GOODNESS ME, GOODNESS YOU!

Curriculum for Community National Schools

Contents

Introduction

Community National Schools were established as a new model of multi-denominational education for 21st century Ireland. Goodness Me, Goodness You! (GMGY) is the patron's curriculum for Community National Schools.

Goodness Me, Goodness You! is a multi-belief and values education curriculum. Using a multi-disciplinary framework, it enables children to encounter identity education, values education, philosophy and multi-denominational religious education. GMGY contributes to the holistic development of the child and as such aims to enable every child to realise their potential as a unique individual.

Firstly, this document introduces the Community National School model and the GMGY curriculum. Then, the vision and aims of the curriculum are outlined. Next, the strands, elements and learning outcomes of GMGY are presented. The guidelines surrounding planning, teaching and assessing are presented and finally the role of parents, teachers and the community in the realisation of the aims, as envisaged by the curriculum, are explained.

The Community National School Model

The first Community National School (CNS) was established in 2008. These schools are multi-denominational state schools under the patronage of the Education and Training Boards (ETBs). The schools strive to provide high-quality primary education for every child in line with the principles of the *Primary School Curriculum* (DES, 1999). The establishment of the Community National School model was part of the Irish State's response to an increasing demand for diversity of school choice in the education system. The model recognises, respects and celebrates the identity of all children equally. Community National Schools aim to promote a holistic approach to education, developing all aspects of the child - intellectually, physically, culturally, morally and spiritually. Children are encouraged and supported in living their lives to the full through their interactions with their family, their community and their school.

It is the policy of the CNS model to respect, celebrate and recognise diversity in all areas of human life. The schools endeavour to encourage children to have pride in what makes them different and a belief that difference, when respected and vaued, gives strength and vibrancy to the school community and the wider community in which they live. The Community National School model has four cornerstones (see Figure 1 below) which underpin the characteristic spirit of Community National Schools; excellence in education, equality-based, multi-denominational and community-focused. The GMGY curriculum supports the characteristic spirit of Community National Schools.

Figure 1. The cornerstones of the community national school model

Multi-Denominational

Community-Focused

Equality-Based

Excellence in Education

The Goodness Me, Goodness You! Curriculum

GMGY is a process curriculum; a curriculum which evolves as the schools evolve. The connection between GMGY and the Community National Schools is an indispensable feature of the process of curriculum development. The development of the curriculum took place in line with an authentic collaborative model of development, where teacher voices, alongside child and parent voices, are central to the development of the curriculum.

Development was informed by engagement with the GMGY School Network Group, a group consisting of a teacher representative from each CNS. The leadership role played by the GMGY School Network Group ensured the curriculum was developed in line with the needs of the school community. This connection was seen as essential in developing a curriculum that enables schools to live out their characteristic spirit fully. The GMGY Project Team worked closely with the CNS Principal's Forum, Education and Training Boards (ETBs), Education and Training Board of Ireland (ETBI) and the CNS Steering Committee[1]; comprising of officials from the Department of Education and Skills and the Education and Training Boards and the Education and Training Board of Ireland.

The process of development for the GMGY curriculum ensured extensive engagement with stakeholders involved in Community National Schools. Their views and opinions were integral to the development of the curriculum and will continue to inform the future development of GMGY. Figure 2 offers an outline of development structures of GMGY.

Figure 2. An overview of the development structures for the GMGY curriculum

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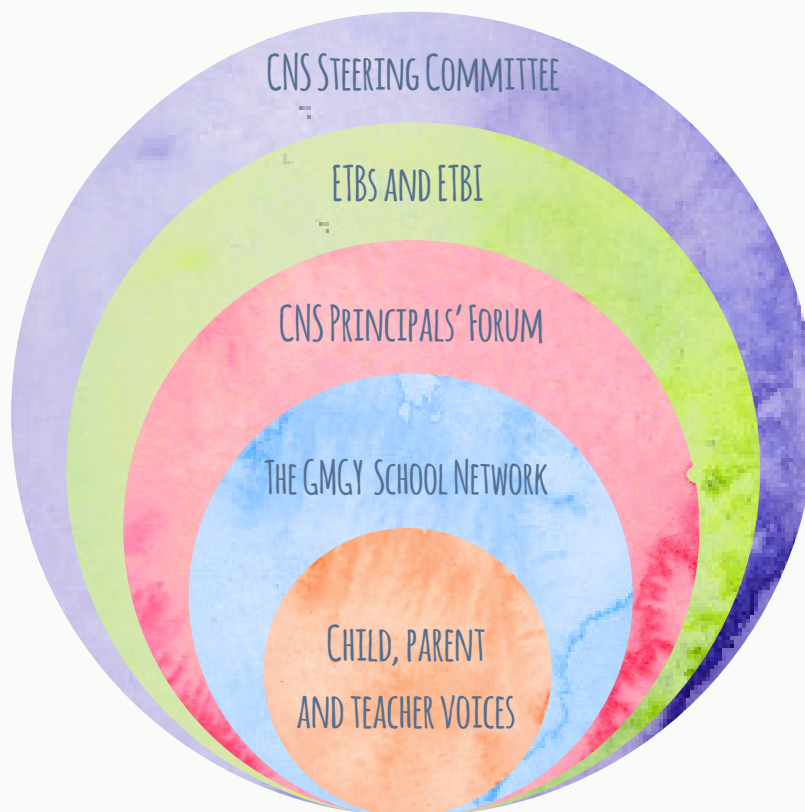
[1] The CNS Steering Committee is made up of representatives from the Department of Education and Skills, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, local Education and Training Board representatives and representatives from the Education and Training Board of Ireland. The Steering Committee meets on a regular basis to consider the development of the Goodness Me, Goodness You! curriculum.

The Vision and Aims of the GMGY Curriculum

The GMGY curriculum makes an important contribution in enabling each child to live their life to the full while exploring their identity and their place in the world. The curriculum enables children to be active citizens in their local and global community, to think critically and imaginatively about the world around them, to share their beliefs and values, and to encounter the beliefs and values of others in a learning environment of enquiry and respect. Through this sharing of experience, the child is enabled to live their life in an atmosphere of respect for and appreciation of diversity.

GMGY recognises parents as the primary educators of their child. It supports this role through encouraging the creation of a respectful and inclusive learning community where children's beliefs and values are respected and where parental participation is encouraged and valued.

The curriculum recognises the importance of the community in the child's life and encourages children to become involved in and to contribute to their local community. It is also envisaged that the community would contribute to the education of the child actively and positively through a close relationship with the school.
The Goodness Me, Goodness You! curriculum aims to enable each child to develop:

- A confident and positive sense of self and group identity, as well as a sense of belonging, while having respect for, and understanding of, the identity and belonging of others.

- An understanding of their own and other's values and in doing so develop as an individual and as a social being and contribute to the good of society.

