



An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment



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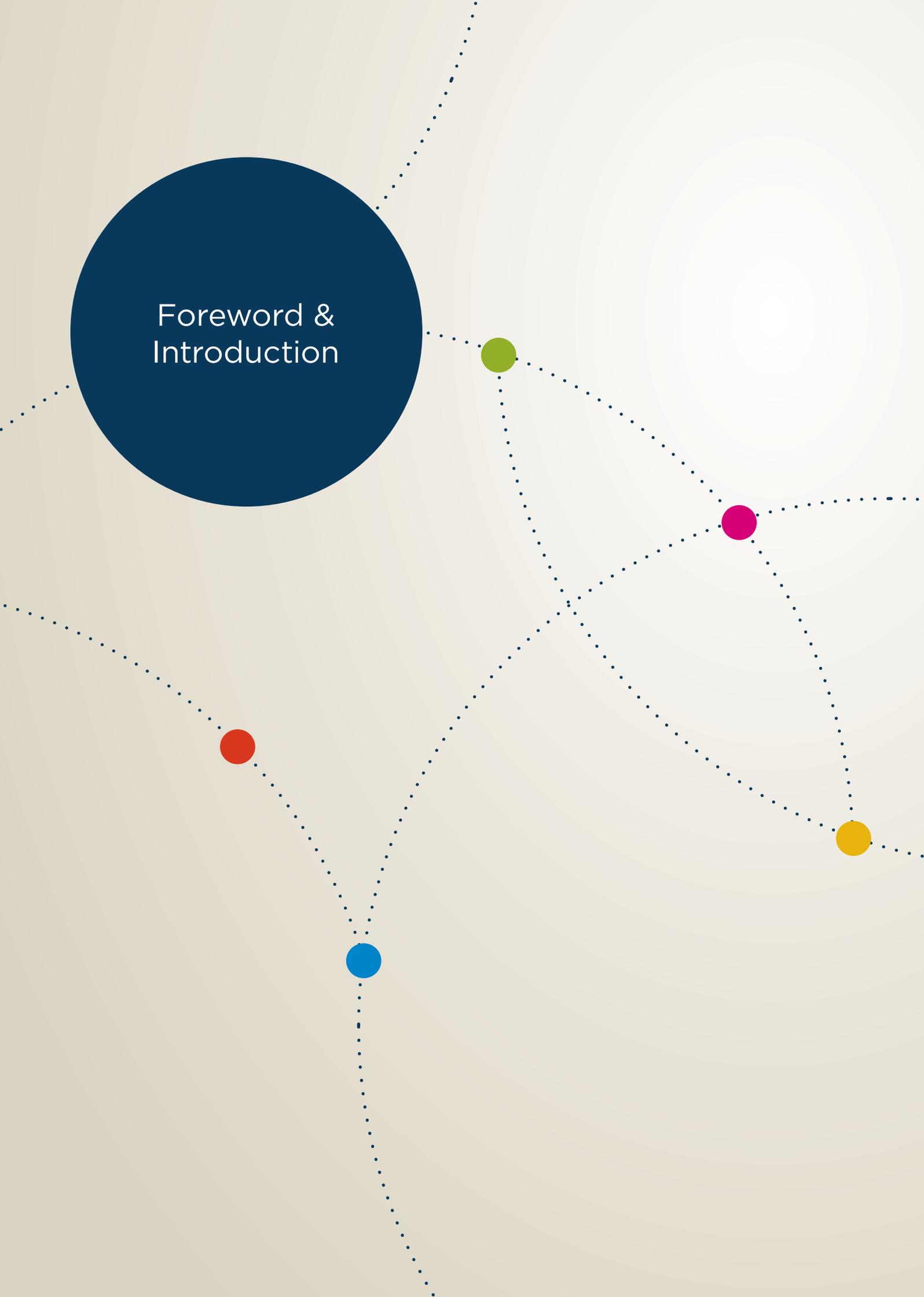
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Foreword &
Introduction



Foreword

2013 was a busy and challenging year for NCCA in delivering on the ambitious work programme involved in the implementation of the reformed Junior Cycle. The revised specification for English was developed and issued for consultation with a major consultation seminar for teachers from across the country in Dublin Castle in September. Consultations were launched on new short courses in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), Physical Education (PE), Programming and Coding and Digital Media Literacy and on a Level 2 Personal Project specification for students with special education needs. Over 770 respondents participated in the consultations.

Developing appropriate assessment tools to support teacher assessment is a critical part of the Junior Cycle work given the innovative nature of this development in an Irish context. Professor Claire Wyatt Smith, an internationally-recognised authority on assessment and learning, worked with NCCA for two months in Spring 2013 on the assessment and moderation toolkit for junior cycle launched in Autumn. Her engagement with NCCA and with our partners highlighted the benefits for teaching and learning as well as the practical implementation requirements.

The impressive outcomes from the *Aistear in Action* project were showcased in dissemination conferences in Mallow and Dublin demonstrating the important benefits from investment in supporting quality early childhood education. Given the significance of quality early education for education outcomes, NCCA was very pleased to be asked to lead the development of the Practice Guide for *Aistear* and *Solta* to support the new National Support Service for Early Years.

NCCA continued its theme of partnership work in key areas with other education bodies. Working with the Teaching Council and the Centre for Effective Services, NCCA consulted with teachers on how they engaged with research as part of their work. The aim was to enhance the effectiveness of this engagement in improving teaching and learning. Over 4000 teachers responded to this consultation and the Research Alive conference on this theme was held in May. As part of the collaborative work on supporting a better transition from second-

level to higher education, the NCCA consulted with teachers in January about their grading practice. The feedback from 240 teachers was used to develop the proposals for LC grading discussed at the Transitions Conference in NUIM in June.

NCCA commenced a new area of work in 2013 with the appointment of a specialist education officer to lead work on Education about Religious Beliefs and Ethics. This follows on from the work of the Forum for Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector. This is an important and sensitive piece of work and is likely to involve much debate and engagement as it develops.

