OECD Project Overcoming School Failure: Policies that Work

National Report
Ireland

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 5

SECTION I 7

CHAPTER 1: STRUCTURE & GOVERNANCE 7

1.1 Main structural features of the Irish school system 7

1.2 Pre School Education 7

1.3 Primary Education 7

1.4 Post-primary Education 8

1.5 Governance of and regulatory framework for the Irish school system. 11

1.6 School Choice 12

1.6.1 Schools Enrolment Policy 13

CHAPTER 2: FAIR AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION 15

2.1 Introduction 15

2.2 Early education intervention & the prevention of school failure 15

2.2.1 Introduction 15
2.2.2 Universal Free Preschool Year in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme 16
2.2.3 Early Start 16
2.2.4 Síolta, the national quality framework for Early Childhood Education. 17
2.2.5 Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework 17
2.2.6 Research Series 2008 – 2010 17
2.2.7 Workforce Development 18
2.2.8 Summary 18

2.3 School Interventions 18

2.3.1 DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) 18
2.3.1.1 Identification Framework 19

2.4 Further Education and Training 20

2.4.1 Overview 20
2.4.2 Alternating training 21
2.4.3 Youthreach 22
2.4.4 Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) Programme 22
2.4.5 Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) 23
2.4.6 Senior Traveller Training Centres (STTCs) 23
2.4.7 Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) 24
2.4.8 Adult Literacy 24
2.4.9 Community Education 25
2.4.10 Additional Supports 25
2.4.11 Training - Background information 26
2.4.12 Community Training Centres (CTCs) 26
2.4.13 Local Training Initiatives (LTIs) 27
2.4.14 Justice Workshops (JWS) 27

CHAPTER 3: FAIR AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICES 28

3.1 The School Support Programme 28

3.2 The National Educational Welfare Board 29

3.3 Background on Individual Services 30
3.3.1 Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) 30
3.3.2 School Completion Programme (SCP) 31
3.3.3 Visiting Teachers for Travellers Service (VTST) 33

3.4 Special Education 33
3.4.1 Introduction 33
3.4.2 Continuum of Support 33
3.4.3 National Council for Special Education 34
3.4.4 General Allocation Model of Teaching Support in Primary Schools 35
3.4.5 Home Tuition 35
3.4.6 School supports 35

3.5 Integration of Migrants 37
3.5.1 Ireland and Migration 37
3.5.2 Access to Education 38
3.5.3 Policy on Intercultural Education 38
3.5.4 English language resource teachers 39
3.5.5 Professional Development for Teachers 39
3.5.6 Language provision 40

3.6 Literacy and Numeracy 40
3.6.1 Targets for Improving Literacy 40
3.6.2 Proposed Actions to Achieving Targets 41
3.6.3 Teacher Training 42
3.6.4 Literacy and Numeracy measures 43

3.7 Streaming and Year Repetition 44

3.8 Guidance in Second-level Schools 46

CHAPTER 4: FAIR AND INCLUSIVE RESOURCING 48

4.1 Governance and Financing 48

4.2 GDP Expenditure on Education 48

4.3 Current Expenditure per Student 49

4.4 Enhanced expenditure on disadvantage 50

4.5 Monitoring and evaluation of DEIS 51

4.6 Monitoring Early School Leaving 53

4.7 Performance measurement 54

CHAPTER 5: CHALLENGES IN OVERCOMING SCHOOL FAILURE 56

5.1 Overview 56

5.2 Stakeholder input to policy and strategy **57**

5.3 Political environment **57**

5.4 Strategic Direction **58**

5.5 Customer service and delivery **58**

5.6 Striving for continuous improvement and innovation **58**

5.7 Performance measurement **58**

5.8 Conclusion **59**

SECTION II **60**

APPENDICES **73**

REFERENCES **82**

Executive Summary

For the individual, educational attainment has a broad-ranging impact on many aspects of life, from personal development to civic engagement and economic well-being. For society, education is an invaluable resource in seeking to address and alleviate the causes of social exclusion, promote good citizenship, enrich culture and underpin economic development. Reducing school failure and improving educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils is a key priority in Ireland's education policy agenda.

Ireland's frame of reference in addressing educational inequity is based on the definition of "educational disadvantage" as contained in the Education Act 1998:

"…the impediments to education arising from social or economic disadvantage which prevent students from deriving appropriate benefit from education in schools."

Ireland's action plan for educational inclusion is DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools). The action plan provides for a standardised system for identifying levels of disadvantage and an integrated School Support Programme (SSP).

There is significant evidence from research, both in Ireland and elsewhere, that disadvantage associated with poverty assumes a multiplier effect and are exacerbated when large proportions of pupils in a school are from poor backgrounds (a 'social context' effect).

Under DEIS schools and school clusters or communities are allocated supplementary resources and supports in line with their concentration of disadvantage. The rationale for DEIS is that additional resources are targeted at schools in which disadvantage is most concentrated. DEIS supports are designed to meet the additional needs of schools in recognition of the concentrated nature of their disadvantage.

The DEIS Action Plan is one element of a continuum of interventions to address disadvantage, which include second-chance education and training and access measures for adults to support increased participation by under-represented groups in Society

It is widely recognised that Ireland's Department of Education & Skills is presently operating in a very challenging environment, shaped in particular by profound economic, social, technological, cultural and demographic changes. However, against a backdrop of necessary cost saving measures implemented over the last number of years there have also been a number of positive developments happening in education.

In January 2010 a universal free pre-school initiative for children in the year before attending primary school was launched. The latest data concerning the initiative known as the Early Childhood Care & Education Scheme (ECCE) show that 94% of the eligible cohort of children are participating in the scheme.

Advance findings from an evaluation of the DEIS action plan, which is expected to be finalised by the end of 2011, show an overall improvement in average reading and mathematics achievement. The improvements are statistically significant at all grade levels and in both English reading and mathematics. Improvements are greatest at lower grade levels, with the largest gains being noted among pupils in 2nd class and the smallest at 6th class. Progress appears most marked among pupils with lower levels of achievement, and positive change in achievement is most evident in junior grades.

In relation to Early School Leaving the latest available figures for all EU27 member states, which are for 2009, show that the proportion of early school leavers in Ireland in 2009 was 11% which compares to the EU-27 and EU-15 averages of 14% and 16% respectively. This ranks Ireland as joint ninth in the list of EU member states. It is particularly encouraging to see that the average Leaving Certificate retention rate in DEIS schools, i.e. those schools which have been identified as having a concentration of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, increased by 5 percentage points from 68.2% to 73.2% for students, while the retention rate in non-DEIS schools increased from 85.0% to 87.4%, for cohort of students entering second-level over the period 2001 to 2004.

Ireland has been affected severely by the late 2000s financial crisis. Between 2007 and 2010, the volume of goods and services produced in Ireland fell by about 12%. In late 2006, the unemployment rate stood at a little more than 4%; now it's at approximately 14%. Against this backdrop the Government has sought to protect spending on Education. The radically altered economic scene in Ireland and the changing demographic profile of the population will require considerable imagination, agility and speed if the Education Sector is to deal with challenges in an appropriate and timely way.

In light of this, the priorities for primary and post-primary education over the coming years will be to continue to promote quality, relevance and inclusiveness by supporting schools in developing an inclusive environment for all learners, targeting interventions to address educational disadvantage, raising educational attainment, meeting the needs of pupils with special education needs, providing supports for immigrant children, enhancing teacher education and professional development, promoting ongoing curriculum development, school evaluation and quality improvement, and providing high-quality school accommodation together with administrative and financial supports.

SECTION I

Chapter 1: Structure & Governance

1.1 Main structural features of the Irish school system

Attendance at full-time education in Ireland is compulsory for children between six and sixteen years of age. The upper age limit is dependent on the child having completed three years in post-primary school or whichever occurs later. Essentially, all Irish children (about 99%) attend non fee-paying publicly funded primary schools. This publicly funded school system consists of eight years of primary schooling (including two years infant education between the age of four and six). This is followed by five or six years of second-level or post-primary schooling, comprising three years of junior cycle and either two or three years of senior cycle. Similarly, almost all (99%) of pupils enrolled in post-primary schools attend publicly funded secondary, vocational, comprehensive or community schools. **Appendix 'A'** provides a diagrammatic representation of the education system in Ireland.

1.2 Pre School Education

In 2010, the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth affairs implemented a universal pre-school provision scheme which provides for a free pre-school year for all children aged between 3 yrs 2 months and less than 4 yrs 7 months in September of the relevant year. 94% of eligible children were enrolled in early childhood care and education (ECCE) services in the 2010/11 school year.

1.3 Primary Education

There are 509,652 children enrolled in 3,305 primary schools in Ireland taught by 32,489 teachers (statistics relate to 2010-11). Many of the schools are small with over 50% of them having four or fewer teachers. Although children in Ireland are not obliged to attend school until the age of six, the majority of children begin school in the September following their fourth birthday.

Within the Irish primary school system, schools are privately owned and controlled by patron bodies and publicly funded through the Department of Education and Skills (DES). This funding takes the form of direct payment for salaries, grants for running costs and resources based on school enrolments, and grants for school buildings. Teachers and other ancillary staff are therefore employed by each school's Board of Management. So while the salaries of principals and teachers are paid by the State, each school is legally autonomous in terms of managing its human resources and in terms of legal and compliance responsibilities. Many schools also supplement state funding by monies raised through various fund-raising efforts.

89.6% of schools are under the patronage and management of the Roman Catholic Church. The new Irish Education Minister announced in March 2011 the establishment of a Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector. The terms of reference of the Forum are, *inter alia, "how it can best be ensured that the education system can provide a sufficiently diverse number and range of primary schools catering for all religions and none"*. The Report of the Forum is due by the end of 2011.

While the Irish language is a compulsory subject for pupils in all primary and second-level schools, about 150 primary schools (referred to in the Irish language as *Gaelscoileanna*) teach all subjects through the medium of the Irish language and the normal language of communication is Irish.

1.4 Post-primary Education

There are 729 post-primary schools in Ireland comprising 383 voluntary secondary schools (52.6% of total), 254 vocational schools and community colleges (34.8% of total), and 92 community and comprehensive schools (12.6% of total). There are 356,107 pupils enrolled in these schools, taught by 26,185 teachers. (Statistics relate to 2010/11.)

Voluntary secondary schools are privately owned and managed, and many of them date back to the 18th and 19th centuries. A small number are fee-paying but the majority are non fee-paying. The trustees of most of these schools are religious communities or boards of governors. State capital funding for voluntary secondary schools has been provided since the early 1960s and current funding from the State is available in the form of teachers' salaries and a capitation grant based on the number of students enrolled. In recent years, there has been a dramatic reduction in the number of members of religious orders and congregations involved in education in Ireland.

Vocational schools and community colleges are administered by Vocational Education Committees (VEC), which were set up following the 1930 Vocational Education Act in every county and county borough. Vocational Education Committees consist largely of democratically elected representatives of the local community. Each VEC appoints a Chief Executive Officer and staff to administer and manage the various educational activities carried out by that VEC, including activities carried out in the vocational schools and community colleges. Financial allocations are made to the VECs on the basis of the financial year, to cover pay and non-pay, and are paid as a block grant. VECs are given a high level of autonomy in the management and appropriation of their budgets in line with its individual priorities. Schools under the auspices of the VEC also have Boards of Management.

Community and comprehensive schools have a more recent history than voluntary secondary and vocational schools, having been set up after the introduction of free second-level education in 1967, to ensure that second-level education was accessible to all students throughout the country. Community

and comprehensive schools are fully funded by the State and are managed by Boards of Management of differing compositions. Pupils in all three types of schools follow the same curriculum and sit the same State examinations.

Vocational, community and comprehensive schools are funded on the basis of an annual budgeted figure and have a higher proportion of their costs covered by State grants.

The Junior Cycle: The Junior Certificate Examination is taken at the end of junior cycle in post-primary schools. The junior cycle caters for students aged from *twelve to fifteen* years and students normally sit the exam at the age of 14 or 15, after 3 years of post-primary education.

The Minister for Education and Skills recently endorsed the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) proposals for junior cycle reform submitted by the Council in October 2011.

Some key elements of the proposals are:

- A revised junior certificate programme with a cap on the number of subjects which can be taken for assessment for qualification purposes. The objective is to make time and space for active learning and the development of key skills (which support the development of literacy and numeracy), to place the focus on the process of learning rather than on the qualification/examination, and to address issues of overload
- All students will be required to cover 24 statements of essential learning which are focused on such areas as communications, language, mathematical concepts, critical thinking, citizenship and sustainable values, environmental, economic and social knowledge, consumer skills, ICT, creating and appreciating art, valuing local and national heritage and recognising the relevance of the past to the current national and international issues, well being, and ethical and responsible decision-making
- Irish, English and Maths are core for all, except for those with an exemption from Irish. The syllabuses for all subjects will be specified at a common level by NCCA, except for Irish, English and Maths which will be specified at Ordinary and Higher Level.
- Schools will have discretion to provide for bottom up curriculum components as well as essential areas of learning in the form of short courses of 100 hours. NCCA will develop guidelines and a range of exemplars to support this.
- Subjects will be reduced to 200 hours, except for Maths, Irish and English which will be 240 hours.
- Students will have a limit on the subjects that can be taken for qualification purposes – a max of 8 subjects, or 7 subjects + 2 short courses, or 6 subjects + 4 short courses.

- 6 key skills will be embedded in subjects – Managing Myself, Staying Well, Communications, Being Creative, Working with Others and Managing Information and Thinking.
- The Literacy and Numeracy Strategy provides for standardised testing in English and Maths to be introduced in the 2nd year of junior cycle. (2014, for 2012 entrants).
- There will be an additional award at level 2 of the National Framework of Qualifications for those students with special needs for whom the Level 3 award is unsuitable.

Discussions on implementation are beginning with the partners in education. A revised syllabus in English will be implemented as a first step in the process, for students beginning junior cycle in 2014, for first examination in 2017. Groups of 4-5 subjects will be implemented on a phased basis each year after that.

Currently students sit the examination in a range of subjects, in some cases as many as 15, including Irish, English and Mathematics. 28 subjects are available at junior cycle including History, Geography, Modern Languages, Art, Music, Home Economics and Science as well as English, Irish and Mathematics[1]. All junior cycle students follow a social, personal and health education programme. Guidance and counselling is provided as well as physical education. Some 87% of pupils proceed to upper secondary education while others go to alternative career pathways such as apprenticeships.

The Senior Cycle: The senior cycle caters for students in the 15 to 18 year old age group and offers a "Transition Year" an optional one-year programme that typically forms the first year of a three year cycle. The main objective of the Transition Year is to promote the personal, social, educational and vocational development of pupils and to prepare them for their role as autonomous, participative and responsible members of society. At the end of the senior cycle, the Leaving Certificate Examination is taken. The examination is the terminal examination of post-primary education. Students may choose one of three Leaving Certificate Programmes:

The Leaving Certificate Established - This is the most widely taken programme in which students must take at least five subjects, including Irish (with the exception of those entering the system after 11 years of age). Those intending to pursue higher education at a third-level institute normally take this examination and access to third-level courses depends on results obtained.

The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) first introduced in 1989 is similar to the established programme detailed above; however there is an added vocational content and a concentration on technical subjects. Pupils taking the LCVP take five Leaving Certificate subjects (including two vocational subjects); a modern European Language and three link modules on Enterprise Education, Preparation for Work and Work Experience. The LCVP is fully accepted as a basis for entry to third level.

[1] A full list of subjects is available at www.ncca.ie

The Leaving Certificate Applied - The Leaving Certificate Applied is a two-year Leaving Certificate available to students who wish to follow a practical programme with a strong vocational emphasis. The primary objective of this person-centred programme is to prepare participants for adult and working life. While certification in the LCA does not qualify for direct entry to third-level courses, students who successfully complete the programme are able to proceed to many Post Leaving Certificate courses. The framework of the LCA consists of a number of modules grouped under three general headings: General Education; Vocational Education and Vocational Preparation.

The percentages of pupils studying the three options in 2010/11 are:
Leaving Certificate Established (60%)
Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (34%)
Leaving Certificate Applied (6%)

1.5 Governance of and regulatory framework for the Irish school system.

The Education Act of 1998 provides the main legislative framework for Irish primary, post-primary, adult and continuing education and for vocational education and training. This Act makes formal provision for the education "of every person in the State, including any person with a disability or who has other special educational needs". It sets out the functions and responsibilities of all key partners in the schooling system and legislates for the establishment of Boards of Management for all schools. It requires schools to engage in the preparation of school plans and to promote parental involvement through the establishment of parent associations. Accountability procedures are laid down under the Act.

Apart from the duties and functions specified in the Education Act, other legislation such as the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act and employment and equality legislation have placed legal obligations on Boards.