- Their psychological and emotional wellbeing and a positive outlook through critical, creative, collaborative and caring thinking and participation in philosophical inquiry, dialogue and reflection.

- An understanding of the diversity of the beliefs that inform their own and other people's ways of living and respect and appreciate people's right to express their beliefs.

The Curriculum Foundations of GMGY

GMGY is a multi-belief and values curriculum. GMGY can be described as multi-disciplinary. Across the curriculum, a pluralist approach is put into action ensuring a greater understanding for the child of their sense of identity and belonging in this world. The curriculum combines the formative pedagogy of values education with the constructivist approach of philosophy with and for children and the exploratory and dialogical pedagogy of multi-denominational religious education. Figure 3 outlines some of the pedagogies which are used to underpin GMGY.

Figure 3. Examples of pedagogies used to teach the GMGY curriculum

Philosophy for children/ Philosophy with children (Matthew Lipman/ Philomena Donnelly)	**Character education and ethical education** (Alasdair MacIntyre/Carol Gilligan/Nel Noddings)
Inter-belief dialogue in religious education (Julia Ipgrave)	**Identity education** (Erik Erikson/ Elli Schachter & Yisrael Rich)
Constructivist approaches (Lev Vygotsky/Jerome Bruner)	**Enquiry-based or problem-posing approaches** (John Dewey/Paulo Freire)
Dialogical approach to Religious Education (Robert Jackson)	**Toledo guiding principles on teaching about religions and beliefs in public schools** (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights)
Children's imagination/ drama and aesthetic (Kieran Egan/Augusto Boal)	**Critical thinking and book talk** (Mary Roche)

The GMGY Curriculum

The GMGY curriculum uses strands, elements and learning outcomes. In GMGY, strands represent the main areas of learning described by the curriculum, while elements describe the essential learning within each strand. Learning outcomes describe the expected learning and development for children at the end of a two-year period.

The strands described in the GMGY curriculum are not discrete areas of learning, as they overlap and interact to form a holistic learning experience for the child. There are four strands outlined in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4. Strands in the GMGY curriculum for community national schools

My stories

We are a CNS

Thinking time

Beliefs and religions

The Strands of GMGY

My stories

The 'My stories' strand is about children developing a positive sense of who they are, and feeling that they are valued and respected as part of a family, a school and a community. From birth, children develop as active agents in defining who they are. Relationships with family members, other adults and children, friends and members of their community play a key role in building their identities. Children's sense of who they are is shaped by their unique goals, values and preferences while negotiating their way through life. Belonging is about having a secure relationship or a connection with a particular group of people. When children feel a sense of belonging and sense of pride in their families, their school, their peers, and their communities, they can be emotionally secure, self-assured, and able to deal with challenges and difficulties. This creates an important foundation for their learning and development.

This strand aims to give autonomy and agency to the child in formulating a sense of 'who' they are in dialogue with their families, peers and community, at a particular time and in a specific context. The strand offers opportunities for engagement with new experiences. The child perceives, processes and integrates the stories of others' lives and experiences with their existing meaning-making system. In this way, new knowledge is linked to a child's earlier concepts of self-identity.

The curriculum opts for an inclusive understanding of identity. The school, as a meeting place for the discovery of commonalities and intergroup dialogue, can foster a sense of inclusiveness and respect for equality, social cohesion and interdependence. The children will examine the concept of identity and belonging through engagement with the elements of 'My life', 'My Relationships' and 'My Space and Place'. These elements allow discovery of identity through interaction with life events, interaction in social situations and places of significance for the child.

We are a community national school

'We Are a Community National School' is a strand with a values-led approach, which recognises that the Community National School is a new approach to state education in Ireland. Values education is a process of teaching and learning about the ideals and norms that a society and its people deem to be important. While this learning can take a number of forms, the underlying aim is for children to understand their own values and to understand and respect the values promoted in their school. This strand allows children to engage with the common values that the Community National Schools promote as well as to explore their own values.

The children will have an opportunity to explore and come to an understanding of the concepts of equality, self-identity, citizenship, democracy, justice and human rights. In this strand, teachers are encouraged to develop the children's respect for themselves and each other. They will also develop their ethical values in the context of their school and the wider CNS characteristic spirit. The strand also strives to relate the school's characteristic spirit to the wider world while enabling active citizenship and positive self-esteem, which connects the ethical education with wider political education.

In this strand, a whole school approach is recommended. School can support this approach through whole school events and the development of a 'Charter of Rights and Values' in individual schools. The 'We Are A CNS' strand employs pedagogies grounded in ethical education and character education. This dual approach recognises that there must be a balance and an interplay between the development of the individual child and their socialisation as an active citizen. The elements of this strand; Values, Respect, Community and Citizenship, and Equality, Rights and Responsibilities—exemplify this balance between the individual and social levels of understanding. Also, at the heart of this strand is the vision of the whole child, and so this education addresses both the cognitive and affective dimensions of the child's education.

Thinking time

This strand is a philosophical approach to primary education which combines child-led (philosophy with children) and teacher-led (philosophy for children) pedagogies. It seeks to develop children's thinking, emotional and deliberative skills and to facilitate their understanding of both their own ideas and those of others. In this strand, there is an emphasis on critical thinking, as well as on wellbeing, developing the cognitive and affective dimensions of children's learning simultaneously. The objective of the Philosophy with and for Children approaches is the development of critical understanding in children through philosophical dialogue. Philosophy with and for children can increase cognitive ability, enhance social skills, support wellbeing and foster resilience. In this strand, there are strong connections with the Aistear framework for early years, and at senior class level, there is a bridge to curricular approaches to philosophy and politics at post-primary level.

The 'Thinking time' strand aims to enable children to develop a deeper understanding of their own perspective and their ability to enter into dialogue with other children, to cultivate debate and the capacity to argue respectfully. Here, there is a strong link between 'Thinking time' and the discussion of different beliefs in the 'Beliefs and religions' strand. The strand enables children to question themselves and others, in an environment of mutual respect and safety, which also allows for creativity and imagination. For teachers, there are opportunities to allow children's own perspectives to emerge and for teachers to become co-participants in the class, which we can refer to as a 'problem-posing' education. There are also spaces for teachers to scaffold a more content-based approach to philosophy (developing on resources from the history of philosophy) at senior class level, which is more teacher-led in pedagogy.

Beliefs and religions

The 'Beliefs and religions' strand employs a multi-denominational approach to religious education. Multi-denominational religious education seeks to provide teaching 'about' and 'from' different religions and beliefs. It should be noted that the GMGY curriculum equally addresses teaching about beliefs which are non-religious conceptions of life and the world.