The work and input of Council members and all those who participate in NCCA boards and development groups is crucial to the effective delivery of NCCA's mission and I thank all involved for their work. As always the delivery of the significant outputs outlined in this report is due to the effective work of the NCCA staff team led by CEO, Dr. Anne Looney. On my own behalf and on behalf of Council I want to express my appreciation of their effort and commitment.

Brigid McManus

Chairperson



Introduction

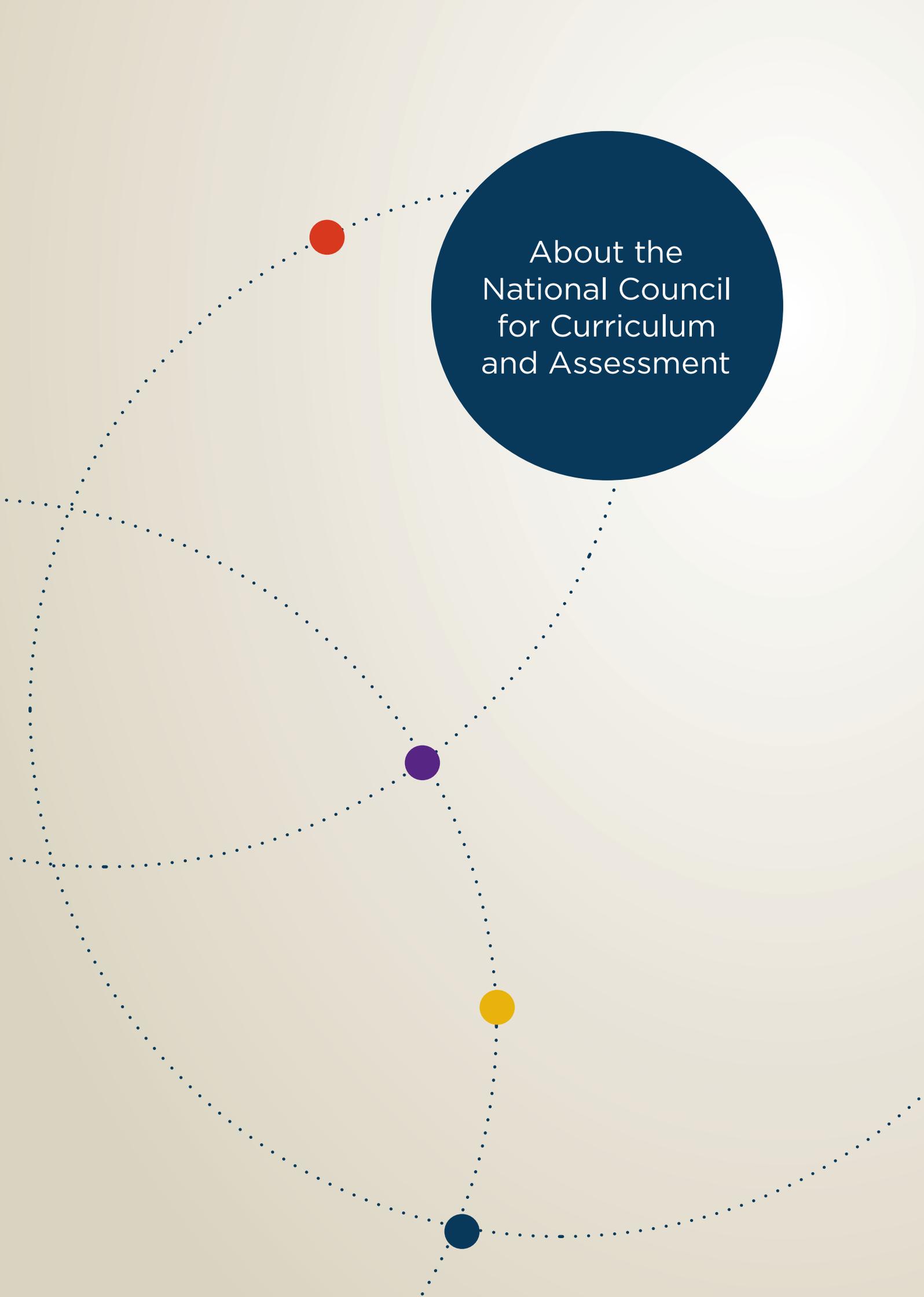
An organisation with a remit to support change in as complex a system as education *should* find internal change relatively straightforward. However, the demands of moving our headquarters to a smaller building, and of co-locating with An Chomhairle Um Oideachas Ghaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta were not insignificant in 2013. We used the opportunity of the move to streamline and improve a number of work processes and by the end of the year the benefits of the new arrangements and location had become clear. Of note, not one working day was lost, and there was no interruption to work targets or customer service. Just as we changed place, we also changed some people, as the executive team was extended to support developmental work at junior cycle. Some of these new colleagues joined directly from the classroom. This new and very pragmatically oriented energy made an immediate impact on internal teams and external engagement. A new place and new people were two of the organisational high points of 2013.

The use of networks of practice and practitioners is a key feature of NCCA's approach to developing curriculum and assessment. The work of two networks, one a nationwide network supporting developments at junior cycle, and the other, in the north Cork and south Tipperary region supporting *Aistear* in a number of early childhood settings was particularly noteworthy in 2013. The *Aistear in Action* project brought NCCA and its work to new audiences and gained new *Aistear* champions among early childhood practitioners. The junior cycle network connected innovative schools interested in

moving ahead on curriculum and assessment with each other, with the NCCA, and through www.juniorcycle.ie with the rest of post-primary schools as they began planning for the changes proposed. Champions emerged from this network too, with teachers and school leaders from network schools sharing ideas with colleagues in other schools. As contestation and debate around junior cycle continued throughout the year, the network provided an important practical proving ground for some of the curriculum and assessment innovations proposed. We owe particular thanks to the principals of network schools and the management and leaders of early years services and settings for their enthusiastic support over the year.

As the list of meetings presented later in this report shows, some NCCA development groups and Boards were particularly busy in 2013 and this in turn gave rise to additional demands on the Council members with busy agendas, lengthy meetings and considered, and sometime heated, debate. Their commitment and willingness to engage with sometimes complex and contentious issues, under the steady leadership of the Chairperson, Brigid McManus, was particularly appreciated in 2013.

