

# Department of Education & Science Annual Report 2003

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# Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Education and Science is to provide for high-quality education, which will:

- Enable individuals to achieve their full potential and to participate fully as members of society, and
- Contribute to Ireland's social, cultural and economic development.

# High-Level Goals

In pursuit of this mission, the Department has the following high-level goals:

1. We will deliver an education that is relevant to individuals' personal, social, cultural and economic needs.
2. We will support, through education, a socially inclusive society with equal opportunity for all.
3. We will contribute to Ireland's economic prosperity, development and international competitiveness.
4. We will seek to improve the standard and quality of education and promote best practice in classrooms, schools, colleges and other centres for education.
5. We will support the delivery of education by quality planning, policy formulation and customer service.

# Activities

Our mandate: In support of these high-level goals, the Department is engaged in a wide range of activities including:

- Policy planning and review
- Quality assurance
- Human and financial resource allocation
- Planning and provision of education infrastructure
- Enhancing education through co-operation



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# Foreword by the Minister



I am pleased to publish the Annual Report of my Department for 2003. This is the first report to directly detail the progress made towards the achievement of the high-level goals and strategies set out in our Statement of Strategy 2003-2005.

4 With international comparative statistics showing that the risk of poverty is highly correlated with the level of educational attainment, our priority is to tackle educational disadvantage. Our commitment to the improvement of participation and achievement, at all levels, was underpinned by the launch of the new National Education Welfare Service which will promote regular school attendance and deal with the problems of absenteeism and early school leaving.

Progress on the White Paper on Adult Education - *Learning for Life* continues with the provision of additional places for adult learners in the adult literacy and community education programmes. We also introduced a range of targeted measures to address disadvantage at third level. The challenge facing us all is to continue to identify and counteract barriers to full participation in the education system.

Improved transparency was a key theme in 2003. Teacher allocations at first and second level operated with independent appeals processes, under which school management authorities can appeal decisions in relation to their staffing allocations for the year. An independent School Transport Appeals Board was also established and for the first time, the School Building Programme was published in the interests of improving access to information.

This report shows the progress achieved in meeting the objectives set out in the Statement of Strategy. There are still challenges ahead to deliver on our strategies and to meet the targets set out in the National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion. With the continued support of the Partners in Education and the commitment and dedication of the staff of the Department, I believe that we are well placed to work towards providing a quality education system for all.

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Noel Dempsey, T.D.

Minister for Education and Science

# Statement from the Secretary General



I am pleased to present the 2003 Annual Report of the Department of Education and Science.

The purpose of this report is to present the main developments across all levels of education and the achievements of the Department in 2003 with reference to the objectives and strategies set out in the 2003 – 2005 Statement of Strategy. This Department is unique in terms of the breadth and scope of services it offers to an equally broad and diverse customer base.

2003 was a challenging year in a number of ways. Implementation of the programme of structural reform within the Department continued and, in an historic move, responsibility for examinations was devolved to the State Examinations Commission. A number of regional offices were established in 2003 with the remainder scheduled for 2004. This programme of structural reform will enable us to focus more on our core work, including strategic policy development and evaluation.

The Department will face additional restructuring arising from the Government decision to proceed with a programme of decentralisation. This Department in its entirety, together with a number of the bodies under its aegis, will relocate to the midlands, with the new Head Office located in Mullingar. The Management Advisory Committee are fully committed to ensuring that the decentralisation plans for this Department are implemented as smoothly as possible.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff of the Department for their enthusiasm and dedication in working towards meeting the objectives set out in the Statement of Strategy.

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John Dennehy,  
Secretary General.



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# Key Education Statistics

## The changing environment of education



It is recognised internationally that education is a critical driver of economic success and social progress. The provision of quality education and training is central to the creation of a high-skills, knowledge and innovation-based economy, that will underpin ongoing and sustainable prosperity. Education and training are also crucial to achieving an inclusive society where all citizens have the opportunity and the incentive, to participate fully in the social and economic life of the country.

### Changing demographics

Between 1979/80 and 2002/2003, the overall total number of students remained relatively static but the number of students at each level changed

dramatically. At primary level, the number decreased by 19 per cent, to reflect the changing demography in Ireland. At second level, the number increased by 16 per cent reflecting the increased participation rate in post-compulsory education, while at third level the number more than tripled from over 37,000 to over 129,000.

At primary level, enrolment declined up to 2000/01 but has increased again each year since then. Based on recent birth data, this increase is set to continue for at least the next 13 years and enrolment may possibly reach the 1979/80 figures at the end of this period.

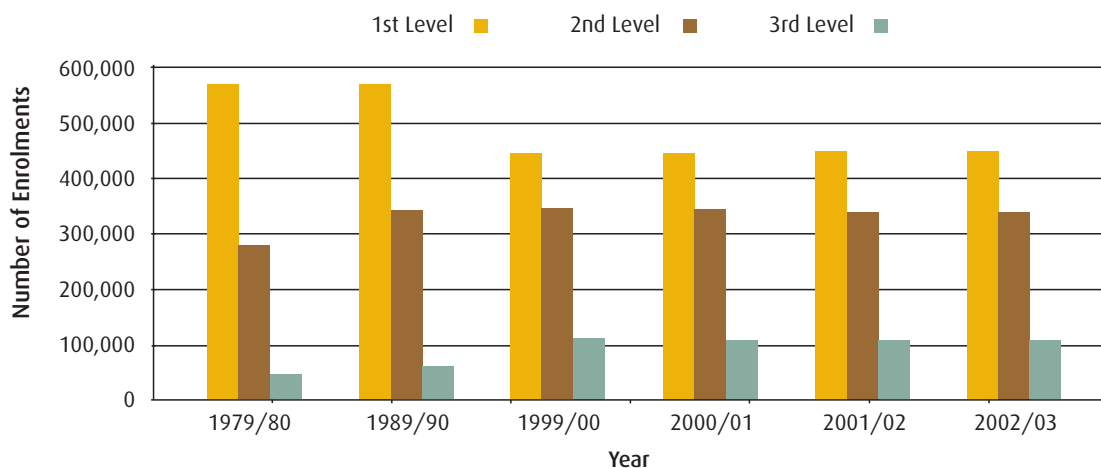
At second level, enrolment increased up to 1996/97 and has declined since then. This decrease is set to



continue until 2007/08 but enrolment should begin to increase again after this, in line with the increase in primary enrolment.

At third level, enrolment has been constantly increasing and this trend is expected to continue into the near future.

### Total Full-time Enrolments by Level (Aided)



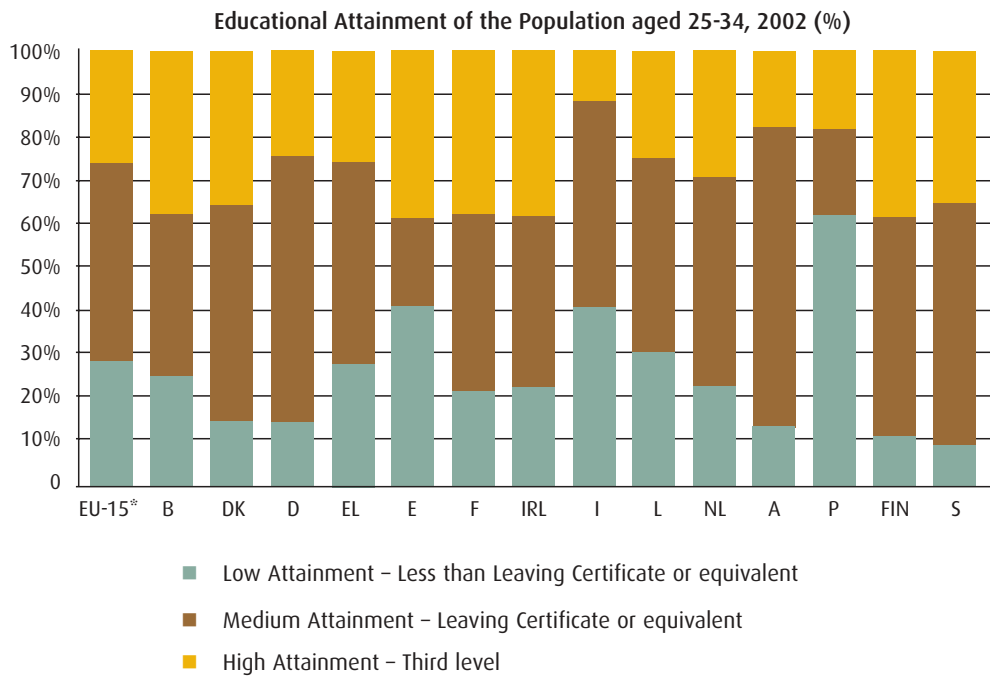
SCHOOL YEAR NUMBER OF FULL-TIME PUPILS	1979/80	1989/90	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
FIRST LEVEL	547,431	552,182	444,310	439,560	441,065	443,720
SECOND LEVEL	292,280	339,132	353,860	345,384	340,078	339,231
THIRD LEVEL	37,425	64,137	115,696	119,991	124,589	129,283



## Educational Attainment of Population – International Comparison

A comparison with 15 EU member states (the EU-15 average), shows that the proportion of people in Ireland with third level attainment is higher than the EU-15 average in every age group.

