



An Roinn Oideachais  
agus Óige  
Department of Education  
and Youth

# Is féidir liom, is féidir linn...

Action Plan for Irish in  
English-Medium Schools



The action plan aims to support schools and teachers to improve the teaching, learning and use of Irish, and to provide children and young people with more engaging and rewarding learning experiences



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## Foreword from the Minister

I am pleased to introduce the Action Plan for Irish in English-Medium Schools. This two-year plan (2025-2027) demonstrates the department's strong and sustained commitment to the Irish language and sets out practical actions to enhance the teaching, learning and everyday use of Irish across both primary and post-primary schools.

The Irish language is unique to Ireland. It belongs to each and every one of us and is central to our national identity. Learning Irish nurtures a shared sense of cultural belonging that is especially valuable in today's modern, diverse and multicultural Ireland.

As with any language, the key reason for learning Irish is to speak it. It is therefore essential that children, young people, teachers and other adults have increased opportunities to speak Irish both within and beyond the school environment. Our goal is for Irish to be experienced as a living, vibrant language, not just a school subject.

Schools that teach through English play a vital role in enabling all students to enjoy Irish and experience success in learning it. Many schools and teachers already provide innovative and creative opportunities for pupils to engage with the language. This plan builds on that strong foundation by sharing inclusive good practice more widely and ensuring effective supports are in place.

This action plan draws on extensive consultation and research, particularly the views of children and young people. While students are enthusiastic about learning Irish and want to be able to speak it, their lived experience in schools does not always reflect that enthusiasm. These insights, together with international research, have informed this focused and ambitious plan designed to deliver meaningful impact within the two-year timeframe.

This plan complements other major developments, such as the successful Policy on Gaeltacht Education and the new Policy for Irish-Medium Education. Together these form part of the Government's broader commitment to a comprehensive policy for the Irish language across the education system.

Delivering on this ambition will require strong collaboration across government departments, state agencies, schools, teachers, parents, communities and, most importantly with students themselves. By working together, we can ensure that Irish is an enriching part of every child's education and a vibrant part of daily life for future generations.

I would like to thank all those who contributed their expertise and creativity to this plan. Their dedication gives us confidence that, with the right support and commitment, we can make real and lasting progress for Irish in our schools.

**Helen McEntee TD**  
**Minister for Education and Youth**



## Foreword from the Secretary General

I am delighted to introduce this Action Plan for Irish in English-Medium Schools. The publication of this action plan reflects the ongoing commitment of the Department to improving the teaching and learning of Irish in our schools. It draws together and builds on the many successful initiatives already in place.

While there are challenges in relation to the teaching and learning of Irish in our schools, we are aware that there is much to celebrate and that there is lots of good practice in schools and individual classrooms that should be shared more widely. Indeed, the proficiency in Irish among Irish people would be far less without the work and commitment of schools and teachers.

This action plan includes measurable actions that are likely to make a difference in a two-year timeframe. It focuses on the elements that make a difference to language learning- attitudes, teaching Irish as a language, opportunities to use Irish and the use of inclusive approaches that allow all children and young people to experience success in their learning. It includes a range of actions that will support schools and teachers in implementing the primary and post-primary curriculums for Irish.

This action plan is strongly informed by the lived experience of the teaching and learning of Irish in our schools. There was extensive consultation with representatives of national organisations and school communities during its development. This included discussions with primary and post-primary students, parents, teachers, principals and student teachers throughout the country.

Engagement with children and young people in schools and giving effect to their voice was a key part of the consultation. It was very encouraging to hear that children and young people want to learn Irish and to be able to speak it. This action plan will help to ensure that they experience enjoyment and success in their learning of Irish and that they have more opportunities to use it within and outside school.

The action plan should generate a new positivity about the learning and use of Irish.

Having a positive attitude towards Irish is crucial. It impacts not just on successful teaching and learning of the language, but it also makes a big difference on whether speakers- children, young people and adults- use it.

Building on the consultation, the implementation of the action plan provides an ideal opportunity to have a more joined-up approach in relation to the teaching and learning of Irish. It will also help to ensure better awareness of, access to, and use of, the supports and resources available for Irish in English-medium schools.

I thank all those who supported the development of the action plan. We look forward to ongoing engagement with you in implementing it and ensuring that our children and young people have the best learning experiences and outcomes possible.

**Bernie McNally**  
Secretary General

# 1 Introduction

The Department of Education and Youth (the department) has developed this Action Plan for Irish in English-Medium Schools to support the teaching and learning of Irish in primary and post-primary schools that teach through English. The action plan will be implemented within a two-year period, 2025 to 2027.

It will support primary and post-primary schools in implementing existing curriculum specifications to provide better learning experiences of Irish and increase the use of Irish among children and young people.

The action plan is informed by extensive consultation at national and school levels. It is also informed by research and approaches to language planning for minority languages in other jurisdictions.

The implementation of the action plan takes account of ongoing developments in the language specifications for primary schools and in the specifications for Irish at junior cycle and senior cycle. A central feature of primary and post-primary curriculum specifications for Irish is the development of communicative competence in Irish. This action plan will support schools and teachers in achieving that objective more effectively.

## 1.1 Context

The department acknowledges the positive work undertaken to facilitate the teaching and learning of Irish in many English-medium schools. The department is equally committed to the learning and use of Irish as a key part of the broad and balanced education provided to all children and young people in the Irish education system. With over 90% of children and young people attending English-medium schools, it is vital that their experiences of learning Irish are enjoyable and rewarding. The education system is a key domain for the promotion and use of the Irish language and the provision of language users who are proficient in Irish.

Concerns have been raised in research and inspection findings over the years about the quality of teaching and learning of Irish and the standards of Irish among children, young people and teachers in English-medium schools. It must also be acknowledged that the collective competency in Irish amongst the public would be significantly diminished without the work of schools and teachers, including those in English-medium schools which are attended by most children and young people.