Dr Anne Looney
Chief Executive

The background features a light beige gradient with several decorative elements. A large, dark blue circle is positioned in the upper right quadrant, containing the text. A network of dotted lines in various colors (red, purple, yellow, and dark blue) connects several solid circles of the same colors scattered across the page. The lines are thin and composed of small dots, creating a subtle, abstract pattern.

About the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment



The NCCA is a statutory Council and its brief is to advise the Minister for Education and Skills on curriculum and assessment for early childhood education and for primary and post-primary schools. This section of the Annual Report provides some background information on the Council, its current membership, organisational structures and financing.

Vision

Our Strategic Plan for 2012-2015 sets out the vision for the NCCA:

Leading innovation in education for living, learning and working in a changing world.

Mission

The Council's approach to its work is summarised in its mission:

The Mission of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment is to:

- *advise the Minister for Education and Skills on curriculum and assessment from early childhood to the end of second level*
- *engage with learners, teachers, practitioners, parents and others to support innovation in schools and other educational settings*
- *undertake, use and share research as a basis for advice and debate on education.*



Composition

The Council is a representative structure, the membership of which is determined by the Minister for Education and Skills. The 25 members come from organisations representing teachers, school managers, parents, employers, trade unions and interests in education. Other members include representatives of the Department of Education and Skills (DES), the State Examinations Commission and a nominee of the Minister for Education and Skills and the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. The membership of the current Council, which was appointed for a three-year term from 31 March 2012, is as follows:

Ms. Brigid McManus

Chairperson

Mr. Declan Kelleher

Deputy Chairperson, Irish National Teachers' Organisation

Mr. Michael Redmond

Deputy Chairperson, Joint Managerial Body

Mr. Clive Byrne

Nominee of the Minister for Education and Skills

Dr. Deirbhile Nic Craith, Uasal

Irish National Teachers' Organisation

Ms Rosemary Eagar

Church of Ireland Board of Education (from 8 November, 2013)

Dr. Marie Griffin

Education and Training Boards, Ireland

Dr. Nóirín Hayes

Nominee of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs

Ms. Christina Henehan

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland

Mr. Philip Irwin

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland

Ms. Bernie Judge

Teachers' Union of Ireland

Dr. Daire Keogh

Irish Federation of University Teachers

Ms. Marie-Thérèse Kilmartin

Joint Managerial Body

Ms. Mary Lillis

National Parents Council Primary

Pádraig Mac Fhlannchadha, Uasal

Department of Education and Skills

Dr. Rose Malone

Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Ms. Hilary McBain

Church of Ireland Board of Education (to 1 June, 2013)

Ms. Patricia McCrossan

National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education

Dr. Kara McGann

Irish Business and Employers Confederation

Mr. Jim Moore

National Parents Council Post-Primary

Mr. Michael O'Brien

Teachers' Union of Ireland

Seán Ó Coinn, Uasal

Foras na Gaeilge

Mr. Bryan O'Reilly

Irish National Teachers' Organisation

Sr. Betty O'Riordan

Catholic Primary Schools Managers' Association

Brid Uí Riordáin, Uasal

State Examinations Commission

Ms. Eileen Salmon

Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools

The members' attendance at Council meetings and the expenses paid to them in 2013 are outlined in Appendices O1 and O2.



Staff

The NCCA has a full-time executive staff led by the Chief Executive Dr Anne Looney, and the Deputy Chief Executives, John Hammond and Dr Sarah FitzPatrick. Together with the full-time staff members, there is a team of specialist Education Officers, who are appointed on a secondment or contract basis to the NCCA.

The full-time staff in 2013 was as follows:

Chief Executive:

Dr Anne Looney

Deputy Chief Executives:

Dr Sarah FitzPatrick and John Hammond

Directors, Curriculum and Assessment:

Arlene Forster
John Halbert
Bill Lynch
Hal O'Neill
Majella O'Shea

Corporate Services:

Paul Brady, Assistant Principal
Aine Armstrong-Farrell,
Higher Executive Officer
Maura Dee, Higher Executive Officer
(from 10 June)
Morgan Lockhart, Executive Officer
Patricia Cassidy, Clerical Officer
Ursula Corcoran, Clerical Officer
Deirdre Dunne, Clerical Officer
Bernie Gallagher, Clerical Officer
John Connors, Services Officer

Education Officers:

Fred Boss (from 1 September)
Cheryl Brennan (to 31 August)
Niamh Uí Chadhla (to 31 August)
Mary Daly
Aisling Greene (from 1 September)
Ger Halbert
Aoife Kelly
Denise Kelly
Rachel Linney
Noel Loftus
John Moriarty
Deirdre Murphy (from 1 September)
Ben Murray (from 1 August)
Reuben Ó Conluain
Aoife Rush (from 1 August)
Barry Slattery (from 28 January)
Patrick Sullivan (from 7 October)
Anna Walshe

Project Officers:

Clare Maloney
Anne White (to 31 August)



Boards and Development Groups

The Council progresses its work through a range of Boards and Development Groups drawn from the organisations represented on the Council and other agencies as appropriate. In 2013 the Council convened 67 meetings of 19 of these groups. A list of the meetings held in 2013 is in Appendix 03.

Finance

The Council's total income for 2013 was €4,234,649. Core funding of €4,174,000 was received from the exchequer through the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The DES also allocated €36,050 to work on Goodness Me Goodness You! (GMGY), a multi-faith programme for children of all faiths (religions) and none. The Council also received €16,153 from the European Union (EU) for work on a key skills project and €8,416 for an EU Folio Project. The balance of €30 was received for processing Freedom of Information requests. Financial statements for the year ended 31 December, 2013 will be published when the annual audit has been completed by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

The funds allocated to the NCCA cover:

- staff salaries
- costs related to the secondment and commissioning of specialist staff to support the work of the Council
- professional development
- publications and digital media including proofing, design, photography, printing and translation
- research
- costs of the meetings of Council, its Boards and Development Groups including hire of conference facilities and travel and subsistence costs
- administration costs such as office maintenance and equipment, stationery, postage, telephone, rent, lighting and heating
- costs related to NCCA conferences and events
- IT maintenance and development
- international interaction including membership fees of international organisations such as CIDREE (Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe) and AEA (Association for Educational Assessment, Europe)
- advertising.