With the exception of the youngest age group, the proportion with Leaving Certificate or equivalent is lower than the EU-15 average. The impact of free second-level education in the late 1960s is evident in the increasing proportion of Leaving Certificate holders, or better, in the younger age group.

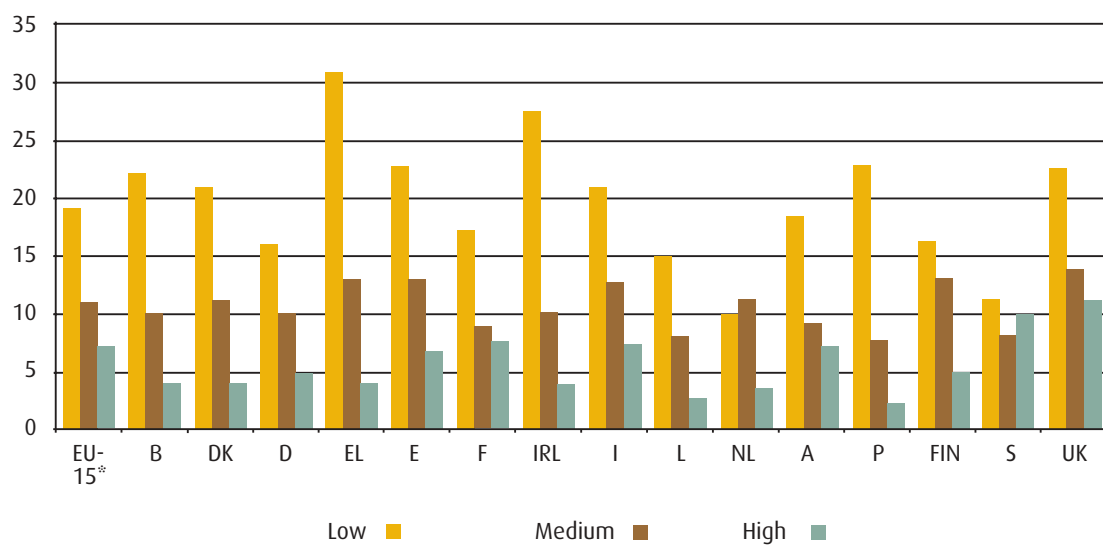


	EU-15*	Belgium	Denmark	Germany	Greece	Spain	France	IRL	Italy	Luxembourg	Netherlands	Austria	Portugal	Finland	Sweden	UK
<b>25-64</b>																
Low	38	40	20	17	47	58	36	40	56	38	32	22	79	25	19	-
Medium	41	32	53	61	35	17	41	35	34	43	43	61	11	42	55	-
High	21	28	27	22	18	24	24	25	10	19	25	17	9	32	26	29
<b>25-34</b>																
Low	28	24	15	15	26	41	22	23	40	32	23	15	65	12	9	-
Medium	47	40	55	64	51	22	43	41	47	46	49	68	20	49	61	-
High	26	36	31	21	23	37	35	36	12	23	28	17	16	38	31	34
<b>55-64</b>																
Low	53	59	28	23	71	82	54	63	77	49	46	33	92	47	33	-
Medium	33	22	49	58	19	7	32	22	17	36	35	54	4	29	44	-
High	14	18	23	19	10	11	15	14	7	14	20	13	5	24	23	23

## At Risk of Poverty Rates by Highest Educational Attainment, 2000

This table shows that in almost all the countries, the risk of poverty is highly correlated with the level of educational attainment. A person has a higher risk of being poor if his/her educational attainment level is low. Ireland has the second highest differential in the risk of poverty between those with low educational attainment (less than upper secondary) and high educational attainment (third level).

At Risk of Poverty Rate by Highest Educational Attainment, 2000



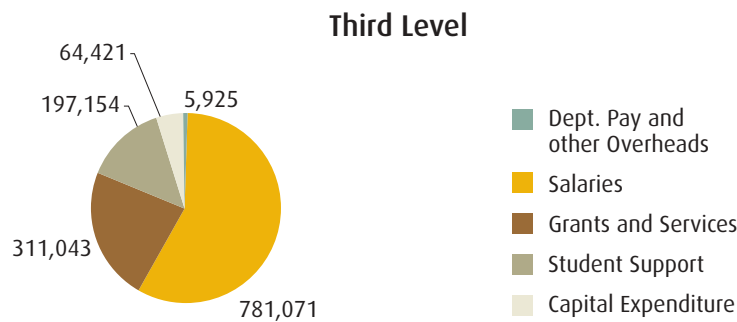
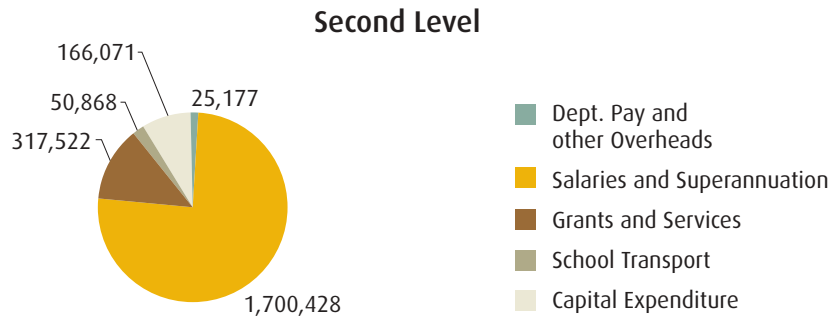
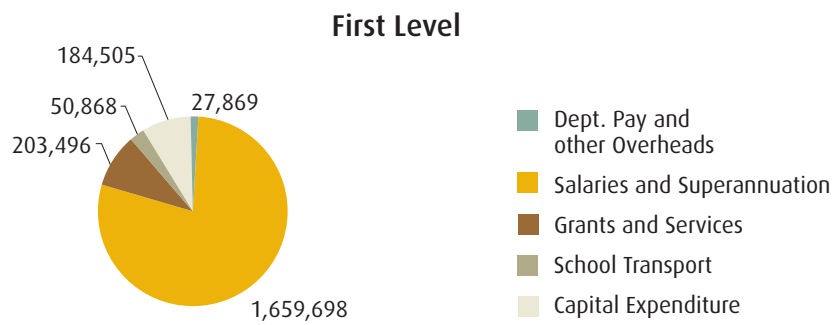
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	EU-15*	Belgium	Denmark	Germany	Greece	Spain	France	IRL	Italy	Luxembourg	Netherlands	Austria	Portugal	Finland	Sweden	UK
Low	19	22	21	16	31	23	17	27	21	15	10	18	23	16	11	23
Medium	11	10	11	10	13	13	9	10	12	8	11	9	8	13	8	14
High	7	4	4	5	4	7	8	4	7	2	3	7	2	5	10	11

## Education and Related Expenditure 2003

€5.7 billion was provided for the education sector in 2003. This funding is principally for three major education programmes; First Level, Second Level and Third Level Education. The Department also provides funding for a number of other smaller programmes relating to non-school services – mainly youth and cultural activities.

The following tables detail expenditure by principal programme of expenditure.



# Main Developments in 2003

## High Level Goal Meeting the Needs of the Individual

We will deliver an education that is relevant to individuals' personal, social, cultural and economic needs.



### Objective 1.1

We will support the development and provision of quality early childhood education in line with the strategy set out in the White Paper on Early Childhood Education, "Ready To Learn".