GMGY employs a dialogical approach to teaching 'about' and 'from' beliefs and religions which aims to promote inter-belief harmony and respect for all, combat prejudice and discrimination, contribute positively to community cohesion and promote awareness of how inter-belief cooperation can support the pursuit of the common good.

Multi-denominational religious education enables children to develop an awareness of religions and beliefs but does not advocate for children's acceptance of any of them. It promotes study about religions and beliefs but does not engage in the practice of any religion. It may expose children to a diversity of religious and non-religious views, but does not impose any particular view or seek to conform or convert students to any specific religion or belief. In this way, teaching about beliefs and religions is delivered in a fair, accurate and objective manner without undermining or ignoring the role of families and religious or belief communities in transmitting beliefs to successive generations.

This approach to religious education seeks to acknowledge the diversity of experiences, viewpoints, understandings and ideas within the class and the school. It uses children's experiences as a resource for class discussions about religions and beliefs. In the case where a school does not have a diversity of religions and beliefs present it is essential to introduce further viewpoints into classroom discussions. This can be achieved through collaboration between schools. Promoting an environment in which children are willing to engage with difference, to share with and learn from others isan important feature of this approach. Involving children in the establishment of a 'safe space' for learning about religions and beliefs and encouraging questioning to develop an interest in others' experiences and points of view will allow for meaningful conversations to occur.

The Elements

The curriculum is organised across four stages: junior and senior infants, first and second class, third and fourth class, and fifth and sixth class. Each strand has three or four elements which outline the key learning, over each stage, to achieve the aims of the curriculum.

The strands are highly inter-related, in that each strand aims to contribute to the development of the whole child and that learning in one strand contributes to learning in the other strands. The elements of learning across the four are outlined in Figure 5 below. Many of the dispositions and skills developed through one strand are transferable to the other strands. It is through an awareness of the interrelationships among the elements and across the strands that the potential of the GMGY curriculum is realised.

Figure 5. The elements of GMGY
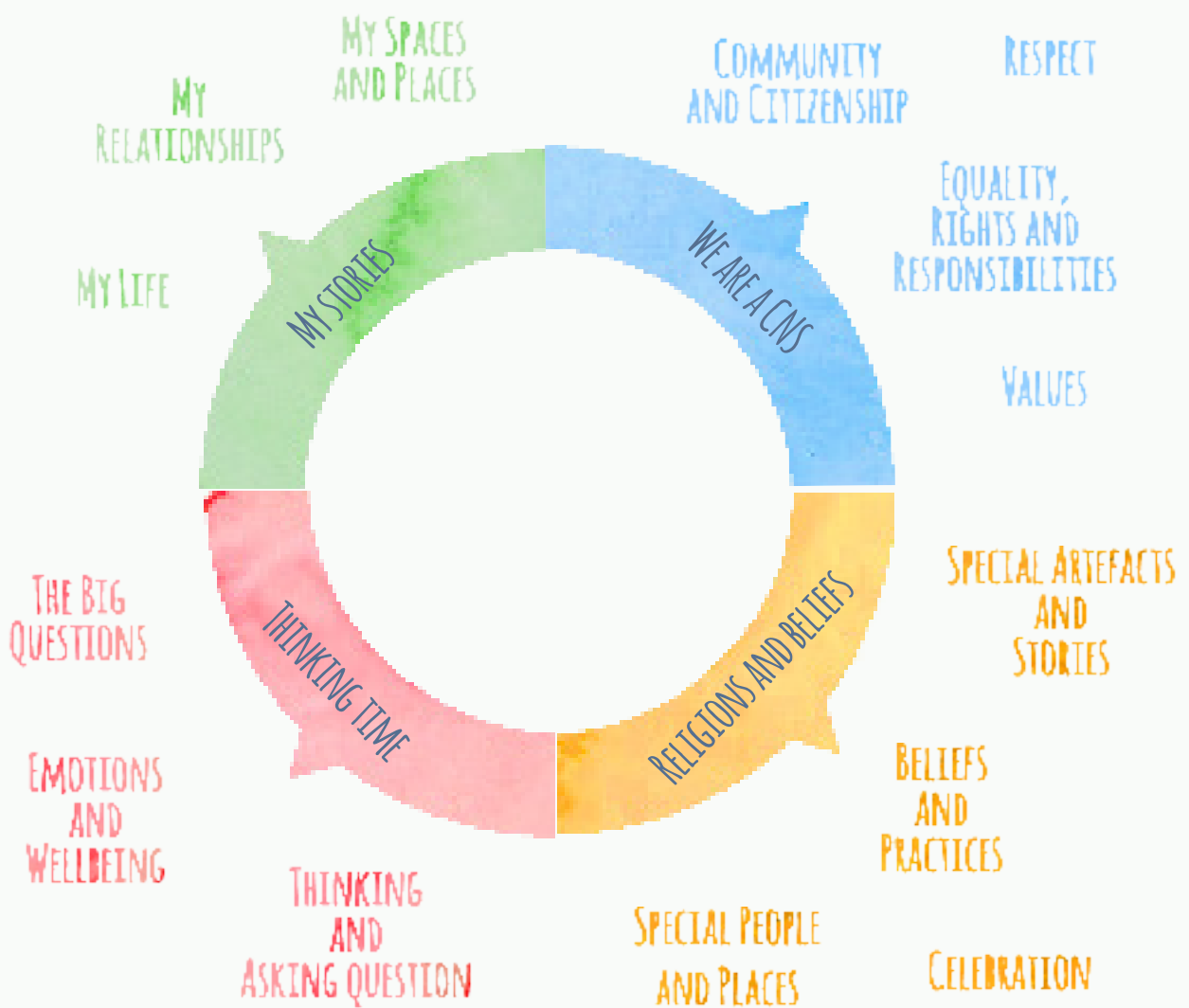
Learning outcomes

Learning Outcomes in GMGY are used to describe the expected learning and development for all learners at the end of a two year period. The curriculum acknowledges that children's progress towards Learning Outcomes will be influenced by their varying circumstances, experiences and abilities. By focusing on learners, outcomes facilitate the use of appropriate pedagogical approaches to support children on their learning journey. Reflecting Aistear's principles and pedagogical approaches, the phrase, 'Through appropriately playful learning experiences, children should be able to...' is used to introduce all Learning Outcomes in stage one.

Learning Outcomes focus on learning being an enabling process that helps children in their development of knowledge, skills and dispositions. They facilitate teacher autonomy by providing flexibility for professional judgement when planning, teaching and assessing all children. Learning Outcomes help teachers to select what to teach, the best order in which to teach it, to choose appropriate pedagogical approaches, and to identify the most appropriate assessment methods that match the intended learning. Learning Outcomes, when shared with learners, can support them to be clear about what they are learning, to be aware of their progress and be active agents in their own learning. Teachers support children in the achievement of the Learning Outcome by providing associated experiences related to aspects of the outcome which are best suited to the needs of the children. Outcomes recognise that children learn, and teachers teach in a variety of contexts and the teaching/learning journeys will be different in these contexts.