## 1.2 Scope

This action plan has been developed to support and improve the teaching and learning of Irish in English-medium primary and post-primary schools over a two-year period, 2025 to 2027. It focusses on actions that are most likely to be effective and make a difference within that timeframe.

The action plan works within existing policy and structures for Irish. This includes curricular reforms that have recently been implemented, are ongoing or are planned through the normal National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) processes.

Given the timeframe for the implementation of this action plan, it does not address more substantial policy matters, such as exemptions from the study of Irish or Irish as a core subject for students and for those who wish to become primary school teachers. Such matters will be considered in the context of an overarching Irish language in education policy. Feedback received during the consultation related to matters outside the scope of the action plan will inform future policies for Irish in the education system.

### 1.3 Aim

The action plan aims to support schools and teachers to improve the teaching, learning and use of Irish, and to provide children and young people with more engaging and rewarding learning experiences, so that they:

- experience success and progression in their learning of Irish
- develop a love and appreciation of the Irish language
- communicate confidently in Irish, in accordance with their ability and
- are happy to use Irish when there are opportunities to do so.

To achieve this, a priority of this action plan is to support and develop individual and collective practice in schools and among teachers. Capturing and sharing of effective practice in relation to the teaching, learning and use of Irish will be a key means of supporting how this aim will be achieved. The action plan also places a strong focus on better integration, co-ordination and use of the supports for Irish.

### 1.4 Consultation

The development of this action plan has been informed by an extensive consultation process with key stakeholders at both national and school community levels. The steps in the consultation process are outlined in the table below:

A **National Forum** was held in June 2025 where the outcomes of the consultation and the key features and actions of the action plan were shared with representatives of national organisations and higher education institutions.

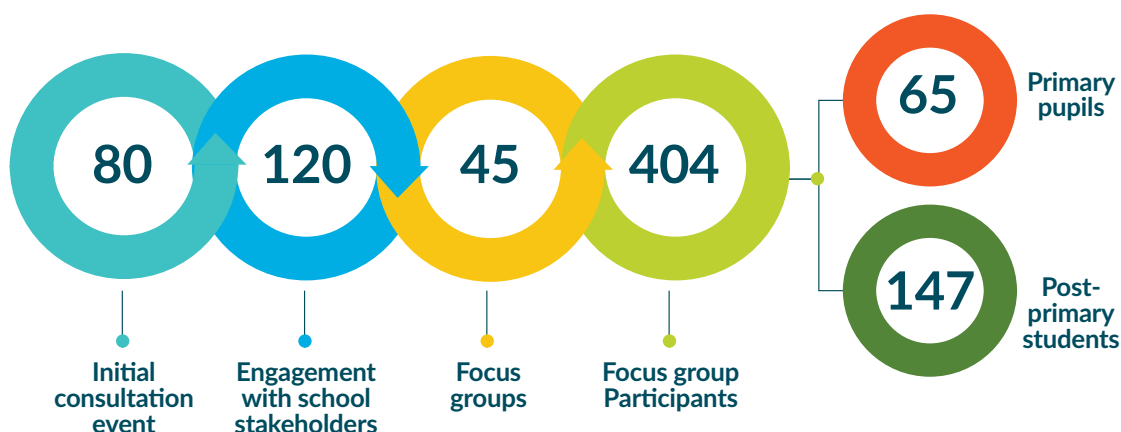
Opening consultation event with representatives of national organisations	January 2025
Focus groups with specific school stakeholders	February/March 2025
Engagement with school communities using the BEACONS approach	April 2025
Meetings with groups of national stakeholders and researchers/language experts	April/May 2025

During the consultation, the department met with almost 200 representatives from national organisations. It also met with over 500 participants in primary and post-primary schools including pupils/students, teachers, school leaders, parents, and student teachers. The focus of the consultation was on gathering views on the lived experience of the teaching, learning and use of Irish in English-medium schools.

Facilitators from the Burren College of Art facilitated the engagement with primary and post-primary school communities using the BEACONS approach (BEACONS is the acronym for Bringing Education Alive for our Communities On a National Scale). At these two events, diverse stakeholders at school level had opportunity to talk with each other and to listen to each other on issues of common interest and importance in relation to Irish. These events provided an opportunity to get a deeper understanding of themes that had surfaced during the previous discussions with school and national stakeholders.

Engagement with children and young people was central to the consultation. Over half of the participants in the discussions with schools were children and young people.

*Number of consultation participants*



Representatives of Sealbhú, Dublin City University were present to record the discussions at each stage of the consultation. Advice from them ensured that there was breadth and depth in the consultation. The outcomes of the consultation are available in two reports prepared by Sealbhú:

- Teaching and Learning Irish in English-Medium Schools: Literature Review and Perspectives of National Stakeholders
- Teaching and Learning Irish in English-Medium Schools: Perspectives of Children, Young People, Parents, Teachers, Principals and Student Teachers

The reports include a review of language and education research relevant to the teaching and learning of Irish in English-medium schools.



## 2 The Action Plan

## 2.1 Pillars of the Action Plan

Four pillars form the basis of the action plan:

- 1 Fostering positive attitudes towards Irish
- 2 Increasing the use of Irish
- 3 Supporting access by all children and young people to learning Irish
- 4 Integrating supports for Irish

These pillars reflect the key themes that emerged from the research and the consultation findings. Actions and sub-actions relating to each of the four pillars are outlined below.

In recognition of the centrality of effective teaching and learning in classrooms in achieving positive learning outcomes for learners and their proficiency in Irish, actions that relate to teaching and learning are incorporated across Pillars 1–3.

These actions, together with actions relating to the use of Irish, support the implementation of the specifications for Irish at primary level, junior cycle, and senior cycle. All specifications place a strong emphasis on the development of positive attitudes towards Irish, the authentic use of Irish within and outside lessons, the provision of engaging and enjoyable learning experiences and the facilitation of all learners in accordance with their abilities to learn and communicate in Irish. In addition, the specifications at primary and junior cycle levels strongly emphasise the development of pupils/students' self-awareness of their learning of Irish.