*The White Paper on Early Childhood Education, "Ready To Learn"* sets out Government policy on all issues relating to early education. The principal objective is to support the development and educational achievement of children through high quality early education, with a particular focus on the target groups of the disadvantaged and those with special needs. Work progressed in 2003 towards the establishment of a national quality framework for early childhood education, including a regulatory regime for quality assurance.

#### Policy Development

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) have worked

closely together in developing the framework consultative document *Towards a Framework for Early Childhood Learning*. The NCCA will finalise the framework on completion of the consultative process.

#### Early Start Programme

The Early Start is a pre-school intervention programme targeted at 3 and 4 year old children in areas of social disadvantage. With this programme, young children can experience an educational programme to enhance their overall development, to help prevent school failure and to help offset the effects of social disadvantage.

Number of Schools	Number of Pupils	2003 Expenditure
40 schools	1680	€1.98m*

\* This figure is exclusive of salaries



## Objective 1.2

We will enable schools at primary and second level to deliver a high quality education by providing a comprehensive range of provision, including financial, staffing and curricular supports

### Support for the Operation of Schools

#### Supply of Primary Teachers

The total intake to the Colleges of Education for primary teaching in 2003 was 1,460. This was made up of 1,000 students on the 3-year undergraduate course and 460 students on the 18-month postgraduate course, which commenced in February 2003. This compares with an intake of 500 in 1996. Overall, there were 3,921 students in the colleges in 2003.

HETAC granted recognition to a new primary teacher training course for graduates in August 2003. The new course is being delivered by Hibernia College and will lead to a Graduate Diploma in Primary Education.

There were 25,575 teaching posts in primary schools in December 2003. The projected pupil teacher ratio for the school year 2003/04 is 17.35:1 (Total number of pupils: teachers)

#### Scrúdú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge (SCG)

Primary teachers, with recognised qualifications acquired outside the State, have to sit the SCG if they wish to gain recognition as a teacher in mainstream classes. The examinations are held twice a year – in April and October. The syllabus was revised in 2003 and over 300 people sat one or more of the four modules on offer. Candidates have to pass all four modules within a five-year period starting when provisional recognition is granted. Candidates also have to attend an approved three-week long Gaeltacht course.

#### Primary Staffing Appeals Board

Staffing allocations to primary schools usually issue by June and are based on the pupil enrolments for the previous September. Boards of Management, can appeal their teaching resource allocations to an independent Primary Staffing Appeals Board, set up in 2003. There were 110 cases in 2003. Additional teaching resources were granted in eight of these cases.

#### Primary Incremental Credit Appeals

Non teaching service with the EU can be recognised if it meets the following criteria:

- Remunerated
- full-time
- satisfactory and
- be relevant to primary teaching

Teachers can appeal to an independent Appeals Board. There were six appeals in 2003 and incremental credit was awarded in three cases.

### Supply of Second-level Teachers

There were 25,645 whole time equivalent (equivalent to full time teaching posts) teachers in the second-level system in the 2003/04 school year. The pupil teacher ratio in this sector is now 13.48: 1 (Total number of pupils: teachers)

The Higher Diploma in Education is a one-year, full-time course leading to the qualification to teach in secondary schools. There are approximately 1,100 places available each year on the Higher Diploma in Education courses.

### Appeals Procedures for Second- Level Teacher Allocations

An independent forum to consider teacher allocation appeals by second-level schools met, for the first time, in May 2003. The appeals forum considers appeals for additional teaching resources, where particular problems arise for schools, in meeting essential curricular commitments. There were 143 appeals in 2003. Additional teacher resources were granted in 102 cases.

### Post-Primary Incremental Credit Appeals

An award of incremental credit may be given in respect of previous teaching experience and relevant non-teaching service for fully qualified, recognised

teachers in the second level sector. The scheme was extended in 2003 to include the following:

- All approved service given in recognised equivalent schools/colleges within the European Union
- Approved service given in primary and third-level colleges
- The award of credit in respect of length of training, teaching service and relevant non-teaching service to eligible part-time teachers on the same basis as full-time teachers.

Teachers can appeal to the Incremental Credit Appeals Board. There were 13 appeals in 2003 and incremental credit was awarded in six cases. Two further cases received partial recognition.

### Appeal System for Students/Parents

Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998 gives parents (and students who have reached the age of 18) the right to appeal certain decisions made by a school's Board of Management.

An appeal may be made in respect of a decision to:

- Permanently exclude a student from the school
- Suspend a student from the school for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days in any one school year
- Refuse to enrol a student in the school.

### 163 appeals were processed in 2003, details as follows:

	Withdrawn	Local Resolution	Facilitation at Hearing	Upheld at Hearing	Not Upheld	Total
<b>Post Primary</b>						
Permanent Exclusion	4	1	9	7	13	34
Refusal to enrol	41	0	8	16	9	74
Suspension	1	1	1	2	1	6
<b>Primary</b>						
Permanent Exclusion	0	0	1	0	0	1
Refusal to enrol	13	3	8	18	5	47
Suspension	1	0	0	0	0	1

There are three layers to the procedures under which an appeal is considered under the Acts

- Both parties are asked, in the first instance, to see if the matter can be resolved at local level
- Should that fail, and where the Appeals Committee considers that it may be possible to facilitate agreement between the appellant and the school, a facilitator will be appointed to contact the parties at the earliest opportunity
- Finally an appeal may be referred for hearing to an Appeals Committee

### Election of new Boards of Management of National Schools

A Board of Management is the body of persons established to ensure that a recognised national (primary) school is managed in a spirit of partnership, as defined by *Section 14 of the Education Act, 1998*. New Boards, with a term of office of 4 years, were established with effect from 1 December 2003. These Boards will operate in accordance with the revised Composition and Rules of Procedure agreed with the Education Partners and published in 2003.

## Curricular Developments and Training Supports

A national programme of in-service training and continuing professional development is provided for teachers and other school personnel at first, second and further education levels and for parents involved at first and second levels. The main focus is on supporting curricular reform initiatives, the provision of special needs education training and programmes in relation to educational disadvantage. The programme is provided through:

- National Support Services established mainly to support specific areas of curricular change and usually for a defined period – these are staffed by teachers on secondment and are generally administered through Education Support Centres. There are a number of sizeable support services/programmes, of which the Primary

Curriculum Support Programme is the largest.

- Teacher training colleges, universities and other educational institutions and agencies
- Education Support Centres and a range of other providers such as management and staff bodies, subject associations, parents associations and schools.

There were 139,000 participants on courses in 2003. 83% of participants rated courses as helpful.

Training programmes include:

### Primary Curriculum Support Programme

The Primary Curriculum Support Programme supports the introduction of the revised primary curriculum which is being implemented on a phased basis up to the end of the 2005/06 school year. Following representations from the Education Partners, a "Review and Consolidation year" was introduced for 2003/04 to allow a review of progress to date, to enable future needs to be considered and to plan for further action.

### Second- Level Support Services

The Second Level Support Service was restructured in 2003 to provide a single support service for the Junior Certificate School Programme, the Transition Year Programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, the Leaving Certificate Applied, English, Physics and Chemistry, and Civic Social and Political Education. These programmes are well established and will continue to be supported through a single integrated service.

Existing support services for Biology, Junior Certificate Maths, Social Personal and Health Education and Home Economics were continued during 2003.

New services were established in 2003 to support the introduction of new syllabi for Junior Certificate Science, Leaving Certificate History & Geography and Leaving Certificate Physical Education.

*The Education Act 1998* requires schools “to promote the social and personal development of students and to provide health education for them”. The phasing in of the new junior cycle curriculum for Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) was completed in 2003. From September 2003, all post-primary schools are required to timetable SPHE as part of the junior cycle core curriculum. The Post-Primary SPHE Support Service continued to support schools throughout 2003.

### Special Needs Training

A Special Education Support Service was established in 2003 to cater for the primary and post primary sectors. The aim of the service is to consolidate, co-ordinate, develop and deliver a range of professional development initiatives and supports to teachers and other personnel in the special needs area.

### Induction for Newly Qualified Teachers

A pilot induction project, established in 2002 to develop the skills of newly qualified teachers by providing mentoring and induction support at both primary and post primary level, was extended in 2003. The first phase had involved some 12 mentors and 40 teachers per sector. The extension of the project for a further year allowed for the inclusion of an additional 12 mentors and 40 teachers at both primary and post primary level.