The Education Act 1998 places a duty on the patron of a recognised school, for the purposes of ensuring that such a school is managed in a spirit of partnership, to appoint where practicable, a Board of Management. The composition of a Board of Management is based on centrally agreed arrangements between the relevant stakeholders. It specifies the various duties and functions of a Board. The Board must manage the school on behalf of the patron for the benefit of the students and their parents and provide, or cause to be provided, an appropriate education for each student in the school. It must uphold the characteristic spirit of the school and must at all times act in accordance with any Act of the Oireachtas relating to the establishment or operation of the school.

The Board is required to prepare policies on admission, suspension or expulsion of students and, in this regard, it is required to respect principles of equality and parents' right to send their children to a school of the parents' choice. It must respect and promote respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society. It must have regard to the efficient use of resources and accountability to students, their parents, the patron, staff and the community served by the school and must make arrangements for the preparation of the school plan and ensure that it is regularly reviewed and updated.

The composition of Boards of Management at primary level was last changed in 1997 when it was expanded to provide for the inclusion of community nominees along with the patron, teacher and parents' nominees to make an eight member Board (or a four member Board in the case of a one teacher school).

The term of office for Boards of Management in primary schools is a 4 year period. The current Boards of Management of primary schools were formed in December 2007 and are next due to change in December 2011.

Boards of Management at post-primary level are typically for a 3 year term of office. There are some differences in the composition of Boards of Management between the three sectors at post-primary level.

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 provides a framework within which issues relating to the educational welfare of children, including the causes and effects of non-attendance at school can be addressed effectively. The Act also provides for the identification of children who are being educated outside the recognised school system and for a structure to ensure that the education that is being provided for them meets their constitutional rights.

1.6 School Choice

The enrolment policy in individual schools is the responsibility of the managerial authority of those schools. Parents have the right to send their children to a school of their choice having regard to the rights of the managerial authorities. The Department's main responsibility is to ensure that schools in an area can, between them, cater for all pupils seeking places. This may result, however, in some pupils not obtaining a place in the school of their first choice.

It is the responsibility of the managerial authorities of schools to implement an enrolment policy in accordance with the Education Act 1998. In this regard a board of management may find it necessary to restrict enrolment to children from a particular area or a particular age group or, occasionally, on the basis of some other criterion. This selection process and the enrolment policy on which it is based must be non-discriminatory and must be applied fairly in respect of all applicants.

Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, provides parents with an appeal process where a board of management of a school or a person acting on behalf of the Board refuses enrolment to a student. Where a school refuses to enrol a pupil, the school is obliged to inform parents of their right under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 to appeal that decision to either the relevant Vocational Educational Committee or to the Secretary General of the Department.

The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) is the statutory agency which can assist parents who are experiencing difficulty in securing a school place for their child. (www.newb.ie)

1.6.1 Schools Enrolment Policy

On the 13th of June 2011 the Minister for Education and Skills opened the way for an overhaul of the enrolment policies in all schools. Minister Quinn published a discussion document on admissions policy aimed to bring about changes in regulations and legislation on how primary and post-primary schools allocate places to students. Central to this debate on enrolment is the need to ensure a fair and transparent system in all schools, which does not discriminate unfairly against students or parents.

The document contains suggestions on how to make the process of enrolling at either primary or second-level schools more open, equitable and consistent.

There are two key areas where regulations, according to the paper, could focus:

- the content of an enrolment policy, in particular the over subscription criteria to be used when demand for places exceeds supply
- the operation of the enrolment policy

On the content of the enrolment policy, suggestions in the discussion document include:

- the enrolment policy of the school be easily and readily available to all
- the school's ethos and general objectives should be set out clearly
- admission to the school cannot be conditional on the payment of a financial contribution or booking deposit
- how to deal with over-subscription

80% of all schools enrol all children who present, according to a 2009 ESRI report, while selection criteria are used for the other 20% of schools. However, appeals have risen dramatically, by over 750%, since the procedure was introduced in 2002.

One of the main areas where problems do currently arise with enrolment in schools is when demand exceeds supply of places at a school. The discussion document sets out a number of options to be considered in these cases:

- Age of applicant. Schools could give, as is often the case now, priority to children who are older
- Remove waiting lists. This is seen to disadvantage new comers to an area
- The practice of giving priority on a first-come first-served basis, which can result in long waiting lists in schools or even queues forming outside schools at the time of enrolment. However, if such a decision was taken, consideration would have to be given as to how to deal with existing waiting lists.
- Siblings in the same school. It would seem reasonable to continue to give priority to students who already have siblings in a school
- Remove the practice of giving priority to a student on the basis of being a relative of the staff, board of management, past pupil or benefactor of the school
- Faith. Continue the right of denominational schools to give priority to children of a particular faith
- Give priority to pupils on the basis of proximity to their schools
- Replace requirements for competency of parents in a particular language with a criterion that parents should respect the linguistic policy of the school
- Ensure that admission to a school is not based on a pupil's academic or other skills
- Admission should not be contingent on the payment of a booking deposit

In relation to the operation of the enrolment process, the discussion paper suggests that regulations could standardise timeframes for enrolment, notification requirements, application processes, decision making processes and the appeals process.

The overall approach in the discussion document is to regulate only those aspects of enrolment policies and practices where a common or national approach may be desirable. Otherwise, maximum discretion remains with the school and board of management. However, the paper also sets out possible new sanctions in a case where a school or board of management is not compliant with any new regulations. In such cases, a patron or the Minister may have the power to appoint an external admissions officer and remove the control of enrolment from a board.

The Minister invited education partners and interested parties to submit their views on school enrolment to the Department. A new regulatory framework will then be devised with a view to a more integrated approach and having regard to the roles of the different agencies that might interact with schools at any time in relation to admission policies or decisions.

Chapter 2: Fair and inclusive education

2.1 Introduction

For the individual, educational attainment has a broad-ranging impact on many aspects of life, from personal development to civic engagement and economic well-being. For society, education is an invaluable resource in seeking to address and alleviate the causes of social exclusion, promote good citizenship, enrich culture and underpin economic development.

Through the National Partnership programme 'Towards 2016', the National Development Plan and the new Programme for Government, the Government has set out a range of measures to support school communities. A continuing programme of curriculum reform is under way and will be progressed in tandem with enhancement of initial teacher education and in-service courses to support teachers.

The priorities for primary and post-primary education over the coming years are to:

- promote quality, relevance and inclusiveness by supporting schools in developing an inclusive environment for all learners
- target interventions to address educational disadvantage
- raise educational attainment
- meet the needs of learners with special education needs
- provide supports for newcomer children
- progress the modernisation agenda
- enhance teacher education and professional development
- promote ongoing curriculum development, school evaluation and quality improvement, and
- provide high-quality school accommodation, administrative and financial supports.

2.2 Early education intervention & the prevention of school failure

2.2.1 Introduction

The value of early childhood education in the prevention of school failure is acknowledged widely in both national and international literature. In Ireland, since the 1990s there has been a significant and sustained period of investment in the provision of early childhood care and education (ECCE) services for children. This investment has resulted in:

- The delivery of a universal Free Preschool Year (from January 2010)
- The creation of new ECCE facilities
- Support and maintenance of established ECCE services

- Development of National Practice Frameworks (Síolta[2], the national Quality Framework and Aistear[3], the Early Childhood Curricular Framework) to underpin and promote quality provision
- Development and implementation of a Workforce Development Plan for the ECCE sector (published December 2010)
- Development and delivery of a range of targeted interventions for children with additional needs e.g. Early Start, Autism preschool services.
- Completion of a series of national research projects and associated practice related tools and materials

2.2.2 Universal Free Preschool Year in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme

This initiative offers one year free preschool education to all children in the year prior to enrolment in primary school. This consists of a maximum of 3 hours per day, 5 days per week, 38 weeks per year. Participation is voluntary. Since its establishment in January 2010, there has been a very positive response to this offer and data collected in September 2010 reports 63,000 (94%) of eligible children have enrolled in ECCE services. A wide variety of ECCE settings are contracted by the state to provide the free preschool year on condition that they fulfil a number of criteria including:

- Compliance with all relevant statutory and regulatory requirements
- Ensuring that Preschool Leaders have achieved minimum of a nationally accredited Level 5 Major Award in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent. (A higher capitation rate is offered to those settings where preschool leaders have a major award at level 7 (bachelor degree) or above and all other staff have achieved a level 5 major award.)
- A commitment to implementing a programme which adheres to the principles of Síolta, the national quality framework

2.2.3 Early Start

The Early Start programme is a pre-school programme for 3 and 4 year olds which offers one year of pre-school to children in designated areas of disadvantage. The programme aims to provide children who are most at risk of educational disadvantage with an educational programme that will enhance their development and prevent failure at school. Parents' involvement is one of the core elements of the programme. The Home School Community Liaison coordinator works with the Early Start staff to develop a structured plan to support parents, ranging from initial contact with families to the enrolment of new pupils at open days. A programme of structured activities throughout the year is developed. The purpose of the parents' involvement is to develop the parents as prime educators, providing them with the relevant skills to maximise their child's participation in the pre-school process and thus laying the foundations for future educational achievement.

[2] Irish language word meaning "Seeds"
[3] Irish language word meaning "Journey"

2.2.4 Síolta, the national quality framework for Early Childhood Education.

Síolta comprises a set of nationally agreed Principles, Standards and Components of quality that address all areas of practice in all ECCE settings where children aged birth to six years are present. In addition a range of tools and processes have been developed to support the implementation of Síolta in practice. Currently a national evaluation of Síolta is underway.

2.2.5 Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework

Aistear, the early childhood curriculum framework was published in October 2010 and, in common with Síolta comprises a set of nationally agreed and evidence based Principles, Themes and Goals which provide guidance for adults supporting the learning, well being and development of children aged birth to six years. Currently Aistear is being disseminated nationally to relevant audiences and a range of support materials and activities are being developed to assist adults as they begin to incorporate Aistear into their practice with children.

Together, Síolta and Aistear provide comprehensive information, for the diverse population of ECCE settings and staff, on how best to support young children to realise their full potential. Key issues such as fostering independence, self esteem, creativity, communication skills (in particular oral language development) and self regulation are addressed with practical tools and guidelines.

2.2.6 Research Series 2008 – 2010

The Early Years Education Policy Unit (EYEPU) provided funding for three national research projects which focused on practical challenges related to pedagogy in early childhood care and education settings, specifically:

- Development of a Framework for Action for the Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in Early Childhood Education Settings – Mary Immaculate College, Limerick
- Examining Pedagogy in Early Childhood – Stranmillis College, Belfast
- Supporting early childhood educational provision within a cluster of DEIS preschool and primary school settings with a specific focus on transition between the two educational settings – Centre for Social and Educational Research (CSER), Dublin Institute of Technology.

Currently the key messages and output of these projects are being disseminated to relevant stakeholders in the ECCE sector.

2.2.7 Workforce Development

In recognition of the central role of the qualified adult in delivering high quality centre based early childhood care and education experience for young children, a Workforce Development Plan for the ECCE Workforce in Ireland was developed and published in December 2010. This plan identified, through a significant programme of research and consultation, the main challenges facing the ECCE workforce in becoming appropriately qualified and set out clearly the actions required to meet those challenges. One particular issue was the lack of national standards for awards in ECCE which reflected agreed occupation role profiles and national practice guidelines. An important step towards resolving this issue was the availability since February 2011 of new national award standards which meet these criteria are published by the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC). (www.fetac.ie)

2.2.8 Summary

Early childhood care and education is an essential element of any strategy to address school failure as it impacts on children's lives at the optimal time to support the development of key cognitive, personal, social and emotional skills which are essential to successful engagement with the national education system. Ireland has recognised this with a sustained programme of investment in ECCE and whilst much of this investment is still at an early stage of implementation in practice, it augurs well for the capacity of children in Ireland to benefit fully from educational opportunities into the future.

2.3 School Interventions

Under-achievement in school can have profound consequences for children and adults in later life, not only in terms of economic uncertainty, but also in terms of well being, health, self esteem and participation in family and community life. For young children in school, the experience of success and enjoyment in learning is vital if they are to be encouraged and motivated to reach their full educational potential. There is ample evidence to show that it is children from disadvantaged communities who constitute a majority of those who currently fail to benefit from the education system, and that under-achievement in school can have inter-generational effects on families and their communities. It is the children of early school leavers who are most at risk of leaving school early themselves. Intervening in this cycle of deprivation demands that a systematic, integrated and effective strategy is put in place to address educational disadvantage.

2.3.1 DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools)

The Department of Education and Skills launched 'DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools)', the action plan for Educational Inclusion in May 2005. The action plan provides for a standardised system for identifying levels of disadvantage and an integrated School Support Programme

(SSP). DEIS is designed to ensure that the schools serving the most disadvantaged communities benefit from the maximum level of support available.

The process of identifying primary and second-level schools for participation in DEIS was managed externally by the Educational Research Centre (ERC) on behalf of the Department and was supported by quality assurance work, co-ordinated through the Department's regional offices and the Inspectorate.

The DEIS action plan focuses on addressing the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities, from pre-school through second-level education (3 to 18 years). Its frame of reference is based on the definition of "educational disadvantage" in the Education Act 1998, as:

"…the impediments to education arising from social or economic disadvantage which prevent students from deriving appropriate benefit from education in schools."

The action plan is, therefore, one element of a continuum of interventions to address disadvantage, which include second-chance education and training and access measures for adults to support increased participation by under-represented groups in further and higher education. A further element of this continuum is the ongoing development of provision for pupils with special educational needs in light of the enactment of the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004 and the establishment of the National Council for Special Education. All of these elements will be discussed further in this report.

The DEIS action plan is grounded in the belief that:

- Every child and young person deserves an equal chance to access, participate in and benefit from education
- Each person should have the opportunity to reach her/his full educational potential for personal, social and economic reasons
- Education is a critical factor in promoting social inclusion and economic development.

2.3.1.1 Identification Framework

An extensive identification process to select schools for inclusion in DEIS was conducted in 2005. Primary schools were selected by reference to a range of socio-economic variables that collectively best predict achievement, including, unemployment; local authority accommodation; lone parenthood; Travellers[4] (see further notes on Traveller Education); large families (5 or more children) and numbers of

[4] Irish Travellers are an indigenous minority who, according to historical evidence, have been part of Irish society for centuries. They have a long shared history, value system, language, customs and traditions that make them a group recognised by themselves and others as distinct. This distinctive life-style and culture, based on a nomadic tradition, sets them apart from the settled population. The history of the Traveller community includes a struggle to uphold their distinct cultural identity and to maintain a nomadic way of life. Travellers have shared a nomadic tradition and a means of communication, beliefs, values and practices distinct from the majority culture.

pupils eligible for free books. Data from the survey were then used to rank-order schools in terms of level of disadvantage, and that rank order was subsequently used to identify schools for inclusion in DEIS. While an educational outcome measure was not used directly, the choice of socioeconomic variables for the ranking process was determined by their association with an educational measure (specifically, an estimate of very poor readers provided by school principals) (see Archer & Sofroniou, 2008).

Second-level schools were selected by reference to centrally-held data from the Post-Primary Pupils and State Examinations Commission databases which included:

- Medical card data for Junior Certificate candidates (including Junior Certificate School Programme candidates) 2002, 2003, 2004
- Junior Certificate retention rates by school for the 1995, 1996 and 1997 school entry cohorts
- Junior Certificate exam results aggregated to school level (expressed as an OPS – "Overall Performance Scale" - score). This was based on each student's performance in the seven subjects in which s/he performed best aggregated to school level for the 2002 and 2003 examination cohorts
- Leaving Certificate retention rates by school for the 1995, 1996 and 1997 school entry cohorts.

2.4 Further Education and Training

2.4.1 Overview

Further Education provision offers access, transfer and progression opportunities to learners. Courses, both full-time and part-time, are open to all and are provided at Levels 1–6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

The principal objectives of the Department's measures and programmes in the area of Further Education and Vocational Education and Training are:

- To meet the needs of young early school-leavers
- To provide second-chance education for people who did not complete upper second-level, and
- To provide vocational preparation and training for labour market entrants and re-entrants in order to enhance their employment prospects.

2.4.2 Alternating training

There are two main forms of alternating training: the apprenticeship system and the traineeship system developed by FÁS[5] the National Training and Employment Authority.

Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship is the recognised means by which people are trained to become craft persons. In the early 1970s a new apprenticeship 'time-served' system was established and implemented for apprentices in construction and other designated industrial trades. This reduced the training period to four years and established an 'off-the-job' first year of full-time training.

A new 'standards based' system of apprenticeship was introduced by the then Department of Labour in 1991. The system is managed by FÁS with the support of the National Apprenticeship Advisory Committee, which consists of representatives of the social partners, FÁS and the Department of Education and Skills. An apprenticeship normally lasts four years. On successful completion of training an apprentice receives the National craft certificate awarded by FETAC. The curricula for apprenticeships are based on uniform pre-specified standards which are agreed with industry.