Strategic
Goals



Progress in 2013

This section of the Annual Report for 2013 describes the progress made in that year towards achieving the outcomes set out in the current Strategic Plan. These outcomes, and the progress towards them, are presented under the High Level goals of that Strategic Plan:

- 01** Curriculum and assessment development
To develop innovative curriculum and assessment for engagement, progression, quality, inclusion and continuity across sectors
- 02** Engagement and networks for innovation
To work with schools, practitioners and learners to build capacity for change and to inform curriculum and assessment development and implementation
- 03** Knowledge and research
To generate, use and share knowledge and research to support the development of curriculum and assessment advice and practice in schools and other educational settings
- 04** Strategic relationships
To build on existing strategic relationships and develop new ones to support and connect curriculum and assessment development and implementation
- 05** Profile and communications
To communicate, present and share the work and achievements of the NCCA to improve the profile of the organisation and engagement with its work
- 06** Organisational effectiveness and governance
To develop the NCCA governance and organisation structures, processes, skills and competences to innovate in the achievement of the vision



1.0

Curriculum and assessment development

To develop innovative curriculum and assessment for engagement, progression, quality, inclusion and continuity across sectors.

1.1

New approaches to assessment and changed reporting systems are being introduced in schools and other settings.

Progress in 2013

The Report Card Creator was enhanced in 2013 in response to suggestions from primary schools. The web statistics for 2013 reflect the popularity of the Creator with 10,147 customised master copy report cards generated to the end of June.

An Assessment and Moderation Toolkit to support teachers and schools introducing the new assessment system at junior cycle is in development and preparation for publication.

1.2

Practice is established for generating and judging samples of students' work as illustrations of expectations for learners in curriculum and assessment specifications.

Progress in 2013

The process for generating, gathering and sharing examples of student work was finalised, and initial examples were shared through www.curriculumonline.ie.

1.3

Post-primary schools are using the new *Framework for Junior Cycle* as a basis for planning and introducing change in their junior cycle.

Progress in 2013

Examples of schools planning for and introducing junior cycle change were included on the NCCA's junior cycle website. These were gathered from schools in the NCCA's or other school networks.

1.4

Aistear is increasingly used in the early childhood sector.

Progress in 2013

A range of new resources were developed and added to the *Aistear* Toolkit to support practitioners in using *Aistear*. Views of the Toolkit landing page increased from 16,367 in 2012 to 96,754 in 2013.

1.5

A new language curriculum for English and Gaeilge is developed for primary school children from junior infants to second class and development of the language curriculum for children from third to sixth classes is underway.

Progress in 2013

Progress was made on the preparation of a draft Primary Language Curriculum for children from junior infants to second class and plans were finalised for consultation in 2014.

1.6

Elements of the primary curriculum are revised to reflect developments in knowledge and research and greater consistency with *Aistear* and with junior cycle developments.

Progress in 2013

Work was initiated in Education about Religious Beliefs and Ethics in primary schools in response to the proposals of the *Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in Primary Schools*.

1.7

Curriculum and assessment reform at senior cycle continues with the completion of new curriculum and assessment specifications.

Progress in 2013

Final drafts of the new curriculum specifications for the Leaving Certificate Science subjects, Biology, Chemistry and Physics were completed.

Possibilities for a revised grading system for the Leaving Certificate examination were prepared in conjunction with the Educational Research Centre, and discussed internally and at a conference on Transitions in NUI, Maynooth in June.

1.8

Curriculum specifications for mathematics have been completed and their introduction is being evaluated as part of Project Maths.

Progress in 2013

The specifications for Junior Certificate Mathematics and Leaving Certificate Mathematics were completed.

Research into the impact of Project Maths on student achievement, learning and motivation by the National Foundation for Educational Research was published.

1.9

Develop a specification for Junior Cycle English

Progress in 2013

The specification for Junior Cycle English was completed and is available on www.curriculumonline.ie.

1.10

Develop specifications for eight short courses

Progress in 2013

Consultation took place on draft specifications for CSPE, SPHE, PE, Coding, Digital Media Literacy, Chinese, Artistic Performance and A Personal Project: Caring for Animals.

1.11

Test and refine an online *Toolkit for Level 2 Learning Programmes*.

Progress in 2013

Level 2 Learning Programmes guidelines and an online planning tool were revised in light of findings of test phase carried out by a selection of schools.



2.0

Engagement and networks for innovation

To work with schools, practitioners and learners to build capacity for change and to inform curriculum and assessment development and implementation.

2.1

NCCA school networks are generating ideas and material to support their own capacity and that of other schools in curriculum and assessment development and in supporting change.

Progress in 2013

Teachers in the **Aistear: Play, Language and Literacy** network developed a play planning framework and examples of curriculum integration through play. They provided feedback on early drafts of the new primary language curriculum for junior infants to 2nd class.

A **Goodness Me, Goodness You** school network was established and contributed to the next phase of the programme's development.

49 schools participated in **NCCA junior cycle network**. The network supported the development of junior cycle programmes, e-portfolios, short courses, examples of student work and the assessment and moderation toolkit.

Over 1,000 teachers from the network schools are registered on our virtual network platform JC2.0 which is used to share ideas and resources between schools.

Principals and link persons from each network school attended two review/planning seminars together during the year. Link persons also attended additional sessions separately which focused on key skills.

A report on Junior Cycle network activity has been presented to the Board for Junior Cycle.

A single website – www.juniorcycle.ie – was established to include both **NCCA's** developmental work and the work of **Junior Cycle for Teachers**, the support service for junior cycle.

Teachers in a network supporting **Project Maths** developed examples of students' work and teaching and learning materials. Some of these focused on Foundation level.

A new **Maths in Practice** group was established to contribute further to maths curriculum development for post-primary schools.

