2026

INSIDE FLÚIRSE:

WHAT IRISH PRIMARY TEACHERS CHOOSE TO LEARN, 2024-26

OCTOBER 2026

Flúirse
Education Solutions



WHAT IRISH TEACHERS CHOOSE TO LEARN, 2024-26

After a busy academic year, we are taking stock of what our learners have told us, not just with their feedback but also with what courses they are choosing to do. Across Flúirse, teachers are not simply choosing different courses; their choices suggest a more purposeful approach to professional learning.

Over three years, their choices moved towards inclusion, wellbeing, practical AI and the new curriculum, and away from broad, general topics. Their own feedback says why: they want learning they can use in September, and they want it to fit around a summer that is also their only real break. This paper sets out those trends and, in teachers' own words, the pressures and barriers that shape how they learn.

A PROFESSION IN CHANGE

Primary teachers are working through a major curriculum development, alongside new demands from inclusion, wellbeing and technology.



A new curriculum, in stages

The Primary Language Curriculum and the 2023 Primary Mathematics Curriculum are already in classrooms.
From 2026/27 school year, every school must begin focused enactment of one new curriculum area. Wellbeing must be among the first three areas (Circular 0052/2026). This means that most classrooms will run old and new curricula side by side for several years.

Modern Foreign Languages

MFL is being introduced within the Language Curriculum, creating a new professional learning requirement for many primary teachers.

More Diverse Classrooms

Teachers are supporting a wide range of additional needs in mainstream settings, and our participant patterns show strong interest in specific, practical strategies linked to particular needs.

FIVE SHIFTS IN WHAT TEACHERS ARE CHOOSING

Across Flúirse from 2024 to 2026, five patterns stand out.

- **From general inclusion to specific need.** Special education needs and inclusion remained the largest area of interest. Within that broad area, participation increasingly centred on courses linked to particular needs, such as dyslexia, ADHD and ASD.

- **Wellbeing has moved to the centre.** Wellbeing and trauma-informed practice showed particularly strong growth across the past three summers, while courses focused on teachers' own wellbeing were among the highest rated of 2026.

- **AI has moved from curiosity to competence.** Interest surged in 2025. In 2026, participation shifted towards practical, responsible use rather than introductory awareness alone.

- **Curriculum change creates demand quickly**. A first-year course on Modern Foreign Languages became one of the most popular course of the summer, illustrating how quickly professional learning demand can emerge around a new requirement.

- **Practical purpose increasingly matters.** Hands-on and locally rooted courses gained ground, while broad leadership and general classroom topics became less prominent, even where they were highly rated.

POPULARITY AND SATISFACTION ARE DIFFERENT SIGNALS

The participation data and evaluation data tell related but different stories. Enrolment shows what teachers chose to study; evaluation results show how they experienced the courses they completed. A course can be highly rated without being one of the most popular, so the two measures should not be treated as interchangeable. One implication is that professional learning providers should pay attention not only to satisfaction, but to the subjects and formats teachers actively select when they have limited time.



WHAT TEACHERS TOLD US



Teachers rated their 2026 courses 3.67 out of 4 on average, and more than 97% agreed with every evaluation statement.

99.7%

Achieved the learning outcomes

99.5%

Felt the course was professionally relevant

99.3%

Improved their skills

98.9%

Said the course was well structured and managed

WHAT TEACHERS WANT FROM CPD

In their own words, teachers describe professional learning that works as practical, flexible and shared. The comments below illustrate recurring themes in the written feedback; individual quotations are not intended to represent the views of all participants.

- **Ready for September.** Participants repeatedly valued professional learning that could be put into practice immediately: "I am looking forward to bringing the new knowledge to the classroom in September." Another left with "a padlet full of resources that I can use next year."

- **Confidence, not just knowledge.** Several comments linked effective professional learning with increased confidence as well as knowledge. One course "helped build lots of enthusiasm and confidence in my own maths teaching going into next year"; another "changed the way I think about behaviour, relationships and emotional safety in the classroom."

- **Help making sense of change.** With curriculum reform under way, some participants valued learning that consolidated current guidance: "it is great to have all the recent DOE documents from the new curriculum, SPHE & Wellbeing etc in a condensed area as there is so much data being pushed out on teachers it is difficult to keep up with all the documents."

- **Seeing it in practice.** A recurring request was for more classroom demonstration: "I can learn much better to watch a video than from a description or a visual guide."

- **Learning that fits around life.** Some participants asked for formats that make learning possible away from the screen: "More audio to listen to course when you are out and about."

- **Learning with and from colleagues.** One participant highlighted the value of peer learning "As educators, we are always learning and evolving. There is no better way to do that than learn from our peers."

- **Whole-school professional learning; beyond summer.** One participant suggested "It would be great to make it available for purchase by a school for the whole staff during the academic year."

- **Support for different settings.** Participants working in multigrade and special settings asked for more tailored support; as one put it, "there's definitely less out there for juggling all four class levels in one room."



THE NEXT PHASE OF LEARNING

Based on what teachers are choosing and telling us, we see five directions shaping the next phase of teacher professional learning in Ireland.

- **From single courses to learning pathways**. The participation patterns support offering connected learning a defined goal, such as an inclusive classroom or a trauma-informed school, rather than relying only on standalone courses.
- **From theory to demonstration.** The feedback points to growing value in short videos of classroom practice, worked examples and ready-to-use resource packs. These features are likely to become increasingly important in effective online professional learning.
- **From one size to different settings.** Providers should consider distinct needs across special schools, multigrade classrooms, special education oles and early-career rather than assuming one course format or context will suit everyone.
- **From AI awareness to AI confidence.** The move towards practical and responsible AI use suggests continued demand for applied guidance, examples and clear professional boundaries rather than awareness-level content alone.
- **Wellbeing as a foundation.** With Wellbeing among the first curriculum areas schools must select for focused enactment, teacher and pupil wellbeing is likely to remain a central professional learning priority.



WHAT THIS MEANS

FOR SCHOOLS

Plan professional learning as a staff around the curriculum area you are enacting, and connect courses around shared priorities such as inclusion or wellbeing.

FOR PROVIDERS

Show real classroom practice on video, keep workload aligned with advertised hours, and design for different settings, multigrade classrooms and flexible learning on the move.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

LEADING THE WAY

Flúirse works with thousands of Irish primary teachers throughout the year, and their feedback shapes what we build. As one teacher wrote: "This was the best EPV course I have ever engaged with, very informative and full of useful and meaningful content."

For 2027 and beyond, we are acting on what teachers have told us:

- A "classroom tomorrow" standard for every course: clear, practical takeaways for September.
- Resource packs and short classroom videos built into every course.
- Learning pathways that connect courses around the priorities schools are enacting.
- Whole-school options that support staff teams through the curriculum rollout.
- Human-led, carefully quality-assured content that is current, Irish in context and proportionate to the time teachers have.

Our aim is simple: professional learning that Irish teachers trust, enjoy and use.



ABOUT THIS PAPER

Trends draw on patterns in participation from 2024 to 2026, reported as directions rather than figures. Evaluation results come from participant evaluations of 56 courses in 2026, on a four-point agreement scale with no neutral option; "don't know" responses are excluded from averages. Quotes are from anonymous written comments, reproduced verbatim. Results reflect Flúirse participants and are not a census of all primary teachers.

Methodological Note: where this paper describes growth, decline or shifts in participation, these statements refer to changes within the Flúirse offering and should not be interpreted as estimates of national teacher demand.