### Leadership Development for Schools.

The Leadership Development for Schools (LDS) national programme was established to promote school leadership in first and second-level schools. The main focus of LDS is the Misneach programme which is a comprehensive induction programme for first time Principals. Initiated in February 2003, Misneach has four elements:

- Residential courses
- Mentoring provision
- Reflective Practice through portfolio development
- ICT-mediated support.

### School Development Planning Initiative.

In-service training in School Development Planning (SDP) continued to be provided in 2003 in both primary and second-level schools through the SDP Support Services in order to stimulate and strengthen a culture of development planning in schools.

## School Transport Service

The School Transport Scheme provides a service each day of the school year to approximately 140,000 pupils including almost 9,000 children with special needs, on 5,750 routes to primary and second-level schools. Bus Eireann operates the Scheme on behalf of the Department. At second level, the Chief Executive Officers of the VECs assist Bus Eireann by acting as Transport Liaison Officers. A School Transport Helpline (1890 200 974) was set up in 2003.

Grants Paid	2003 Expenditure
€9.6m	€101.7m*

\*Included in this figure is €4.6m for over 600 escorts and €4.1m towards the transport costs of travellers and children with special needs.

### School Transport Appeals

An independent School Transport Appeals Board was set up in 2003 to deal directly with appeals received relating to transport provision. Appeals to the School Transport Appeals Board are made to the School Transport Manager in Bus Eireann. The appellant must give details of the grounds for the appeal. The decision of the board is final. There were 15 appeals in 2003 and further transport resources were granted in 13 cases.



## Objective 1.3

We will manage, monitor and resource a range of initiatives aimed at supporting children with special needs and develop a comprehensive, efficient and effective service which reflects best international practice.

### Special Education Service

Special educational provision for pupils with disabilities ranges from additional support in mainstream schools to specialist support in special schools. There are three models of provision:

- A pupil with a disability may be enrolled in a mainstream class with additional support from a resource teacher or a special needs assistant
- A pupil may be enrolled in a special class in a mainstream school
- A pupil may be enrolled in a special school that caters for the pupil's category of disability

There are 108 special schools catering for about 6,000 pupils. Special schools operate at reduced pupil teacher ratios and the pupils attract special rates of capitation funding. There are over 650 special classes attached to mainstream primary schools. These classes cater for an estimated 4,000 pupils.

#### National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

The NCSE was established by the National Council for Special Education (Establishment) Order, 2003. The Order was made under *Section 54 of the Education Act, 1998*. Under the terms of the Order, the NCSE must undertake all of its functions by October 2004. The broad functions of the Council will be to commission and conduct research into issues relating to the education of children with disabilities. Through the deployment of a new grade of Special Education Needs Organisers, the Council will provide a direct service to children, their parents and education providers.

## Special Education Provision

### Learning Support Teacher Service

This service provides assistance for pupils experiencing learning difficulties, particularly in the core area of literacy and numeracy. Guidelines are in place to assist schools in getting full benefit from this service.

	Number of Teachers	Programme cost in 2003
First Level	1,531	€69m
Second Level	548	€24.7m

### Resource Teacher Service

Resource teaching posts and hours are provided for pupils who are assessed as having specific learning difficulties arising from a disability.

	Number of Teachers	Programme cost in 2003
First Level	2,600	€109m
Second Level	970	€43.7m

### Visiting Teacher Service for Pupils with Disabilities

The Visiting Teacher Service supports pupils, with visual or hearing impairment or downs syndrome, in the first and second-level systems. Each visiting teacher covers a geographical area of the country.

	Number of Teachers	Programme cost in 2003
First and Second Level	42	€1.8m*

\* excluding cost of teachers' salaries

### Home Tuition Service and July Education Programme

The Home Tuition Service is intended to provide compensatory instruction to pupils with a medical ailment that is likely to cause major disruption to their attendance at school, on a continuing basis.

The scheme is also used to fund the July education programme available to all schools catering for pupils with autism and severe/profound general learning disabilities. The support package includes special nationally agreed rates of remuneration for participating teachers and special needs assistants. A total of 53 schools participated in the programme, in 2003 and they receive a special rate of capitation funding. Funding is also available to facilitate the provision of school transport and escort services for the pupils. There are approximately 1,000 children availing of the home tuition scheme at an annual cost in excess of €6.13m.

#### Resource Teacher Service for Traveller Pupils

The Department's policy in relation to Traveller pupils is that they should be taught in an integrated setting and this is supported by 524 resource teachers for travellers operating at an annual salary cost of €23.5m.

#### Visiting Teacher Service for Travellers

The visiting teacher service employs 40 teachers throughout the country. The aim of the service is to give Traveller parents, their children and schools the opportunity to work together to maximise participation by Travellers in the education system and at the same time, promoting intercultural education for all. The visiting teacher service costs an estimated €1.8m annually

#### Special Needs Assistants

Special Needs Assistants (SNA) are appointed to support pupils with disabilities, who have been assessed as having a significant care need and require such support to participate in the education system.

	Number of SNAs	Programme cost in 2003
First Level	5,700	€119m
Second Level	466	€12m

# Main Developments in 2003

## High Level Goal Supporting an Inclusive Society

We will support, through education, a socially inclusive society with equal opportunity for all.



Two events in 2003 had particular significance for the Department's range of strategies aimed at promoting equality of access, participation and opportunity. These were the publication of the latest social partnership agreement Sustaining Progress 2003-05 and the National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2003-05. The Department is undertaking a number of key actions over the period 2003-05 in support of the agreement and the plan.

These actions include addressing literacy and numeracy problems among children and the adult population as well as ensuring a focused and integrated approach to tackling the problem of early school leaving. Learning and training opportunities for young people and adults, particularly for those in disadvantaged communities, will continue to be developed through such programmes as the Back to Education Initiative. Non-formal education will be further supported through the National Youth Work Development Plan 2003-07 and access to higher education will be enhanced through the establishment of the National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education in 2003.

### Objective 2.1

We will contribute, through education, to the implementation and development of the Government's social inclusion policy and continue to provide and review targeted support programmes for children experiencing or at risk of educational disadvantage and early school leaving.

### Tackling Educational Disadvantage

International comparative statistics show that the risk of poverty is highly correlated with the level of educational attainment. The National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2003-05 and the special initiative on tackling educational disadvantage in Sustaining Progress contain the following targets:

- Halve the proportion of pupils with serious literacy difficulties by 2006.
- Reduce the proportion of adults aged 16-64 with restricted literacy levels to 10-20% by 2007.



- Ensure that participation rates to completion of upper second level education or equivalent increases to 90% by 2006.

Some €460m was provided in 2003 for programmes specifically designed to tackle educational disadvantage.

#### Educational Disadvantage Committee

The Educational Disadvantage Committee is an independent statutory body established in March, 2002 under the *Education Act, 1998*.

The Committee was requested by the Minister to review the disadvantaged schemes operated by the Department, in order to ensure optimum integration. The Educational Research Centre was engaged to provide research support for the review. The Committee submitted a paper to the Minister - "A More Integrated and Effective Delivery of School-based Educational Inclusion Measures" - in December 2003.

In 2003, the Committee also published two submissions to the Minister on *Identifying Disadvantage for the Purpose of Targeting Resources and other supports*; and *Teacher Supply and Staffing in Disadvantaged Settings*.

#### Absenteeism and Early School Leaving

The *Education (Welfare) Act, 2000* established the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) as the single national 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 NEWB was officially launched in December 2003. The Board is developing a nationwide service that is accessible to schools, parents/guardians and others concerned with the welfare of young people. Educational Welfare Officers are being deployed throughout the country to support regular school attendance and provide a welfare focused service.

Progress in 2003 included:

- The appointment of head office staff and 53 educational welfare staff
- Establishment of regional teams based in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford
- The deployment of educational welfare staff in areas designated under the Government's Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development (RAPID) programme
- The establishment of a School Implementation Group to provide advice to the Board on school related matters.

Expenditure in 2003 was €6.1m.

#### Giving Children an Even Break by Tackling Disadvantage

The aim of the Giving Children an Even Break Programme is to address educational disadvantage in targeted primary schools. Participating schools were identified for inclusion in the Programme by an Educational Research Centre survey – the most comprehensive ever undertaken on the incidence of educational disadvantage in primary schools.