The standards-based apprenticeship has seven phases, three off-the-job and four on-the-job. The duration of off-the-job phases is approximately 40 weeks in total. The first (on-the-job) phase is an introduction to apprenticeship, safety, the world of work and the basic skills of the trade. The remaining phases of on-the-job training entail the practice and further development of skills learned in the off-the-job phases. Each off-the-job phase is delivered in a single institution to ensure integration of practical training with the necessary theory, mathematics, science, technical drawing and personal skills. Apprentices are recruited and employed by companies and receive wages based on a (varying) percentage of the full craft wage. Apprentices must be at least 16 years of age and have gained a pass in the Junior Certificate or equivalent. There are 26 trades designated by FÁS under the standards-based system. Traditionally about 10-15 % of all school leavers follow the designated apprenticeship routes.

Traineeships

Traineeships involve employers, union representatives and FÁS working together to devise occupational-specific training programmes for jobseekers. The training content and occupational standards are based on consultation with employers and lead to certification by FETAC. Traineeships combine structured on-the-job training with formal off-the-job tuition in a FÁS Training Centre. In host companies trainees are assigned a mentor or skills coach who supervises workplace training. Traineeships vary in duration from six to twenty-four months, depending on the scope of the

[5] Foras Áiseanna Saothair (FÁS) - Ireland's National Training and Employment Authority. It was announced on the 27th of July 2011 that a new education and training authority is to replace Fás, which is being disbanded. The new agency is to be called Solas. Solas is an Irish language acronym which stands for *Seirbhísí Oideachais Leanunaigh Agus Scileanna* - Continuing Education And Skills Services. It is intended that the new agency will bring a more integrated approach to the provision of further education and training in Ireland.

curriculum, the skill requirement of the occupation and the entry level of the trainees. Example of these programmes would include, retail and legal secretary traineeships.

2.4.3 Youthreach

Youthreach is a full-time programme that provides two years integrated education, training and work experience for early school leavers between the ages of 15 and 20 years of age without any qualifications or vocational training and who are unemployed.

There are currently almost 6,000 Youthreach places available nationwide. Almost 3,700 of these places are delivered in just over 100 Youthreach centres by VECs with the remaining 2,300 places delivered by FÁS in Community Training Centres (CTCs).

Participants aged 16 and over are paid a training allowance[6]. Participants may be eligible for a range of additional allowances (e.g. meal, travel, long-term unemployment) and these are all paid by the VECs.

In 2007 a Special Education Needs Initiative (SENI) was implemented in 20 centres to support learners attending Youthreach with special educational needs.

2.4.4 Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) Programme

The PLC programme is a self-contained whole-time programme designed to provide successful participants with specific vocational skills to enhance their prospects of securing lasting, full-time employment or progression to further studies. It caters for:

- Learners who have completed senior cycle education and require further vocational education and training to enhance their prospects of employment or progression to further studies and
- Adults who are returning to education, who may not have completed the senior cycle but who are deemed by the provider to have the necessary competencies and capacity to undertake the programme.

The aim of the programme is to provide participants with specific vocational skills. It is intended, therefore, that this programme will provide for a more intensive development of technical skills,

[6] In line with Circular 0086/2008 and with effect from 1 September 2008, no trainee allowances are to be paid to learners under 16 years of age in Youthreach centres. This is in the context of the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, which raised the minimum school leaving age to 16 years (or the completion of three years of post-primary education, whichever is the later).

including new technologies, combining opportunities for work experience, vocational studies and general studies.

PLC courses are predominately provided in VEC schools, with some provision in voluntary secondary and community and comprehensive schools. There are almost 200 centres offering the PLC programme with over 2,100 courses available in a wide range of disciplines. The number of PLC places increased by 1,000 from September 2011 under the Jobs Initiative, bringing the total number of places available to 32,688. The provision of maintenance grants was extended to PLC students with effect from September 1998.

2.4.5 Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)

VTOS is a full-time second chance education and training initiative providing courses between Levels 3-6 on the NFQ to unemployed people over 21 years of age. The scheme is delivered and managed locally by VECs. Tuition, stationery and books are provided free of charge.

There are 5,000 VTOS places available nationally. Participants who were in receipt of Jobseekers Benefit/Assistance (JB/JA) prior to commencing VTOS receive a training allowance in lieu of this payment from the VEC. Those participants who were previously in receipt of another Department of Social Protection payment e.g. Disability Allowance/One Parent Family Payment continue to be paid by the Department of Social Protection. All participants may be eligible for a range of additional allowances (meal, travel, long-term unemployment bonus) and these are all paid by the VECs.

2.4.6 Senior Traveller Training Centres (STTCs)

There are currently 34 STTCs operated by VECs for Travellers over 18 years of age.
Participants are paid a training allowance and may also be eligible for a range of additional allowances (e.g. meal, travel, long-term unemployment bonus) and all these are paid by the VECs.

In line with Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy 2006 and the 2008 Value for Money (VFM) Review of Youthreach and STTCs, it was announced in Budget 2011 that an integrated further education provision for Travellers will be implemented through the phasing out of STTCs by June 2012 and replacement places, prioritised for Travellers, being provided under the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI).

2.4.7 Back to Education Initiative (BTEI)

BTEI commenced in October 2002. It provides flexible part-time options across Further Education and is aimed at adults with less than upper second-level education.

It aims to give adults who wish to return to education an opportunity to combine their return to learning with family, work and other responsibilities. Programmes are offered on a part-time basis in the mornings, afternoons, evenings or even at weekends. Under the BTEI, a programme may be offered for as little as 1 hour per week or as much as 17 hours per week, depending on the needs and demands of the prospective learners. It is recommended that programme duration for individual learners (class contact hours) not exceed 400 hours per annum i.e. 400 hours over a twelve month period.

Since September 2007, any adult with less than an upper second-level education is entitled to free tuition. Originally only people with a social welfare entitlement of medical card were entitled to free tuition.

There are currently 12,000 BTEI places available, including 3,000 additional places allocated this year under the Jobs Initiative.

2.4.8 Adult Literacy

The Adult Literacy service is funded by the Department and delivered by Vocational Education Committees (VECs) nationwide. It is focused on those with low levels of literacy skills but includes English language tuition (ESOL) for adult immigrants and basic education services. Adult literacy, in addition to reading and writing, now extends to such basic education as numeracy, social and personal development, learning to learn and IT skills.

People who avail of literacy are often the most disadvantaged, low-skilled and hard-to-reach. For those who do avail of the literacy service progression can be from 1-to-1 tuition to group tuition and from there to modules at FETAC Levels 3 and 4. Success for participants is often not measured through certification but participation.

In recent years, a number of different initiatives have been developed to tackle adult literacy. These include:

- The Intensive Tuition in Adult Basic Education Programme (ITABE) which provides up to six hours of tuition per week to learners instead of the normal two hours
- A family literacy pilot scheme to address poor literacy from an intergenerational family perspective
- A workplace literacy programme (the Return to Learning Scheme) in all Local Authority areas for outdoor workers

Participants on Community Employment Schemes can avail of intensive literacy tuition provided by the VECs. There are other special funding projects including literacy for deaf people, for people with dyslexia and for native Irish speakers in Gaeltacht areas. Funding has also been provided in partnership with the National Adult Literacy Agency for several successful television series to raise awareness around adult literacy issues.

It is delivered on a one-to-one and group basis, in classrooms or outreach or other atypical settings, for between 2 and 6 hours weekly up to 40 weeks annually. The adult literacy service is free and confidential. A substantial portion of the tuition, particularly in one to one tuition, is provided by volunteer tutors. In 2010, funding of €30 million was provided for adult literacy services nationwide and over 50,000 participants availed of tuition.

2.4.9 Community Education

Community Education refers to education and learning generally outside the formal education sector, with the aims of enhancing learning, empowerment and contributing to civic society. It is firmly community-based, with local groups taking responsibility for, and playing a key role in organising courses and deciding on programme content.

The Department provides grants to Vocational Educational Committees (VEC) to deliver Community Education locally. The VEC-based Community Education Facilitator (CEF) arranges for provision, mainly through small grants to community organisations or the provision of tutor hours.

In 2010, €10 million was provided for the programme and over 50,000 participants availed of community education classes.

2.4.10 Additional Supports

Adult Educational Guidance Service (AEGI)

The AEGI operates 40 projects offering a service in each county with the aim of providing a quality educational guidance service for adults. This free service is available to adults wishing to participate in VTOS, adult literacy, BTEI, community education and other adult education courses.

The service includes personal, educational and career guidance and covers the pre-entry, entry, ongoing and pre-exit stages by offering information, advice and guidance on a 1-to-1 and group basis to help people make the best possible choices for learning. It aims to provide a comprehensive information service on adult learning opportunities in an accessible manner. In 2010, almost 38,000 participants availed of the Guidance service at a cost of €7 million.

Childcare Education Training Scheme (CETS)

CETS, which is administered by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and commenced in September 2010 is providing 1,500 free Full Time Equivalent childcare places to participants in VTOS, Youthreach, Senior Traveller Training Centres and Back To Education Initiative programmes. The CETS scheme standardises childcare practices across the VECs in a fair and consistent manner and enhances the supports available to the disadvantaged and low-skilled.

2.4.11 Training - Background information

Early school leavers are a priority client group for FÁS. Early School Leavers are defined as young people aged 16-21 who left school with no or incomplete qualifications and who face difficulties accessing the labour market.

The primary FÁS response to early school leavers is under the national Youthreach programme. In addition some training for early school leavers is provided through Local Training Initiatives. The programmes provided by FÁS Community Services for early leavers aim to enable them to develop their personal, social and vocational skills to assist them achieve nationally recognised qualifications and progress towards further education, training and employment.

FÁS also collaborates with the Probation Service of the Department of Justice to support Justice Workshops providing services to early school leavers who have engaged with the Probation Service.

2.4.12 Community Training Centres (CTCs)

FÁS Community Services works in partnership with 39 CTCs in the provision of training and related services in a professional, supportive and inclusive manner. During 2010, an average of 2,100 early school leavers were availing of training places at any one time, and a total of 1,686 finished their training. Delivery of training and related services focuses on supporting the learner to achieve a major award on the national framework of qualifications as a route to sustainable employment. The potential of the learner is maximised through a learner centred approach involving:

- Initial needs identification and support
- Development of individual learner plans
- Training for nationally recognised qualifications
- Application of learning supports as required
- Targeted progression routes.

2.4.13 Local Training Initiatives (LTIs)

Local Training Initiatives are alternative early training interventions for socially excluded clients who are primarily people under 35 years of age with no formal qualifications or incomplete secondary level qualifications. In general, clients experience barriers accessing the labour market, mainstream training and education programmes for social, economic, educational or geographical reasons.
In 2010 228 early school leavers participated in Local Training Initiatives.

LTIs provide training which responds to identified individual learning barriers and needs. The training approach is predominately facilitative with a mix of formal training and project based learning and takes place in local community settings in partnership with community and voluntary organisations.
The objectives of the Local Training Initiative programme are to:

- Address locally identified training needs of marginalised individuals
- Provide vocational training opportunities and learning supports to assist learners achieve awards on the National Framework of Qualifications
- Optimise work opportunities and further education and training progression for participants through direct links with local and regional employers

2.4.14 Justice Workshops (JWS)

FÁS collaborates with the Probation Service to support 10 Justice Workshops. The target client group are people referred through the Probation Service comprising ex-offenders on supervision from court or prison, ex-offenders and other persons engaged with the Probation Service, who are under 25 (apart from agreed exceptions) and have not completed second-level education. Approximately 720 people are scheduled to be trained between 2008 -2013. At the end of 2010 there were 184 learners in training and 259 had completed training for 2008-2010 (155 of these completed in 2010).

Justice Workshops implement the following actions:

- Address the specific training, education, behavioural and employment needs of ex-offenders and persons engaged with the Probation Service in need of additional attention not available in mainstream FÁS centres
- Ensure that the training and learning provided is integrated with and complements participants' probation Service Supervision
- Provide quality assured training and learning opportunities leading to awards on the National Qualifications Framework
- Provide participants with an individual learning plan including progression routes
- Assist participants to achieve their potential in a safe and positive environment

Chapter 3: Fair and inclusive practices

3.1 The School Support Programme

Under the Schools Support Programme (SSP), schools and school clusters or communities are allocated supplementary resources and supports in line with their concentration of disadvantage.

Some 200 of the most disadvantaged urban primary schools are supported with maximum class sizes of 20:1 in all junior classes (junior infants through 2nd class) and 24:1 in all senior classes (3rd class through 6th class)

In addition to this, all DEIS urban primary schools are provided with the following supports:

- Administrative principals are allocated on lower enrolment and staffing figures than apply in primary schools generally
- Additional capitation grants are allocated based on the level of disadvantage in each school.
- Enhanced financial allocations under the school books grant scheme are made and are based on the levels of disadvantage in each school
- Access to the School Meals Programme, which is operated by the Department of Social Protection, is extended to all of these schools
- Specified literacy and numeracy support services and programmes including *Reading Recovery, First Steps, Maths Recovery*, *Ready, Steady, Go Maths* and homework clubs/summer camps assisting literacy and numeracy development are provided. (further notes on these programmes are included in section 3.6.4)
- The services of the Home/School/Community Liaison and the School Completion Programme are in place in all of these schools (further notes on these services are included in later paragraphs)
- Transfer programmes supporting progression from primary to second-level are provided
- Enhanced planning supports are in place and further details are contained in Appendix 'B'
- Improved access to a range of professional development supports is also provided

Rural primary schools and school clusters/communities are supported with the following measures:

- Enhanced financial allocations under the school books grant scheme are made and are based on the levels of disadvantage in each school
- Access to the School Meals Programme has also been extended to these schools
- The School Completion Programme services are in place in these schools and access to transfer programmes supporting progression from primary to second-level are provided under this programme
- Improved access to a range of professional development supports is also provided

Second-level schools included in DEIS are supported with the following measures:

- Curricular choices are enhanced by the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) which provides enhanced focus on literacy and numeracy supports
- The Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), and associated staffing and funding supports
- Additional capitation allocation based on the level of disadvantage in each school
- Enhanced financial allocations under the school books grant scheme are made and are based on the levels of disadvantage in each school
- Enhanced financial allocations under the school books grant scheme are made and are based on the levels of disadvantage in each school
- The Home/School/Community Liaison services and the School Completion Programme services are in place in all of these schools
- Enhanced planning supports are in place
- Improved access to a range of professional development supports is also provided
- An enhanced guidance counselling provision is supported
- New school libraries and librarian support are being developed in the 50 DEIS schools with the highest concentrations of disadvantage over five years. Extension to further DEIS schools will be considered subsequently

3.2 The National Educational Welfare Board

The Education Welfare Act 2000 made provision for the establishment of the National Educational Welfare Board. The Board was established in 2003 as the statutory body with responsibility for school attendance. The Act provides a comprehensive framework promoting regular school attendance and tackling the problems of absenteeism and early school leaving.

The general functions of the Board are to ensure that each child attends a recognised school or otherwise receives a certain minimum education and to provide a service to the most disadvantaged areas and most at risk groups.

The NEWB has legal responsibilities in relation to non-attendance in schools, and is the prosecuting authority where there is persistent non-attendance. The Board also has responsibility to conduct research into underlying causes for poor attendance and disseminating results of such research to assist schools in developing codes of behaviour and attendance strategies.

Parents can choose to have their children educated outside the recognised school system, whether in the home or in a private school. The Board is required to assess the provision of education and maintain a register of all children in receipt of an education in a place other than a recognised school.

In May 2009 the remit of the Board was extended to include responsibility for the Home School Community Liaison, the School Completion Programme and the Visiting Teacher Service for Traveller pupils (VTST) as well as the National Educational Welfare Service.

These services are all, to a greater or lesser extent, concerned with attendance, participation, engagement and early school leaving and attainment. All deploy a range of targeting strategies, aimed at identifying children at risk, and all engage with children, parents, schools/teachers/principals and external services at different levels. This development brings together some 700 service delivery personnel under the direction of the Board.

The underlying rationale for this new single strategic approach, acknowledging and utilising the combined strengths and capacities of the four services, is to deliver better outcomes for children, families and schools.

The functions under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 including the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) and the integrated services under the remit of the Board transferred in May 2011 from the Minister for Education and Skills to the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. Formal links are to be established between the two Departments to ensure that support for DEIS and educational disadvantage and other areas of mutual or crossover responsibility are maintained.

3.3 Background on Individual Services

3.3.1 Home School Community Liaison (HSCL)

The Home/School/Community Liaison (HSCL) is a preventative strategy targeted at pupils at risk of not reaching their potential in the educational system because of background characteristics which tend to affect adversely pupil attainment and school retention. The service focuses directly on the salient adults in children's educational lives and seeks indirect benefits for the children themselves. At present there are some 400 Home School Community Liaison Coordinators deployed across all DEIS urban primary and post-primary schools.

