

11 November, 2019 – Minister McHugh announces schools selected to participate in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) pilot project

PE and other subjects to be taught through Irish

The Minister for Education and Skills Joe McHugh T.D. today (Monday 11th November 2019) announced 19 schools and early years centres have been selected for a new project to promote the teaching of Irish.

The three year Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) pilot will see PE and other subjects taught to children across different age groups through Irish.

Minster McHugh said: “I am delighted that this exciting project is underway. The standard and enthusiasm evident in many of the applications meant that we could arrange a pilot that is bigger than originally envisaged.

“Our talented teachers have seized this opportunity to help promote the language in a novel way. We will have a lot to learn from the project over the course of the next three years and it will improve all the time. I am confident that by introducing Irish across different subjects in schools then we will make it more relevant and help young people connect with it in a new and better way.”

The following schools and early years centres have been selected for the initial phase of the pilot project:

Early Years:

Teach Abhaile pre-school, Ennis, Co. Clare.

Mounthawk Montessori, Tralee, Co. Kerry.

High Hopes Montessori, Harolds Cross, Dublin.

Roots and Wings, Donabate, Co. Dublin.

Fairytales day care, Milford, Co. Donegal.

Teach Leanbh, Ballinalee, Co. Longford.

Primary:

Holy Family Senior NS, Ennis, Co. Clare.

St. Olivers NS, Killarney, Co. Kerry

St Mary's NS, Donnybrook, Dublin 4.

Scoil Réalt na Mara, Skerries, Co. Dublin.

SN Naomh Colmcille, Kilmacrennan, Co. Donegal.

St. Colmcille's SNS, Kells, Co Meath.

St Colman's Wood PS, Roscommon.

Post-primary:

Coláiste Fionnchua, Mitchelstown, Co Cork.

Millstreet Community School, Millstreet, Co Cork.

Presentation Secondary School, Castleisland, Co Kerry.

St. Muredach's College, Ballina, Co Mayo.

St. Joseph's, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.

Clonaslee College, Co Laois.

The schools were selected on the basis of the criteria set out in the application process including the size of the school, location to support clustering and ongoing engagement between schools and experience of using CLIL.

The first year of the project will help to inform the Department on the development of the CLIL programme including CPD, assessment and resources.

The Department's CLIL project team will assess each of the settings and schools participating in the pilot to identify its level of preparedness for the project and what further supports they will need.

Under CLIL, the theme of "communicating" will be taught through Irish in early years settings. In the primary and post-primary schools three subjects will be taught through Irish including PE. The other two subjects have yet to be finalised but may include Visual Arts, Maths, Science, Business, Geography, SPHE or CSPE.

The Department's CLIL project team will use information from the schools to outline the weekly contact time children in the selected settings and schools will learn Irish through CLIL. Some subjects may be taken through Irish for a full class or part of a class, every day or once a week.

A range of ages will be involved in the pilot. At early years stage it will involve children in years 1 and/or 2 of the ECCE programme. In primary it will be junior and senior infants and pupils in 5th and 6th classes. In post-primary it will be 1st years. This will inform the benefits for transition between early years to primary and from primary to post-primary.

Minister McHugh added: "I hope that the schools not selected for this first year development phase will continue to use the CLIL approach in the hope they can be included in the three-year project in future years.

"The project lives up to our commitment to the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language, and the 5 year Action Plan that I launched as Minister of State. I want to see initiatives like this grow and develop to sustain the language and to help schools to instil a love and familiarity with the language in the next generation."

ENDS

Note for Editors

Under the 20-year strategy for the Irish Language and accompanying 5-year action plan, the Department has the following commitment: “The implementation of CLIL will be piloted as a means of supporting the learning of Irish, across pre-school, primary and post-primary levels (2019/2021).”

1.1 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 5-Year Action Plan 2018-2022 include the Department’s commitment to explore a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach to implementing partial immersion in Irish[1] in schools and early years settings.

1.2 What is CLIL ?

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 learners’ higher order cognitive and creative competences

exploiting and integrating opportunities for language acquisition and content learning in other curricular areas

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.

1.3 Why now ?

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 evaluate 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 were 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.

1.4 What are the benefits of CLIL ?

The benefits to pupils include:

Improvements in their motivation and knowledge in both the Irish language and the subject.

Improvements in their cognitive skills such as higher-order and critical thinking.

Developing their cultural awareness and knowledge.

Developing their learning and communication strategies.

The benefits for practitioners/ teachers 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.

Opportunities for increased levels of collaboration with colleagues from within their own setting/ school, as well as practitioners/ teachers from other settings and schools.

Higher motivation levels around learning Irish amongst learners in their classrooms.

Scope of the Irish CLIL project

2.1 What is the aim of this CLIL Project ?

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

2.2 What is the scope of the CLIL Project ?

This is a three-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.

2.3 How many schools and teachers will take part in this CLIL project ?

In Year 1, it was initially envisaged the pilot would involve two early years settings, five primary and five post-primary schools. Due to the standard of applicants the pilot was broadened. It also allowed for improved clustering to allow teachers and staff to build connections.

Establishing communities of practice both between and within schools and settings will be an important aspect of this project. This will mean that the participation of a minimum number of teachers in each school will be required. For that reason, no small schools (i.e. three teachers or fewer) will be included for the Pilot Year 1.

We will work with three practitioners/teachers in each setting/school. At post-primary level the three teachers will be Irish teachers with a 2nd subject.

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

In Year 2 and Year 3 we aim to increase incrementally the number of early years settings and schools participating and the range of subjects.

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.

2.4 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 depends on the applications received from schools, assessment of the schools, and the resources and teachers available, the potential subjects for inclusion are:

Primary – PE and two others such as Visual Arts, Maths or Science. This list is only indicative and the final subjects selected may be different.

Post-primary – PE and two others such as Geography, Music, Business, Classics, English or Home Economics. This list is only indicative and the final subjects selected may be different.

2.5 Which children/ class groups will participate ?

Children in English-medium early years settings will be in years 1 and/or 2 of the ECCE programme.

In Year 1, at primary level the project will focus on junior and senior infants and fifth and sixth class.

At post-primary level the project will focus on 1st year in Junior Cycle in Year 1. Over the lifetime of the project there may be three different cohorts of 1st year students or one cohort of students from 1st year to 3rd year. All students participating will normally study L2 Irish in an English-medium setting.

2.6 How many classes/ lessons will be delivered through Irish ?

At primary level and in early years settings, there will be a minimum requirement to use the CLIL approach in the identified aspects of the learning programmes 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 3 subjects.

The aim is that for Year 2 and 3, there would be 3 x 8 week modules running consecutively:

i.e. Term 1 – 8 weeks – subject 1

Term 2 – 8 weeks – subject 2

Term 3 – 8 weeks – subject 3

2.7 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.

2.8 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).

Substitution and travel costs may be provided where necessary for practitioners and teachers participating in CPD.

<https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2019-press-releases/PR19-11-11.html>