Stage one: junior and senior infants

Overview

In junior and senior infants, children will begin to explore their own identity through personal narrative. The children will explore identity and belonging through their personal characteristics and other attributes that make them unique, while in dialogue with others. They will explore their values and beliefs and begin to develop skills of critical philosophical thinking, respectful discussion and the religious literacy which is necessary to engage in inter-belief conversations. The Learning Outcomes for stage one have clear connections with *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. Stage one of GMGY recognises that many children come to school having encountered Aistear in their pre-school setting and aims to build upon the valuable learning and experience that children bring to their junior infant classroom.

Strand: My stories
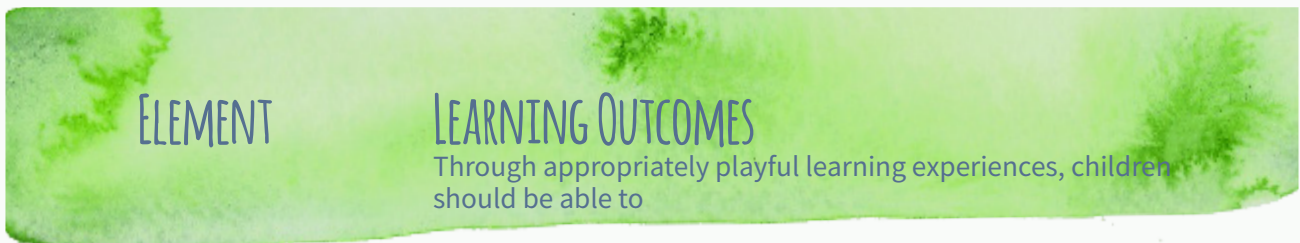
Element	Learning Outcomes Through appropriately playful learning experiences, children should be able to
My Life	Identify and analyse their personal attributes and recognise the value of these attributes.
My Relationships	Share their personal narrative and compare this with the narratives of others to begin to recognise what makes them unique.
My Spaces and Places	Appreciate and understand what makes a home and develop their sense of belonging in their home.

Strand: We are a community national school

Element	Learning Outcomes Through appropriately playful learning experiences, children should be able to
Values	Formulate and investigate their understanding of what is right and wrong and develop awareness of the effects that their actions have on others.
Respect	Respect, celebrate and value the talents, interests and positive qualities that make them, and others, unique.
Community and Citizenship	Understand the positive contributions that friendship and community make in their lives.
Equality, Rights and Responsibilities	Develop their understanding of fairness and explore the rights of children.

Strand: Thinking time

Element	Learning Outcomes Through appropriately playful learning experiences, children should be able to
Thinking and Asking Questions	Develop respectful agreeing, disagreeing and questioning skills.
Emotions and Wellbeing	Develop awareness of the importance of emotional expression for themselves and others.
The Big Questions	Create new and imaginative ideas and questions based on events relevant to their own lives.

Strand: Beliefs and religions

| Element	Learning Outcomes Through appropriately playful learning experiences, children should be able to
Celebrations	Develop a sense of respect for and understanding of celebrations that are relevant in their own lives and the lives of others.
Beliefs and Practices	Identify practices that are connected to their own and others' beliefs.
Special People and Places	Identify people who help them in their lives and their community and examine why these people are important to them and important to others.
Special Artefacts and Stories	Recognise the items and artefacts that are special to themselves and their families while developing an understanding of items that are special to others.

Stage Two: first and second class

Overview

Having explored their characteristics and their understanding of what a home is in junior and senior infants, the children will now build on this through exploration of their identity in the context of their home and community. They will investigate their role as part of a family and a community and explore the interplay of belonging, values and beliefs. Children in first and second class will continue to develop as critical thinkers while also building positive self-worth and self-esteem. They will learn about participating in the local community as active citizens while also developing awareness of and respect for the rights of others. The children will continue to develop religious literacy while engaging with curricular content and develop respect, empathy and understanding while in dialogue with others.

Strand: My stories
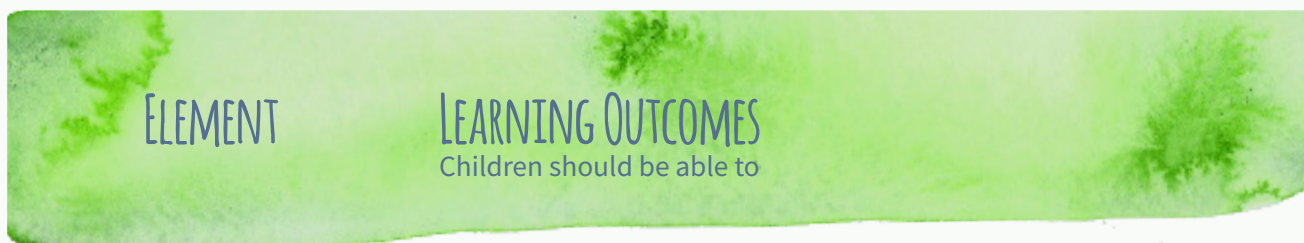
Element	Learning Outcomes Children should be able to
My Life	Identify and share some of their personal achievements and recognise the value of these in their lives.
My Relationships	Share the narratives of their family and community and recognise their own value as part of that family and community unit.
My Spaces and Places	Recall and discuss stories that originate in the community and develop an appreciation for their cultural value.

Strand: We are a community national school

Element	Learning Outcomes Children should be able to
Values	Define and investigate the values of the school community and understand the impact that these values have on their actions.
Respect	Respect, celebrate and value the diversity present within the school community and recognise ways to respect diversity.
Community and Citizenship	Recognise their role as citizens in their school and local community and participate in activities which benefit the school and local community.
Equality, Rights and Responsibilities	Become more aware of the rights of children and the responsibilities that correspond to these rights.

Strand: Thinking time

Element	Learning Outcomes Children should be able to
Thinking and Asking Questions	Explore different types of questions, formulate questions based on a variety of stimuli and discuss possible answers.
Emotions and Wellbeing	Become aware of their personal characteristics in building and maintaining positive self-worth and self-esteem.
The Big Questions	Think imaginatively and critically in response to stories, images and other stimuli.