There are two main elements of the HSCL scheme:

- Establishing partnership and collaboration between parents and teachers in the interests of children's learning and
- Working with staff to develop a spirit of collaboration and partnership with the parent’s body.

The coordinator organises locally based activities aimed at encouraging greater contact between parents, teachers and local voluntary and statutory groups to tackle issues in the community that impinge on learning.

Within the school the HSCL coordinator works to ensure that positive outcomes of the HSCL scheme are disseminated throughout the school system generally and promotes new methodologies and practices to counter educational disadvantage. A coordinator may provide a service to more than one school in an area.

The service is supported by National and Regional Coordinators who advise on and support the development of the scheme at both primary and post-primary level. The National Coordination team devises and delivers in-career to all local HSCL coordinators as well as induction courses to all newly appointed local HSCL coordinators and training for other school personnel.

In the region of €25 million has been allocated to HSCL for 2011. 155,000 pupils attending 545 schools (200 post-primary and 345 primary) have access to Home School Community Liaison, with approximately 50,000 of these pupil's families being specifically targeted for the services of Home School Community Liaison Coordinators.

3.3.2 School Completion Programme (SCP)

The School Completion Programme (SCP) is a Department of Education and Skills initiative that was developed to identify and tackle the causes of early school leaving and to promote pupil retention in primary and post-primary schools.

The School Completion Programme is funded on a multi-annual basis under the National Development Plan (NDP) 2007-2013. The School Completion Programme was funded with assistance from the European Social Fund (ESF) until 2007. €29.5 million has been allocated to the School Completion Programme for 2011.

There are currently 124 School Completion projects in operation nationwide, encompassing 464 primary schools and 227 post-primary schools and specifically targeting over 36,000 young people. Local Management Committees have been set up in each project area and have put together retention plans supporting young people between the ages of 4 and 18 at risk of early school leaving.

The programme targets individual young people of school-going age, both in and out of school and supports access, engagement and participation primarily for the targeted children at risk. The programme is based on the project model with an integrated approach involving primary and post-primary schools, parents and relevant statutory, voluntary and community agencies.

Projects are required to engage in a consultative and planning process with schools' staff, with parents and with local representatives of relevant statutory, voluntary and community agencies in the development of the annual retention plans. An essential feature of SCP is its 'bottom up' approach, which allows the local management committees to put together plans and supports that target the needs of local young people at risk of early school leaving. Each project employs a local Coordinator to run the project at local level.

Examples of project activities under the SCP include:

- Breakfast Clubs/After-School Supports/Homework Clubs
- Transfer Programmes
- Out-of-School Programmes
- Holiday Programmes
- Mentoring Programmes
- Learning Support Programmes
- Social and Personal Development Programmes
- Parental Programmes and Family Support
- Therapeutic Support

The School Completion Programme is supported by a National Coordination Team which forms part of the management team of the National Educational Welfare Board. The National Coordination Team supports and monitors the projects and specifically the implementation of their area-based Retention Plans under which the supports are identified and delivered. In-career development for local coordinators and project workers is provided at regional and national level. Regional in-service is offered in the regions three times a year and National in-service is provided annually. Planning and review meetings are held in each region at the end of the academic year.

Annual Progress Reports compiled by the SCP management team have pointed to some success in improving retention rates in schools included in the programme. The DEIS evaluation programme will include some findings on retention within schools participating in the School Completion Programme.

One particular example of cross-sectoral co-operation is the Schools Business Partnership[7] which was established in order to facilitate the potential of mutually beneficial links between schools and local businesses and to support the Government's overall strategy on education. The Partnership works with schools participating in the School Completion Programme.

[7] Further information on this programme is to be found in Appendix 'C'

3.3.3 Visiting Teachers for Travellers Service (VTST)

The Visiting Teacher service for Travellers (VTST)**,** comprising 42 posts nationally, supported and facilitated the Traveller community to engage fully at all levels of the education system, from pre-school through compulsory education to post-Leaving Certificate programmes.

As part of a range of measures included in the National Recovery Plan 2011 to 2014 this service was withdrawn from September 2011. The School Support services, including the School Completion Programme and the Home School Community Liaison under the NEWB, will be adapted to undertake work with Travellers in the future and will ensure that its combined services are more effectively targeted to support children at risk, including Traveller children.

3.4 Special Education

3.4.1 Introduction

There have been significant developments in special education since 1998 involving enhanced levels of provision as well as new structural and legislative frameworks for the delivery of services to pupils with special educational needs. Approximately 15% of the entire budget of the Department of Education and Skills - €1.3bn – will be spent in support of children with Special Educational Needs in 2011. The Department's overall spend to support persons with special educational needs in 2010 amounted to approximately €1bn. The equivalent spends for 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 were €605m, €706m, €838m, €900m, €1bn and €1bn respectively.

3.4.2 Continuum of Support

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) provides for the education of children with special education needs through a number of support mechanisms depending on the child's assessed disability.

Section 2 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004 requires that:

> "A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with:
>
> - The best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this Act
> - The effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated."

In general, educational provision for children with special needs is made:

- In special schools
- In special classes attached to ordinary schools
- In integrated settings in mainstream classes

The nature and level of the educational response is based on the professionally-assessed needs of each individual child. The Department's policy is to achieve as much integration as possible and also to take account of the views of the parents. Where placement in an integrated setting is considered to be the appropriate response, provision will normally take the form of resource teacher or special needs assistant support, or both, depending on the level of need involved.

While the Department of Education and Skills' policy is to ensure the maximum possible integration of children with special needs into ordinary mainstream schools, students who have been assessed as having special educational needs have access to a range of special support services. The services range from special schools dedicated to particular disability groups, through special classes/units attached to ordinary schools, to placement on an integrated basis in ordinary schools with special back-up supports.

Children with more severe levels of disability may require placement in a special school or special class attached to a mainstream primary school. Each such facility is dedicated to a particular disability group and each operates at a specially reduced pupil teacher ratio. Pupils attending these facilities attract special rates of capitation funding and are entitled to avail of the special school transport service and the school bus escort service.

3.4.3 National Council for Special Education

A significant development was the enactment of the EPSEN Act 2004. With effect from 1 January 2005, the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) took over responsibility for processing resource applications for children with disabilities who have special educational needs. The Council, through the local Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO), process the individual applications for resources at primary and post-primary level and inform the school of the outcome.

There are approximately 89 Special Education Needs Organisers (SENOs) employed by the Council, who have been deployed on a nationwide basis, with at least one SENO being deployed in each county. They are charged with facilitating access to, and co-ordinating education services for children with special needs in their areas. In addition to processing requests for resources, the Council will co-ordinate the provision of education and related support services with health authorities, schools and other relevant bodies.

The NCSE co-ordinates, with the health services schools and other relevant bodies, with regard to the provision of education and related support services to children with disabilities or special needs. This responsibility also includes identifying appropriate educational placements for individual children with special educational needs as well as the establishment of special classes in various geographical areas as required.

3.4.4 General Allocation Model of Teaching Support in Primary Schools

A new scheme for allocating resource teachers to schools to cater for the needs of children with high-incidence special needs such as mild general learning disability and learning-support needs was introduced in primary schools in September 2005. In accordance with this scheme, every school has a number of resource teaching hours based on the number of pupils in the school.

This is a major improvement on the previous system, under which children with high incidence special needs required a psychological assessment before they were given resource teaching hours by the Department. This was a time-consuming process that often led to delays in children getting the support they needed. Learning Support/Resource Teachers are now in place in the school from the start of the school year, so that children who need their assistance can get it straight away.

3.4.5 Home Tuition

A home tuition grant is available for pupils with special educational needs or grave medical conditions who are unable to attend school on a regular basis. It may also be provided to pupils who are awaiting an appropriate educational placement.

3.4.6 School supports

The following supports are available to support pupils with special educational needs:

- Approximately 9,950 learning support/resource teacher posts in primary and post-primary schools in order to provide additional teaching support to pupils with special educational needs compared with fewer than 2,000 in 1998
- Over 1,000 teachers are also provided for in special schools, teaching pupils with various disabilities at much reduced pupil:teacher ratios
- Over 10,575 Special Needs Assistants in mainstream primary, post-primary schools and special schools supporting the care needs of students with disabilities compared with approximately 300 in 1998

- Special equipment. Funding is provided to primary schools for the purchase of special equipment including assistive technology equipment for pupils with special educational needs. Approximately €1.8 million was spent in 2010 on specialised equipment and materials.
- The School Transport Scheme for Children with Special Educational Needs supports the transport to and from school of children with special educational needs arising from a diagnosed disability, in circumstances where children are not in a position to avail of standard school transport services. Eligibility is determined following consultation with the National Council for Special Education (NCSE). The Department also allocates funding to schools, under the terms of this scheme, for the employment of escorts to accompany those children whose care and safety needs are such as to require the support of an escort. Approximately €60 million is spent annually on school transport for Children with Special Educational Needs.
- Capitation grants. Enhanced capitation rates are paid in respect of pupils attending special schools and special classes. These special rates vary, depending on the particular level of need involved. The current rates range from €486 to €936 per pupil.
- Special schools and classes. For children for whom mainstream provision is not appropriate, placement may be made in one of over 125 special schools and over 500 special classes and units located around the country. Special classes and classes in special schools are normally dedicated to a particular disability category and in all circumstances operate at a significantly reduced pupil teacher ratio e.g. 6:1 in the case of pupils with severe/profound general learning disability (GLD) and 8:1 for pupils with a moderate GLD.
- Early educational intervention is provided for children with autism from 2½ years of age. There are now 56 early intervention classes for children with autism attached to mainstream schools that are funded by the Department. Funding is also provided through the home tuition programme for children with autism aged from 2½ years to 5 years who are unable to access an early intervention class.
- An extended school year is currently available for pupils who have either a severe/profound general learning disability or who have autism.
- All primary and post-primary schools have access to psychological assessments either directly through the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) or through the Scheme for commissioning Psychological Assessments (SCPA) which is administered by NEPS.
- Special Education Support Service (SESS). The Department has provided for a comprehensive system of continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers in the area of special educational needs. Central to this is the "Special Education Support Service" (SESS) which was established in September 2003. The service consolidates, co-ordinates, develops and delivers a range of professional development initiatives and support structures for school personnel working with students with special educational needs in a variety of educational settings. These settings include mainstream primary and post-primary schools, special schools and special classes. The SESS supports a continuum of models of CPD that includes telephone support, on-

line learning, seminars, workshops, in-school support, projects focused on developing school communities of discourse and practice, conferences, and post-graduate programmes. Schools may also identify their own particular professional development needs and apply for advisory or financial support to the SESS. The CPD provided by the SESS covers a range of specialities, including inter alia:

- Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASDs)
- Dyslexia
- Challenging Behaviour
- Post-primary issues in Special Educational Needs
- Specialist training for Autism Units attached to schools

The Department provided funding of over €2.4m to the SESS in 2010 for training and development. A total of 22,516 teachers availed of training places in 2010, designed to ensure a quality service that promotes inclusiveness, collaboration, and equality of access for students with special educational needs to educational opportunities.

3.5 Integration of Migrants

3.5.1 Ireland and Migration

Ireland was historically known as a country of emigration. From the Great Famine of 1845-49 to the 1950s and 1980s, the rate of emigration was relatively higher than any other European country. Ireland's economic boom, during the 1990s and 2000s, brought unprecedented levels of prosperity and helped transform it into a "country of net immigration" by the early 2000s.

The EU Treaty of Accession in 2003 saw the agreement of Ireland, along with the United Kingdom and Sweden, to allow citizens from the 10 countries that joined the European Union in May 2004 to work in the country immediately. This contributed to acceleration in EU immigration flows; a large proportion of which came from Poland as well as Latvia and Lithuania. It should be noted that Ireland did impose restrictive measures when Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU on the 1st of January 2007.

As a consequence of the current economic recession, Ireland is facing a new set of policy issues with reduced immigration rates but still a substantial population of legal foreign residents. Figures from the latest Census 2011 Preliminary Report (April 2011) show that over the period from 2006 to 2011 there continued to be net inward migration, measured at 118,650 or an average of 23,730 per annum. (CSO 2011)

However, while Ireland continued to experience strong net inward migration for the early years of the period 2006- 2011, this was followed by a switch to net outward migration in the latter years, resulting in an average annual inward migration rate of less than half that experienced in the period 2002-2006.

Recent Eurostat EU statistics reported Ireland's emigration rate is now at the highest in the EU, with nine people per 1,000 leaving the State (Eurostat 2010). This may be due to a combination of immigrants leaving and also Irish nationals leaving. This is almost double the rate of the second-highest member state Lithuania, and a complete change from the days of the "Celtic Tiger" when Ireland's immigration rate was the EU's second highest.

Against a background of rising emigration Ireland faces the additional challenges of high unemployment rates with associated pressures on the social welfare system.

3.5.2 Access to Education

All immigrant children, including unaccompanied minors (UM) and children of asylum seekers (CAS), can access pre-school, first and second-level education in a manner similar to Irish nationals. If UM and CAS have started their senior cycle post-primary education and then reach 18 years during the two year programme, they can finish the course and present for the Leaving Certificate examination. Under current arrangements UM, CAS or children of non-EEA parents are ineligible for State supports in order to access courses in further, higher or adult education.[8]

3.5.3 Policy on Intercultural Education

In September 2010, the Department of Education and Skills published its Intercultural Education Strategy. The Strategy has identified ten key components that are necessary for the creation of an inclusive, integrated and intercultural learning environment. These are leadership; knowledge of the language of instruction; mainstreaming; rights and responsibilities; high aspirations and expectation; enhancing the quality of teaching; partnership and engagement; effective communication; data collection and research; and implementing the strategy, monitoring and evaluation.

The Department has prioritised the mainstreaming of migrants in our school and does not support segregated provision. Mainstreaming is a fundamental concept that is linked to equity, equality and diversity. Equal opportunity and respect require catering for the identified educational needs of each student. From this starting point, educational provision, based on identified educational needs, should

[8] See Appendix 'E' which set out categories of students who can access State support.

allow for all students to learn together. All students, irrespective of their nationality, should learn in the same classroom, access the full curriculum and attain on a par with their peers. International support for this position is found in OECD research on migrant education which shows that the use of "pull – out programmes" that are not closely integrated with the curriculum …. requires students to miss parts of the normal curriculum [and] it may have a stigmatising effect" (Nusche, 2009).

According to the European Commission, all forms of "segregation will weaken the ability of education to deliver on one of its main objectives – to build social inclusion, friendships and societal bonds between children…. In general, the more the school policies counteract all forms of de facto segregation…. The better will be the educational experience."(EU Green Paper, 2008)

A study by the Economic and Social Research Institute found that Irish schools using separate intensive provision classes were more likely to report absenteeism and difficulties in social interaction among migrants "which may reflect the potentially negative impact of being in a separate classroom on student morale and engagement" (Smyth, E et al, 2009).

3.5.4 English language resource teachers

Approximately 10% of students in primary and post-primary education are immigrant students. A proportion of these young people do not speak English as their first language. To enable them to gain proficiency in English as the language of instruction, the Department provided over 1,400 English Additional Language (EAL) resource teachers to our primary and post-primary schools in 2010/ 2011. In the academic year 2001/2002 there were only 260 such teachers. This provision was at its peak in 2008/2009 when there were 2,200 EAL teachers. The reduction in EAL teacher numbers is due mainly to two key factors - firstly budget reductions, and secondly, length of time the migrant students are in our education system.

This EAL resource is a substantial one and the challenge is to utilise it as effectively as possible. In addition, it is especially important that all primary and post-primary teachers realise their role as language teachers and that this brief is not assigned solely to EAL teachers. Work by the Council of Europe on "Language as Subject" and "Language in Subject" clearly sets out this inclusive language role for teachers.

3.5.5 Professional Development for Teachers

The Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) provides, inter alia, continuing professional development for school staff on EAL and on the enhancement of a school's intercultural learning environment at both primary and post-primary levels. The importance of students gaining proficiency not only in communicative language but also in academic language is emphasised. The PDST

emphasises the importance of the students' mother tongue and recommends that teachers encourage their international students to speak in their mother tongue e.g. if they wish to debate education concepts amongst themselves.

3.5.6 Language provision

In Ireland, it is estimated that there are over 200 languages currently being spoken. Candidates presented in a total of 27 languages in the 2010 Leaving Certificate examination. It is not feasible to provide tuition in all 200 languages. Scarce resources are focussed on gaining proficiency in the language of instruction.

Ireland participated in the consultation process for the EU Green Paper Migration and Mobility: Challenges and Opportunities for EU Education Systems (2008) which, inter alia, addressed the question of mother tongue when it sought comments on the success or otherwise of the implementation of Directive 77/486/ ECC. The majority opinion was that the Directive no longer reflected the challenges faced by Member States.