## 2.2 Pillar 1: Fostering positive attitudes towards Irish

### What the research says

Research indicates that a positive mindset supports learning and the development of the user's language competence. There is a strong relationship between positive attitudes to Irish among learners and their achievement in the language. However, research on children and young people's attitudes towards Irish indicate that while they appreciate the cultural value of learning Irish, they are generally less positive about Irish than other subjects, viewing it, for example, as one of the more difficult and less useful subjects.

Studies show that teachers' and parents' attitudes towards Irish can have a significant influence on children and young people's achievement in Irish. Teachers' enthusiasm for Irish has been shown to have a strong impact on children and young people's experience of and attitudes to the language. Research also highlights the vital role that school leadership plays in fostering a positive and effective learning culture that influences learners' outcomes.

## Key messages from the consultation

The consultation shows that there is strong support for the teaching and learning of Irish in primary and post-primary schools. Key points mentioned during the consultation were the importance of learning Irish for cultural and social reasons and the important role it plays in our national identity. The word ‘bród’ (pride) was frequently mentioned by children and young people and their parents during the consultation.

However, views on the experiences of learning Irish in English-medium schools are much less positive. A common view among children and young people and their parents is that Irish is one of the more difficult subjects to learn. Young people also reported negative perceptions of their proficiency in Irish compared to other languages. This reflects the findings of the research. Many also expressed their frustration at their perceived lack of progress in speaking Irish.

Fear of making a mistake and taking a risk were also mentioned by children, young people, teachers, other adults in schools and student teachers as impacting on their willingness to speak and use Irish. There was also limited awareness generally among children, young people and parents about the social and professional opportunities that Irish can offer.

## Actions

This action plan emphasises actions that help to increase awareness in school communities on the role of Irish in national identity for all children and young people, the cultural, linguistic, social and professional benefits of learning and using Irish, and the opportunities to use Irish. As the title of the action plan, *Is féidir liom, is féidir linn* indicates, the actions have been chosen with a view to helping everybody, particularly children, young people and teachers, identify what they can do in relation to Irish, and to build on that in collaboration with a diverse range of stakeholders at local and national level.

The action plan also includes actions that will help to build awareness and self-esteem among children and young people, teachers and other adults in schools regarding their ability to learn and use Irish. Furthermore, actions are included that aim to support learners and users of Irish to have a greater understanding of language learning, and of the benefits and processes associated with learning and using more than one language.

In recognition of the crucial role that assessment plays in supporting learners’ awareness of their learning and the progress they are making, the action plan includes actions that support teachers in making more effective use of assessment to support pupils’ and students’ learning of Irish.

The actions relating to assessment align with current curriculum review and development processes which include the review of Junior Cycle Irish being undertaken by SEALBHÚ, Dublin City University on behalf of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, and the redevelopment of Leaving Certificate Irish in the context of Senior Cycle Redevelopment. These parallel processes will, as they progress, provide the opportunity to respond holistically to any identified opportunities and challenges within the current curriculum specifications, including assessment arrangements.

*Pillar 1: Foster positive attitudes towards Irish*

		Policy Lead	Implementation
<b>1.1</b>	<b>Raise awareness of the value of learning and using Irish among schools, higher education institutions, teachers, parents, children and young people and student teachers</b>		
1.1.1	Support the organisation of events and activities that encourage the enjoyable use of Irish and celebrate success in the use of Irish		
1.1.1.1	Support awareness of, and increase participation in, the Gaelbhratach scheme and similar initiatives	Department of Education and Youth  Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht	Foras na Gaeilge and relevant Irish language lead organisations
1.1.1.2	Increase awareness of, and encourage participation in, national competitions and events (e.g. Siansa, Seachtain na Gaeilge, Gaeilge 24, debating competitions) that increase the use of Irish	Department of Education and Youth	Foras na Gaeilge and relevant Irish language lead organisations
1.1.2	Design, develop and run a schools' and higher education institutions' focused communications plan and campaign (including audio-visual materials) on the role of Irish in national cultural identity and the cultural, linguistic, social, professional and economic benefits and opportunities associated with learning and speaking Irish	Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht  Department of Education and Youth	Foras na Gaeilge and relevant Irish language lead organisations  An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta
1.1.3	Support engagement of schools with communications campaign materials	Department of Education and Youth	Oide
1.1.4	Support the use of Irish at national educational fora and events in a manner that is inclusive and encouraging of people with different levels of proficiency in Irish	Department of Education and Youth	Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Unit, Department of Education and Youth
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Increase awareness among learners/users of Irish of their own language learning</b>		
1.2.1	Clarify expectations for the teaching, learning and use of Irish		

		Policy Lead	Implementation
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Increase awareness among learners/users of Irish of their own language learning</b>		
1.2.1	Clarify expectations for the teaching, learning and use of Irish		
1.2.1.1	Communicate with schools to clarify expectations of the implementation of Irish within the Primary Languages Curriculum/Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile, including observation of the minimum suggested time allocation for the teaching and learning of Irish (as outlined in the Primary Curriculum Framework (2023))	Department of Education and Youth	Curriculum and Assessment Unit- Primary & An tAonad Gaeilge um Scoileanna Meán-Bhéarla, Department of Education and Youth
1.2.1.2	Communicate standards of teaching and learning of Irish based on effective practice to school leaders and teachers across schools	Department of Education and Youth	Inspectorate, Department of Education and Youth
1.2.2	Develop classroom resources to support learners' and users' understanding of the nature of second/additional language learning (including the need to take a chance and make mistakes), and their awareness of their progress in learning Irish	Department of Education and Youth	An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta Oide
1.2.3	Commence the update of standardised testing requirements at primary level, including the redevelopment and standardisation of listening and reading tests in Irish to support learner progress	Department of Education and Youth	Educational Research Centre
1.2.4	Work towards aligning Irish language curriculums (and associated teaching supports and assessment arrangements) with the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) to enhance spoken Irish in schools	Department of Education and Youth	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment Oide State Examinations Commission An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta
1.2.5	Support primary teachers on the assessment of Irish and the use of assessment data to support effective learning of Irish to include the use of portfolios (including digital formats) and digital resources	Department of Education and Youth	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment Oide
1.2.6	Support post-primary teachers of Irish on effective use of formative assessment within the post-primary curriculum including the use of portfolios and, in particular, a focus on the development of oral competence	Department of Education and Youth	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment Oide