### Giving Children an Even Break

Number of Schools Participating	No. of posts	2003 Expenditure
2345	208 teaching posts 79 rural co-ordinators	€17.48m

### The School Completion Programme (SCP)

The School Completion Programme was launched in 2002. The Programme is based on an integrated cross-community approach to tackling educational disadvantage, involving primary and post primary schools, parents, communities and relevant statutory and voluntary agencies. Its objective is to provide a range of interventions in areas of disadvantage that support the retention of young people in education.

### The School Completion Programme

Number of Schools Participating	No. of posts	2003 Expenditure
288 primary	1 National Co-ordinator	€19.5m
112 post primary	4 assistant National Co-ordinators	
	82 Local Co-ordinators	

### The Home School Community Liaison Scheme (HSCL)

The HSCL scheme is a preventative strategy for schools based on establishing partnership and collaboration between parents, teachers and communities in the interests of children's learning. The scheme is based at local school level where a full-time co-ordinator serves the liaison needs of one school or a number of schools in one or two catchment areas. "Family clusters" of co-ordinators, in first and second level catchment areas support the families who have children ranging from pre-school years to Leaving Certificate level.

The Educational Research Centre completed a review of the Home School Community Liaison Scheme on behalf of the Department in April 2003. The review recommended that there should be greater prioritisation of literacy and numeracy in the Department's disadvantaged schemes. The Department, in consultation with the HSCL National Co-ordinator, is examining the recommendations and issues highlighted in the review.

### The Home School Community Liaison Scheme

Number of Schools Participating	No. of Co-ordinators	Expenditure
279 Primary	172	€6.9m
194 Post Primary	193	€8.7m

### Literacy Measures

The Early Literacy Measure is a pro-active approach to preventing literacy difficulties. The programme includes the following:

#### Reading Recovery Programme

The Reading Recovery intensive remediation model is being piloted in 28 Monaghan (rural) and in 13 (urban) Dublin schools. Implementation of this intensive remediation programme in severely disadvantaged primary schools is aimed at increasing reading standards and identifying upper limits of achievement, thereby assisting standard setting for the future.

#### Summer Camp Project.

During the summer holidays in 2003, children aged 7-11 from eighteen disadvantaged areas throughout the country, participated in two-week long Summer Literacy Camps. The project emphasises fun learning through art, drama, music and dance but incorporates learning goals associated with reading, literacy and thinking skills.



### Junior Certificate School Programme Literacy Strategy

The Junior Certificate School Programme Literacy Strategy promotes a whole school approach to literacy development at junior cycle. This approach was adopted on foot of research indicating that such an approach can impact positively on literacy standards in schools that have a high concentration of students with literacy difficulties. Within the strategy, schools are encouraged to put in place a literacy development plan which encompasses short term interventions with selected students and the fostering of a reading culture throughout the school. Research Projects in 10 schools will measure the effectiveness of this whole school approach.

### Data on Literacy and Numeracy

In May 2003, the Educational Research Centre conducted a survey on behalf of the Department to provide, for the first time, a baseline for literacy standards in disadvantaged schools. The Drumcondra Sentence Reading Test was administered to 6000 pupils in first, third and sixth classes in a representative national sample of 94 designated disadvantaged schools. The study will provide baseline data and benchmarks, against which performance in future years can be compared.

Data collection for the PISA (OECD programme for international student assessment) survey of 15-year olds was completed in 2003. This phase of PISA had mathematics as the major domain with reading literacy and science and problem-solving as minor domains. The national and international reports of the PISA survey will be available in late 2004.

### Substance Misuse Prevention

The issue of drug misuse is a serious reality that confronts many homes, schools and communities on a daily basis. The Government has recognised the urgency of tackling this issue through the publication of the *National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008: Building on Experience*. The strategy has four separate aims – Supply reduction, Prevention, Treatment and Research – which will be addressed through Local Drugs Task Forces. It also includes a series of actions to be implemented by State Departments and Agencies. Among these is a requirement that all schools would have a substance abuse policy in place.

### Local Drugs Task Forces

14 Local Drugs Task Forces were set up in areas experiencing the highest levels of illicit drug use, in particular the areas where heroin abuse is most prevalent. These areas are defined on the basis of the following criteria:

- Drug treatment data from the health services (especially data relating to opiate dependency)
- Garda crime statistics
- Data relating to school attendance/drop out
- Other relevant data on the levels of social and economic disadvantage in the area.

In January 2001, the funding of 36 local drugs task force projects, with an education and prevention theme under the National Drugs Strategy, was transferred into this Department. The next phase saw approved funding for 50 projects with an education and prevention theme.



Expenditure on LDTF projects in 2003 was approximately €2.6 million.

Developments in 2003 included:

- The 14 Local Drugs Task Force areas in Dublin, Cork and Bray were prioritised as part of the remit of the National Educational Welfare Board
- The Social Personal and Health Education programme is now mandatory for all primary and post primary schools
- A pamphlet entitled *A parent's guide to drugs* was issued in 2003 in association with the Department of Health and Children, as part of the on-going National Awareness Campaign.

## Objective 2.2

We will promote the development of a high quality inclusive further education and vocational training system for young people and adults, which is relevant to social and economic needs.

*The White Paper on Adult Education Learning for Life* (2000) and the *Report of the Taskforce on Lifelong Learning* (2002) are key reference points for the development of further education and adult learning provision.

The principal objectives of the measures and programmes funded by the Department in the area of further and adult education 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.

Vocational Education Committees (VECs) are the main providers of these services. Programmes are delivered either directly in schools, further education colleges, Youthreach and Senior Traveller Training

Centres and adult education centres, or through the provision of resources and services to local community education groups. Post-Leaving Certificate Courses (PLCs) are also delivered in a small number of secondary, community and comprehensive schools.

Policy issues are addressed in consultation with relevant stakeholders. Support services are provided directly by the Department and the VECs, by agencies under the aegis of the Department, such as the National Centre for Guidance in Education, or through voluntary bodies funded by the Department, such as the National Association for Adult Education (AONTAS) and the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA).

## Adult Education Services

### Adult Literacy

The International Adult Literacy Survey, published in 1997, found that about 25% of the Irish population scored at the lowest level (Level 1). The survey showed early school leavers, older adults and the unemployed as being most at risk of literacy difficulties, with participation in adult education and training being least likely for those with the poorest skills.

Since the publication of the survey, the Department has provided substantially increased funding to VECs to support the development and expansion of adult literacy services at local level. Increased funding has also been provided to NALA to support research and training.

Student Numbers	2003 Expenditure
31,579	€18m

During 2003, the Department, VECs and NALA co-operated in the development of innovative programmes to expand the provision of literacy services, including customised programmes for family groups, non-nationals, deaf people, travellers and people in the workplace.

Through funding to NALA, the Department also supported the in-career development needs of

teaching staff engaged in the delivery of the VEC Adult Literacy Service.

A television series to promote literacy awareness and tuition entitled *READ WRITE NOW*, was broadcast over the past few years with average audiences of 146,000. In the light of positive feedback, a fourth series was commissioned in 2003 by the Department, working with NALA and RTE and was broadcast over a 12 week period.

The Department also provided funding for "Breacadh", a project based in the VEC sector and directed towards native speakers of Irish. It involves the development of teaching resources and training programmes for literacy tutors attached to VECs that cover Gaeltacht areas.

### Community-Based 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.

Thirty-five Community Education Facilitators, funded by the Department, were appointed by VECs in the period 2002/2003. Their role is to assist the planning, development and management of local community education services and provide technical, administrative and educational help and support to new and existing community education groups.

The Department provided grants to VECs totalling almost €8m in 2003 to support this programme.

### Education Equality Initiative

The Education Equality Initiative seeks to address educational disadvantage through the strategic

allocation of funding. The first phase of 18 projects commenced in 2000 and concluded in 2003. An evaluation report noted that the projects clearly demonstrated the positive impact of the projects for the individual and for the education sector.

The second phase of 10 projects began in 2003 and will run until December 2006.

## Further Education Programmes

### Youthreach

Youthreach is a programme for unemployed young people in the 15 to 20 year age group who left school early without qualifications or with poor qualifications. It is delivered in out-of-school centres provided by VECs and by a network of Community Training Centres. It is funded jointly by this Department and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, with assistance from the European Social Fund. Participants can obtain certification through Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC), through the Leaving Certificate Applied and through subjects in the Junior and Leaving Certificates. 74% of students who completed the programme in 2003 progressed to employment or further education or training.

No. of Youthreach Centres	No. of Participants	2003 Expenditure
88	3,258	€37m

### Senior Traveller Training

The centres operate on the same basis as Youthreach but there is no upper age limit. 51% of students





who completed the programme in 2003 progressed to employment or further education or training.