3.6 Literacy and Numeracy

In July 2011, the Minister for Education and Skills launched the national strategy to improve literacy and numeracy among children and young people 2011-2020, "Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life". The development of the Strategy was informed by an extensive consultation process. Enormous interest was shown in developing the Strategy. Over 480 submissions were received and face-to-face consultative meetings were held with a large number of key organisations.

3.6.1 Targets for Improving Literacy

The Strategy sets a series of targets for improving literacy and numeracy standards for the period 2011 to 2020. These are:

Improve our attitudes to literacy and numeracy

- Raise public awareness of the importance of oral and written language in all its forms (including print, writing and digital media)
- Foster an enjoyment of reading among children and young people
- Create greater awareness of, and more positive attitudes towards, Mathematics among the public
- Promote better attitudes to Mathematics among children and young people

Improve outcomes at early childhood level

- Improve the oral-language competence of very young children in early childhood care and education (ECCE) settings and their readiness to develop early mathematical language and ideas

Improve outcomes at primary school level

- Ensure that each primary school sets goals and monitors progress in achieving demanding but realistic targets for the improvement of the literacy and numeracy skills of its students in a school improvement plan
- Increase the percentage of primary children performing at Level 3 and Level 4 (the highest levels) in the National Assessment of Mathematics and English Reading by at least 5 percentage point at both second class and sixth class by 2020
- Reduce the percentage of children performing at or below Level 1 (minimum) in the National Assessment of Mathematics and English Reading by at least 5 percentage points at both second class and sixth class by 2020
- Increase awareness of the importance of digital literacy and include assessments of primary students' ability to read digital material as part of the national assessments of English reading

Improve outcomes at post-primary level

- Ensure that each post-primary school sets and monitors progress in achieving demanding but realistic targets for the improvement of the literacy and numeracy skills of its students in a school improvement plan
- Extend the National Assessment of Mathematics and English Reading to assess the performance of students at the end of second year in post-primary education; use data from these assessments to establish the existing levels of achievement and to set realistic targets for improvement, similar to those adopted at the primary level
- Increase awareness of the importance of digital literacy and include assessments of post-primary students' ability to read digital material as part of the national assessments of English reading
- Increase the percentage of 15-year old students performing at or above Level 4 and Level 5 (the highest levels) in PISA reading literacy and numeracy tests by at least 5 percentage points by 2020
- Halve the percentage of 15-year old students performing at or below Level 1 (the lowest level) in PISA reading literacy and numeracy tests by 2020
- Increase the percentage of students taking the Higher Level Mathematics examination at the end of junior cycle (i.e. Junior Certificate examination or its equivalent) to 60 per cent by 2020

3.6.2 Proposed Actions to Achieving Targets

The Strategy addresses six key areas aimed at improving literacy and numeracy outcomes, these are:

- Enabling parents and communities to support children's literacy and numeracy development

- Improving teachers' and early childhood education and care practitioners' professional practice through changes to both pre-service and in-service education
- Building the capacity of school leadership to lead improvements in the teaching and assessment of literacy and numeracy in schools
- Getting the content of the curriculum for literacy and numeracy right at primary and post-primary levels by making sure that the curriculum is clear about what we expect students to learn at each stage
- Targeting available additional resources on learners with additional needs, including students from disadvantaged communities, students learning English as an additional language and students with special educational needs
- Improving how teachers, schools and the educational system use good assessment approaches to plan the next steps for each learner and monitors progress.

3.6.3 Teacher Training

Both primary and post-primary teachers are educated in a manner that seeks to encourage the development of an inclusive classroom. At primary level, courses on offer include: inclusion; educational disadvantage; intercultural education; equality and cultural diversity; and social justice (both domestically and globally). The Development and Inter-Cultural Education Project operates across all state-funded Colleges of Education to integrate development and intercultural education. Its strategic aim is to support colleges to utilise, develop and further extend staff capacity and expertise in development and intercultural education across all relevant areas of the Primary School Curriculum (1999). At post-primary level, courses include: equality and diversity; social justice; multiculturalism; and inclusion. These courses also include microteaching and tutorial sessions on experiential learning in the community.

Continuing Professional Development programmes operate under the aegis of Teacher Education Section of the Department of Education and Skills. They are tailored to meet the needs of both teachers and schools and to enable them to deal with the teaching and learning needs of all students, regardless of their individual circumstance or ability. They provide a general focus on inclusion and support for pedagogical practices which promote inclusion. All service providers continually review their programmes to ensure that they reflect the Education for Equality, Respect and Diversity and are fully inclusive.

Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life, The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020, aims to ensure that teachers and schools maintain a strong focus on literacy and numeracy skills, within a broad and balanced curriculum. It sets out a wide-ranging programme of reforms in initial teacher education courses, in continuing

professional development for teachers and school principals, and in the content of the curriculum at primary and post-primary levels in order to achieve these vital skills.

The main changes include:

- improvements to initial teacher education courses including the setting of new higher entry requirements for teacher education courses and the reconfiguring of the content to ensure the development of teachers' skills in literacy and numeracy teaching as well as an increased emphasis on the other key strategic priorities such as ICT and inclusion

- extension of the Primary Bachelor of Education programme to four years (by 2013/14) and the postgraduate diploma teaching qualification (for primary and post-primary teachers) to two years by 2014/15.

3.6.4 Literacy and Numeracy measures

The DEIS action plan when launched in 2005 provided for a standardised system for identifying levels of disadvantage and a new integrated School Support Programme (SSP). The School Support Programme brings together, and builds upon, existing interventions in schools with a concentrated level of disadvantage. Under the terms of the DEIS action plan a high priority has been given to specific measures and supports to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes which include:

Primary level

- Reading Recovery:

This is a school-based intervention designed to reduce literacy problems within an education system. It is an early intervention, giving children who have particular difficulties in reading and writing after one year in primary school, a period of intensive, individual teaching.

- First Steps

The objective of the First Steps initiative is to target the whole school or a specific school group on a particular strand/unit of the curriculum with the emphasis on a holistic approach to the teaching of literacy. It offers teachers an accurate means of assessing and monitoring children's competencies and progress in reading, writing, spelling and oral language

- Maths Recovery

The Maths Recovery Programme has been developed as a systemic response to the problem of chronic failure in school mathematics. The programme involves identification of the lowest attainers in their second year of school typically of age 6 or 7. They are then provided with a programme of intensive,

individualised teaching in order to advance them to a level at which they are likely to learn successfully in a regular class.

- Ready, Set, Go-Maths

Ready, Set, Go-Maths is an intervention programme which contains a practical handbook of guidance for teachers in the use of a wide range of activities and materials. This enables them to improve the quality and effectiveness of early learning in numeracy for children who find mathematics difficult.

- Literacy Summer Camps

The literacy camps' project, Exploring Pathways to Literacy through Arts Activities, emphasises fun learning through art, drama, music and dance, but accommodates learning goals associated with reading, literacy and thinking skills. It caters for 37 DEIS schools, with 36 pupils per school.

Second-level:

- Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP) - Literacy and Numeracy initiatives

The JCSP is an intervention for second-level students, who are potential early school leavers. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies promote a school-wide approach. Within the Literacy strategies, schools are encouraged to put in place a development plan which encompasses short term interventions with targeted students and the fostering of a reading culture throughout the school. The JCSP Numeracy Strategy promotes an integrated approach to Numeracy development and provides JCSP schools with a range of classroom strategies, short term interventions and resources to support and promote Numeracy development.

- JCSP - Demonstration Library Project

The JCSP Literacy Strategy includes a National Demonstration Project for the provision of Libraries for JCSP Schools. The project has, to date, set up school libraries in 30 participating JCSP schools nationally. The libraries are staffed by full-time qualified librarians who are front-line staff working with students on a daily basis in their schools. Library classes are built in to the school timetable and are now seen as an integral element of the school week for students.

3.7 Streaming and Year Repetition

Streaming

Streaming involves placing students into ability groups ranked from higher to lower streams. In September 2007 the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), published research by the Economic and Social Research Institute and published a report entitled ***"ESRI Research into the experiences of students in the third year of junior cycle and in transition to senior cycle"*** which examined the effects of streaming.

The research has shown that students left in a mixed-ability environment actually do better than those who have been grouped according to the hierarchy of test results. If students are taken out of mixed-ability education and put in a 'slow' stream they tend to reach the level of underachievement they feel is expected of them, rather than striving to grasp the topic and rejoin the mainstream. The research also indicates that having a 'fast' stream for quicker learners doesn't guarantee greater exam success.

The study found that while schools may believe that streaming enables them to better meet the learning needs of particular students, such students do not benefit from the arrangement. Streaming has a polarising effect on students. One group, primarily those in top streams, is more positive about school, gets on well with teachers, becomes more engaged with learning and expects succeed in the exams. The other group, more frequently students in lower stream classes, becomes progressively more negative about school and can drift or disengage from the classroom. What appears to be happening is that students reach the level of achievement, or rather underachievement that is expected of them. Predictably, students in lower streams also perform poorly in the Junior Certificate examination. A more interesting finding is that students in mixed ability settings outperform higher stream students in this examination.

The report states that the implications for schools and for teachers are striking. Streaming is having a negative impact on student engagement and achievement and schools, as part of their ongoing review and planning, need to begin to consider how their approach to assigning students to classes is affecting student attitudes and outcomes.

There is also a message in the report for disadvantaged schools. Faced with a wider range of ability than ever before, schools serving working class or disadvantaged students in this study chose to stream. Anecdotal evidence is that this is an emerging pattern in schools coping with more diverse populations than heretofore.

Year Repetition

The Department does not view year repetition as an appropriate strategy to deal with pupils with learning difficulties. Considerable support in the form of learning-support teachers, resource teachers, special needs assistants and a wide range of resources under the DEIS plan are among the forms of provision allocated to schools for pupils with learning difficulties. It is felt that the level of provision available should enable pupils to make progress in keeping with their needs and abilities and to move consecutively through the different class levels in the school along with their peers.

At primary level, children are only allowed to repeat one year for educational reasons and in exceptional circumstances. Similarly at second-level, a pupil will not be permitted to repeat more than one year of the post-primary cycle prior to first sitting the Leaving Certificate examination, except in very exceptional circumstances.

Consequently, the latest figures from the Department of Education and Skills show that year repetition isn't a very common practice at either primary or post-primary level in Ireland. The figures for year repetition at primary level for the current school year show an average between the 8 grades (junior infants to 6th class) of 0.6638%. While the figures for year repetition at post-primary level are 1.089% for the 2009/10 school year and 0.657% for the 2010/11 school year.

Interestingly, the OECD in their 2007 report "No More Failures, TEN STEPS TO EQUITY IN EDUCATION" (OECD, 2007) show a self-declared repeat percentage of almost 13% at primary level for 2003 (Page 90). It is felt that the large difference between the two sets of data is accounted for by the different nature of the data. The Department's figures are based on administrative recorded data, whereas the OECD/PISA figures are based on a self reporting response by the 15 year old respondents. Other possible reasons for the discrepancy may be due to the inability of respondents at age 15 to remember accurately whether they were held back a year or not (up to 11 years earlier). A percentage of those sampled would speak a language that is different from the language of instruction thereby casting doubt on the reliability of their response. Similarly a small percentage of the sample may have completed their initial schooling in another country.

3.8 Guidance in Second-level Schools

Section 9(c) of the Education Act, 1998 requires that a recognised school shall use its available resources to ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices. Guidance in schools refers to a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence, which assists students to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. It encompasses the three separate, but interlinked, areas of personal and social development, educational guidance and career guidance.

Counselling in Second-level Schools

Counselling is a key part of the school guidance programme, offered on an individual or group basis as part of a developmental learning process and at moments of personal crisis. Counselling has as its objective, the empowerment of students so that they can make decisions, solve problems, address behavioural issues, develop coping strategies and resolve difficulties they may be experiencing. Counselling in schools may include personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling or combinations of these.

The Aims of Guidance and Counselling

The guidance and counselling process aims to help students to develop an awareness and acceptance of their talents and abilities; to explore possibilities and opportunities; to grow in independence and to take responsibility for themselves; to make informed choices about their lives and to follow through on those choices.

In this document, the word *guidance* is used to describe the activities provided by the *guidance and counselling* services identified under *support services* in paragraph 2 of the Education Act 1998.

The Importance of Guidance and Counselling

Significant changes are taking place in economic and social structures in this country which have important implications for the education system and for the students who are its principal focus. The value of guidance and counselling in responding to these challenges is widely recognised in Government policy statements. It is fully accepted that the provision of guidance and counselling in second-level schools is vital to enable each pupil to gain the maximum benefit from the education system.

Enhanced guidance counselling provision, targeted at supporting junior cycle students, is provided in second-level DEIS schools with the highest concentrations of disadvantage. Guidance counsellors have a particularly important role to play in advising second-level students on career options and on the related issue of appropriate subject choice. This involves the provision of advice on an individual or group basis, as appropriate. Additional guidance counselling provision is made available for second-level schools participating in the SSP and having the highest concentrations of disadvantage. This provision will be targeted at meeting the needs of junior cycle students, with an emphasis on supporting them through the initial period of their second-level education and assisting them in making appropriate subject choices and in developing good habits of study.

Chapter 4: Fair and Inclusive Resourcing

4.1 Governance and Financing

In Ireland the governance and financing of educational establishments varies across each level of the education system. As indicated previously, most primary (national) schools in Ireland are privately owned and managed, mainly by Church authorities. They are, however, almost entirely financed by the state and they charge no enrolment fees to parents. Post-primary schools in Ireland are privately owned and managed by religious orders or other denominational groups; these state funded institutions enjoy a large degree of autonomy. A small number of secondary schools are fee paying. Comprehensive and Community (C&C) Schools are state funded but are owned and managed by their own Board of Management. Vocational schools are also state funded and are managed through local Vocational Education Committees (VECs).

In all categories of publicly-funded schools, the salaries of recognised teachers and of a specified number of other staff (e.g. special needs assistants etc) are paid by the State. In addition, State grants are paid towards the costs of heating, cleaning, maintaining, insuring and equipping schools as well as towards capital expenditure. However, the State grant is rarely sufficient to cover the full costs of running schools. This is particularly true in the case of primary and voluntary secondary schools, which are funded on a per (pupil) capita basis.

Since the State grant for these schools does not usually cover all costs, a proportion of costs have been traditionally raised by the schools through various fund-raising efforts. Vocational, community and comprehensive schools are funded on the basis of an annual budgeted figure and have a higher proportion of their costs covered by State grants.

Bachelor level tertiary education is free of charge to EU nationals, however recent years have seen the introduction of an annual student contribution. It is known as a registration fee and it covers student services and examinations. The amount of the contribution varies from one institution to another. The maximum rate of the student contribution for the year 2011/2012 is €2,000.

4.2 GDP Expenditure on Education

The *Education at a Glance 2010* report based on 2007 figures shows that Ireland invested about 4.7 per cent of its GDP on education compared to an OECD average of 5.7 per cent. The study shows that spending on all levels of education combined doubled between 1995 and 2007 in Ireland. However, Ireland's GDP rose sharply over the same period leading to a decrease in expenditure as a proportion of

income. The study reveals that average annual expenditure on a second-level student is 30 per cent higher than at primary level while annual average spending on a third level student is nearly double what is spent on a primary pupil. It also indicates that Ireland has the seventh-highest graduation rate among industrialised countries, placing it ahead of the UK and the US.

Since then Ireland has been severely affected by the late 2000s – financial crisis. Between 2007 and 2010, the volume of goods and services produced in Ireland fell by about 12%. In late 2006, the unemployment rate stood at a little more than 4%; now it's at approximately 14%. Against this backdrop the Government has sought to protect spending on Education. Gross Expenditure on Education for 2011 as contained in the Irish Government's 2011 Revised Book of Estimates is €8.91 billion (comparative expenditure for 2010 is €9.01 billion). Current expenditure on Education is 16% of total Government current expenditure. The corresponding figures for Health and Social Welfare are 27% and 39% respectively. It equates to 6.5% of Gross National Product. Over 70% of current expenditure on education expenditure is related to salaries and superannuation.

