

Fifth and sixth classes 1

A summary of your child's learning in fifth and sixth classes in the 6 curriculum areas is provided below, along with some suggestions on how you can support your child's learning at home.

LANGUAGE

Through language, your child learns to communicate in English and in Irish. Your child learns to listen, to speak, to read and to write in both languages. These language skills provide a basis for learning other languages and are important for learning in all other areas of the curriculum.

In English, your child's **listening and speaking skills continue to be developed** through talk and discussion. He/she learns to: *listen, start conversations, question, tell stories, summarise, express and explain feelings, give instructions, argue, persuade and present ideas*. Your child should now be a confident reader and writer and is **learning to think about and question the messages put across** in both his/her own writing and the broad range of reading material he/she reads both for personal pleasure and information. Through **reading a class novel**, your child participates in group or whole class reading sessions and shares his/her response to what is being read and predictions of what may yet happen with others. Reading a novel helps your child to sustain reading over time. Your child also **writes longer pieces**, and so learns to develop one piece of writing over time by revising and redrafting it.

In Irish, children continue to **develop their conversation and communication skills** and to increase their vocabulary in Irish, building on what they have learned in previous classes.



They work with the same themes as in previous years: **mé féin, sa bhaile, an scoil, bia, an aimsir, an teilifís, siopadóireacht, caitheamh aimsire, éadaí agus ócáidí speisialta** (myself, home, school, food, the weather, television, shopping, pastimes, clothes and special occasions). Your child **uses everyday resources** such as newspaper articles, and radio or television programmes (for example, news from TG4). These real materials develop and improve your child's listening and speaking skills in Irish, reinforce the idea of reading for information and pleasure and provide a good model and reason for writing.

In schools where the teaching is mostly through Irish, your child reads and responds to a broader range of reading material and writes in Irish for many different reasons and in many different ways.

You can help your child to learn at home by:

- listening to and talking with your child, for example, about what's happening at school, about their friends or about their favourite subject
- watching programmes, such as *an nuacht*, quizzes, cartoons or sports programmes on TG4, with your child. Although your child may not understand much of the language used at first, he/she will probably be able to understand the gist of the programmes using the pictures and sound and his/her own prior knowledge
- encouraging your child to borrow books, novels or story tapes from the local library.

Information for parents

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MATHEMATICS

Your child learns to understand and solve problems with the Mathematics Curriculum. Children **continue to work with real materials** such as counters, cubes, fraction tiles, measurement equipment, number games, playing cards and mathematical software to build their knowledge and understanding of new content in:

- Number (including learning about place value, adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing numbers and working with fractions and decimals)
- Algebra (including working with positive and negative numbers using a number line and working with number sentences and word problems)
- Measurements (including working with length, area, weight, capacity, time and money)
- Shape and space (including working with 3-D shapes and 2-D shapes and lines and angles)
- Data (including understanding, interpreting and making charts and graphs and learning about probability and chance).

The tasks and practical problem solving activities that your child works with in fifth and sixth class are similar to those in previous classes. They have, however, become **more challenging and complex**.

You can help your child to learn at home by:

- creating opportunities for your child to handle money and work within budgets, for example, you could give your child the responsibility of planning a shopping trip and staying within a particular budget to buy particular items on your list. He/she could use the internet to check out and compare prices of, for example, CDs or DVDs online
- providing opportunities for your child to solve problems in real-life situations at home, for example, ask your child to help in assembling furniture or in measuring a room for wallpaper or a new carpet.

SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SCIENTIFIC EDUCATION (SESE)

In SESE (history, geography and science) children continue to use the classroom, school and local area as a resource for learning. **Their learning broadens out to explore other places in Ireland and beyond and to explore the lives of people in the past.** Children use the same **investigative skills** of *questioning, observing, predicting, investigating and experimenting, estimating and measuring, classifying and recording and communicating* as **they work as Scientists, Historians and Geographers.** Photographs, real objects and information sources such as encyclopaedias, atlases, computer software and Internet searches all help children to explore a world beyond their own local environment. **New learning builds on and links to what has been learned before,** for example, in geography, children may learn about the physical features of another area in Ireland but will connect this to what they have already learned by comparing and contrasting it with features in their own local area.

Likewise, in history, children may discover how the lives of people have changed over time in their own area **and** in other places through exploring a topic like *homes*.

You can help your child to learn at home by:

- watching documentaries and programmes of historical, geographical or scientific interest with your child. When the programme is over, use a map, globe or the internet to find countries which have featured in the programme. Use reference books or web sites to find out more about the story and the people and places involved and past events that have shaped the current situation
- visiting places that are interesting in terms of science, history and geography such as beaches, open farms, woodlands or rivers in the local area, ruins, or museums. Talk to your child about what you see, hear and do there.