No. of Senior Traveller Centres	No. of Participants	2003 Expenditure
35	1,076	€16m

### Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)

VTOS is a second chance education and training programme, which provides courses up to two years in duration for unemployed people. Trainees on VTOS can take subjects in the Junior or Leaving Certificate programmes, or modules or awards certified by FETAC.

69% of students who completed the programme in 2003 progressed to employment or further education or training.

No. of VTOS Centres	No. of Participants	2003 Expenditure
127	5,625	€51m

### Post-Leaving Certificate Courses (PLC)

PLC courses are full-time, of one and two years duration and offer integrated general education, vocational training and work experience for those who need further training to enhance their chances of gaining employment. Certification is provided through FETAC Level 2 and Level 3 and colleges also supplement this with certification from private/professional bodies in certain disciplines.

89% of students who completed the programme in 2003 progressed to employment or further education or training.

No. of centres delivering PLC Courses	No. of Participants	2003 Expenditure
210	28,656	€ 104.6m

The Post Leaving Certificate Review was commissioned to examine the sector and make

recommendations as necessary regarding the organisational, support, development, technical and administrative structures and resources required in schools with large-scale PLC provision. The final report- the McIver Report- was completed in April 2003.

### Back to Education Initiative

The Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) provides opportunities for young people and adults to return to learning. With its emphasis on part-time provision, it provides the opportunity to combine a return to education and training with family work and other responsibilities. A scheme of free tuition and reduced fees applies.

10% of the provision under the Back to Education Initiative is set aside to support projects proposed by community education groups.

No. of BTEI Centres	No. of Participants	2003 Expenditure
VEC	8,823	€13.29m
Community	938	€0.93m

## Support services

### Adult Education Guidance Initiative

An Adult Education Guidance service was developed to meet the needs of learners in adult literacy, VTOS and community education. The National Centre for Guidance in Education oversees the service. 25 guidance projects were funded in 2003. The service offers information, advice and guidance to help people make the best possible choices for learning.

No of students availing of Guidance Service	2003 Expenditure
20,491	€3.1m

### Further Education Programmes

The Department provides funds for Guidance/Counselling and Psychological Services for participants in the Youthreach Programme and

Senior Traveller Training. The funding is used by the centres to prioritise needs from a spectrum ranging from initial orientation, guidance and vocational information to counselling and psychological services.

### Childcare

The Department provided €4.8m to VECs to assist towards the childcare expenses of participants in VTOS, Youthreach and Senior Traveller Centre programmes.

### National Adult Learning Council

The National Adult Learning Council was set up in March 2002 on an interim basis, pending its establishment as a statutory body. A strategic review of the role and functions of the Council was undertaken in late 2003. The statutory functions of the Council will be determined following the review.

## Objective 2.3

We will promote the personal and social development of young people through non-formal education, having particular regard to the youth work needs of young people aged 10-21 and those who experience social or economic disadvantage.

The Department is responsible for the provision of a policy framework and financial support for the development of youth work services. These non-formal education services deal with the personal and social development of young people outside of, but complementary to, formal education and prioritise the 10 to 21 age group and disadvantaged youth. Services are mainly delivered by national and regional voluntary youth organisations and through structures being developed within the VECs.

*The Youth Work Act, 2001* provides a legal framework for the provision of youth work programmes and services. Under the Act, the National Youth Work Advisory Committee, representing both statutory and voluntary youth work interests, advises the Minister on youth work policy.

### The National Youth Work Development Plan 2003 - 2007

This Plan developed in consultation with the National Youth Work Advisory Committee was launched in 2003. The Plan has 4 broad goals:

- To facilitate young people and adult participation fully in youth work programmes and services.
- To enhance the youth work contribution to social inclusion, cohesion and citizenship.
- To develop existing infrastructure for support and co-ordination of Youth Work at a national and local level.
- To enhance the professionalism and standards in Youth Work.

Funding for the youth work sector in 2003 was €27.1m

## Objective 2.4

We will manage the Department's response to initiatives for the redress of child abuse in residential institutions.

A Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse was established in May 2000 as part of a range of measures to address the effect of abuse in childhood on the victims.

Due to the resignation of Ms. Justice Mary Laffoy and the subsequent review of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse, the Investigation Committee of the

Commission did not hold any hearings during the latter half of 2003. Mr. Justice Sean Ryan was appointed as new Chairperson to the Commission in December, 2003 and the Investigation Committee will resume hearings in 2004.

The Residential Institutions Redress Board, which was formally established in December 2002, commenced making awards to survivors of institutional abuse in 2003. The Barnardo's Origins service was established to provide an information and mediation service for former residents of Industrial and Reformatory schools.

## Objective 2.5

We will promote greater equity of access to third-level education, particularly for disadvantaged and mature students and students with disabilities, through improved targeting of student support/access initiatives.

### Student Support Provision

The Department promotes access and provides support for participation for students in Third Level and Further Education. There are four student maintenance grant schemes that provide means-tested financial assistance to further education and third-level students: three schemes in respect of third level education and one scheme which applies to PLC courses.

Expenditure under these schemes is set out in the table below:

Scheme	No. of Grantholders*	2003 Expenditure
Higher Education Grants	24,308	€79m
VEC Scholarships	6,628	€20.6m
3rd level Trainees Maintenance Grant	13,401	€40m
PLC Grants	6,665	€13.2m
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51,002</b>	<b>€152.8m</b>

\*The numbers are for the 2002/03 academic year. Final figures for the 2003/04 academic year are not yet available.

Under the social inclusion measures in the National Development Plan (NDP), there is provision for a Third Level Access Fund totalling €120m, over the period 2000 to 2006, aimed at tackling under representation by three target groups:

- Students from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Mature students
- Students with disabilities

In 2003, €26m was provided for a range of access measures including the Special Rate of Maintenance Grant 'Top-up', and the following ESF aided programmes; Fund for Students with Disabilities; Student Assistance Fund; and the Millennium Partnership Fund. The number of students qualifying for the special rate of maintenance grant in the 2002/03 academic year was close to 10,000, a significant increase on the 2001/02 figure of 3,422.

Access funding was also provided under the Higher Education Authority's targeted initiative scheme.

### Special Package to tackle Disadvantage in Third-Level Education

In 2003, measures costing €42m were taken to improve the grants levels and eligibility criteria for the maintenance grants schemes. The income thresholds for purposes of determining grant eligibility was expanded. The standard rate of grant under the 2003 Maintenance Grant Schemes was increased by 15%, from €2,510 to €2,885 for students residing more than 15 miles from college and from €1,004 to €1,155 for students residing within 15 miles of college. The special rate of maintenance grant (top-up grant) payable to disadvantaged grant holders was increased from €4,000 to €4,495 for students residing more than 15 miles from college (equivalent to the maximum personal rate of Unemployment Assistance) and from €1,600 to €1,800 for students resident within 15 miles of college.

### Review of Student Support Provision

In August 2003, the Department published a review of student support provisions. The review was undertaken to ensure that the benefits of the substantial investment being made are maximised. The review highlighted the following requirements:

- The introduction of a more equitable system of means testing
- An overhaul of the existing systems of administration to ensure consistency and greater client accessibility
- The establishment of a single unified scheme as identified in the Programme for Government.

### The National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education

A key recommendation of the Action Group on Access to Third Level Education was that a single co-ordinating body was essential to improve access to third-level education. The National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education was established in August 2003 and has been operational from February, 2004. The remit of the National Office is to facilitate inclusive and equitable access to higher education from under-represented groups and promote improved participation by students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, students with a disability and mature 'second chance' students.

The National Office now administers access measures formerly handled by the Department, namely, the Student Assistance Fund, the Fund for Students with Disabilities and the Millennium Partnership Fund for Disadvantage.

## Objective 2.6

We will promote gender equality in services, actions, programmes and measures for children and adults at all levels of education

A dedicated Equality Unit, established in the Department in June 2001, co-ordinates and monitors the process of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all areas of the education system. A number of publications were produced in 2003 including *Schools and the Equal Status Act*, co-produced with the Equality Authority.

