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Ministers Foley and Minister O’Gorman launch ‘Ireland’s Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy 2024 – 2033’

Minister for Education, Norma Foley, and Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O’Gorman, have today launched Ireland’s Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy 2024-2033: Every Learner from Birth to Young Adulthood and a supporting five-year implementation plan.

The strategy has been developed jointly by the Department of Education and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth in collaboration with an inter-agency Steering Committee.

Minister Foley said:

“Today marks the launch of our new literacy, numeracy and digital literacy strategy for all learners from birth to young adulthood. We want our students and all our learners to have the skill set, the knowledge, the tools that they need to thrive and flourish individually and in society.

“Literacy lays the foundation for effective communication, critical thinking and comprehension of the world around us. Numeracy empowers learners to make informed decisions, manage finances and navigate various aspects of daily life with confidence. And in today’s digital age, digital literacy has become equally indispensable in the face of online misinformation, exploitation and fraud.

“This strategy recognises the importance of partnership in driving further progress in literacy, numeracy and digital literacy. It acknowledges that a collective effort is required from teachers, school leaders, learners, parents, communities and policymakers to build on the progress we have made so far.”

Minister O’Gorman said:

“This new strategy reflects the many changes in Irish society since the last strategy was published in 2011. In particular, the last decade has seen a transformation in provision of Early Learning and Care (ELC). There is now wide recognition of the importance of early childhood in laying the foundations of essential skills such as literacy and numeracy. ELC services play a vital role in supporting early childhood development, complementing the central role of parents and families. This strategy places a strong emphasis on the role of both.

“The strategy also reflects Ireland’s increasingly diverse society. Many children in Ireland grow up speaking different languages at home and in the education system. This strategy points to the many

benefits of plurilingualism for children and to the need for our ELC services and schools to adjust to reflect this reality.

“One of the strategy’s pillars focuses on tailored supports for diverse learners. The strategy recognises different learners’ unique strengths, challenges and learning styles. The strategy responds to diversity, whether disabilities specific to literacy and numeracy – such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dysgraphia – or the many other disabilities that may challenge children’s development of literacy and numeracy skills. Likewise, the strategy aims to overcome the barriers facing children from disadvantaged backgrounds, including Traveller and Roma children.”

The strategy has been informed by extensive research and consultation including the views of learners, parents, early learning and care (ELC) and school staff, ELC and education stakeholders, and members of the public.

The implementation plan for the strategy includes over 100 actions to build on the success of the previous national literacy and numeracy strategy, such as:

- Providing a co-ordinated information campaign through different communication channels to highlight the essential role of parents and communities in supporting their children’s literacy, numeracy and digital literacy.
- Running programmes through the Education Support Centres to help parents develop and promote reading and numeracy skills with their children.
- Mainstreaming and expanding the My Little Libraries Initiative which provides free books and a library membership card to junior infants.
- Redeveloping the screening and diagnostic tests of early literacy and early numeracy in Irish and English.
- Support the STEM Passport for Inclusion led by National University of Maynooth, which recognises the experiences of girls from DEIS schools as they achieve micro-credentials in STEM.
- Ensuring that initial professional education for early years educators and ongoing professional learning programmes include modules of learning regarding the unique cultural values of minority ethnic groups (including Irish Travellers and Roma), and how best to support children from these groups in their literacy, numeracy and digital literacy learning.
- Develop subject and career information sheets for primary school children and their parents that can be provided in advance of the critical transition to post-primary school.
- Developing a curriculum at primary and post-primary level for Irish Sign Language to support the learning of ISL and learning in other areas for ISL users.

This strategy builds on the achievements and ambition of the Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy strategy 2011-2020 and the 2017 interim review. The new strategy continues the journey to nurture and enhance literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills from birth to young adulthood to ensure that every individual is equipped with the essential skills to navigate and succeed in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

The strategy’s vision is that ‘Every learner, from birth to young adulthood, develops the necessary literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy skills to thrive and flourish as an individual, to engage and contribute fully as an ethical, active member of society and to live a satisfying and rewarding life.’

Central to achieving this vision is the ambition to deliver systematic improvement in literacy, numeracy and digital literacy across the continuum of education from early learning and care to post-primary level, and to strengthen supports for the critical roles played by parents and communities in supporting the development of children's literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills. The areas for development and action, as identified in the strategy, span five pillars:

Pillar 1: Enabling parents and communities to support learners' literacy, numeracy and digital literacy.

Pillar 2: Supporting the professional practice of early years educators, childminders and teachers.

Pillar 3: Supporting leadership in early learning and care and in the school system.

Pillar 4: Improving the learner experience through curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.

Pillar 5: Supporting diverse learners to achieve their potential.

A comprehensive five-year implementation plan has been developed which serves as the blueprint that transforms our strategy into actionable steps. It outlines the specific actions and initiatives that will be undertaken. Measuring the success of the strategy will be a continuous process.

The Strategy and Implementation Plan can be accessed [here](#).

Notes to Editor

The Programme for Government commits to the development of a new strategy for Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy. It follows from the first Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy strategy 2011- 2020 and the 2017 interim review where significant progress has been made including:

- The early learning and care landscape has transformed
- The performance of learners in Ireland in reading and mathematics has improved
- There has been significant curriculum change across all levels
- Supports for early years educators, Early Learning and Care (ELC) setting leaders, teachers, and school leaders have increased
- Opportunities for learners to engage with digital literacy in the classroom and through the curriculum have increased
- Inclusion and equity in educational provision continue to be a priority
- Supports for learning outside of formal educational settings has increased
- There have been significant developments in Irish-medium education and further Irish language supports have also been provided for English-medium schools.

The education landscape has evolved significantly since 2011, driven by societal needs, advancements in technology, pedagogical understandings and related policy developments across the early learning and care (ELC) and the school sectors. These changes reflect a broader understanding that education must be adaptable, comprehensive and forward-looking to prepare individuals for an ever-changing world.

Some of the other actions as set out in the five-year implementation plan are as follows:

- Commission research into effective literacy practices with a view to supporting learners in DEIS schools.

- Measures to enhance outcomes in language, literacy and numeracy for children at risk of educational disadvantage.
- Providing professional learning to further enhance the pedagogical knowledge, subject knowledge and skills of early years educators and teachers in the areas of literacy, numeracy and digital literacy.