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ARTS EDUCATION

In the three subjects **visual arts, music and drama** your child continues to have many opportunities to be creative and to develop his/her imagination through art activities, music and drama. Your child's active and enjoyable participation in artistic activities is emphasised. The **focus is not so much on the work your child produces (the product) but on what your child learns by engaging in creative activity (the process)**. Your child improves and refines his/her skills through exploring and experimenting in art, music and drama lessons. He/she works with a greater variety of artistic material and experiences a broader range of musical and dramatic activity. This curriculum area encourages your child to **listen to, look at and respond to** the music, artwork and dramatic expression of others in the class, as well as the work of other children and adults.

You can help your child to learn at home by:

- encouraging your child's interest in listening to or performing music, such as listening to CDs, singing songs, playing the recorder or another musical instrument
- encouraging your child to express themselves artistically by providing resources and space to do so and giving your child the responsibility of tidying up when he/she is finished
- watching children's drama on television with your child or taking your child to see films, plays, concerts and art exhibitions in the community and talking about what they have seen and their response to it.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In fifth and sixth class your child again participates in a range of physical activities, both indoor and outdoor such as:

- Athletics (including running, jumping and throwing)
- Dance (including exploring, creating and performing dance)
- Gymnastics (including balancing, moving in different directions and in sequence, alone and with others and moving using apparatus such as mats and benches)
- Games (including ball handling, kicking, carrying and striking, and playing and refereeing small-sided versions of games)
- Outdoor and adventure activities (including walking, cycling and camping and following increasingly challenging trails and obstacle courses within time limits).⁴



These activities help your child to understand and appreciate physical activity. There is an emphasis on fun and enjoyment in P.E. lessons and your child learns to work together with others to improve overall group performance.

At the same time, your child is encouraged to improve and refine his/her own individual performance in various physical activities at his/her own pace. Through experiencing a variety of physical activity, you'll find that your child may like some activities or games more than others. These may then well be played outside of school and on into adult life.

You can help your child to learn at home by:

- ensuring your child has many opportunities to take part in physical activities with family and friends
- bringing your child to watch local or national sporting events and encouraging your child's interest and participation in particular physical activities or games. This could mean supporting a local or county G.A.A. team or playing for a local club. This will help your child to develop a sense of belonging to the community.

⁴In aquatics children learn about safety in the water and how to move in the water through play and using their arms and legs. To suit individual school circumstances, the curriculum advocates that children should have opportunities to develop water based movement skills at some point in their primary schooling.

Information for parents

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SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (SPHE)

Social, Personal and Health Education, or SPHE, deals with your child's **personal development, health and well being**. It helps children to **understand how to care for themselves, how to respect and relate to others and how to deal with their feelings**. It also helps your child to learn and develop a sense of responsibility for his/her actions. SPHE includes **Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)** – an important part of all children's development. SPHE enables your child to recognise the importance of treating his/her body and that of others with dignity and respect and to learn about the changes that take place in his/her body at the various stages of development, for example, at puberty. **Each school has an RSE policy** which outlines what will be taught in RSE and when certain content will be introduced.

The SPHE Curriculum also helps your child to:

- learn to care for him/herself
- appreciate the importance of good nutrition and hygiene in staying healthy
- learn about healthy behaviours
- recognise causes of personal worry and to identify coping strategies
- develop a growing sense of the importance of making informed decisions.



Children also develop a greater sense of their own contribution in the school and local community, begin to explore the concept of democracy and learn to recognise, acknowledge and respect the various cultural, religious, ethnic or other groups that exist in a community or society. They learn to care for the local and wider environment and appreciate their own role in keeping the Earth safe for future generations. They also learn to think about the role and influence of media sources in their lives.

You can help your child to learn at home by:

- encouraging healthy eating habits through encouraging your child to help make a healthy lunch for school and at other mealtimes. Breakfast is a particularly important meal as it starts your child on a healthy day
- involving your child in planning and carrying through family events like shopping, a cinema trip or decorating a room will give your child a real sense of being a useful family member and will also allow him/her to apply skills learned through the curriculum in school to real-life situations, such as searching the internet and interpreting timetable information
- talking to your child about different issues which affect him/her, for example, relationships with family and friends, what is happening in school, keeping safe, the dangers involved in the misuse of substances such as drugs or alcohol. Through discussion help him/her to find appropriate ways of dealing with situations such as bullying and peer pressure. Through such discussions, your child will learn that he/she can talk to you about anything.

Ask your child's teacher about other ways you can help your child to learn at home in fifth and sixth class. Ask other parents what works well for them.