### Training

Training is an important element in raising gender equality awareness. Policy makers and education providers need to be aware of the issues involved in ensuring equality of outcome for all. In 2003, training included:

- Educational management training in Dublin, Cork and Donegal for 68 female teachers
- Gender awareness training for the Department's School Completion Initiative Project Team



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## Young Offenders Provision



This Department has responsibility for the provision of residential services for children up to age 16 years who have been convicted or placed on remand by a court. There are five schools for young offenders under the aegis of the Department providing such services - Trinity House School, Finglas Child and Adolescent Centre, Oberstown Boys Centre, Oberstown Girls Centre (all located in Dublin) and St. Joseph's School, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.

The schools are governed by the terms of the *Children Acts* 1908 to 1989 which will be replaced by the *Children Act, 2001* when the provisions of the latter are commenced. The schools are managed by Directors and Boards of Management. The Board of Management in St. Joseph's in Clonmel was set up in 2002 mirroring the provisions of the *Children Act, 2001*. Boards of Management for the three schools at Lusk (Trinity House School, Oberstown Boys Centre and Oberstown Girls Centre) and a separate Board of Management for Finglas Child and Adolescent Centre were appointed in 1997.

The operational capacity of the five schools in 2003 was 128, 113 places for boys and 15 for girls. Operational capacity can vary at any given time due to a range of factors, such as refurbishment and renovation work, fire, safety and security concerns and current childcare practices.

The curricula and syllabi on offer at the schools are broadly in line with those in first and second level schools. The general aim is to provide a positive experience of education. A comprehensive educational assessment is carried out on each student on admission and an individual programme of education is drawn up. Many of the students in these schools present with particular problems in

literacy and numeracy and a programme is designed for each student on the basis of his/her needs and abilities. Educational programmes can range from intensive learning support in literacy and numeracy to a wide range of academic and practical subjects which can be studied up to State Examination Level.

### The Children Act, 2001

The *Children Act, 2001* provides a statutory framework for the future development of the juvenile justice system. Responsibility for implementing the Act, which will take place on a phased basis, lies with this Department, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Department of Health and Children. Implementation of the Act is being overseen by the National Children's Office.

The Act provides for a range of early interventions and non-custodial alternatives for children who have come into conflict with the law or who have serious care needs. The Act sets down the principle that the imposition of a custodial sentence should be a matter of last resort. This Department has responsibility for Part 10 of the Act, which provides for the establishment of Children Detention Schools to replace the existing reformatory and industrial schools.

The Special Residential Services Board was established on a statutory basis in November 2003, pursuant to the *Children Act, 2001*. Its functions are to provide policy advice on the remand and detention of children and ensure the efficient, effective and co-ordinated delivery of services to children in respect of whom children detention

orders or special care orders are made. To facilitate the appointment of the Special Residential Services Board, section 159 (1) of the Children Act, 2001 was partially commenced to allow for the membership of representatives of the Children Detention Schools.

A key consideration for this Department is the identification of the appropriate number of residential places required under the new arrangements. An independent international expert in residential care was commissioned, to review the residential requirements for Children Detention Schools, so as to ensure that there are sufficient and appropriate places into the future.

#### Redevelopment of the schools for young offenders

The Department is implementing a major capital development plan in the schools for young offenders to ensure that they meet obligations that will arise under the Children Act 2001, as well as ensuring that they meet modern childcare standards in accordance with best practice internationally. Some of the major developments in 2003 include:

- The development of a new highly specialised secure unit in direct response to the requirements of the *Children Act, 2001*, providing intensive intervention and support for up to 6 young people displaying extremely challenging behaviour, at a cost of circa €4.7 million.
- Expenditure of nearly €1.6 million was incurred between 2001 and 2003 in Trinity House School in relation to essential health and safety upgrading, refurbishment works and improvements to security.
- The refurbishment and upgrading of the facilities at the Finglas Child and Adolescent Centre leading to the development of this facility into separate house units. This project cost circa €5 million during the period 2001 to 2003.
- Refurbishment of residential units and the education areas of both the Oberstown Girls and Boys Centres involved expenditure of over €0.5 million during the period 2001 to 2003.

# Main Developments in 2003

## High Level Goal Contributing to Economic Prosperity

We will contribute to Ireland's economic prosperity, development and international competitiveness



### Objective 3.1

We will promote the contribution of the third-level sector to economic and social development in the context of changing needs and arrange a supply of qualified and skilled personnel to support Ireland's competitiveness and economic and social development.

Education and training are critical components of economic success. The pace of change, and the move to a knowledge-based economy, has profound implications for our education and training systems. Achieving a successful transition to a knowledge-based economy is key to our future development. The Department liaises closely with the Higher Education Authority in relation to the university sector. We also support other State-aided third-level institutions in providing a range of courses, including apprenticeship training and teacher training.

Research and innovation are vital elements in achieving and maintaining our economic competitiveness and securing continued prosperity. During 2003, the Department continued with a programme of activities specifically focused on supporting this objective.

### Review of Higher Education in Ireland

One of Ireland's key strategic objectives, aimed at promoting the country's economic and social development and maintaining our competitiveness is the placing of our higher education system in the top rank of the OECD in terms of both quality and level of participation.

In 2003, the Department invited the OECD to conduct an extensive review of higher education in Ireland, in order to map a future strategy for the sector. The OECD review will evaluate how well the Irish higher education sector is meeting the strategic objectives set for it, by reference to comparative performance in other OECD countries and will make recommendations for future progress.

### Meeting Skills Needs – Apprenticeship

The Standards Based Apprenticeship System covers a range of 26 designated trade areas and consists of four modules involving on-the-job training and three modules of formal technical training conducted in either a FÁS training centre, an Institute of Technology or certain VEC colleges.

The total number of training places in the education sector is in the region of 10,400. In response to fluctuations in the demand for particular trades, there have been increases in provision in trades such as brickwork, plumbing and carpentry-joinery and



decreased provision in trades such as toolmaking and metal fabrication.

One summer course was run in 2003 in the area of floor/wall tiling in Limerick Institute of Technology.

## Support for Research Programmes

### Programme for Research in Third-Level Institutions (PRTLII)

This programme, which is managed by the Higher Education Authority, provides integrated financial support for the institutional research strategies, programmes and infrastructure. An integral part of the programme is the provision of post-graduate and post-doctoral research posts. The programme was established to:

- enable a more strategic approach, at the institutional level, to the funding of institutional strengths and core competencies in research,
- to encourage more explicit institutional planning and prioritisation and
- to promote greater inter-institutional co-operation and inter-disciplinarity within the third level system.

Over €600 million has been allocated to third level institutions under this programme for research. Expenditure of €270m (Exchequer and private philanthropic funds) has taken place from 1998 to the end of 2003 and this funds both capital infrastructure and research programmes.

Funding has been provided for a total of 33 research centres across many research disciplines. In the region of 800 researchers, 540 postgraduate researchers and 272 post-doctoral researchers have been funded through the PRTLII to date. Furthermore, some 40 new inter-institutional programmes/initiatives have been established.

### Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology

The Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology was set up to promote excellence in

research in the three areas of science, engineering and technology. In 2003, the Council funded 400 post-graduate scholarships at a cost of €5.9m.

### Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences

The Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences was established to encourage excellence in the humanities and social sciences and to develop research opportunities and policies for the promotion of research. In 2003, the Council funded 500 post-graduate scholarships at a cost of €6.2m.

## Objective 3.2

We will ensure that pupils in every school have the opportunity to achieve computer literacy and acquire the necessary skills for participation in the Information Society.

## Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in Education

In 1998, the Department initiated the ICT in Schools Programme with the introduction of the three-year programme - *Schools IT 2000*. This was followed from 2001 - 2003 with the programme *Blueprint for the Future of ICT in Education*.

During 2003, the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) continued to provide support for ICT in Education to first and second level schools. The NCTE commissioned a progress report on ICT in Irish schools from 1998 - 2002. This report, *Schools for the Digital Age*, showed the following:

- Computers in schools increased from 36,000 to 85,000.
- Average pupil/ computer ratios have fallen from 37:1 to 11.8:1 in primary schools, from 16:1 to



9.4:1 in post-primary schools, and from 9:1 to 4:1 in special schools.

- Every school has been provided with Internet access.
- Over 34,000 teachers have availed of ICT training programmes.
- Most primary and post-primary schools are using ICT on a regular basis across a range of subject areas.

The Department commissioned a consultancy report to advise on a viable cost-effective strategy for the provision of broadband Internet connections to schools. Following the report, discussions were held over several months between this Department, the Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources and Industry. An agreement was reached on the establishment of an €18m joint Industry/Government fund, to resource the provision of high-speed broadband connectivity to all first and second-level schools nationwide over a 3 year period. €15m of the fund will be provided by industry and €3m by Government.