## 2.3 Pillar 2: Increasing the use of Irish

### What the research says

A key purpose for learning a language is to speak and use it. Research indicates that:

- increased use of a language positively influences children and young people's perception of the language and supports the development of their proficiency in the language
- use of a language depends on many factors including attitudes, motivation, exposure to the language, opportunities to use it and proficiency in the language.

Proficiency in the target language is particularly important as it supports both positive attitudes to the language and the use of the language among learners and teachers. The language proficiency and pedagogical skill of the teacher, together with their willingness to use the language, are key factors in effective language teaching and the promotion of language use among learners.

### Key messages from the consultation

The consultation shows that children and young people want to be able to speak Irish. Parents also want this. However, many children and young people generally perceive that they cannot do so confidently and express considerable frustration at their lack of progress in this regard. A key message during the consultation from participants at school level is the need to teach Irish as a language in the same way that modern foreign languages are taught. Another key message is that children and young people should be provided with more opportunities to use Irish within Irish lessons, during the school day and outside the school. There was strong support generally for normalising the use of Irish within and outside school settings.

During the consultation, many examples of effective and innovative practice in relation to the teaching, learning and use of Irish at primary and post-primary levels were mentioned by school leaders and teachers in individual schools and to a lesser extent by children, young people and parents. These practices were reflective of the principles and methodologies for the teaching of Irish in the curriculum specifications for Irish at primary and post-primary levels. In such instances, school leaders played a crucial role in creating a culture where Irish was a visible and living part of school life and where effective and innovative practices were the norm.

However, it is evident that these practices and the positive learning experiences associated with them are not consistent across all schools and classrooms. Children, young people, and parents described many teaching practices in schools that are not consistent with the curriculum specifications for Irish and that greatly inhibit the use of Irish in classrooms and diminish the

learning experiences of children and young people. These practices include little opportunities to use Irish communicatively within and outside lessons; didactic teaching; teaching Irish through English; an over-emphasis on reading and writing based on textbooks (primary); decontextualised learning of single words and spellings (primary); and an overemphasis on rote learning and note-taking (post-primary). Some reports from the consultation suggest that even the minimum time allocation for Irish is not always observed.

Teachers and school leaders, particularly at primary level, frequently highlighted the confidence and proficiency of teachers and student teachers in Irish as a key area of concern. Challenges in recruiting qualified teachers who are proficient in Irish were also frequently mentioned, particularly at post-primary level.

Parents indicated that they felt unable to support their children's learning of Irish and that they would welcome more support from schools in terms of knowing what their child was learning and different ways to participate in their child's learning of Irish.

## Actions

This action plan supports the teaching of Irish as a language and aims to provide increased opportunities for children and young people to speak and use it. The actions under Pillar 2 focus on addressing the key drivers that underpin language use – namely, user confidence and competence; teacher language proficiency and pedagogical skill; the quality of learning experiences; and contact with and opportunities to use the language. These actions also focus on the key contexts and individuals who most influence children's and young people's learning including school leaders, teachers and parents.

The action plan builds on examples of good practice shared by individual schools and teachers during the consultation. These practices include:

- use of communicative, task-based and action-orientated approaches to teaching Irish
- using Irish as the medium of instruction during lessons
- informal use of Irish by school leaders, teachers and pupils/students during the school day
- making Irish visible in the school environment
- teaching subjects or part of subjects through Irish (Content and Language Integrated Learning)
- participating in whole school- events and activities through Irish
- participating in events and activities outside the school, including Gaeltacht courses and Irish language summer camps
- establishing links with other schools and with local/community organisations and initiatives
- supporting parents to participate in their children's learning of Irish.

The action plan focuses on supporting teachers to realise to greater effect their professional responsibility and agency to effectively implement the curriculum specifications for Irish so that their pupils/students have positive and rewarding experiences in their learning of Irish. This support for teachers has a dual focus:

- increasing teachers' awareness of and supporting their access to opportunities to improve their proficiency in Irish
- supporting teachers to effectively implement the teaching approaches advocated in the curriculum specifications for Irish.

Given the important role of school leaders in creating the right culture to promote and support Irish, the action plan includes actions to support school leaders in leading the teaching, learning and use of Irish effectively in their schools.

The action plan also includes actions to help parents to support and participate in their children's learning and use of Irish.

*Pillar 2: Increase the use of Irish*

		Policy Lead	Implementation
<b>2.1 Support school leaders in leading the teaching, learning and use of Irish in schools</b>			
2.1.1	Provide support to school leaders in English-medium schools on creating a positive school culture for Irish and leading the teaching, learning and use of Irish in their schools	Department of Education and Youth	Oide
2.1.2	Support school leaders on the use of the school self-evaluation process to improve the teaching and learning of Irish in schools	Inspectorate, Department of Education and Youth	Inspectorate, Department of Education and Youth Oide
2.1.3	Capture and share using a multi-media approach, effective practice in relation to leading the teaching, learning and use of Irish	Department of Education and Youth	Inspectorate, Department of Education and Youth Oide
<b>2.2 Maintain and enhance teachers' proficiency in Irish</b>			
2.2.1	Work with higher education institutions to provide innovative and motivating communicative opportunities for student teachers to use and improve their Irish	Department of Education and Youth	An tAonad Gaeilge um Scoileanna Meán-Bhéarla & An tAonad um Oideachas Gaeltachta, Department of Education and Youth in consultation with Initial Teacher Education Providers

