

PRESS RELEASE

ICSTI WELCOMES INCREASED EMPHASIS ON SCIENCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The Irish Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (ICSTI), in a new statement on Science in Primary Schools, has welcomed the new science syllabus in the revised primary school curriculum.

The Council calls on the Minister for Education and Science to give the science syllabus priority attention in the proposed phased introduction and in the implementation of the new curriculum. ICSTI also urges the Minister to ensure that primary school teachers receive adequate training for the new syllabus. It calls on the scientific and business community to support primary schools in delivering the science syllabus as effectively as possible.

"The introduction of this greatly expanded science syllabus will have important implications for the integration of science into mainstream

Irish culture and for the understanding of science in Ireland," says the Council. "It will have significant impact on public awareness of and access to science, on the standing of science in Ireland and on the education of future science-informed citizens and science-qualified graduates. Greater confidence in dealing with science and technology is a key condition for the development of an Irish economy capable of maintaining its citizens into the new millennium."

ICSTI highlights the need for effective support of primary schools in preparing for and in implementing the new science syllabus. It believes that the role of the wider community will be of great significance in supporting schools in this task.

The recommendations include that:

- the Minister for Education and Science introduce the new curriculum quickly, with in-service teacher training commencing in 1998-9;**
- the science syllabus have priority attention in training for the new curriculum;**
- sufficient provision for the support of teachers be made in all areas (including training, support networks and educational materials), firstly by the Department of Education and Science but also by the business, scientific and other communities;**
- the time-tabling for the new curriculum be flexible, allowing sufficient and appropriate time for science education;**

- **the third level colleges establish courses in science education for primary level teachers and**
- **the scientific, education and business communities give support to teachers in the implementation of the science syllabus.**

The Council believes that science in the revised primary curriculum can be effectively introduced by the Department of Education and Science if it draws upon the experiences of other countries. In this respect, the late recognition here of the importance of science and technology are to our benefit. Science in primary schools will have its greatest potential for a positive impact on Irish society through the formation of a partnership between teachers, parents and the wider community. The Council undertakes to play its part in seeking to build up that partnership.

ENDS.

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