4.3 Current Expenditure per Student

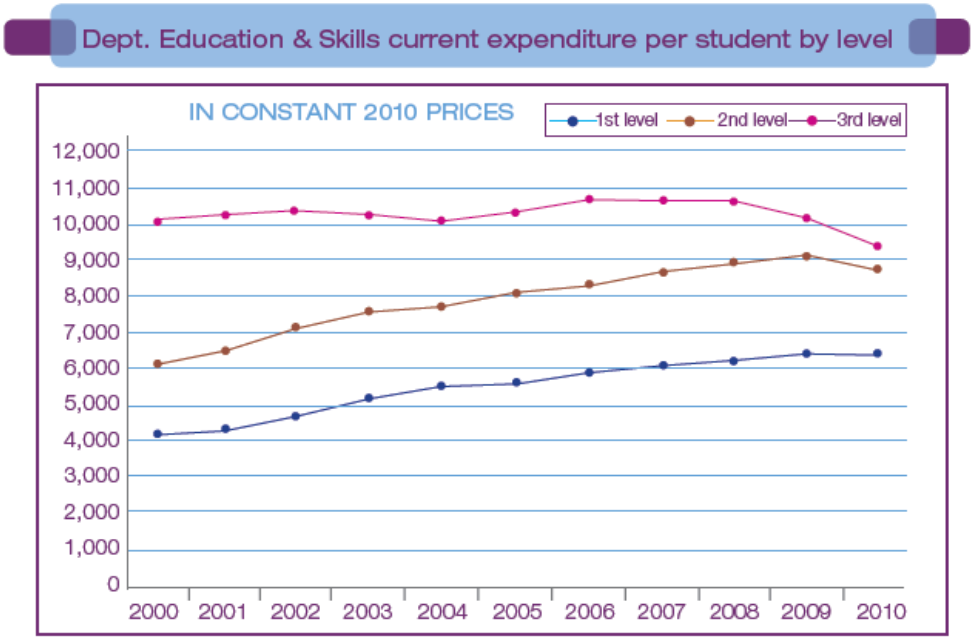
The Table and chart below illustrates the Department's current expenditure per student for each of the three sectors.

Table 4.1

Department of Education and Skills current expenditure per student by level (in constant 2010 prices (€))

Year	First Level €	Second-level €	Third Level €
2000	4,255	6,127	10,182
2001	4,387	6,693	10,503
2002	4,812	7,105	10,565
2003	5,257	7,631	10,376
2004	5,644	7,710	10,137
2005	5,728	8,023	10,426
2006	5,923	8,370	10,881
2007	6,058	8,812	10,785
2008	6,171	8,931	10,650
2009	6,442	9,077	10,167
2010	6,409	8,828	9,413

Fig 4.1



Data refer to Gross voted expenditure divided by full-time equivalent students in DES-aided institutions for each calendar year. Values are calculated in constant 2010 using the CSO National Accounts deflator for net expenditure by central and local government on current goods and services. All data are provisional for 2010.

Source: Department of Education and Skills, Statistics Section

4.4 Enhanced expenditure on disadvantage

Since DEIS was launched in 2005, considerable progress has been made in relation to the roll out of supplementary supports to participating schools.

Under the DEIS action plan, primary schools are subdivided into three categories. Schools in Urban Band 1 are the most disadvantaged and these schools receive the highest levels of funding allocated on a sliding scale based on the highest concentration of disadvantaged pupils. As mentioned previously, all DEIS Urban Band 1 schools have reduced pupil teacher ratios of 20:1 in the junior classes and 24:1 in the senior classes. There are 200 schools in Band 1. There are 145 schools in Urban Band 2 in receipt of enhanced capitation. These schools have lower levels of concentrated disadvantage than schools in Band 1. There are 331 schools in the rural element of DEIS and these schools also receive enhanced capitation based on concentration of disadvantaged students.

At post-primary level there are 200 schools in DEIS in receipt of enhanced capitation.

Enhanced capitation of €14.07 million (€10.767million at primary level and €3.302 million at post-primary level) was allocated to DEIS schools in the 2010/11 school year, ranging from €500 to € 96,000 per school at primary level and €1,300 to € 56,000 per school at post-primary level. The calculation of this enhanced capitation is based on the enrolment of the school and its level of educational disadvantage relative to other schools. Guidelines issue to schools on how this additional funding should be utilised, principally recommending that in line with Departmental policy, the additional DEIS capitation grant for school books should be used in the school to implement, maintain and support book

rental schemes as a measure to minimise the cost of school books. The amount of assistance to individual pupils may be fixed at the discretion of the principal having regard to the total and relative levels of need, and available resources. The Department issues funding to primary schools in April, and to post-primary schools in June of each year, to enable them to provide assistance for school books. Funding is allocated on the following basis: €11 per pupil in non-DEIS primary schools and €21 per pupil in DEIS primary schools and €24 per pupil in non-DEIS post-primary schools and €39 per pupil in DEIS post-primary schools. This funding arrangement affords schools the autonomy to utilise funding in the most effective way based on their particular knowledge of their student needs.
As mentioned previously all DEIS schools are supported by the provision of additional financial supports.

These supports include:

- reduced pupil teacher ratios in primary schools in urban areas with most disadvantage
- allocation of administrative principals on lower figures than generally apply in primary schools in urban areas
- additional capitation funding based on levels of disadvantage
- additional funding for schools books
- access to the School Meals Programme
- access to numeracy/literacy supports and measures at primary level
- access to Home School Community Liaison services
- access to the School Completion Programme
- enhanced guidance counselling provision at post-primary level
- access to planning supports
- provision for school library and librarian support in post-primary schools with most disadvantage
- access to the Junior Certificate School Programme and Leaving Certificate Applied
- access to a range of professional development supports

As stated in Chapter 3, approximately €25 million has been allocated to HSCL and €29.5 million has been allocated to the School Completion Programme for 2011.

4.5 Monitoring and evaluation of DEIS

In 2007, the Educational Research Centre (ERC) gathered data on the achievements in reading and mathematics of pupils in 120 schools participating in the urban dimension of the School Support Programme (SSP) under DEIS. In 2010, follow-up achievement data were collected from pupils in the same 120 schools, (*"A Report on the First Phase of the Evaluation of DEIS").* A comparison of the achievements of pupils in 2007 with their counterparts in 2010 revealed that the latter group had higher test scores in reading and mathematics. The improvements are significant at all grade levels and in both

subjects. Improvements are greatest at lower grade levels, with the largest gains being noted among pupils in 2nd class and the smallest at 6th class. While the percentage of high-achievers in reading in 2nd class remained stable, very low achieving pupils were less common in 2010 than in 2007. The percentage scoring at or below the 10th percentile decreased, by about 6%, between 2007 and 2010. Patterns of achievement are similar in the case of mathematics, with significant reductions in the percentages of pupils with scores at or below the 10th percentile at each grade level.

In a longitudinal study, a comparison of the same pupils' achievements on two occasions (e.g., those in 2nd class in 2007 with their scores on a different level of the test in 5th class in 2010) also showed significant improvements. Improvements were noted at school level also, with average scores in reading and mathematics more often increasing than decreasing between 2007 and 2010.

Using the same instruments that were administered in urban schools, test data on reading and mathematics were collected from 3rd and 6th class pupils in rural schools in 2007 and 2010. Cross-sectional analyses of the data on both occasions indicate that follow-up test scores in 2010 were significantly higher than those in 2007 at both grade levels and in both reading and mathematics. On both occasions, the average achievements of rural pupils in the SSP were greater than those of their urban counterparts, and closer to the national average.

All of these findings are suggestive of improved outcomes over the first three years of the programme. It should be borne in mind that the increases observed occurred despite the presence of several factors which might have been expected to impact negatively on achievement. These include increased poverty levels nationally (and almost certainly in participating schools), fewer exemptions of weak pupils from testing, better overall attendance among the student cohorts in 2010 than in 2007 (probably indicating that greater numbers of poor performers were included in the testing), and increased class size at 2nd class level in the 120 schools in the sample.

Other data collected for the evaluation indicate that, at national level, most aspects of the urban dimension of the School Support Programme under DEIS as it was originally designed have been put in place. In terms of implementation at school level, evaluation data collected from a variety of sources, indicate that levels of engagement with aspects of the programme such as school planning and uptake of literacy and numeracy initiatives appears to be very high. Furthermore, feedback from teachers and others involved in implementing the programme suggests that the programme is being positively received.

While the improvements in achievements appear clear-cut, it is not possible to say with certainty at this stage whether or not they are the result of participation in the programme, and, if so, which aspects of the programme are having an impact. Addressing these questions will require the collection of other

data from schools. In particular, data on the extent to which the programme is being fully implemented by schools, and the extent to which this distinguishes schools that improved from those that did not, will be closely examined. Also, it will be necessary to continue to monitor achievements in participating schools in order to see if gains have been maintained or built on.

In parallel with the ERC's research on pupil attainment in DEIS schools, the Inspectorate of the Department conducted evaluations of planning in a sample of 36 DEIS schools. The findings of this evaluation indicate that a systematic planning process comprising target-setting, the implementation of appropriate strategies and interventions to achieve the targets set, the monitoring of progress, and the review of targets in the light of progress is very necessary in DEIS schools. There are components of the DEIS planning process of relevance to all schools, particularly in the context of literacy and numeracy. The report therefore recommends that the DEIS planning framework be made available to all schools (DEIS and non-DEIS) to assist them in their school development planning and school self-evaluation processes. Both evaluations were published in January 2012. (www.education.ie)

4.6 Monitoring Early School Leaving

The Department regularly presents Reports on Retention Rates in second level schools which are based on a detailed analysis of the records held in the Department's Post-Primary Pupils Database. The latest Report provides data relating to pupils who entered the first year of the junior cycle in the years from 1991 to 2004 and completed second-level schooling no later than 2010. It should be noted that the analysis is limited in that it relates to students entering the state-aided post-primary sector only and does not take account of important educational pathways outside this system such as Youthreach and apprenticeship training.

The main findings from the latest report are:

- The number of students staying in school to complete their second-level education is now at its highest rate ever
- The report shows that the number of young men staying in secondary school has risen dramatically by 11.4% in 8 years
- The percentage of students sitting the Leaving Certificate overall has risen by more than 6% to 87.7% in the same time period
- The reports show that the average Leaving Certificate retention rate in DEIS schools increased by 5 percentage points from 68.2% to 73.2% between the 2001 to 2004 entry cohorts while the retention rate in non-DEIS schools increased from 85.0% to 87.4% for the same entry cohorts
- 82.4% of males are staying on to sit their Leaving Certificate, which is a rise of 11.7% in 8 years. However, a small gap remains between the sexes, with 86.5% of females completing second-level

- While lack of opportunities in the labour market have probably had an impact on the improvement in retention overall, measures taken by the Department such as the extra resources provided to the 200 second-level schools under DEIS and programmes like the School Completion Programme have played their part
- Students who attend voluntary secondary schools continue to have the highest retention rates at both Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate stages. VEC schools have, on average, lower rates of retention to Leaving Certificate, especially for males, although the gap is narrowing; it should also be noted that many transfer to apprenticeships and other forms of training, which are not taken into account in the report
- In terms of geographical spread, cities tend to have lower rates of retention than other areas. Limerick City (77.6%), Dublin City (80.1%) and Cork City (80.6%) had the lowest rates
- The report also shows that in 2010 the proportion of early school leavers in Ireland was 10%, down from 13% in 2004. The latest data for all 27 EU member states in 2009 shows Ireland, with 11%, ahead of the EU averages of 14% for the 27 member bloc and 16% for the EU 15 respectively. Ireland's proposed Europe 2020 target for 18-24 year olds, with at most lower secondary education and not in further education and training, is 8%.

4.7 Performance measurement

Performance of the Irish education system is generally well regarded internationally. In Ireland, there has long been a growing recognition that quality in schools is best achieved when a range of measures work together to improve learning and teaching, and where everybody involved in the education system is focused on improvement. Schools themselves are responsible for some of these measures; others are organised by the Department of Education and Skills(DES) or other agencies. At all levels of the school system, external evaluation by the Department's Inspectorate makes an important contribution to quality assurance, while system-wide evaluations, sometimes undertaken in co-operation with other countries, provide valuable data and assist in policy development. The role of the Inspectorate is outlined in Section 13 of the Education Act, 1998. The Inspectorate is closely involved with many of the initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and learning at first and second-levels.

A relatively recent innovation in relation to quality assurance has been the introduction of Whole School Evaluation (WSE). Whole School Evaluation is a process whereby a team of Inspectors from the Department of Education and Skills spends a few days in a school evaluating the overall work of the school under the following themes:-

1) Quality of school management
2) Quality of school planning
3) Quality of curriculum provision

4) Quality of learning and teaching in subjects

5) Quality of support for students

At post-primary level, Subject Inspections are also undertaken within the framework of the WSE process. Subject Inspections are also carried out independently of WSE, where the Inspectorate focuses only on specific subject areas. A school may have subject inspections and/or WSE.

The evaluation process also involves preparatory communication and submission of documentation and post-evaluation verbal and draft written reports. Reports from these inspections and evaluations are posted on the Department of Education and Skills' website, accessible to all.

Chapter 5: Challenges in overcoming school failure

5.1 Overview

There is no doubt that many of the barriers to the educational progress of children and young people are caused by issues outside the education system. These barriers can be financial, family and health related, social/communal, cultural and geographic or a combination of any of these. As indicated earlier, Ireland's frame of reference in addressing educational inequity is based on the definition of "educational disadvantage" contained in the Education Act 1998 as:

"…the impediments to education arising from social or economic disadvantage which prevent students from deriving appropriate benefit from education in schools."

While it is recognised that we cannot expect our education system to address all the causes of disadvantage, we can and should expect the system to make special efforts to help everyone reach their full educational potential. The challenge for the education system is to work, in partnership with others, to overcome as many of these barriers as possible in a way that is learner-centred, systematic and effective in terms of educational outcomes.

It is fully recognised that educational disadvantage is complex and multi-faceted and that policy responses need to be designed accordingly. However, despite this complexity, our objectives are clear. We want all our young people to derive maximum personal benefit from the education system. We want the needs of the learner and a culture of high expectations to be at the centre of all our actions. These actions must include a concentration on literacy and numeracy from an early stage; strong links between the home, school and community; strong links between schools working co-operatively; and added value from links between education and other services. And we want supports, and second-chance provision, for the minority of our young people who, for various reasons, leave education early without the knowledge and skills they need to support them in later life.

Ireland has a long history of providing assistance to schools serving pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Schemes such as the Disadvantaged Areas Scheme (1984), Breaking the Cycle (1996), and Giving Children an Even Break (2001) all provided additional supports to schools to assist them in addressing the problems associated with catering for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools(DEIS) is the most recent of such programmes, and has the explicit aim of ensuring 'that the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities are prioritised and effectively addressed'.

The nature and complexity of Ireland's education system has grown hugely in recent years, for example, services provided under the EPSEN Act 2004 for pupils with special needs, the recognition and

inclusion of persons with disability, and other unique challenges arising from migration and integration issues.

As a result of changing demographics, enrolment figures will continue to rise over the medium term – for example, projected enrolment at primary level will grow by over 9% over the period 2009/10 to 2014/15. This will bring new demands with regard to teacher supply, school accommodation, higher education provision, and education supports for special needs students and will bring particular challenges in the context of the current economic climate. In addition, the Government's present Employment Control Framework means that while overall teaching staff numbers are due to increase in the coming years in order to cater for rising school enrolments, there are restrictions in place for the number of administrative staff working in the sector. If the Education sector is to contribute to the accelerated reduction in public service numbers set out in the new Programme for Government, it will face even greater challenges.

The Department of Education and Skill's wider remit, incorporating skills and training with further and adult education, will necessitate that it achieve synergies with different streams of education provision and develop more flexible education and training models to maximise opportunities for labour force up-skilling and re-skilling.

5.2 Stakeholder input to policy and strategy

While the learner is the primary customer of the educational process, there are a number of other principal customers and stakeholders. The principal stakeholders are collectively referred to as the *Education Partners* – students, parents, teaching trade unions and management bodies. Other stakeholders include employer and business representatives, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the local community and other State bodies. The partnership approach has been an embedded feature of education policy for many years with the Department engaging in extensive consultation on many issues. Some stakeholders would believe there is scope for seeking greater input from them especially pupils and parents. From the Department's perspective the negotiation process is hugely time-consuming and it can be difficult to reconcile different approaches and perspectives.

5.3 Political environment

Education issues, which can be quite emotive, traditionally feature very high on both national and local agendas and consequently there is a strong political dimension to the management and development of the sector. Of particular interest in this regard is teacher and financial resource allocation at individual school level, school transport, supports for pupils with special needs or those at risk of educational disadvantage and the provision of new schools and expansion of existing schools.

5.4 Strategic Direction

The Department has always demonstrated a good capacity to develop both policy and strategy and it does so while operating in a highly complex environment. However, it is important to ensure that a proper balance is struck between managing short-term issues and tackling strategic priorities. In particular there is a need to articulate a vision for the education system which will integrate, prioritise and sequence the issues to be tackled in the short-term and those which will be progressed in the medium to longer-term. Ongoing reprioritisation will be crucial in light of foreseeable financial and human resource constraints. The Department needs to ensure its policies and activities are more joined-up so as to better integrate and facilitate progression between the different levels within the education system**.**

5.5 Customer service and delivery

The Department provides a wide range of services and supports to its customers including payroll and pensions services, and social inclusion supports. Access to Departmental and education-related information will be improved in 2012 with the development of a new website to meet the needs of internal and external customers. The current website was developed almost ten years ago and it is intended that the new website will be developed to the highest standards possible and will be launched by mid 2012.