Strand: Beliefs and religions

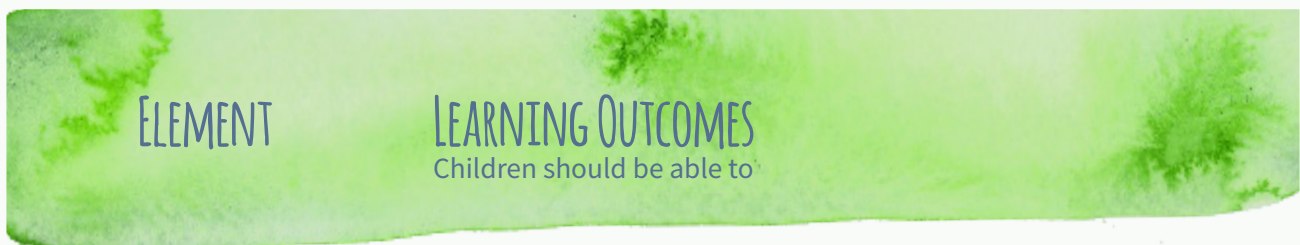| Element	Learning Outcomes Children should be able to
Celebrations	Develop an understanding of rites and ceremonies that are important in their own lives and recognise and respect the rites and ceremonies of others.
Beliefs and Practices	Recognise the difference between good choices and bad choices and examine examples of influences that affect the choices they make.
Special People and Places	Develop an understanding of places that are special to them and recognise and respect the special places of others.
Special Artefacts and Stories	Develop an understanding of books and stories that are special to them and recognise and respect the special books and stories of others.

Stage Three: third and fourth class

Overview

Having explored their role in their family and the local community in first and second class, the children will begin to explore themselves in relation to their wider and national community in third and fourth class. They will examine the influence of the stories of others, the relationships they have and the places they have been in shaping their identity and wellbeing. Here, the children develop more advanced skills in respectfully expressing personal opinions and ideas while in contact with philosophical fables and the ideas of others. They will begin to develop as an active citizen in a global society and promote equality and the rights of others. Religious literacy developed at the junior primary level will inform a more in-depth study about other religions while also offering children an opportunity to engage in inter-religious conversations with others.

Strand: My stories

Element	Learning Outcomes Children should be able to
My Life	Discuss some of the significant milestones and events in the lives of their family and community and evaluate the influences of these events.
My Relationships	Listen to and discuss the personal narrative of influential figures and examine the influence that this narrative may have on them.
My Spaces and Places	Recall and discuss stories that they have encountered and that originate in the Irish tradition, and develop an appreciation for their cultural value.

Strand: We are a community national school

Element	Learning Outcomes Children should be able to
Values	Define and analyse several of the values of the Irish state and evaluate the impact that these values have on Ireland as a society.
Respect	Respect, celebrate and value the diversity of the local community and construct practical ways to respect the diversity in the local community.
Community and Citizenship	Evaluate their role as a national citizen and participate in activities which positively benefit the local community.
Equality, Rights and Responsibilities	Develop their understanding of equality and human rights in the world and the responsibilities that correspond to these rights.

Strand: Thinking time

Element	Learning Outcomes Children should be able to
Thinking and Asking Questions	Respond respectfully to alternative perspectives and justify their responses using logical reasoning and debate.
Emotions and Wellbeing	Develop an appreciation of their wellbeing and examine personal characteristics that influence their wellbeing.
The Big Questions	Think critically and imaginatively in response to questions, debates and ideas they encounter in philosophical fables and stories.

Strand: Beliefs and religions

| Element	Learning Outcomes Children should be able to
Celebrations	Demonstrate an understanding of journeys that are special to them and recognise, respect and appreciate special journeys that belong to a range of belief traditions.
Beliefs and Practices	Demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the connection between beliefs and lifestyle choices and examine how their beliefs affect the lifestyle choices they make.
Special People and Places	Demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the special people who are associated with a range of belief traditions and develop an understanding of special people in their own lives.
Special Artefacts and Stories	Identify and discuss significant artefacts in their own lives and demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the religious artefacts that are associated with a range of beliefs traditions.

Stage four: fifth and sixth class

Overview

In fifth and sixth class the children will now explore themselves in relation to the wider world. They will be encouraged to think about global affairs and how such events can shape their identity and belonging in the world and their wellbeing. They are asked to look to their future-selves and explore how their interactions with international events and people could shape the person they become. Engagement with the classical philosophical tradition will continue to develop critical thinking skills. The children will develop more advanced religious literacy while exploring the religious traditions of others. They will continue to develop respectful dialogue skills while learning about and from their own and other's beliefs.

Strand: My stories

Element	Learning Outcomes Children should be able to
My Life	Describe and discuss the stories of international events and examine the impacts on the lives of the people in those areas.
My Relationships	Compose their imagined narrative for their future-self and explore the relationships that have inspired them towards this future.
My Spaces and Places	Explore and discuss stories that originate in countries around the world, and develop an appreciation for their cultural value.

Strand: We are a community national school
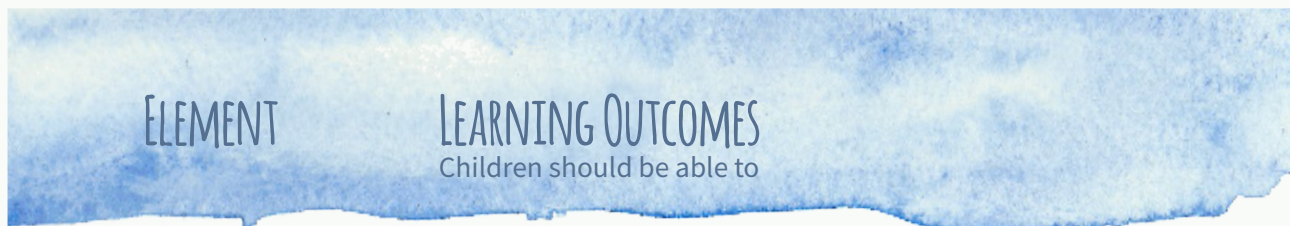
| Element | Learning Outcomes
Children should be able to |
|---|---|
| Values | Understand the values of the European Union and the United Nations and evaluate the impact that these values have throughout Europe and the wider world. |
| Respect | Respect, celebrate and value the positive contributions of diversity in Irish society and construct positive ways to support inclusion of diversity. |
| Community and Citizenship | Examine the concept of active citizenship and analyse the positive contributions and change brought about by active citizens throughout the world. |
| Equality, Rights and Responsibilities | Develop their understanding of equality and human rights in the world and the responsibilities that correspond to these rights. |

Strand: Thinking time

Element	Learning Outcomes Children should be able to
Thinking and Asking Questions	Critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their own arguments in discussion.
Emotions and Wellbeing	Critically evaluate the effects of external influences on wellbeing and examine the importance of nurturing resilience.
The Big Questions	Think critically and imaginatively about questions, stories, debates and ideas from the classical philosophical tradition.

Strand: Beliefs and religions

Element	Learning Outcomes Children should be able to
Celebrations	Identify celebrations that are significant in their own lives and demonstrate an understating of and respect for celebrations that belong to a range of belief traditions.
Beliefs and Practices	Identify and discuss examples of codes of conduct in their own lives and demonstrate an understanding of, and respect for, the codes of conduct that influence the way people live in a range of belief traditions.
Special People and Places	Identify and discuss places that are special in their own lives and demonstrate an understanding of the special places that are associated with a range of belief traditions.
Special Artefacts and Stories	Identify and discuss significant symbols in their own lives and demonstrate an understanding of and respect for symbols from a range of belief traditions.