		Policy Lead	Implementation
2.2.2	Work with higher education institutions to identify and increase awareness of the supports they are providing for Irish in the school sector	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science  Department of Education and Youth	Higher Education Policy and Reform Unit, DFHERIS & An tAonad Gaeilge um Scoileanna Meán-Bhéarla, DEY in consultation with higher education institutions
2.2.3	Explore ways to fund access to Irish language courses for teachers	Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht	Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht  An tAonad Gaeilge um Scoileanna Meán-Bhéarla & An tAonad um Oideachas Gaeltachta, Department of Education and Youth
2.2.4	Explore how initial teacher education programmes can best support student teachers to develop the Irish language and pedagogical skills and competencies necessary for the teaching of Irish, engaging with relevant stakeholders, as part of the next review of <i>Céim: Standards in Initial Teacher Education</i>	Department of Education and Youth	The Teaching Council
2.2.5	Implement actions to ensure a supply of teachers of Irish in post-primary schools, including provision of upskilling courses, exploration of the potential for sharing of teachers and research on aspects of supply where further information is required	Department of Education and Youth	Teacher Supply Unit, Department of Education and Youth
2.2.6	Increase school leaders' and teachers' awareness of and engagement with summer courses and other professional learning experiences, including Irish language immersive courses that support the maintenance and development of their proficiency in Irish	Department of Education and Youth  Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht	An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta  Education Support Centres Ireland  Oide  Irish language course providers for teachers  Providers of Irish language courses for adults

		Policy Lead	Implementation
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Maintain and enhance teachers' skills to teach Irish</b>		
2.3.1	Enhance the supports from the Gaelaonad in Oide to provide tailored support to teachers in English-medium schools	Department of Education and Youth	Oide
2.3.2	Increase teachers' awareness of and engagement with summer courses and other professional learning experiences that support the development of their skills in teaching Irish	Department of Education and Youth	Oide An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta Education Support Centres Ireland
2.3.3	Capture and share effective practice and positive and enjoyable experiences of teaching, learning and use of Irish		
2.3.3.1	Support the establishment of communities of practice, collaborative initiatives among clusters of schools and pilot twinning of schools	Department of Education and Youth	Oide Education Support Centres Ireland Education and Training Boards Ireland
2.3.3.2	Capture and share using a multi-media approach, examples of effective practice and successful experiences in the teaching, learning and use of Irish in English-medium schools	Department of Education and Youth	Inspectorate, Department of Education and Youth Oide
2.3.4	Facilitate greater use of the Féilte Bursary by teachers to support the teaching and learning of Irish	Department of Education and Youth	The Teaching Council
<b>2.4</b>	<b>Support teachers' and student teachers' use of existing resources and provide additional resources</b>		
2.4.1	Develop and manage a single online hub with links to relevant resources for promoting and supporting the teaching, learning and use of Irish in English-medium schools	Department of Education and Youth	An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment Oide

		Policy Lead	Implementation
2.4.2	Support teachers' and student teachers' awareness of and use of existing resources within professional learning experiences	Department of Education and Youth	Oide An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta Initial Teacher Education Providers
2.4.3	Develop a resource to support the development of the listening and oral language skills of pupils/students in primary and post-primary English-medium schools	Department of Education and Youth	An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta Oide (advisory)
<b>2.5</b>	<b>Increase opportunities for the use of Irish in schools and classrooms</b>		
2.5.1	Support schools to embed the use of Irish as the language of instruction during the teaching of Irish through professional learning experiences, curriculum materials and inspection	Department of Education and Youth	Oide National Council for Curriculum and Assessment Inspectorate, Department of Education and Youth
2.5.2	Support schools to embed the informal use of Irish among school leaders, teachers and pupils/students outside of lessons through professional learning experiences, curriculum materials and inspection	Department of Education and Youth	Oide National Council for Curriculum and Assessment Inspectorate, Department of Education and Youth
2.5.3	Support primary and post-primary schools with developing and implementing ideas on how they can encourage pupils and students to use and enjoy using Irish	Department of Education and Youth	Oide An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta
2.5.4	Support the teaching of other subjects through Irish by increasing the participation of primary and post-primary schools in Department of Education and Youth funded content and language integrated learning (CLIL) projects	Department of Education and Youth	Oide An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta

		Policy Lead	Implementation
2.5.5	Explore the potential to build on children's early experience of Irish in early learning and care settings	Department of Education and Youth  Department of Children, Disability and Equality	An tAonad Gaeilge um Scoileanna Meán-Bhéarla & Teacher Professional Learning and Early Years Unit, Department of Education and Youth  Quality Unit, Department of Children, Disability and Equality
2.5.6	Support where possible the use of Irish during advisory, support, consultation and inspection visits to schools	Department of Education and Youth	Inspectorate, Department of Education and Youth  Oide  The National Education Psychological Service  The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment  The National Council for Special Education  Other relevant agencies
2.5.7	Liaise with TG4 on the development of Foghlaim TG4 to support the teaching and learning of Irish in English-medium schools, including enhancement of collaboration between TG4 and other providers	Department of Education and Youth	An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta
2.5.8	Liaise with other organisations (such as providers of tuairisc.ie and e-Leathnach) that support the teaching and learning of Irish in English-medium schools and support the use of their resources	Department of Education and Youth	An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta  Foras na Gaeilge and relevant Irish language lead organisations