5.6 Striving for continuous improvement and innovation

The Department has evinced its capacity to manage structural change as shown by its management of the Government's decentralisation programme, the establishment of agencies and devolution of certain functions to other bodies. It has and continues to implement change in the area of service provision. There needs to be acceleration in the improvement of ICT practices and data management systems to support policy development and evaluation, thereby ensuring that the Department is well positioned to manage the challenging education agenda over the years ahead.

5.7 Performance measurement

Evaluation by the Department is its strength in some respects e.g. evaluation of schools, Value for Money studies, commissioning research, and in reviewing some programmes such as DEIS and special needs supports. There are well established metrics and benchmarks for the measurement of performance at higher education level. However there is scope to considerably improve data integration and usage within the Department. A particular deficit is the absence of a learners database which makes it difficult to track the educational progress of specific target groups. There is also scope for improving measurement and evaluation of the Further Education sector.

The radically altered economic climate and the changing demographic profile of the population will require considerable imagination, agility and speed in the management of change if the Education Sector is to deal with challenges in an appropriate and timely way.

5.8 Conclusion

To reiterate, Ireland's priority for addressing school failure begins with interventions in early years education. Early childhood care and education is an essential element of any strategy to address school failure as it impacts on children's lives at the optimal time to support the development of key cognitive, personal, social and emotional skills which are essential to successful engagement with the national education system. Ireland has recognised this with a sustained programme of investment in ECCE and whilst much of this investment is still at an early stage of implementation in practice, it augurs well for the capacity of children in Ireland to benefit fully from educational opportunities into the future.

The priorities for primary and post-primary education over the coming years will be to continue to promote quality, relevance and inclusiveness by supporting schools in developing an inclusive environment for all learners, targeting interventions to address educational disadvantage through the DEIS action plan, raising educational attainment, meeting the needs of learners with special education needs, providing supports for newcomer children, progressing the modernisation agenda, enhancing teacher education and professional development, promoting ongoing curriculum development, school evaluation and quality improvement, and providing high-quality school accommodation, administrative and financial supports.

The rationale for DEIS is that additional resources are targeted at schools in which disadvantage is most concentrated. DEIS supports are designed to meet the additional needs of schools in recognition of the concentrated nature of their disadvantage. The Action Plan is, therefore, one element of a continuum of interventions to address disadvantage, which include second-chance education and training and access measures for adults to support increased participation by under-represented groups in further and higher education.

Further Education provision offers access, transfer and progression opportunities to learners. Courses, both full-time and part-time, are open to all and are provided at Levels 1-6 on the National Framework of Qualifications to meet the needs of young early school-leavers; provide second-chance education for people who did not complete upper second-level, and provide vocational preparation and training for labour market entrants and re-entrants in order to enhance their employment prospects.

SECTION II

The purpose of this section is to provide Ireland's policy responses to the ten step framework set out in the OECD document "**No More Failures: TEN STEPS TO EQUITY IN EDUCATION".** To avoid repetition, readers are directed to text covering the same topics in Section I.

Step 1: Limit early tracking and streaming and postpone academic selection

Step 2: Manage school choice so as to contain the risks to equity

A: Title: DISCUSSION PAPER ON A REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL ENROLMENT
B: Description: On the 13th of June 2011 the Minister for Education and Skills published a discussion document on admissions policy aimed at leading to changes in regulations and legislation on how primary and post-primary schools allocate places to students. *[Ref: Paragraph 2.4.16 Schools Enrolment Policy - Section I]*
C: Status: Current Status: ongoing. Interested parties submitted their views on school enrolment to the Department by end of October 2011. A new regulatory framework will be devised with a view to a more integrated approach and having regard to the roles of the different agencies that might interact with schools at any time in relation to admission policies or decisions
D: Scope and level **Scope:** National Level **Level:** Students, parents, teaching trade unions and management bodies. Other stakeholders include employer and business representatives, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the local community and other State bodies.
E: Outcome and impacts **Intended outcome:** Better Educational Outcomes for Children **Impacts:** N/A at this stage **Formal evaluation of impact:** N/A at this stage
F: Policy conditions Strong buy-in from Schools, Parents an other Stakeholders
G: Research: N/A
H: Comments: Ref: Paragraph 1.6 on School Choice and 2.4.16 in Section I

Step 5: Identify and provide systematic help to those who fall behind at school and reduce high rates of school-year repetition

Step 6: Strengthen the links between school and home to help disadvantaged parents help their children to learn

Step 9: Direct resources to students and regions with the greatest needs

Step 10: Set concrete targets for more equity – particularly related to low school attainment and dropout

A: Title: DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) the action plan for educational inclusion.

B: Description: The action plan provides for a standardised system for identifying levels of disadvantage and a new integrated School Support Programme (SSP). It brings together, and builds upon, a number of existing interventions in schools with a concentrated level of disadvantage. There are 878 schools in DEIS. These comprise 678 primary schools and 200 second-level schools. The action plan is one element of a continuum of interventions to address disadvantage, which include second-chance education and training and access measures for adults to support increased participation by under-represented groups in further and higher education.

DEIS provides various supports for both primary and post-primary schools which include:

- Reduced pupil teacher ratio for urban primary schools serving communities with the highest concentrations of disadvantage
- Allocation of administrative principal on lower pupil ratio
- Additional non-pay/capitation allocation based on level of disadvantage
- Additional financial allocation for schools books
- Access to numeracy/literacy supports and programmes at primary level
- Access to Home School Community Liaison services
- Access to School Completion Programme
- Enhanced guidance counselling provision at post-primary level
- Enhanced planning supports
- Access to the Junior Certificate Schools Programme and the Leaving Cert Applied
- Provision for school library and librarian support for the post-primary schools with highest concentrations of disadvantage.

Ref: Paragraph 2.3.1 DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools), Paragraph 3 and Paragraph 4.4 (Enhanced expenditure on disadvantage) - Section I.

C: Status: Commenced 2006 – Current Status: ongoing

D: Scope and level

Scope: The programme is targeting educational disadvantage at a national level.

Level: Students, parents, teaching trade unions and management bodies. Other stakeholders include employer and business representatives, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the local community and other State bodies.

E: Outcome and impacts

Intended outcome: Better Educational Outcomes for Children

Impacts: Noted improvement in English Reading and Mathematics
Improvement in School Completion Rate in DEIS Schools

Formal evaluation of impact: Please see paragraph 4.5 Monitoring and evaluation of DEIS in Section I
F: Policy conditions: Strong buy-in from Stakeholders
G: Research: Please see paragraph 4.5 Monitoring and evaluation of DEIS in Section I
H: Comments:

Step 8: Provide strong education for all, giving priority to early childhood provision and basic schooling

A: Title: Universal Free Preschool Year in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme
B: Description: This initiative offers one year free preschool to all children aged between 3 yrs 2 months and less than 4 yrs 7 months in September of the relevant year. This consists of a maximum of 3 hours per day, 5 days per week, 38 weeks per year. Participation is voluntary. Since its establishment in January 2010, there has been a very positive response to this offer and data collected in September 2010 reports 63,000 (94%) of eligible children have enrolled in ECCE services. A further 4 percent of pre-school children have joined other State schemes, such as the Early Start programme. *[Ref: Paragraph 2.2.2 - Section I]*
C: Status Commenced 2010 – Current Status ongoing
D: Scope and level **Scope** This is a universal provision **Level:** Register of approved early childhood centres, Department of Children and Youth Affairs. Early Years Education Policy Unit
E: Outcome and impacts **Intended outcome:** Better educational outcomes for children **Impacts:** 94% of eligible children have enrolled in ECCE services **Formal evaluation of impact** See G below
F: Policy conditions: Strong Participation rates by eligible children and parents
G: Research: The Early Years Education Policy Unit (EYEPU) provided funding for three national research projects which focused on practical challenges related to pedagogy in early childhood care and education settings. *Ref:Paragraph 2.2.6 Research Series 2008 – 2010 in Section I.*
H: Comments: 94% of the eligible cohort of children are participating in the scheme. It should be noted that of the 6% remaining, some of these children would have started school proper. The challenge is to identify and remove the barriers to reach the remaining children.

Step 3: In upper-secondary education, provide attractive alternatives, remove dead ends and prevent dropout

Step 4: Offer second chances to gain from education

A: Title: Youthreach
B: Description: Youthreach is an integrated programme of education, training and work experience for young people aged between 15 and 20 who have left school early without any qualifications or vocational training. *[Ref: Paragraph 2.4.3 - Section I]*
C: Status Commenced 1989 – Current Status: ongoing
D: Scope and level **Scope** The programme is targeting educational disadvantage at a national level. **Level:** Vocational Education Committees, Community Training Centres
E: Outcome and impacts **Intended outcome:** Better educational outcomes for children and young people **Impacts:** Improved School Completion Rate Ref: Paragraph 4.6 - Monitoring Early School Leaving - Section I **Formal evaluation of impact:** 2008 VFM report "Youthreach and Senior Traveller Training Centre Programmes funded by the Department of Education and Science Value For Money Review". The programmes are also subject to ongoing evaluation by the Inspectorate.
F: Policy conditions: Strong buy-in from Stakeholders
G: Research: • **"**Youthreach and Senior Traveller Training Centre Programmes funded by the Department of Education and Science: Value for Money Review". (2008) • Ongoing evaluation by Department of Education and Skills Inspectorate.
H: Comments

A: Title: FÁS - Ireland's National Training and Employment Authority.

[It was announced on the 27th of July 2011 that a new education and training authority is to replace FÁS, which is being disbanded. The new agency is to be called Solas. Solas is an Irish language acronym which stands for Seirbhísí Oideachais Leanunaigh Agus Scileanna - Continuing Education And Skills Services. It is intended that the new agency will bring a more integrated approach to the provision of further education and training in Ireland.]

B: Description: Through a regional network FÁS operates training and employment programmes; provides a recruitment service to jobseekers and employers, an advisory service for industry, and supports community-based enterprises.
FÁS' Corporate Strategy sets out the strategic direction taken by the Authority and outlines the action that it will take to progress the Strategy under 8 High Priority Goals. These Goals cover areas such as services for jobseekers and the unemployed, workforce development, labour market policy, social inclusion, equality and diversity, and customer service.
[Ref: Paragraph 2.4.2 - Section I]

C: Status Commenced 1988 – Current Status: ongoing

D: Scope and level

Scope The organisation targets at a national level.

Level: Vocational Education Committees (VECs), Community Training Centre (CTCs), Local Training Initiatives (LTIs), Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) and Justice Workshops (JWS)

E: Outcome and impacts

Intended outcome: Up-skill those seeking employment.

Impacts

Formal evaluation of impact:

F: Policy conditions:

G: Research:

H: Comments

A: Title: The Back to Education Initiative (BTEI)
B: Description: The Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) provides part-time Further Education programmes for young people and adults. The aim is to give people an opportunity to combine a return to learning with family, work and other responsibilities. Those in receipt of unemployment payments or means-tested social welfare benefits, and holders of medical cards, and their dependants, are entitled to free tuition. Other unwaged people with less than upper second-level education will be entitled to a reduction in fees. *[Ref: Paragraph 2.4.7 - Section I]*
C: Status Current Status ongoing
D: Scope and level **Scope** The organisation targets at a national level. Anyone can take part in these courses but they are aimed primarily at those with little or no formal educational qualifications **Level:** VEC Colleges and Centres; some non-VEC schools and community organisations.
E: Outcome and impacts **Intended outcome:** Up-skill those seeking employment. **Impacts :** In 2011 as part of the Government's Jobs initiative 3,000 additional places were provided of part-time, flexible learning opportunities for unemployed people who are low-skilled or who left school without completing the Leaving Certificate **Formal evaluation of impact:**
F: Policy conditions: As part of the recently announced Jobs Initiative, provision has been made under the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) for an additional 3,000 places nationally which are specifically targeted at the unemployed. The places will commence in September 2011 and brings the total number of approved BTEI places available nationwide to around 12,000. Strong buy-in from Stakeholders.
G: Research:
H: Comments

A: Title: Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)
B: Description: VTOS is a full-time second chance education and training initiative, providing courses between Levels 3-6 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) (Appendix 'D') to unemployed people over 21 years of age. The scheme is delivered and managed locally by the VECs. *[Ref: Paragraph 2.4.5 - Section I]*
C: Status Current Status: Ongoing
D: Scope and level **Scope:** There are 5,000 VTOS places available nationally every year. The total spend for VTOS in 2010 was €78.9 million. This figure included pay, non pay and trainee allowances. **Level:** VEC Colleges and Centres
E: Outcome and impacts **Intended outcome:** The programme's objectives are to: provide individuals aged 21 years and over with the education and skills needed to gain employment or progress to further and/or higher education and training leading to employment; and to address a structural issue in the labour market whereby a significant proportion of long-term unemployed people have left school before completion of upper secondary education or have had no schooling beyond primary level. **Impacts :** **Formal evaluation of impact:**
F: Policy conditions: Strong buy-in from Stakeholders.
G: Research:
H: Comments

A: Title: Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) Programme

B: Description: The PLC programme is a full time programme for students who have completed their Leaving Certificate and for adults returning to education. The programme caters for those who have completed senior cycle education, and require further vocational education and training to enhance their prospects of employment or progression to other studies. It also assists adults returning to education who may not have completed the senior cycle but are deemed by the provider to have the necessary competencies to undertake the programme. *[Ref: Paragraph 2.4.4 of Section I]*

C: Status Current Status: Ongoing

D: Scope and level

Scope: The programmes are run on a national level. The number of PLC places increased by 1000 from September 2011 bringing the total number of places to 32,688.

Level: VEC Colleges and Centres and some post-primary schools.

E: Outcome and impacts

Intended outcome: The courses are specifically designed to enhance participants' employability, to prepare students for work by giving them specific skills and training and also to act as a stepping-stone to other third level qualifications at Institutes of Technology, Universities or other colleges.

Impacts: PLC enrolments in the last academic year were some 22% above the number of approved places.

Formal evaluation of impact:

F: Policy conditions: As part of the recently announced Jobs Initiative, an additional 1,000 Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) were announced bringing the total available to 32,688- to be prioritised for the unemployed. Strong buy-in from Stakeholders.

G: Research:

H: Comments

A: Title: Adult Literacy and Community Education

B: Description: The adult literacy and community education programmes are part-time programmes for learners seeking to improve their basic education skills. Certification is an option for learners mainly at levels FETAC 1-3. *[Ref: Paragraphs 2.4.8 and 2.4.9 of Section I]*

C: Status Current Status ongoing

D: Scope and level

Scope: The programmes are run on a national level through the VEC sector and were availed of by over 100,000 participants in 2010. Participation levels have increased annually in recent years.
Level: VEC and community centres.

E: Outcome and impacts

Intended outcome: The courses are aimed at improving the basic skills of learners and encouraging further participation in education and in the local community.

Impacts: The impact for learners are twofold, the development of basic skills and the enhancing of softer skills like personal development and improved community participation.
Formal evaluation of impact:

F: Policy conditions:

The programme for Government contains commitments in relation to the improvement of adult literacy levels in two key areas. As part of its Labour Market Policy, the Government will make literacy and basic workplace skills a national priority, with literacy training incorporated into a wider variety of further education and training programmes. The Government will also address the widespread and persistent problem of adult literacy through the integration of literacy in vocational training and through community education under its lifelong learning policy.

G: Research: Ireland is participating in an adult literacy survey organised by the OECD entitled the Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). This involves surveying adults (between the ages of 16-64) in their homes on a range of skills covering the interest, attitude and capacity of individual adults to access, manage, understand, integrate and evaluate various types of information (principally text and numerical) as well as to respond and communicate with others in the information age. It will focus on the key cognitive and workplace skills that are required for successful participation in the economy and society of the 21st century. The CSO will administer the survey, commencing in August 2011, in Ireland and results are expected to be published in 2013.
AONTAS – The National Adult Learning Organisation, an umbrella body representing adult and community education organisations conducted research on the Community Education Programme, funded by the Department of Education and Skills in 2010. The research found the programme was successful in the area of personal development and found less focus on community development activities in the programme.

H: Comments

Step 7: Respond to diversity and provide for the successful inclusion of migrants and minorities within mainstream education

A: Title: Traveller Education

B: Description: A key development in terms of advancing education for the Traveller Community has been the Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy which was launched in November 2006. The Report covers all aspects of Traveller Education from pre-school right through to further and higher education within a lifelong learning context.

The principle of inclusion is at the core of the current strategy and future provision will focus on the development of more inclusive and intercultural school practice and environment through the whole school planning process, admissions policies, codes of behaviour and whole school evaluation. A key aim of the strategy is to enhance access and education service delivery to Travellers with provision focused on 'individual educational need' rather than 'Traveller identity'.