Planning, Teaching and Assessing GMGY

Each Community National School is a unique entity, with a distinctive character, tradition and culture. However, all operate within the CNS Patron's Framework. Each school is influenced by its size and location, and by particular internal and external environmental circumstances and dynamics. A collaborative approach is encouraged in planning for, teaching and assessing GMGY at school level. Schools are encouraged to involve parents and the wider school community in the planning process, where appropriate. In line with the *Primary School Curriculum* (1999), classroom planning will have both short-term and long-term dimensions. Planning for a week, a term, a year or indeed other periods provides the means by which the teacher can ensure that all elements of the curriculum are covered adequately in a way that is relevant to the needs of the different individuals in the class. Planning templates are available online at www.cns.ie/goodness-me-goodness-you.

A Broad and Balanced Approach to Planning

An important part of planning in GMGY is to provide a wide variety of experiences for children. Efficient planning will ensure that undue repetition and significant gaps in the curriculum are avoided. The four strands should be a feature of school planning each year where possible. It is recommended that within the strands each element should be covered to ensure variety, balance and continuity. However, considering each school's context, the depth of treatment of each strand may be adjusted to suit each particular school. It is recommended that the strands are interwoven rather than taught in consecutive blocks.

Time allocation

The suggested weekly time framework within the *Primary School Curriculum* (1999) proposes 2 hours and 30 minutes for the teaching of GMGY each week. The GMGY curriculum provides schools with the autonomy and flexibility for negotiating the curriculum in line with the needs of the school community. To this end, schools may spend more or less time teaching particular aspects of the curriculum.

Integration

Integration refers to cross-curricular connections. For the young child, the distinctions between subjects are not relevant. What is important is a consistent learning process that makes connections between subjects. An emphasis on the interconnectedness of knowledge and the transversal nature of skills gives children a broader and richer perspective and reinforces the learning process.Opportunities for integration exist throughout all strands of the curriculum. Teachers can identify these opportunities when planning. Within the lesson samples, there are suggestions of some of the instances where integration might be established.

Assessment

Assessment is the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using, and reporting information about a child's progress and achievement in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes. The information gathered enriches the teacher's understanding both of what and how the child learns. The teacher uses that information to plan learning experiences based on appropriate Learning Outcomes from the curriculum, and on the child's previous learning. Through assessment, the teacher constructs a comprehensive picture of the short-term and long-term needs of the child and plans future work accordingly. Using assessment information in these ways, the teacher supports and extends the child's learning. Figure 6 outlines eight possible assessment methods. These methods are presented on a continuum. Methods positioned towards the left are those in which the child plays a leading role in assessing his/her work; towards the right of the continuum, the teacher plays a more significant role in leading the assessment. Ongoing assessment will provide information on the child's learning and development towards the different Learning Outcomes in the GMGY curriculum.

Differentiation

Differentiation is concerned with appropriately matching teaching, learning and assessment approaches to the children so that so that all children can benefit from the variety of learning experiences and make progress towards the Learning Outcomes. This may include looking at a child's interests, previous experiences, level of motivation, personal expectations, and the pace of learning and completion of work. The short-term plan should detail the strategies a teacher will use to cater to the diversity of children's learning needs in his/her classroom. The selected differentiation strategies should closely relate to the learning activities and should also be appropriate to the needs of the children.

Figure 6. A continuum of assessment methods (NCCA, 2007)

CONCEPT MAPPING

QUESTIONING

PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

TEACHER OBSERVATION

TEACHER DESIGNED TASKS AND TESTS

CONFERENCING

SELF - ASSESSMENT

STANDARDISED TESTING

CHILD LEADS THE ASSESSMENT

TEACHER LEADS THE ASSESSMENT

METHODOLOGIES

Like the Primary School Curriculum (1999), GMGY recommends the use of a wide variety of teaching methodologies to be inclusive of all learners. These have been coplemented with methodologies from international practices and research as outlined below.

Active learning

The GMGY curriculum is designed to provide opportunities for active engagement in a wide range of learning experiences. Children are encouraged to respond in a variety of ways to particular content. The teacher chooses a sequence of activities that will be most effective in advancing children's learning. This is the principle of guided activity and discovery learning.

Collaborative learning

Children are stimulated by hearing the ideas and opinions of others and by reacting to them. Collaborative work exposes children to the perceptions that others may have of a problem or a situation. This interaction will help broaden and deepen an individual child's understanding. The act of co-operating with others facilitates the child's social and personal development and fosters an appreciation of the benefits of working collaboratively.

Information and communication technologies

The use of information and communication technologies (ICT) can lead to an enhanced experience for the child in engaging with GMGY. ICT can support the GMGY curriculum through access and retrieval of information, exploring the cultural diversity outside of their communities, connecting and communicating with people, thus developing valuable skills. Appropriate videos, podcasts and advertisements can be very beneficial in exploring some of the topics and issues in GMGY. The internet, in particular, can provide children with access to a wide range of age-appropriate source materials. The use of such media in GMGY should be carefully monitored, and children should be encouraged to think critically about the content available to them.

Philosophy for and with Children

Philosophy for Children is an approach to teaching philosophy where children are presented with a topic or a problem. They are given thinking time to devise their responses and questions to the problem and engage in philosophical dialogue with their peers.

Philosophy with Children is an approach to teaching philosophy which emphasises the teacher as a co-participant and allows children to develop their own themes for discussion (to an age appropriate level).

Play

Play is a central activity of childhood. Through play, children explore their natural and social environment. During play, children can investigate this environment, make meaningful discoveries about it and solve problems arising from the materials they encounter or conditions in which they find themselves. They can examine the dynamics involved in maintaining social relationships through co-operation, conflict resolution and discussion. Play stimulates the imagination and expands the child's understanding of the world they live in. Play is not confined to the early years and is seen as a valuable context for learning right throughout childhood. GMGY encourages the use of appropriately playful experiences to support children's learning across the curriculum.

Problem-solving

In the curriculum, the child is encouraged to observe, collate and evaluate evidence, to ask relevant questions, to recognise the essence of a problem, to suggest solutions, and to make informed judgements. These activities help to foster the higher-order thinking skills such as summarising, analysing, making inferences and deductions and interpreting figurative language and imagery.

Quiet Time

Quiet Time fosters the child's capacity for silence. It enables the child to silence him or herself and to silence the environment, to listen more intently and with greater self-discipline. Children are offered an opportunity to focus on becoming quiet and still.