		Policy Lead	Implementation
<b>2.6</b>	<b>Increase opportunities for the use of Irish outside schools</b>		
2.6.1	Extend opportunities for teachers to use Irish		
2.6.1.1	Increase awareness in schools and higher education institutions of the activities and initiatives at national and local level that provide opportunities to use Irish	Department of Education and Youth  Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht	Foras na Gaeilge and relevant Irish language lead organisations  An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta  Oide
2.6.1.2	Support the establishment of pop-up Gaeltachts, ciorcail chomhrá and Teach Meets in education support centres	Department of Education and Youth	Education Support Centres Ireland
2.6.2	Extend opportunities for children and young people in English-medium schools to use Irish and enjoy the use of Irish		
2.6.2.1	Continue to provide Gaeltacht scholarships to students attending post-primary schools participating in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools programme (DEIS) and increase awareness of and encourage student access to these scholarships	Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht	Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board  Foras na Gaeilge
2.6.2.2	Increase awareness of and support links via a targeted regional approach with national and local Irish language organisations and initiatives, social media, pop-up Gaeltachts, sports, arts and community activities related to schools	Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht  Department of Education and Youth	Foras na Gaeilge and relevant Irish language lead organisations
2.6.2.3	Increase awareness of and encourage greater participation of children and young people in existing Irish language youth clubs	Department of Education and Youth	All youth services including Irish language youth service providers  Education and Training Boards supported by Education and Training Boards Ireland

		Policy Lead	Implementation
2.6.2.4	Support the establishment of Irish language youth clubs and after-school activities in areas where these are not currently available	Department of Education and Youth  Department of Children, Disability and Equality	All youth services including Irish language youth service providers  Education and Training Boards supported by Education and Training Boards Ireland  Quality Unit, Department of Children, Disability and Equality
2.6.2.5	Increase awareness of and encourage student participation in Campaí Samhraidh held outside the Gaeltacht	Department of Education and Youth	Foras na Gaeilge and relevant Irish language lead organisations
<b>2.7</b>	<b>Support parents to participate in their children's learning of Irish</b>		
2.7.1	Increase the visibility and accessibility of existing resources, including digital, for parents to support their children's enjoyment, learning and use of Irish	Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht  Department of Education and Youth	Foras na Gaeilge and relevant Irish language lead organisations  National Council for Curriculum and Assessment  An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta
2.7.2	Develop resources to help parents support their children's learning of Irish and for parents and children to enjoy using the language together	Department of Education and Youth	Foras na Gaeilge and relevant Irish language lead organisations  National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
2.7.3	Gather and share examples of effective practices on how English-medium schools support parents to participate in their children's learning and use of Irish	Department of Education and Youth	Foras na Gaeilge and relevant Irish language lead organisations
2.7.4	Undertake an awareness campaign aimed at parents highlighting the availability and accessibility of Irish language classes	Department of Education and Youth	Foras na Gaeilge and relevant Irish language lead organisations



## 2.4 Pillar 3: Supporting access by all children and young people to learning Irish

### What research and policy says

Research on second language acquisition suggests that enjoyable and productive engagement with the Irish language is both an entitlement of, and opportunity for, all children and young people, appropriate to their learning needs, stage of development and ability.

Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) recognises the right of persons with disabilities to an inclusive education at all levels, on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live. It also emphasises that there is reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements.

The principle of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) focuses on presenting information and content in different ways to accommodate diverse learning preferences and needs. Universal Design for Learning is about designing learning experiences, environments and materials that are inherently flexible and inclusive and are accessible to all learners. The provision of multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression, helps to minimise barriers to learning.

The provision of an inclusive education for all children and young people, including those with additional educational needs, those at risk of educational disadvantage and those from migrant and ethnic minority backgrounds is a key feature of the Irish educational system. The principles of inclusion and differentiated learning also underpin primary and post-primary curriculum specifications and apply to pupils'/students' engagement with all subjects, including Irish.

Accordingly, schools are encouraged to provide all pupils and students, to the greatest extent possible and in a meaningful way, with opportunities to participate in Irish language and cultural activities at a level appropriate to their learning needs and to achieve a level of personal proficiency appropriate to their ability.

### Key messages from the consultation

During the consultation, those representing children and young people with additional learning needs, including those who are neuro-divergent, and children and young people from minority groups among others questioned assumptions about the appropriateness of such children and young people learning Irish. In other words, they expressed the view that assumptions seemed to be made that children from these groups either should not or did not need to learn Irish. Their clear preference was that every child should be given meaningful opportunities to learn Irish, in a manner appropriate to their need.

There were also some suggestions during the consultation that due to the priority given to the development of English language literacy skills, there was a reduced focus on the teaching and

learning of Irish in schools participating in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools programme (DEIS). This is not consistent with the position of Irish as a core subject in the curriculum. Neither is it consistent with the National Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy which emphasises the development of literacy skills in Irish. During the consultation, school leaders and teachers in DEIS schools highlighted the importance of finding ways to make children and young people in these schools aware of the relevance of learning Irish as a means of motivating them to participate in the learning of Irish.

The need to adapt teaching approaches and resources so that all children and young people can access and experience success in learning Irish was highlighted. In this context, there was specific mention of the need for a customised research-informed programme for teaching word recognition in Irish in English-medium schools, bearing in mind the specifics of Irish phonology, orthography and morphology.

Furthermore, it was suggested that a greater focus on the development of these children and young people’s listening and speaking skills (rather than reading and writing) would allow them to experience greater success in learning Irish and enable them to continue in their learning of Irish.

The importance of having resources for Irish that are reflective of the diversity of school populations was also emphasised. The need to provide learning support for Irish to children and young people who require such support was also highlighted.

### Actions

This action plan includes actions that involve additional support and guidance to schools and teachers to support the learning of Irish by all children and young people, including those with additional learning needs, those at risk of educational disadvantage and those from minority groups. Consideration of how to make resources for the learning of Irish more inclusive and accessible, and representative of the diverse backgrounds of children and young people in schools, including those from Traveller and Roma communities and those who are new to Ireland, will be a priority.

The action plan also includes actions that support Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) in contributing to the use of Irish in schools. Within the context of their non-teaching care and support role, SNAs can support the use of Irish by pupils/students with special educational needs.

