

Céim Review: Stakeholder Written Submission

Programme Design

E.g. Programme Content, Required areas of study, learning, and assessment.

4. In relation to Programme Design, what works well in the **current** Céim policy?

The National Parents Council (NPC) has gathered and analysed feedback from parents regarding their opinions on the Céim Review.

The findings presented in this submission are based on a survey conducted by the NPC between the 18th and the 24th of March 2026. The survey was sent to all parents on the NPC mailing list who had consented to receiving such invitations. During this time, a total of 393 responses were collected. The opinions of the parents who completed the survey will be shared in this submission.

In relation to Programme Design, parents were given a number of different options to choose from. Based on these they told us they think the current policy works well because there is a focus on teaching important subject areas like literacy and numeracy. They believe these subjects are essential for students' learning and success. Additionally, the focus on children's well-being was also noted as a positive aspect of the policy.

Parents also recognise that the development of practical teaching skills and preparation for working in real classroom environments are working well within current teacher education programmes. They value the emphasis on hands-on experience, which helps ensure teachers are confident and capable when they begin working in schools. Parents welcomed the fact that there is a focus on inclusive education, with parents acknowledging that programmes aim to equip teachers to support children with a wide range of learning needs, including those with additional needs.

They also welcomed the fact that the Programme is based on key values that guide teachers to act with trust, honesty, care, and respect. When teachers follow these values, parents told us, they create a positive and supportive

classroom. This helps students feel safe and valued, making them more eager to learn.

5. Could this Section of Céim policy be improved? If so, how?

Many parents believe that teacher education in Ireland could be improved by providing more in-depth training in special educational needs (SEN) and neurodiversity. They feel that teachers are not fully prepared to support children with additional needs such as dyslexia, autism, ADHD, and other learning differences. Parents emphasised the need for mandatory, practical training that equips all teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners. They also highlighted that while schools aim to be inclusive, teachers often lack the skills to implement this effectively in the classroom, where children learn in different ways and at different speeds.

Parents highlighted the importance of teachers being trained in positive approaches to managing classroom behaviour, with a focus on understanding why children act in certain ways. They emphasised that teacher education should develop skills in promoting well-being, building strong relationships, understanding child psychology, and addressing bullying, while navigating the complex dynamics of real classrooms.

Parents also stressed the need for teachers to be confident and comfortable working in partnership with them as parents, ensuring open two-way communication to support each child effectively.

Parents identified a need for more practical, classroom-based training, with increased placements, observation opportunities, and supervised experience. They suggested expanding the number and variety of school placements, including special classes, special schools, urban and rural settings, Irish-medium schools, and classrooms with diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

Core Elements

All ITE programmes shall include the specific elements set out hereunder on an equitable basis:

1. Inclusive Education
2. Global Citizenship Education
3. Professional Relationships and working with parents
4. Professional identity and agency
5. Creativity and Reflective Practice
6. Literacy and Numeracy
7. Digital Skills

6. In relation to the Core Elements within Céim, what works well in the **current** policy?

The majority of parents consider Inclusive Education and Literacy and Numeracy teaching to be the most important elements among the seven core elements outlined in the current policy. Parents believe Inclusive Education is crucial for ensuring that every student, regardless of their individual needs, has the opportunity to thrive in a supportive learning environment.

Additionally, the emphasis on Literacy and Numeracy is widely recognised as fundamental, as these skills form the basis for academic success and lifelong learning.

7. Could this Section within the current Céim policy be improved? If so, how?

Parents feel this area could be strengthened by placing greater emphasis on practical experience in building effective parent-teacher partnerships. They highlighted the need for mandatory modules within teacher education to develop communication skills, understanding of family contexts, and confidence in working collaboratively with parents.

Parents think that the element regarding teachers' professional identity could be improved by educating teachers around unconscious bias and how this can affect their interactions in the classroom and with families. They believe that exercises in self-reflection and empathy would improve communication between teachers and parents and lead to better outcomes for children.