2.2

NCCA is supporting the work of partner networks engaged in curriculum and assessment development and supporting teaching and learning.

Progress in 2013

The **Aistear in Action** project, a partnership with Early Childhood Ireland, was completed and a range of resources was published in the Aistear Toolkit. Two conferences – one in Mallow and one in Dublin – were held to disseminate the findings of the project.

Aistear workshops continued to be provided for primary school teachers as part of the **Aistear Tutor Initiative**, a collaboration with the Association of Teacher Education Centres in Ireland.

25 *Aistear* summer courses were facilitated involving 602 teachers. Over 10,000 teachers and principals in total participated in workshops/summer courses from April 2010 to the end of 2013.

Examples of children's work were gathered from teachers in the **Aistear Tutor Initiative**. These will contribute to the primary language curriculum for junior infants to 2nd class.

In response to requests from the **Goodness Me, Goodness You** school network, a summer course was designed and developed for Community National School Teachers in collaboration with Marino Institute of Education.

Resources to support language teaching in primary schools were developed through the **Write to Read** initiative, a collaboration with St. Patrick's College. These will form part of the new primary language curriculum.

NCCA worked with a **number of networks** to support schools' work on junior cycle development: Bridge 21 network, Irish School Heads Association, National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals, Principals and Deputies Association, National Parents' Council and other school management and trustee bodies. This work focused on collaborative learning, programme planning, learning and teaching, key skills, information for parents, and challenges for small schools.

NCCA continued to contribute to the **European Commission Policy Network on Key Competencies in School Education (KeyCoNet)**. A case study on Key Skills in Junior Cycle was prepared, presented to the network and published on www.keyconet.eun.org

2.3

Structures and supports are in place to ensure that the voice and experience of learners are included in NCCA deliberations.

Progress in 2013

Materials to consult with students were developed and published on www.juniorycycle.ie.

Information on junior cycle developments for children in 6th class was sent to all primary schools.



3.0

Knowledge and research

To generate, use and share knowledge and research to support the development of curriculum and assessment advice and practice in schools and other educational settings

3.1

Curriculum and assessment developments are informed by evidence and research.

Progress in 2013

Feedback was gathered from Community National Schools on their experience with the *Goodness Me Goodness You* programme and informed the development of the programme.

Research was commissioned on Curriculum Structures and Stages in Primary Education across jurisdictions. Findings were prepared for publication at the beginning of 2014 in a detailed Tables Report and a Summary Report.

Research reviews were completed on mathematics in early childhood and primary education to inform revisions to the primary mathematics curriculum.

A research review was completed on pre-school to primary school transition.

Data from the *Trends In Mathematics and Science Study* will be used to inform revisions to the primary mathematics curriculum.

Interim and final reports on *Research into the impact of Project Maths on student achievement, learning and motivation* by the National Foundation for Educational Research were published

Leaving Certificate Teachers' Grading and Marking Practices – a report on the online consultation was published.

3.2

Teachers, practitioners, parents, learners and others are accessing research findings and examples of practice from schools and settings.

Progress in 2013

Tip sheets and video clips on 3rd and 4th class mathematics curriculum were published.

Findings from a survey on teachers' engagement with educational research were presented at *Research Alive*, a national conference on teachers and research held in Coláiste Bríde, Clondalkin.

Feedback tools were developed to support schools in sharing their experiences of the *Goodness Me Goodness You* programme.

3.3

NCCA is contributing to and supporting the increased focus on the use of evidence in policy-making and evaluation generally, and in schools and other educational settings.

Progress in 2013

Leaving Certificate Mathematics: a comparative analysis by Dr. Sue Pope was published, comparing the new mathematics specification with those in other jurisdictions.

The first strand of evaluation of the junior cycle developments - the JC 2.0 experience for teachers - commenced.

Discussion papers disseminated and videos on assessment and moderation published.

3.4

Research findings and new knowledge are shared and interrogated by NCCA staff as an integral part of their work.

Progress in 2013

NCCA staff attended and/or presented papers at national and international conferences on educational research and practice. Details of these are presented in Appendix 04.



4.0

Strategic relationships

To build on existing strategic relationships and develop new ones to support and connect curriculum and assessment development and implementation

4.1

Collaborative relationships with a number of organisations are improving the understanding and quality of curriculum and assessment developments and implementation.

Progress in 2013

Work was ongoing with the **Early Years Education Policy Unit, DES**, to support the early childhood sector in using *Aistear* to improve practice and outcomes for children.

Preparatory work on the *Aistear/Síolta* Practice Guide began in partnership with the **Department for Children and Youth Affairs**.

NCCA continued to work in partnership with the **Association of Teacher Education Centres in Ireland (ATECI)** through the *Aistear* Tutor Initiative.

The *Aistear in Action* developmental project was completed in partnership with **Early Childhood Ireland**.

NCCA and **COGG** became co-located in shared offices in 35 Fitzwilliam Square following a decision to further integrate the work of the organisations.

Ongoing engagement with **IPPN** and **NAPD** as designated bodies for NCCA continued.

Ongoing engagement with the **Professional Development Service for Teachers** continued, as did work with the Education Committee of INTO, the Project Maths Development Team and Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT).

NCCA continued to participate in the **Project Maths Implementation Support Group**.

The Memorandum of Understanding between the **DES** and the NCCA was completed.

NCCA participated in the **Transition Reform Group** set up to discuss the transition from second level to higher education. *Supporting a Better Transition from Second-Level to Higher Education: Directions for Change* was published in March and a conference on the key directions was held in June.

The standing committee with the **State Examinations Commission** met twice.

A standing arrangement is in place for meetings with the **Teaching Council** every three months.

The NCCA continued to participate in the DES Interagency **Teacher Planning Committee** which met on four occasions.

In 2013 the NCCA maintained membership of

- Educational Studies Association of Ireland
- Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe
- Assessment in Education Association – Europe
- Institute of Public Administration
- Public Affairs Ireland.

In addition, the CEO is a member of the Association of Chief Executives of State Agencies.

The Chairperson continued as a member of the Association of Chairs of State Agencies.

NCCA continues to be a member of SCOTENS (the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South) as does CCEA in Northern Ireland.