#### *Pillar 3: Support access by all children and young people to learning Irish*

		Policy Lead	Implementation
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Support the learning of Irish by children and young people with additional learning needs, those at risk of educational disadvantage and those from minority communities</b>		
3.1.1	Provide support to teachers on the use of inclusive teaching approaches that facilitate successful and enjoyable participation in the learning of Irish by all children and young people (e.g. scaffolding of learning to meet varying needs)	Department of Education and Youth	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment  Oide  The National Council for Special Education

		Policy Lead	Implementation
3.1.2	Explore ways to support the teaching and learning of Irish language phonics and orthography/spelling and provide additional resources as required	Department of Education and Youth	An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta
3.1.3	Ensure that new resources for Irish are representative of the diverse pupil/student profiles in schools including children and young people from the Travelling and Roma communities and those from other linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds	Department of Education and Youth	An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta  The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment  The National Council for Special Education
3.1.4	Provide learning support for Irish for children and young people experiencing significant challenges with learning it, as part of the Continuum of Support at classroom level	Department of Education and Youth	All schools
3.1.5	Provide guidance to schools and teachers on how all children and young people can access the learning of Irish within the Continuum of Support framework. This guidance should be aligned with the principles of inclusive education and Universal Design for Learning, effective pedagogical practices and the implementation of the Circulars on Exemptions from the Study of Irish in schools	Department of Education and Youth	National Educational Psychological Service  National Council for Special Education
3.1.6	Provide support materials and professional learning experiences for schools and teachers on the teaching of Irish to children coming from other countries who require additional language support	Department of Education and Youth	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment  Oide
3.1.7	Provide supports to Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) to develop their proficiency in Irish	Department of Education and Youth	An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta  Irish language course providers for adults
3.1.8	Provide guidance to SNAs on their role in a whole-school approach to supporting the use of Irish by pupils/students with special educational needs	Department of Education and Youth	The National Council for Special Education



## 2.5 Pillar 4: Integrating supports for Irish

### What research and policy says

Research highlights the importance of joined-up thinking and action, and collaboration within and across organisations, agencies and bodies to develop better and more responsive services for users of the services. This approach provides opportunities to work towards a common set of objectives and to share information and ideas. It also helps to coordinate actions and improvements, and to reduce duplication of efforts and resources.

### Key messages from the consultation

The discussions with national education and Irish language organisations, support services, higher education institutions and schools during the consultation indicates that there is a wide range of initiatives, schemes, and high-quality resources available to support the teaching and learning of Irish across the education system. There are also lots of supports available within and outside the educational system to support the development of teachers' and young people's proficiency in Irish and give them opportunities to use Irish.

There are many policies, actions, structures and resources already in place to support the teaching and learning of Irish across State departments, agencies, support services and Irish language organisations. Existing policies that support the teaching, learning, and use of Irish include:

- 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010–2030
- Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy 2024–2033
- Initial Teacher Education Policy Statement
- Primary Curriculum Framework
- Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017–2022
- Education Research Centre Strategic Plan 2025–2030
- Opportunities for Youth: National Strategy for Youth Work and Related Services 2024–2028

Other relevant policies include [Languages Connect: Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017–2026](#). There are also opportunities to align the action plan with new policies such as the Policy for Irish-Medium Education outside of the Gaeltacht and the forthcoming National Plan for Irish Language Provision in Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare developed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality. It is also important that the action plan is aligned with the commitments for Irish in the Programme for Government 2025 –

Securing Ireland's Future, including the action relating to the alignment of Irish language curriculum with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

As evident during the consultation, however, there appears to be a notable lack of awareness at system and school levels of the extent of the initiatives and resources available for the teaching and learning of Irish and of how to access them. There is also a general lack of awareness among schools and teachers in English-medium schools and among student teachers of how to best use the resources available.

The need to adapt existing resources or to develop customised resources for the teaching and learning of Irish in English-medium schools where there are gaps in provision was also frequently mentioned during the consultation.

## Actions

The action plan emphasises the need for all organisations working with schools in relation to Irish, including those within the civil and public service, as well as stakeholder organisations, to enhance their collaboration in pursuit of a small number of strategically important objectives. The overall structuring of the action plan across four key areas is a clear demonstration by the Department of this intention, and how important it deems it to be.

This action plan links with, consolidates and extends relevant actions for Irish in English-medium schools that are included in existing policies that support the teaching and learning of Irish. Similarly, it aligns as relevant with new policies within the education system for Irish, including the forthcoming National Plan for Irish Language Provision for Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare and the Policy for Irish-medium Education outside of the Gaeltacht; this will support progression in the teaching and learning of Irish between early learning and care settings and primary schools and the consolidation of efforts across sectors.

A key feature of this action plan is supporting awareness of, access to, and use of existing resources for Irish by schools and teachers. It also places a strong emphasis on the sharing of good practice between schools, school leaders, teachers, and higher education institutions through a multi-faceted approach.

The action plan also aims to strengthen structures already in place and to develop additional structures as necessary to facilitate greater coordination in relation to provision for the teaching and learning of Irish in English-medium schools. This will involve working closely with relevant government departments, sections within the department, bodies and agencies under the department, Irish language organisations, youth service providers, and national and school stakeholders.

Technology will be used as a key enabler for support and resource accessibility. It will play a vital role in connecting those who need resources with those who have them, fostering collaboration and sharing.

Better integration and co-ordination should help to maximise the impact of collective efforts to support the teaching and learning of Irish in English-medium schools. It should also give greater effect to existing investment in Irish for these schools and any additional investment provided to support the implementation of this action plan.