C: Status: Ongoing

D: Scope and level

Scope: National

Level: Provision through Mainstream Education System from pre-school to further and Higher Education. There are a small number, of segregated centres which are still in existence. A phased approach is being be taken to ensure that, prior to the closure of the centres, appropriate alternative facilities are in place for those children and young people affected by the closures.

E: Outcome and impacts

Intended outcome: The primary objective of the Strategy is to ensure a quality, integrated education for Travellers underpinned by the principles of inclusion and mainstreaming with an emphasis on equality and diversity and the adoption of an intercultural approach.
Impacts: The vision for Traveller Education, as summarised in the Strategy, is that Travellers would

a. Obtain access to all mainstream provision
b. Participate as equals, achieve their full potential, and have outcomes similar to those of their settled peers
c. Be participants in an education that is changing and evolving into an inclusive system
d. Gain qualifications, obtain access to mainstream employment, aspire to promotion and participate fully as members of society
e. Respect and be respected for their culture and identity in an Ireland where diversity, equality and inter-culturalism are the norm and reciprocally respect other cultures and identities
f. Contribute to Ireland's social, cultural and economic development.

Formal evaluation of impact: No formal evaluation planned at this stage. One of the recommendations for immediate priority was the mainstreaming of provision for Travellers by ending, in a phased manner, segregated provision in pre-schools, primary, post-primary and further education. Many of the recommendations for mainstreaming provision on the basis of identified educational need rather than Traveller identity are being advanced at all levels.

F: Policy conditions

The Strategy underpins all policy in relation to provision for Traveller Education. The successful implementation of the strategy is critical to secure improved outcomes for Traveller children and adult learners.

The Traveller Education Strategy Advisory and Consultative Forum (the "Forum") was

established in 2009 as a forum for consultation on the implementation of the Traveller Education Strategy. The Forum comprises representatives of the Department of Education and Skills charged with responsibility for Traveller education, education partners and Traveller representative groups. The object of the Forum is to identify issues, including obstacles, to the implementation of recommendations of the Traveller Education Strategy.

In addition to the Forum, the Department of Education and Skills participates fully with the National Traveller Monitoring and Advisory Committee to which it provides comprehensive progress reports. The Department engages with Travellers, non-governmental organisations and other parties represented on the Committee. It also engages bilaterally with representative groups on a regular basis.

G: Research:

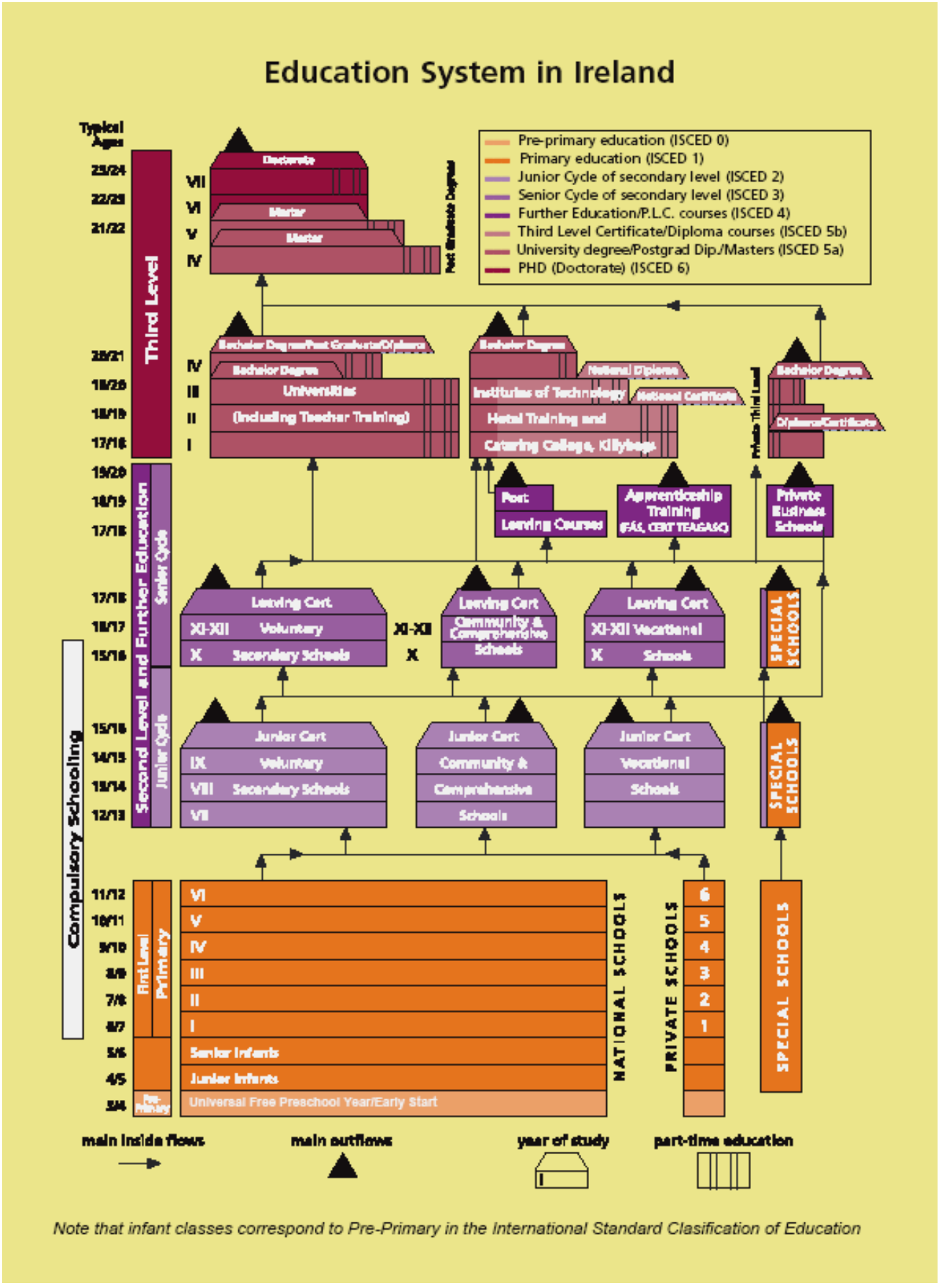
- Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy 2006
- Youthreach and Senior Traveller Training Centre Programmes funded by the Department of Education and Science: Value for Money Review". (2008)
- Ongoing evaluation by Inspectorate.

H: Comments

A: Title: Intercultural Education Strategy
B: Description: The Strategy has identified ten key components that are necessary for the creation of an inclusive, integrated and intercultural learning environment. These are leadership; knowledge of the language of instruction; mainstreaming; rights and responsibilities; high aspirations and expectation; enhancing the quality of teaching; partnership and engagement; effective communication; data collection and research; and implementing the strategy, monitoring and evaluation.
C: Status: Commenced: September 2010
D: Scope and level **Scope:** The programme is targeted at a national level. **Level:** All actors
E: Outcome and impacts **Intended outcome:** The Department has prioritised the mainstreaming of migrants in our school and does not support segregated provision. Mainstreaming is a fundamental concept that is linked to equity, equality and diversity. **Impacts** **Formal evaluation of impact**
F: Policy conditions
G: Research: "Adapting to Diversity: Irish Schools and Newcomer Students" ESRI, (2009) "OECD Thematic Review on Migrant Education- Country Report for Ireland" (2009) "OECD Reviews of Migrant Education - Closing the Gap for Immigrant Students: Policies, Practice and Performance" (2010).
H: Comments

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 'A'



Note that infant classes correspond to Pre-Primary in the International Standard Clasification of Education

APPENDIX 'B'

Professional Development Service for Teachers

The School Development Planning Initiative(SDPI) was established in 1999 by the Department of Education and Science to stimulate and strengthen a culture of collaborative development planning in schools, with a view to promoting school improvement and effectiveness.

Over the following eleven years, SDPI provided a wide range of supports for schools, including school-based services from the SDPI Team, cluster workshops, regional seminars, training courses, and guideline materials. SDPI also worked with and through other education agencies in helping school communities to address their planning needs. In 2010, in a major programme of rationalisation of all the planning support and professional development services, a new multi-disciplinary Professional Development Service for Teachers(PDST) was established. With effect from 1 September 2010, support for school development planning is part of the remit of the PDST.

Section 5 of the DEIS Action Plan places an increased emphasis on planning at school and school cluster level, target-setting and measurement of progress and outcomes to ensure that the increased investment under the DEIS initiative is matched by an improvement in educational outcomes for the children and young people concerned.

The Department recognises that the vast majority of schools already have school plans in place. Since the inception of the Planning Support service, schools have been assisted in developing school plans through a process of consultation and collaboration with members of the school community. It is in the context of the work of school planning generally that schools in the DEIS programme adopt more focused target-setting and on-going review processes.

A planning template was devised by the support service to facilitate this process. A team of DEIS advisors from within the Professional Development Service for Teachers provide support to the most disadvantaged DEIS schools in the area of literacy and numeracy.

APPENDIX 'C'

Schools Business Partnership

Business in the Community

Business in the Community is a business-led non-profit organisation was founded in January 2000 to promote the adoption of corporate responsibility policies and practices through its services and programmes.

The Schools Business Partnership was set up in June 2001 as a structure to facilitate the mutually beneficial links between schools and local businesses and to support the Government's overall strategy on education. The Partnership works with students in areas of educational disadvantage.

161 of 220 post-primary schools currently participating in the School Completion Programme have been partnered with local businesses under Business in the Community's Schools Business Partnership. The School Completion Programme is a major component of DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools), the action plan for educational inclusion. The School Completion Programme provides support for targeted children who are at risk of early school leaving. The supports are provided through 124 local projects and include interventions on school attendance, literacy/numeracy, after school, homework holiday time supports as well as social and sporting interventions.

Funding is currently provided to the Schools Business Partnership annually from the School Completion Programme Budget for associated programme costs.

The lead sponsor Marks and Spencer Ireland is continuing with their sponsorship of the Schools' Business Partnership. They provide the leadership to Irish business in terms of their commitment to impacting on educational inclusion in Ireland. They have been the lead sponsor since 2001.

The Schools Business Partnership is divided into four main programmes:

(1) The Student Mentoring Programme encourages students who are at risk of leaving school early to continue their studies with the advice and support of a mentor from a local business. About 970 students have participated.

(2) The Skills@Work programme invites employees from local businesses to talk to post-primary school students about real-life workforce skills such as interview preparation and CV writing. Almost 14,000 students have taken part.

(3) The Summer Work Placement Programme, offered in cooperation with the Irish Funds Industry Association, organises short-term job opportunities for students in leading global financial services organisations. 261 students have participated since 2001.

(4) The Management Excellence for Principals programme facilitates skills sharing between business and school leaders. The number of principals who have taken part is 458.
In 2011, the existing partnership between the School Completion Programme and the Schools Business Partnership will be further developed by extending access to the SBP to more second-level schools participating in DEIS over 2 – 3 years.

Other Educational Initiatives involving SBP

Bridge to Employment is a unique Irish tripartite initiative bringing together industry, community and education (at both second and third level). Its aim is to increase access to third level education for disadvantaged communities in Cork. The initiative commenced in 2006. The Irish partners are: Janssen Pharmaceuticals, De Puy, Centocor (all J & J companies) Cork Institute of Technology, UCC, Mayfield CS, North Monastery SS, Terence Mc Swiney CC, BITC and Junior Achievement. The SBP sits on the Steering Group of this initiative – one of its first in Ireland being piloted by the J & J companies.

'Science in Action' was hosted by the Schools' Business Partnership in October 2006 for science teachers and guidance counsellors. The aim of 'Science in Action' was to achieve a greater awareness of the strategic direction of science-based industries among science and career guidance teachers and to establish a closer link between science-based industries and schools.

The *Ready to Work* initiative which was launched in 2002 provides work experience and guidance to people who are looking to move on from homelessness into employment or training. Through Ready for Work, businesses in Ireland are able to make a direct impact on the lives of homeless people by providing a realistic experience of the world of work as part of a structured and supportive programme.
Time to Read programme commenced in October 2010, Time to Read is a pilot reading support programme involving businesses and primary school children in first and second class managed by the SBP. It will be run along similar lines to the Time to Read programme and aims to increase the enjoyment of reading, increase confidence in reading, improve and encourage self discovery and improve fluency and comprehension when reading. Seven schools will take part in the pilot and will be rolled out across the country to other SCP schools and the programme will involve volunteers from businesses providing one to one reading support to students. The pilot is sponsored by Bórd Gais. All volunteers will receive a half day's training from SBP prior to starting the programme

The volunteers will provide one hour of reading support per week and will work with two students giving each 30 minutes of their time. The programme will run for 24 weeks and will be delivered in the school but outside of the classroom. Each volunteer will undergo a half day's training provided by the SBP team.

International Recognition

The Schools Business Partnership has shared its programmes, materials, systems and outcomes with interested parties both in Ireland and abroad at various EU Conferences abroad. The latest being the EU Thematic Conference on Schools Business Partnerships in Brussels in March 2010.

Following a conference on partnership between educational and training institutions and employers, held during the Czech EU presidency in April 2009, the Czech Republic decided to replicate the Schools Business Partnership in their country.

APPENDIX 'D'

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS
Údarás Náisiúnta Cáilíochtaí na hÉireann
National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
LEVEL 1 CERTIFICATE
LEVEL 2 CERTIFICATE
LEVEL 3 CERTIFICATE
JUNIOR CERTIFICATE
LEVEL 4 CERTIFICATE
LEAVING CERTIFICATE
LEVEL 5 CERTIFICATE
ADVANCED CERTIFICATE
HIGHER CERTIFICATE
ORDINARY BACHELOR DEGREE
HONOURS BACHELOR DEGREE
HIGHER DIPLOMA
POST-GRADUATE DIPLOMA
MASTERS DEGREE
HIGHER DOCTORATE
DOCTORAL DEGREE
FETAC
SEC
HETAC & IoT
DIT
UNIVERSITIES
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
10-LEVEL FRAMEWORK
AWARDING BODIES
FETAC - Further Education and Training Awards Council
SEC - State Examinations Commission (Department of Education & Science)
HETAC - Higher Education and Training Awards Council
IoT - Institutes of Technology (make their own awards at specified levels under Delegated Authority from HETAC)
DIT - Dublin Institute of Technology
Universities
AWARDS IN THE FRAMEWORK
There are four types of award in the National Framework of Qualifications:
Major Awards: are the principal class of awards made at a level
Minor Awards: are for partial completion of the outcomes for a Major Award
Supplemental Awards: are for learning that is additional to a Major Award
Special Purpose Awards: are for relatively narrow or purpose-specific achievement
Transforming Ireland
NDP
Funded by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan, 2007 - 2013.
For further information consult: www.nqai.ie www.nfq.ie www.qualrec.ie
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APPENDIX 'E' - Integration of Migrants

Under the terms of the Department's Free Fees Initiative the Exchequer meets the tuition fees of eligible students who are pursuing full-time undergraduate courses of study which are a minimum of two years duration in an approved institution.

The main conditions of the scheme are that students must be first-time undergraduates, meet the nationality clause of the scheme in their own right and have been ordinarily resident in an EU/EEA/Swiss state for at least three of the five years preceding their entry to an approved third level course. In order to meet the nationality criteria of the scheme students must meet the terms of one of the following categories:

- Students must be a national of
    - (i) an EU Member State,
    - (ii) a state which is a contracting state to the EEA Agreement,
    - (iii) the Swiss Confederation, or

- Persons who have official refugee status in this State. Time spent from date of official lodgement of application papers for refugee status will be included for the purpose of meeting the three year residency requirement; or

- Family members of a refugee who are granted permission by the Minister for Justice and Law Reform to enter and reside in the State under Section 18 of the Refugee Act 1996

- Persons who have permission to remain in the State as a family member of a Union citizen under the provisions of the European Communities (Free Movement of Persons) Regulations 2006 and 2008 and Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council; or

- Persons who have been granted Humanitarian Leave to Remain in the State (prior to the Immigration Act 1999); or

- be a person in respect of whom the Minister for Justice and Law Reform has granted permission to remain following a determination not to make a deportation order under section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999

It is the student's own nationality or his/her immigration status in the State that determines whether or not he/she meets the nationality requirement of the scheme. The assessment of eligibility under the Free

Fees Initiative in individual cases is a matter for each higher education institution to determine within the terms of the scheme.

Where students do not meet the eligibility criteria of the Free Fees initiative such students must pay the appropriate tuition fee as determined by the third level institution.

Note that with effect from the 2011/12 academic year, the Free Fees initiative will incorporate a Student Contribution Scheme. Under the Student Contribution scheme, eligible undergraduate students, who meet the criteria of the scheme, will not have to pay approved EU/non-EU tuition fees but will have to pay the necessary student contribution each year.

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http://www.esri.ie	**Economic and Social Research Institute**
http://www.fetac.ie	**Further Education and Training Awards Council**
http://www.ncca.ie	**The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment**
http://www.newb.ie	**National Educational Welfare Board**