4.2

Staff and students in early childhood courses and initial teacher education are well-informed about our work, and in turn, have opportunities to contribute to that work.

Progress in 2013

An overview of Aistear Toolkit resources and a poster on the Toolkit (in English and Irish) was sent to all City and County Childcare Committees and National Voluntary Childcare Organisations.

NCCA staff led sessions on *Aistear* with a number of organisations including City and County Childcare Committees and National Voluntary Childcare Organisations, the Cork Early Years Network, practitioner groups in South Tipperary and North Cork, and through the Early Childhood Ireland Gathering conference.

A briefing on junior cycle developments for those working to support the initial teacher education of post-primary teachers was held in Dublin in May.

The final report on the *Aistear in Action* project was published on the NCCA website to help inform other organisations' work with *Aistear*.

Updates on Primary Developments were provided for members of the Conference of Heads of Colleges of Education of Ireland (CHOICE).

4.3

Curriculum and assessment developments north and south of the border have been supported by collaboration between NCCA and CCEA.

Progress in 2013

NCCA staff visited CCEA for meetings and a school visit in Northern Ireland to explore the role of assessment to measure progress and improve learning and to discuss how schools in NI manage moderation.

A school visit provided an opportunity for observation of a moderation meeting in action by teachers of English. These activities informed the ongoing development of the Assessment and Moderation Toolkit and the Assessment specifications for junior cycle English and science.

The NCCA CEO served as an external member of the Qualifications Review for Northern Ireland.



5.0

Profile and communications

To communicate, present and share the work and achievements of the NCCA to improve the profile of the organisation and engagement with its work

5.1

Arising from an effective media strategy, key messages on reforms are widely shared and NCCA responses and contributions are informed and timely.

Progress in 2013

The practice of posting regular reports from development groups on the progress of curriculum and assessment development was continued.

A policy was developed for the use of the NCCA twitter account and a new @NCCAie twitter account was launched.

Three editions of info@ncca.ie were published in Irish and English in March (4,775 subscribers), September (6,027) and December (6,259).

5.2

A new form of online curriculum and assessment specification has been introduced for primary and post-primary developments.

Progress in 2013

This online specification, launched in 2013, aligns learning outcomes with teaching and learning and assessment. Annotated samples of student work are directly linked to learning outcomes. The specification can be filtered, so that the teacher can see the parts of it they need to see. There is also a facility to create an individualised curriculum library and generate pdfs of web content.

The Junior Cycle English specification has been published in the new online format.

5.3

NCCA websites are consolidated and improved in response to customer-feedback, statistics on web usage and developments in online and social media.

Progress in 2013

There was a 19% increase in visitors to the website overall, compared with 2012 figures, with a 150% increase in visitors using a tablet device and 141% increase in those using a mobile to access the site.

Curriculum online was redesigned and re-launched to accommodate the new approach to presenting specifications.

The primary webpages were re-designed and developed to improve access to key information for users.

The Junior Cycle website (www.juniorcycle.ie) was further developed to accommodate the co-hosting of the JCT support service web presence and to give users a 'one stop shop' for junior cycle.

5.4

The work of the NCCA on curriculum and assessment and on practice in schools is shared with national and international audiences.

Progress in 2013

A National Conference '*Aistear in Action*' was co-hosted by NCCA and Early Childhood Ireland to celebrate the achievements of pre-schools using *Aistear*.

Presentations and display stands on '*Aistear* in infant classes' were organised as part of *Féilte*, the World Teachers' Day celebration in Kilmainham on 5th October.

Presentations on '*Aistear in Action*' and '*Aistear* in infant classes' were made at the OMEP (World Organisation for Early Childhood Education), the European Early Childhood Education Research Association and the Early Childhood Ireland Gathering conferences.

Mathematics resources were developed and published on the Teacher Zone on www.ncca.ie. A parents' page was designed and an information video for parents was made available on that page.

Two ezines were published and sent to 1,000 maths teachers.

A conference on English was organised in Dublin Castle as part of the consultation on the new Junior Cycle English specification.

Work on key competences was shared with a European audience through **KeyCoNet** - a European network on key competences in schools. A group of 22 KeyCoNet members was hosted by the NCCA on a Peer Learning Visit in March 2013. The participants visited schools and an Education Centre and had discussions with representatives of NCCA, SEC and DES. They also participated in the European Presidency conference on Key Competences in Dublin Castle. <http://keyconet.eun.org/peer-learning-visits-reports>.

A case study on the Key Skills of junior cycle was prepared. This involved interviews with school principals, teachers, project coordinators and others and school visits. The case study report and accompanying videos are published on the KeyCoNet website. (link - http://keyconet.eun.org/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=c415fa33-6269-46c0-8292-52b8c0cec2d5&groupId=11028)

A case note was prepared on the implementation of **Project Maths** and was approved by the network as the basis for the development of a case study in 2014.



6.0

Organisational effectiveness and governance

To develop the NCCA governance and organisation structures, processes, skills and competences to innovate in the achievement of the vision.

6.1

Organisation structures and processes are supporting innovative curriculum and assessment development and collaborative work practices.

Progress in 2013

Structures and processes are in place and agreed for areas of current curriculum and assessment work.

New subject development groups are in operation for junior cycle developments and for primary language.

SharePoint facilitated efficient and effective work practices and collaboration. Staff members were provided with computer tablets which allied to SharePoint facilitated 'paperless' meetings with consequent savings in print and paper.

NCCA moved to Managed Print Services and away from the ad-hoc provision of desktop printers and photocopiers. With MPS the supplier provides a total office print solution on an all-inclusive cost per image, leading to lower costs and savings in paper.

6.2

NCCA staff has developed the knowledge and competences required to develop innovative curriculum and assessment advice and to support its introduction in schools.

Progress in 2013

Four staff pursued post-graduate studies, two at doctoral level, in areas relevant to their work.

A variety of professional development needs were identified and provided for through on-the-job training, internal professional development events, mentoring, coaching and through courses and conference attendance.

6.3

There is a strong performance culture across the organisation.