Transfer of skills

The ability to transfer learning is a central feature of the curriculum. GMGY addresses the development of knowledge and understanding, which the child will be able to apply in dealing with circumstances that are unfamiliar and in responding to new ideas and perspectives. The child's ability to apply what they have learned in a variety of situations is a good indicator of the effectiveness of that learning.

Talk and discussion

This is a central teaching approach in every curriculum area. Much learning takes place through the interaction of language and experience. Ideas, emotions and reactions can be explored through increasingly complex language which helps the child to clarify and interpret experience and acquire new concepts. GMGY encourages meaningful conversation in all strands of the curriculum.

Using the environment

First-hand experience that actively engages the child with the immediate environment and with those who live in it is an effective basis for learning. The experience begins in the home and continues to expand as the child grows, from the immediate environment to the school and beyond. First-hand experience of different aspects of the curriculum outside the classroom adds to the relevance and effectiveness of children's learning.

The methodologies detailed above encourage teachers to use multiple approaches during the GMGY lessons. Methodologies should be utilised sensitively, in line with the needs of the child.

Parents, Teachers, The Community and Goodness Me, Goodness You!

The GMGY curriculum enables children to explore and discuss their own life experiences through a multi-disciplinary approach which aims to develop the child as a whole. Parents, teachers and community figures can play a vital role in the realisation of the GMGY curriculum. Parents can contribute to their child's learning in the curriculum by giving feedback, attending meetings, and using the GMGY materials at home. Schools are encouraged to invite parents into classrooms to talk about their life experiences on a variety of topics and to invite parents to be part of a GMGY committee in school.

The curriculum facilitates parents in their role as primary educators of their children by providing support materials. These materials encourage and enable the involvement of parents. Examples of these materials include; interviews for parents and children to complete together and activities and research projects to be completed by the family. The CNS website (www.cns.ie) hosts GMGY, and the GMGY section of the website has a parents' section that includes access to additional resources. These resources inform parents about the teaching and learning that takes place in a GMGY lesson and aims to support them to develop the lesson further at home with their child.

Teachers and their schools are encouraged to make contact with community figures and invite them into classrooms and the school and to organise field trips to places in the local community. The curriculum endeavours to provide the child with engagements with the local community to gain a greater understanding of their identity, belonging and responsibilities within the community and social groups. Community members can contribute to the development of GMGY by attending school events, visiting the classroom and giving feedback on the way in which GMGY is approached in individual schools.

Further to the input of parents and community, teachers have been central to the development of GMGY as a curriculum since its inception. Whether as co-ordinators of GMGY in individual schools, as part of the GMGY Network Group or working as a team with parents at school level, teacher involvement has been a key facet of the curriculum. The multi-disciplinary nature of the GMGY strands and pedagogy provide a framework in which teachers can both be supported and autonomous in their planning and teaching of GMGY.

The curriculum recognises the teacher as a positive role model for the children in their class. Teachers create opportunities across the school day for engagement between children from different backgrounds. Teachers are flexible in working within the class and school structures to facilitate children's learning within GMGY.

Teachers support parents by sharing information about the GMGY curriculum, answering their questions, and helping parents to share in their child's learning at home. The learning experiences described by the curriculum enable teachers to inform parents about the learning which takes place in the classroom, while also enabling each family to inform the class of the learning that takes place in the home.

Glossary

Belief	is trust, faith or confidence in someone or something and is something that a person accepts to be true. GMGY also includes belief as non-religious conceptions about life and the world.
Character education	is a concept that encapsulates an appreciation that people's rights also imply responsibilities, the development of a sense of conscience, the recognition of the importance of personal integrity and the promotion of an active tolerance and respect across religious/cultural divides.
A characteristic spirit	may be considered as an expression of the aims, objectives, goals, values and beliefs which the school aspires to, endorses and preserves. Characteristic spirit also places emphasis on the exposure and immersion by all within a school community to a prescribed set of values and beliefs. In this context, the characteristic spirit has been understood as the atmosphere that emerges from the interaction of some aspects of school life, including teaching and learning, management and leadership, the use of images and symbols, rituals and practices, as well as goals and expectations. It can also be referred to as the ethos of a school.
Citizenship	is a position or way of being a citizen of a particular state or country.
Active citizenship	refers to the act of participating in the local or national communities and refers to the roles and responsibilities a citizen has in relation to society and the environment.
A constructivist approach	to education is based on the belief that learning occurs as children are actively involved in the process of meaning-making and knowledge construction as opposed to passively receiving information.
Critical thinking	is the objective analysis of an issue or situation which will allow the person to make a judgement or decision.
Dialogical pedagogy	is used to describe learning processes in which teacher and children critically interrogate the topic of study, express and listen to multiple voices and points of view, and create respectful and equitable classroom relations.

Dialogical Religious Education	is characterised by the following elements: It relates both to the experiences of the children and to the stimuli of religious traditions. It is contextual and intercultural, and it is based on approaches to inter-religious learning. The approach in GMGY refers to an experience-oriented understanding of dialogue. Through this understanding, the dialogue in the classroom takes on great importance as the venue in which pupils can participate with their different and differential religious and ideological backgrounds and in which they can develop their views and positions. In many respects, the different religions agree, but the dialogue in Religious Education is also designed to explore the differences between religious traditions. The goal is not to compromise individual positions by mixing different viewpoints but to develop them by contrasting them with others. Religious education should enable a classroom dialogue that allows the participants to refer to their different religious and non-religious backgrounds, even if it does not require it to succeed. Dialogue in the classroom fosters respect for other religious commitments and refers its participants to the possibility of gaining reassurance or making their religious commitment while critically monitoring it at the same time (Weisse, 2003). This form of religious education must be understood in the context of an educational approach that seeks not to mirror the separation and division in society, let alone increase it, but aims at a mutual understanding which treats differences with respect.
Diversity	refers to the diverse nature of Irish society. Diversity is about all the ways in which people differ, and how they live their lives as individuals, within groups, and as part of a wider social groupings. For example, a person can be classified, or classify themselves, by their social class, gender, disability/ability, as a returned Irish emigrant, family status, as an inter-country adoptee, or from a different family structure, including foster care. They can be seen – or see themselves – as part of a minority group, a minority ethnic group or part of the majority/dominant group (adapted from Murray and Urban, 2012).
Equality	refers to the importance of recognising, respecting, and accepting the diversity of individuals and group needs, and of ensuring equality in terms of access, participation and benefits for all children and their families. It is therefore not about treating people 'the same'. Equality of participation is particularly relevant when working with children and parents. Through GMGY children may explore the following nine grounds of equality: • Gender: You are entitled to equal treatment whether you are a man, a woman or a transgender person. • Civil status: You are entitled to equal treatment whether you are single, married, separated, divorced or widowed, in a civil partnership or previously in a civil partnership.