*Pillar 4: Integrating supports for Irish*

		Policy Lead	Implementation
<b>4.1 Co-ordinate efforts to support Irish</b>			
4.1.1	Build on existing structures to support the coordination of supports for Irish across departments, bodies, agencies, organisations and higher education institutions	Department of Education and Youth	An tAonad Gaeilge um Scoileanna Meán-Bhéarla (AGSMB), Department of Education and Youth in consultation with all relevant stakeholders and organisations
4.1.2	Co-ordinate alignment with the implementation of relevant actions in other policies and plans and with curriculum development and implementation actions	Department of Education and Youth	AGSMB, Department of Education and Youth in consultation with all relevant stakeholders and organisations
4.1.3	Put arrangements in place to communicate effectively on the action plan and its implementation at system school levels, drawing from and building on existing networks and communication media and fora	Department of Education and Youth	AGSMB, Department of Education and Youth in consultation with all relevant stakeholders and organisations
<b>4.2 Implement actions to assess the impact of the action plan</b>			
4.2.1	Commission new research where there are research and information gaps	Department of Education and Youth	An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta
4.2.2	Conduct a programme of evaluations of Irish	Department of Education and Youth	Inspectorate, Department of Education and Youth
4.2.3	Gather feedback annually from children and young people, parents, teachers and leaders in schools to assess the impact of aspects of the action plan and adjust supports accordingly	Department of Education and Youth	AGSMB, Department of Education and Youth  Oide
4.2.4	Use success criteria to assess the impact of the action plan and publish progress reports at the end of Year 1 and the end of Year 2 of implementation	Department of Education and Youth	AGSMB, Department of Education and Youth

## 3 Implementation



## 3 Implementation

### 3.1 Approach

A partnership approach that includes children and young people, teachers, school leaders, parents, policy makers, education agencies and other relevant education and Irish language stakeholders and partners will support the implementation of this action plan.

Progress towards the implementation of the action plan will be realised through a planning and review process which will require sustained effort and focus across each part of the education system. This will also be subject to the availability of resources in the normal manner.

The department will establish the necessary structures to oversee and enable the implementation of the action plan. Such structures will be aligned to and build on the existing oversight and working groups for Irish within the department. They will include representation from all relevant external bodies, agencies and organisation and sections within the department.

Given the two-year timeframe for the implementation of this action plan, some actions may be piloted in pockets of the country to enable and support successful and targeted implementation of the measures. The learning from the implementation of these targeted measures will inform consideration of the potential for more widespread implementation of the measures as part of an overarching Irish in education policy.

This action plan is the start of a process to support the teaching and learning of Irish in English-medium schools in a focused and impactful manner. This support will be built on and sustained in the context of an overarching Irish in education policy and associated future action plans that draw together the three strands of work being undertaken by the department relating to Irish-Gaeltacht education, Irish-medium education outside the Gaeltacht and Irish in English-medium schools. The learning from the implementation of this action plan and evidence of its impact together with similar information relating to the delivery of the other strands will be central in informing an overarching Irish in education policy.

## 3.2 Measuring success

Gathering information on the impact of the action plan, both quantitatively and qualitatively, will be a key feature of its implementation. This will be a continuous process over the two-year timeframe of the action plan that will involve the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data and feedback from a broad range of sources. These sources will include research, evaluations of Irish by the Inspectorate, and feedback from national stakeholders and school communities, including children and young people.

- Research will help to assess the impact of the action plan and to address information gaps that will inform further policy decisions and interventions in relation to Irish in English-medium schools and across the education system.
- Evaluations of Irish by the Inspectorate and engagement by inspectors with schools will help to raise the profile of and expectations regarding Irish in schools. It will also continue to provide valuable information on the effectiveness of curriculum implementation and policy actions for Irish, as well as on the proficiency of teachers to teach Irish and the learning experiences and outcomes of children and young people.
- Feedback from school communities, including use of a randomised stratified sampling approach and surveys of teachers following attendance at professional learning events, will help to assess the impact of the action plan and associated initiatives and interventions on the lived experience of the teaching, learning and use of Irish in primary and post-primary schools.

In addition, indicators have been identified which will serve as benchmarks for assessing progress and identifying areas where further action is required during and at the end of the implementation of the action plan. This approach to monitoring progress ensures that the action plan will remain responsive to evolving needs. Progress will be recorded annually and disseminated through published reports.

Indicators	Pillars
Attitudes among children and young people to the learning and use of Irish in primary and post-primary schools	Pillar 1, Pillar 3
Attitudes among primary teachers to Irish, the teaching of Irish and the use of Irish	Pillar 1
The number of schools participating in the Gaelbhreach scheme	Pillar 1
Completion of communication campaigns	Pillar 1, Pillar 3
Provision of scholarships for students in DEIS post-primary schools to attend Gaeltacht courses	Pillar 1, Pillar 3
Use of Irish at educational fora and events	Pillar 1
Visibility and use of Irish in schools and classrooms	Pillar 2
Quality of leadership of the teaching, learning and use of Irish in primary and post-primary schools	Pillar 2
Sharing of effective practice on the leadership of and the teaching, learning and use of Irish	Pillar 2
Quality of teaching and assessment of Irish in primary and post-primary schools	Pillar 2
Opportunities for student teachers to use Irish	Pillar 2
Participation by teachers in professional learning experiences for Irish	Pillar 2
Awareness among primary and post-primary teachers, and student teachers of the resources available to support the teaching and learning of Irish	Pillar 2
Participation of post-primary students in Irish language youth networks and other opportunities to use Irish	Pillar 2
Launch of a new COGG resource to support the development of children and young people's listening and oral language skills	Pillar 2
Launch of the new online hub for supporting the teaching, learning and use of Irish in English-medium schools	Pillar 2
Development of resources to support parents' participation in their children's learning of Irish	Pillar 2
The number of schools participating in the Content Language and Integrated Learning (CLIL) projects funded by the department	Pillar 2
Provision of supports and resources to support the learning and use of Irish by children and young people with additional learning needs, those at risk of educational disadvantage, and those from minority communities	Pillar 3
Establishment of structures, processes and networks to oversee and support the implementation of the action plan	Pillar 4
Publication of annual progress reports on the implementation of the action plan	Pillar 4