Progress in 2013

Phase 2 changes to PMD, agreed as part of the Croke Park Agreement, were implemented. A staff member attended an information session on calibration. All staff were briefed on the Phase 2 changes while the performance of staff working at AP, Director, Deputy CEO and CEO levels was calibrated as part of end-of-year reviews.

6.4

There is a robust financial management and reporting system in place with a strong emphasis on value for money.

Progress in 2013

Financial reports were monitored at regular Management Team meetings.

Monthly management accounts were submitted to each meeting of the Council.

Quarterly Income and Expenditure reports were submitted to DES.

Financial statements were reviewed by the Audit Committee.

Public service procurement processes were adhered to with a particular focus on value for money.

NCCA staff in Dublin moved premises to 35 Fitzwilliam Square with a consequent saving in rent of €189K

6.5

The governance requirements of state bodies are fully complied with.

Progress in 2013

NCCA reported to DES on Corporate Governance compliance.

The Annual Report for 2012 was published.

The Audit of financial statements for 2012 was completed.

The Review of Systems of Internal Financial Control was completed.

The risk register was updated and approved by Council.

6.6

Customer service standards are developed and improved.

Progress in 2013

<http://www.curriculumonline.ie> redeveloped and launched resulting in improved access to legacy and current information on curriculum and assessment.

Further improvements were made to the Primary Curriculum Planning Tools.

The Customer Service Charter and complaints procedure were updated in line with guidelines from the Office of the Ombudsman.

6.7

The NCCA has complied with all relevant public sector agreements and development plans.

Progress in 2013

The NCCA has met all targets outlined in the Public Service Agreement 2010 - 2014 (Croke Park) and Public Service Stability Agreement 2013 - 2016 (Haddington Road).

The NCCA has complied with the ECF for the period.

The Workforce Development Plan was updated and report submitted.



Membership and attendance at Council meetings 2013

		Council Meetings							
		7 February	21 March	21 April	2 May	12 June and 13 June	26 September	7 November	12 December
Dr Rose Malone	Irish Congress of Trade Unions					✓	✓	✓	
Ms Hilary McBain (to 1 June)	Church of Ireland Board of Education	✓			✓				
Ms Patricia McCrossan	National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dr Kara McGann	Irish Business and Employers Confederation	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ms Brigid McManus	Chairperson	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mr Jim Moore	National Parents Council (Post-Primary)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Mr Michael O'Brien	Teachers Union of Ireland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Seán Ó Coinn, Uasal	Foras na Gaeilge	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Mr Bryan O'Reilly	Irish National Teachers' Organisation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sr Betty O'Riordan	Catholic Primary Schools Managers Association		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Bríd Uí Riordáin, Uasal	State Examinations Commission	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Mr Michael Redmond	Deputy Chairperson	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Ms Eileen Salmon	Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



Appendix

02

Expenses paid to NCCA Council members in 2013

The figures below include expenses for attendance at meetings of sub-groups of Council.

€

Mr Clive Byrne	Nominee of the Minister for Education and Skills	0.00
Ms Rosemary Eagar (from 9 November)	Church of Ireland Board of Education	0.00
Dr Deirbhile Nic Craith	Irish National Teachers' Organisation	0.00
Dr Marie Griffin	Irish Vocational Education Association	0.00
Prof Nóirín Hayes	Nominee of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs	0.00
Ms Christina Henehan*	Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland	3,218.49
Mr Philip Irwin	Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland	0.00
Ms Bernie Judge	Teachers Union of Ireland	0.00
Mr Declan Kelleher	Deputy Chairperson from 1 April	2,404.42
Prof Daire Keogh	Irish Federation of University Teachers	30.42
Ms Marie-Thérèse Kilmartin	Joint Managerial Body	0.00
Ms Mary Lillis	National Parents Council (Primary)	172.02
Pádraig Mac Fhlannchadha, Uasal	Department of Education and Skills	0.00
Dr Rose Malone	Irish Congress of Trade Unions	0.00



Expenses paid to NCCA Council members in 2013

The figures below include expenses for attendance at meetings of sub-groups of Council.

€

Ms Hilary McBain (to 8 November)	Church of Ireland Board of Education	0.00
Ms Patricia McCrossan	National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education	0.00
Dr Kara McGann	Irish Business and Employers Confederation	0.00
Ms Brigid McManus	Chairperson	29.60
Mr Jim Moore	National Parents Council (Post-Primary)	1,285.00
Seán Ó Coinn, Uasal	Foras na Gaeilge	0.00
Mr Michael O'Brien*	Teachers Union of Ireland	2,135.34
Mr Bryan O'Reilly	Irish National Teachers' Organisation	0.00
Sr Betty O'Riordan	Catholic Primary Schools Managers Association	302.30
Bríd Uí Riordáin, Uasal	State Examinations Commission	0.00
Mr Michael Redmond	Deputy Chairperson	0.00
Ms Eileen Salmon	Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools	0.00

*Denotes payment of expenses incurred in 2013 and 2012



Appendix

03

List of meetings in 2013

Early Childhood and Primary	Total
Board for Early Childhood and Primary	5
Early Childhood and Primary Language Development Group	5
Early Childhood and Primary Language Advisory Group	6
Junior Cycle	
Board for Junior Cycle	7
An Mheitheal Forbartha don Ghaeilge ag an tSraith Shóisearach	2
Business Studies Development Group Junior	2
CSPE Development Group	3
Junior Cycle Mathematics Development Group	2
English Development Group	6
Science Development Group	2
SPHE Development Group	2
PE Development Group	4
Senior Cycle	
Board for Senior Cycle	3
Senior Cycle Mathematics Development Group	2
Chemistry Development Group	2
Physics Development Group	2
Biology Development Group	1
Boards of Studies	
Board of Studies for Mathematics	1
Other	
Audit Committee	2
Total number of meetings in 2013	59
Total number of committees/groups	19

Appendix

04

A selection of the presentations, papers or workshops delivered by NCCA in 2013 organised by strategic goals.