	• Sexual orientation: You are entitled to equal treatment whether you are gay, lesbian,bisexual, asexual or heterosexual. • Religion: You are entitled to equal treatment no matter what your religious beliefs are or if you do not hold any religious beliefs. • Age: You are entitled to equal treatment regardless of your age. • Race: You are entitled to equal treatment irrespective of your race, skin colour, nationality or ethnic origin. • Traveller community: You are entitled to equal treatment if you are a member of the Traveller community. • Disability: You are entitled to equal treatment if you have a disability.
Identity education	aims to develop the individual's dynamic self-understandings and self-definitions used to structure, direct, give meaning to and present the self, that is negotiated intra- and interpersonally across the lifespan within sociocultural contexts, along with the psychosocial processes, meaning-systems, practices and structures that regulate their continued development.
Inclusion	refers to a process involving a programme, curriculum or educational environment where each child is welcomed and included on equal terms, can feel they belong, and can progress to his/her full potential in all areas of development.
The inquiry-based approach	to teaching and learning puts children's questions at the centre of the curriculum and places value on the skills of research as well as on the knowledge and understanding gained through inquiry.
Inter-belief conversation/Dialogue	refers to cooperative, constructive and positive interactions between children of different belief backgrounds, both religious and non-religious.
A Lesson	refers in GMGY is understood as a sustained period of teaching and learning.

A methodology	comprises the principles of methods used by teachers to enable children to achieve the desired learning. These methods are determined by the needs of the child in order to support their learning.
Multi-denominational	comprises schools promote culturally responsive education and uphold and respect the equality of beliefs and values held by children, parents, staff and members of the wider community. These schools aim to develop culturally responsive teachers and curricula; promote culturally responsive and inclusive school environments; and enable children and parents to be active members of the school community. Being a culturally responsive school involves understanding differences within their diverse populations, understanding the norms and values of these diverse populations and being sensitive to the transitions of children between home and school, and adapting the communication with parents to be responsive to cultural norms.
Parents	refers to a parent, guardian or carer.
Patron	refers to the 'owner' of the school as registered with the Department of Education and Skills. The patron defines the characteristic spirit of the school and appoints a Board of Management to run the school. In the case of the Community National School, the patron is the local Education and Training Board.
The patron's programme/ curriculum	refers refers to the programme or curriculum developed by a patron to underpin and promote the characteristic spirit of their schools. The Education Act (1998) recognises the legal right of patrons to design, supervise, implement and teach their programme/ curriculum during the school day.
Pedagogy	refers to the teacher's actions or works in supporting children's learning and development.
Philosophical perspectives	are worldviews that define the nature of the world, the individual's place in it, and the possible relationships to that world and its parts.

Philosophy for children	is an approach that aims to teach reasoning and argumentative skills to children. The approach advocates that teaching children reasoning skills early in life greatly improves other cognitive and academic skills.
Philosophy with children	is an approach to teaching philosophy in early years which emphasises the teacher as a co-participant and allows children to develop their own themes for discussion in class (to an age appropriate level).
Pluralist epistemology	refers to the different ways we have of knowing things.
Values	refers to the principles or standards of behaviour that a person holds.
Wellbeing	is a state of being confident, emotionally resilient, happy and safe. GMGY's definition of wellbeing is one which encompasses the child's awareness of their values and abilities, taking action to safeguard these values and having a positive, yet creative outlook on life. Wellbeing here embodies the child's value of their role as an active and social global citizen, with an understanding of their rights, and responsibilities towards others.

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Appendix A – GMGY Concept Map

Appendix B – Long-term planning template

Appendix C – Short-term planning template

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We have been learning about Ireland and places around the world that hold a special meaning for some people. Please help you child to identify a place (religious or secular) that is special to your family.

Name

_____

1. Name a place that has special meaning to your family and explain why this place holds special meaning.

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Where is this place located? Draw a map.

Appendix C – Short-term planning template

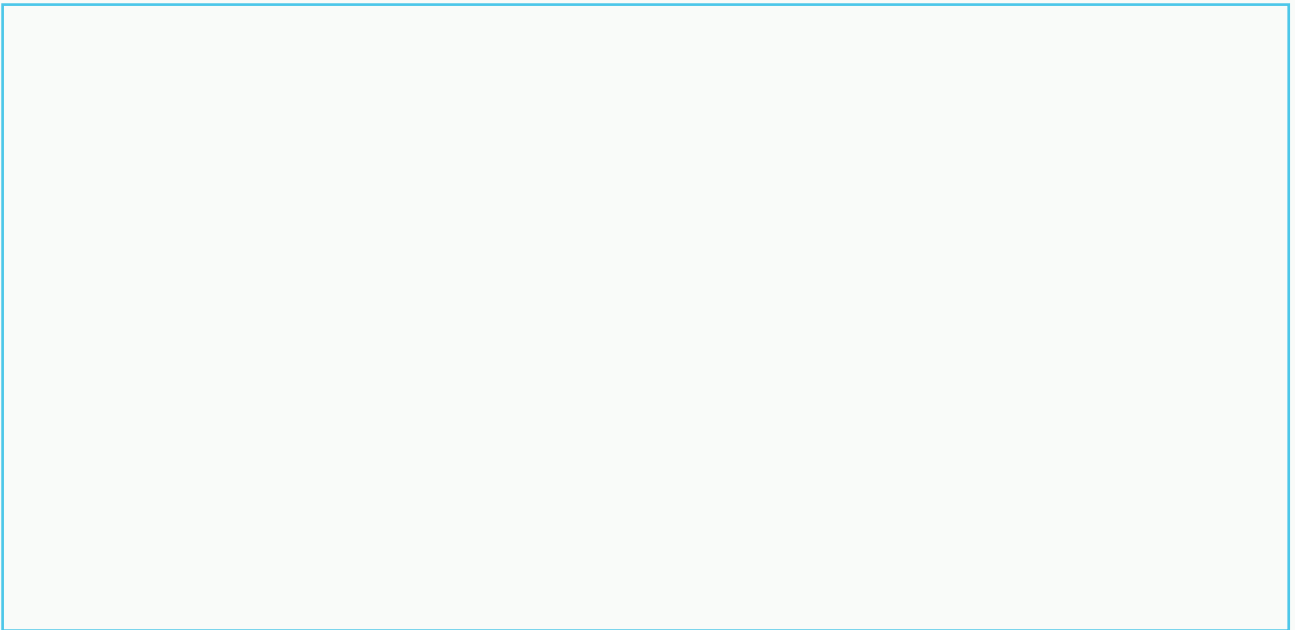**3.Describe what this place looks like. Draw a picture or insert a photo to show the class.**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

You might like to send in photos of the place you have chosen to show the class.

Parent/Guardian Signature

_____

Appendix D – Sample Family Project