



Why is a Content and Language Integrated Learning approach being considered?

The education-related objectives set out in the [20-Year Strategy for the Irish language 2010-2030](#) and the associated *Action Plan 2018-2022* include the Department's commitment to explore a CLIL approach to implementing partial immersion in Irish in schools and early years settings.

What is CLIL?

CLIL is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both language and content. A CLIL approach provides for the delivery of aspects of the curriculum through a language that is not the medium of instruction in the school.

While CLIL is not the same as immersion, it offers flexibility and opportunities for a more focused approach to target language (Irish in this instance) learning and teaching in English-medium early years settings and schools by

- increasing the exposure of learners to Irish by extending the use of Irish as a medium of communication and instruction in real contexts beyond discrete Irish language lessons
- supporting the development of learner's higher order cognitive and creative competences
- exploiting and integrating opportunities for language acquisition and content learning in other curricular areas to support the use of academic language
- expanding the pedagogical repertoire of early years practitioners, primary teachers and teachers of Irish and other subjects
- extending and promoting the benefits of bilingualism beyond the Irish-medium sector.

How is language education developing?

Significant developments have taken place in Irish education and in Irish language curricular provision at early years, primary and post-primary level since the publication of the Government's [20-Year Strategy for the Irish language 2010-2030](#).

- Early-years Education Inspections (EYEI) which evaluates the quality of educational provision in early-years settings participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme funded through the Department of Children and Youth Affairs was introduced in 2016.

- The Primary Language Curriculum (2015) promotes an integrated approach to the learning of English and Irish.
- For the first time, separate Irish language specifications were published in 2016 for Junior Cycle Irish in Irish-medium and in English-medium post-primary schools.

What are the benefits of CLIL?

CLIL improves motivation and knowledge in both the Irish language and the subject as well as cognitive skills such as higher-order and critical thinking. It also develops cultural awareness and knowledge and learning and communication strategies.

For practitioners/ teachers the benefits include increased professional development opportunities where training will increase their understanding of the CLIL approach, the pedagogical principles underpinning CLIL, along with other language teaching pedagogies. It also offers opportunities for increased levels of collaboration with colleagues from within their own setting/ school, as well as practitioners/teachers from other settings and schools.

It will also lead to children being more motivated to learn Irish.

What is the aim of this CLIL PE as Gaeilge project?

The aim is to improve learner competence, confidence and disposition to Irish in English-medium early-years settings and in primary and post-primary schools.

It is a 3 year project starting in September 2019.

Year 1 (2019/2020 – The Pilot) will be a developmental phase in which a small number of English-medium schools and Early Years settings will work with the Department’s project team to identify the resources and supports required for a wider roll-out of the approach in Year 2 and Year 3.

In Year 1, it is planned to work with two Early Years Settings, five primary and five post-primary schools.

Establishing communities of practice both between and within schools and settings will be an important aspect of this project. At least three practitioners/teachers will be supported in each setting/school. At post-primary level the three teachers will be Irish teachers with a second subject.

Teachers participating in Year 1 should have a high level of confidence and competence in Irish.

A steering group has been established to manage the CLIL project comprising representatives of the Department, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta & Gaelscolaíochta (COGG), the Post Primary Languages Initiative (PPLI), DCU, IT Tralee, UL and NUI Maynooth. The Steering Group will select the schools to participate in the project. A sub-group chaired jointly by the PDST and JCT will develop the teacher training programmes required.

What areas of learning/subjects will be taught through Irish?

Aspects of the Aistear (the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework) theme “Communicating” will form the focus of CLIL in Early-years settings in Year 1 to 3 of the project.

Year 1 (2019/20 – The Pilot) will include three subjects at primary and post-primary level. PE will be one of the subjects at primary and post-primary level. While the other two subjects selected for inclusion in Year 1 will depend on the applications received from schools.

Which children/class groups will participate?

Children in English-medium Early Years settings will be in the ECCE programme.

In the Year 1 of the pilot, at primary level the focus will be on Junior and Senior Infants and on fifth and sixth class.

At post-primary level the project will initially focus on 1st year in Junior Cycle. Over the lifetime of the project this may be three different cohorts of 1st year students or one cohort of students from 1st year to 3rd year.

How many classes/lessons will be delivered through Irish?

In Early Years and primary there will be a minimum requirement to use the CLIL project lessons for at least 8 weeks.

At post-primary level: In the development year 1, there will be 1 x 8 week implementation module in each of the three subjects running simultaneously in the third term. The aim is that for Year 2 and 3, there would be 3x8 week modules running consecutively over the three terms.

How will the project be evaluated?

Regular evaluation by the practitioners/teachers will be required, at the start, throughout and at the end of the year. Indicator/evaluation resources will be developed during Year 1

and provided to practitioners/teachers for this purpose. Feedback from practitioners/teachers and learners will also be used to inform the further development of the approach.

How will participating practitioners/teachers be supported?

CPD in the CLIL approach will be provided to practitioners and teachers participating in the project. This will be informed by research and third level experts working in the fields of linguistics and teacher education.

It is expected that this will be in the region of six days, some of which may include in-setting/in-school support.

In Year 1, the participating teachers and practitioners will help to identify and develop the training and the kind of supports which would be of greatest benefit to participants (e.g. communities of practice, clusters etc).

CPD will be provided with implementation in Early Years settings and the classrooms taking place in the third term. A wider roll-out of the approach will take place on an incremental basis in Years 2 and 3.