School Placement

E.g. Diversity of settings, Taisce, Research

8. Regarding School Placement, what works well in the **current** policy?

School placement works well in the current policy, because, parents believe, it is a central, structured component of teacher education, accounting for at least 25% of the overall programme.

9. Could this Section within the current Céim policy be improved? If so, how?

Parents emphasised that placement experience in special classes and special schools is a critical component of teacher preparation, essential for effectively meeting the diverse needs of all learners. There was also strong support for ensuring teachers gain experience across a diverse range of contexts, including schools with varying socio-economic backgrounds, as well as urban, rural, and Irish-medium setting.

Parents believe school placement could be improved by increasing the overall proportion of time allocated to placement within teacher education programmes. While the policy currently requires at least 25% of the programme to be school placement, feedback from parents suggests that many would prefer a higher allocation, with the majority indicating that teachers should spend up to 50% of the overall time in schools. Increasing placement time, parents believe, would allow student teachers to gain deeper, more sustained experience in classroom environments and better prepare them for the realities of teaching.

Although the policy requires placement in a minimum of two different school settings, feedback indicates that this could be expanded. More than half of respondents suggested exposure to up to four different types of school settings, and a significant minority believe teachers should experience up to five.

Mentoring and support during placements were considered crucial, allowing student teachers to receive constructive feedback, try multiple teaching methods, and reflect on their practice. This practical experience helps bridge the gap between theory and the realities of classroom teaching, building confidence and competence before teachers graduate.

There is also a feeling that teacher education colleges and placement schools are not always well-connected. Better links between them could help make teacher education more relevant and practical.

Overall, improving both the length of placement and the variety of school settings would strengthen the effectiveness of school placement and better support the professional development of student teachers.

Programme Resourcing

E.g. Staffing, facilities, student supports

10. Regarding Programme Resourcing, what works well in the **current policy?**

Regarding Programme Resourcing, parents believe that ensuring student teachers receive individual support and feedback is essential for their development and success in the classroom. This involves providing regular one-to-one mentorship sessions where experienced educators guide student teachers through their practical experiences, addressing specific challenges they may face in real-world teaching situations. Constructive feedback is timely and tailored, focusing on both strengths and areas for improvement, which can help student teachers refine their instructional strategies and classroom management skills.

11. Could this Section within the current Céim policy be improved? If so, how?

Parents told us that investing in quality materials such as digital technologies and language labs to resource the Programme could provide a conducive learning environment for both student teachers and their mentees. Parents also emphasised that having teacher trainers with recent, hands-on experience teaching in schools should be ranked as a high priority, as this ensures that guidance is current, practical, and grounded in the realities of today's classrooms. Resources such as teaching aids, technology, and access to professional development workshops can enrich the training experience and better prepare student teachers for their future roles.

Parents highlighted that there should be increased resources for educating teachers to work in partnership with parents. Teachers need to feel confident talking to parents, especially when there are concerns or difficulties.

Additional Information

12. Is there anything else which your organisation feels should be considered as part of the Céim review?

The dominant concern raised by parents is the need for better education in special education and inclusion. We know there are increasing numbers of children with additional needs in our classrooms, but parents believe that teachers are not fully educated in how best to support these children in mainstream, special classes and special schools.

Parents believe that mandatory modules within teacher education are essential to equip student teachers with the knowledge and practical skills to build effective partnerships with families and apply them confidently in the classroom.

Accessibility into teaching is another key theme. Parents named several barriers including the requirement for a high proficiency in Irish. Some parents feel this is too restrictive and stops good candidates from becoming teachers.

Some respondents also question how teachers are selected, suggesting that exam results alone are not enough. They believe qualities like empathy, communication and personality should be considered.

There were repeated calls for more flexible and affordable training routes for teachers, including paid or apprenticeship-style pathways, recognition of international qualifications, and recognition of experience in other employment settings.

Parents also want to see more diversity in the teaching profession, as it does not always reflect the society we live in.

Overall, parents want a system that better supports both teachers and students and reflects the real challenges of teaching today.