



Press Release

For 24th October 2018

Launch of *Children's School Lives (CSL)*, National longitudinal cohort study of primary schooling in Ireland

On Thursday 25th October 2018 at 9.15am, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and University College Dublin (UCD) will welcome children, teachers, education partners and researchers to the Confucius Institute to launch *Children's School Lives (CSL)*, the national longitudinal cohort study of primary schooling in Ireland.

Children's School Lives (CSL) is an exciting and unique research study which will follow 4,300 children through their primary school years in order to learn, in detail, about and from their experiences. The study will generate rich, in-depth insights into what it's like to be a child in primary school in Ireland as we head into the third decade of the twenty-first century. Relationships lie at the heart of primary education and the study will help to illuminate how children's experiences shape and are shaped by schools as communities, institutions, and as a system. Following a tender process by the NCCA earlier this year, UCD was awarded the contract to carry out the research over the coming seven years.

The NCCA always uses research and the evidence it provides to guide its advice on how the curriculum should be developed and what direction it should take. Research plays a central role in all curriculum development at early childhood, primary and post-primary. For the first time in almost twenty years, the Council is reviewing and redeveloping the primary curriculum from junior infants to sixth class. This is an important opportunity to step back from the curriculum and ask what it should do for children and for teachers in the next ten, fifteen years. Reflecting on the significance of the research, Brigid McManus, NCCA Chairperson, noted: *'Today marks a very exciting day for everyone in primary education. The new longitudinal study, the first of its kind in Ireland, will play a pivotal role in providing a strong evidence-base for the NCCA's redevelopment of the primary curriculum. Children's experiences, and the perspectives of their teachers, school management and*

parents on what happens in schools, are an important part of connecting practice with national policy. Aptly titled, Children's School Lives, the study will ensure that the primary curriculum is updated in order to continue to provide a strong foundation for teaching and learning in our primary schools.'

The Minister for Education and Skills, Mr Joe McHugh, TD, will join the event to launch the longitudinal study. Speaking ahead of the launch, the Minister said, *'I am looking forward to launching the Children's School Lives (CSL) study which seeks to capture the lived experiences of children in primary schools in Ireland by gathering the voices of children, their teachers and parents, and school management. This exciting new longitudinal study offers us an opportunity to build a more complete picture of children's time in primary school. This work will be of great benefit to schools, parents and policy-makers in the valuable work they undertake to improve the lives of children in Ireland.'*

Children from St Colmcille's Junior National School, Knocklyon and from St Thomas' Senior National School, Jobstown will open the launch with poetry and songs. Following the formal proceedings, attendees will have the opportunity to participate in a seminar, *Building the evidence base to improve children's lives* led by Assistant Prof Jennifer Symonds [Co-Principal Investigator]. Commenting on the study, Prof Dympna Devine [Head of UCD School of Education and Principal Investigator] noted, *'Children's School Lives is a landmark study nationally and internationally. It will fill key information gaps in our knowledge of the primary school system, prioritizing children's voices and the richness of the insights they can bring. The study's funding and vision recognises the centrality of children's educational experiences not only to their present lived experiences as children, but also their capacities to flourish throughout their lives.*

The event can be followed on Twitter @CSLstudyUCD, @NCCA, and @educationIRL for updates.

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Notes to Editors

For more information on *Children's School Lives (CSL)*, National longitudinal cohort study of primary schooling in Ireland, see www.ncca.ie

For more information on the event, contact: Elaine Ní Neachtain, Director, Curriculum and Assessment at 087 743 7326 or csl@ucd.ie phone 01-7167967