Curriculum and Assessment Development

To develop innovative curriculum and assessment for engagement, progression, quality, inclusion and continuity across sectors

Event/organisation	Theme/title
Special Education Support Service	Level 2 Learning Programmes
Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) Physical Education Associates Meeting	JC Developments
Professional Development Service for Teachers	JC Developments
Irish Primary Principals' Network Annual Conference for Deputy Principals	Assessment , Reporting and transfer
Professional Development Service for Teachers Associates	Assessment and Key Skills in JC
PDST Leadership Associates	Leadership for a new Junior Cycle
National Educational Psychological Service Conference	Level 2 Learning Programmes
Junior Cycle for Teachers School Leadership Associates	Leadership for a new Junior Cycle
Social Political and Health Education (SPHE) Support Service	SPHE in a new Junior Cycle

Engagement and networks for innovation

To work with schools, teachers, practitioners and learners to build capacity for change and to inform curriculum and assessment development and implementation

Event/organisation	Theme/title
Home-Parent Visitors, National Early Years Access Initiative Numeracy Project, National College of Ireland, Docklands	<i>Aistear</i>
Junior Cycle Network schools' Link teachers	Key Skills in JC
Irish Learning Support Association Annual Conference, Drogheda	Supporting Learning in Junior Cycle
Irish Primary Principals Network: Principals' Professional Briefing Day	Primary Developments
Principals of Special Schools	Level 2 Learning Programmes
Business Studies Teachers Association (BSTA)	Junior Cycle Developments
Irish Science Teachers Association annual conference	Science and the Junior Cycle Developments
Cork, Tipperary and Waterford County Childcare Committees	Workshops on the <i>Aistear in Action</i> project



Knowledge and research continued

Knowledge and research

To generate, use and share knowledge and research to support the development of curriculum and assessment advice and practice in schools and other educational settings

Event/organisation	Theme/title
Sligo Institute of Technology Conference	Play in <i>Aistear</i>
Computer Education Society of Ireland Annual Conference	Technology in Education
International Masters Students in the Dublin Institute of Technology	<i>Aistear</i>
Institutes of Technology, Ireland Conference	Transitions
EU Presidency Conference: <i>Better Assessment and Evaluation to Improve Teaching and Learning</i>	Key Competences
EU KeyCoNet group on Irish visit	Key Competences
<i>Why Maths Matters</i> conference, University of Limerick	Project Maths
OMEP (World Organisation for Early Childhood Education) Conference UCC	<i>Aistear in Action</i> project
Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) Conference: <i>Children's Engagement in Education</i> .	Primary Developments and the landscape of childhood
European Union Thematic Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care	Evaluation and Monitoring in the NCCA's early childhood work
<i>Research Alive</i> Conference: Centre for Effective Services (CES), the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and the Teaching Council.	Teachers and educational research
UNESCO, ESD and Quality Ed research project, Beijing	Education for Sustainable Development and quality education
Transitions Conference, NUI Maynooth	Grading in the Leaving Certificate
European Early Childhood Education Research Association	<i>Aistear</i> in infant classes in primary schools
EU KeyCoNet, Brussels	Mathematical competences case study
Royal Irish Academy Conference on STEM	Motivating engagement with science



Strategic relationships

To build on existing strategic relationships and develop new ones to support and connect curriculum and assessment development and implementation

Event/organisation	Theme/title
Marino Institute of Education: Final year B Ed Students	Primary Developments
BA degree students in Froebel College of Education	<i>Aistear</i>
INTO Education Committee	Primary Developments
St. Angela's College, Sligo: BSc and MSc in Education Studies.	Curriculum and Programme Development and Evaluation
National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD) Southern Region	Key skills in JC
Department of Education and Skills Inspectorate	Primary Language Curriculum
Amnesty International	Student Voice
Joint Managerial Body	Technology in School
Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools conference	Leadership for a new Junior Cycle and Level 2 Learning Programmes
City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee	Junior Cycle
Church of Ireland Board of Education Annual Conference	Assessment, Reporting and transfer
INTO Education Committee meeting	Transfer
Educate Together Primary School Principals	<i>Aistear</i> in infant classes in primary schools
CCEA Symposium on Qualifications Reform Queens University, Belfast	JC Developments
An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta & Gaelscolaíochta (COGG) Annual Conference	Primary Language Curriculum
National Parents' Council - Primary, Annual Conference	Reporting and Transfer
Joint Managerial Body National Conference	Junior Cycle - Assessment, Short Courses Key Skills and Timetabling
Joint Managerial Body, Special Educational Needs Advisory Group	Transfer
EUFOLIO European partner meeting	e-portfolios
Conference of Heads of Irish Colleges of Education	Junior Cycle Developments



Profile and communications

To communicate, present and share the work and achievements of the NCCA to improve the profile of the organisation and engagement with its work

Event/organisation	Theme/title
Catholic Primary School Managers' Association, Annual training course for principals	Primary developments
Representatives of County and City Childcare Committees and National Childcare Voluntary Organisations	<i>Aistear in Action</i> project
Irish Mathematics Teachers Association, <i>MathsFest2013</i> conference	Project Maths
South Tipperary and North Cork Early Childhood Community	<i>Aistear in Action</i>
Pavee Point, Education and Training Committee	Reporting and Transfer
Business in the Community	Senior Cycle Sciences and Junior Cycle
Amnesty International	Student Voice
Cork Early Years Network	Translating <i>Aistear</i> into Practice - keynote
Cork Early Years Network Conference	Workshop on <i>Aistear in Action</i> project
Kildare Childcare Committee	Supporting literacy and numeracy using <i>Aistear</i>
<i>Goodness Me Goodness You</i> Website Launch, Scoil Niamh Community National School	Primary Developments
Early Childhood Ireland International Gathering	<i>Aistear</i> in infant classes in primary schools
An tSeirbhís um Fhorbairt Ghairmiúil do Mhúinteoirí: An Tionól Teagaisc	Obair na CNCM
International conference on European Science and Technology in Action: <i>Building Links with Industry, Schools and Home</i>	Science and technology education in a changing world





Notes



Notes





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NCCA

An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

35 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin 2.

T: +353 1 661 7177 F: +353 1 661 7180 E: info@ncca.ie

www.ncca.ie