### Objective 3.3

We will contribute to the development of education in Ireland through co-operation and decision making in the European Union, international organisations and bilaterally, and through participation in programmes and initiatives in the education, scientific and training areas assisted by the European Union and other international organisations.

#### Irish Presidency of the EU

Preparations for the Irish Presidency of the EU Council of Ministers began in the latter half of 2003. Classroom resources were produced and made available through the Scoilnet website

([www.scoilnet.ie/eupresidency](http://www.scoilnet.ie/eupresidency)). These resources provided up-to-date information and materials for schools on the European Union with a particular focus on the Irish EU Presidency. All primary and post-primary school pupils were also involved in the selection of Ireland's EU presidency logo, by registering their preferred option for the logo online.

#### EU/International Affairs

The Department works closely with the EU on education issues and in implementing the different strands of the Socrates programme. Socrates is a European Union education programme that supports co-operation on a range of educational projects, initiatives and professional development. The Department also co-ordinates Ireland's involvement with the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop). It also works with the OECD, Council of Europe and UNESCO. During 2003, Ireland hosted a meeting of the OECD Education Chief Executives in Dublin Castle.

During 2003, European Education Ministers adopted conclusions on European benchmarks in education and training. Ministers also agreed on an e-Learning Programme for Europe; the establishment of a programme for the enhancement of quality in higher education and the promotion of intercultural understanding through cooperation with third strand countries, to be known as *Erasmus Mundus*.

Ireland held the Presidency of the European Schools in 2003 and a major conference was held in Co. Clare to mark the occasion.

#### Bologna Process

The Bologna declaration and Prague communiqué seek to develop a more collaborative and co-ordinated system of higher education in Europe. The promotion of mobility and establishment of European credit systems are important components in the move towards transparent quality assessment and quality assurance mechanisms. The Prague communiqué highlights the importance of quality assurance systems in facilitating the comparability of qualifications throughout the world. This

collaboration is enhanced and facilitated through agencies such as the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education.

At a meeting in Berlin in September 2003, which was attended by the Minister for Education and Science, Ministers with responsibility for higher education decided to include the doctoral studies within the Bologna Process, thus increasing the number of cycles to three.

Furthermore, Ministers decided to put new support structures in place in advance of their next meeting in Bergen in 2005. As a result of its forthcoming presidency, Ireland became a member of the Bologna Follow-Up Group Board.

Ireland launched its own National Framework of Qualifications in 2003 under the auspices of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland.

#### Continuing International Co-operation

The Department is continuing to build on strategic bilateral linkages on specific areas of education policy and practice. These include an ongoing dialogue with the US Department of Education in the area of special educational needs and regular liaison with the Department for Education and Employment in the UK, particularly in relation to mutual recognition of qualifications, both bilaterally and in the broader EU context.

In 2003, a Joint Communiqué was issued by Ireland and Mexico agreeing in principle to the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding on Educational Co-operation. The second Mexico-Ireland Seminar of Experts, an important part of the Memorandum of Understanding, was held in the Department.

In addition two Memoranda of Understanding on Educational Co-operation were signed, between the Department, the Ministry of Education, Turkey and the second Ministry of Education, Chile.

The initiation of the Ireland - Malaysia Fellowship exchanges, arising from the Memorandum of Understanding on Educational Co-operation between the two countries, commenced during the year.

## Objective 3.4

We will contribute to maintaining international competitiveness by developing Ireland as a leading knowledge-based economy.

#### Promoting Ireland as a centre for educational excellence

Ireland's future competitiveness and prosperity relies on the ability of education providers to respond quickly and flexibly to the skills needs of the economy. The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, operating under the aegis of Forfás was established in 1997. Its remit is to develop national strategies to tackle the issue of skills needs, manpower needs estimation, and education and training for business.

The Expert Group has produced four major reports to date, together with two further single issue reports, on e-Business Skills Needs and In-Company Training. The Fourth Report of the Group was launched in October 2003. This focuses on ICT, construction, biotechnology, food processing, logistics, engineering and financial skills. It also explores the importance of soft skills for organisational success and provides an overview of the labour market.

Recommendations from previous reports continue to be implemented. A dedicated ICT skills fund of €2.5m was available in 2003. Additional places in the health therapies were provided with new courses commencing in Occupational Therapy in NUI Galway and Physiotherapy in UL. New places were also provided in Physiotherapy at UCD, TCD and RCSI.

# FOCUS

## Science in Schools



### Introduction

Ireland's economic future depends on the supply of an increasing number of people qualified in science and engineering. To reverse the decline in interest in the sciences throughout the education system, the Task Force on the Physical Sciences recommended a multi-faceted strategy based around the following areas:

- Planning and Resources for School Sciences
- Equity of Access
- Teaching and Learning of Science
- School Curriculum and Assessment
- Promotion of Science and Careers
- Science Education at Third Level

The Department has since put in place a number of initiatives to develop science education to meet the demands of an increasingly technological society and to promote the development of scientific literacy in the general population.

### Curricular Developments

The revised science curriculum was introduced to all primary schools in September 2003, to ensure that pupils, on leaving primary schools, will have a firm foundation in the sciences.

At the same time, a new science syllabus was introduced at post-primary level for Junior Certificate students. This was brought in on an optional basis, for first examination in 2006. The introduction of this syllabus was one of the recommendations of the

Task Force on the Physical Sciences. The revised syllabus has an increased emphasis on "hands-on" student practical work and promotes a more investigative approach to the teaching and learning of science. Despite some initial difficulties, the revised syllabus has proved popular with schools with some 90% of schools providing the revised syllabus.

For the Leaving Certificate, the Department has introduced revised syllabi in physics, chemistry and biology in the last four years. As well as the addition of new, up-to-date content, these syllabi place an increased emphasis on student practical work and on the interface between science, technology and society. These changes are intended to highlight for students the relevance of these subjects to their everyday lives. Work by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) on the revision of the two remaining science subjects, Agricultural Science and Physics and Chemistry (combined), is at an advanced stage.

### Professional Development of Teachers

A four year in-career development programme for teachers, delivered by a team of 16 trainers, has supported the introduction of each revised syllabus. In all, about 1000 chemistry teachers and 900 physics teachers participated. The programme included the provision of teaching materials and resources.

The Leaving Certificate Biology Support Service was established in 2001 with a team of 12 trainers. Some 1700 biology teachers have been given the opportunity of attending a total of at least 7 days of

in-service training over the last three years. As with the physics and chemistry support services, teachers were provided with a range of materials and resources.

The Junior Science Support Service was established in September. The team, which consists of ten members, is providing support to almost 3000 teachers of junior science.

At primary level, the introduction of the revised science curriculum continued to be supported by the Primary Curriculum Support Programme. Since September, twelve regionally-based *Cuiditheoirí* have been providing support specifically in relation to science teaching to teachers in their area. The work of the *Cuiditheoirí* builds on the support already provided to teachers through national in-service seminar days.

### Physical Resources

Along with the professional development of teachers, equipment grants are also being provided. These complement an additional annual per capita grant for each student studying the physical sciences at Leaving Certificate level.

Post-primary schools, providing the revised syllabus, could apply for grants of €3,500 per junior science laboratory. Schools, who had identified additional needs, based on an indicative resource list, could apply for an enhanced grant. On average, schools received a total of over €18,000 each under this scheme. A small number of schools with insufficient laboratory accommodation were identified. The building needs of these schools have been prioritised.

At primary level, schools received grants to support the teaching of science. Each primary school received a grant of €6.30 per pupil, with smaller schools receiving a minimum of €378.

### Participation Rates in Science

While science is not compulsory at Junior Certificate level, the uptake of the subject has been consistently high, with almost 89% of the cohort studying it in the 2002/2003 school year. At Leaving Certificate level, participation rates in biology are traditionally high, at around 50%. However, participation rates in physics and chemistry peaked at over 20% in the mid-1980s and then declined steadily over the next 15 years. Since the introduction of the revised syllabi in these subjects, the decline has been arrested and participation rates in both subjects have shown increases over the past three years.

### Promotion of Science

The Department contributed to the development of the Discover Science and Engineering Programme which is managed by Forfás on behalf of the Office of Science and Technology at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. The Department is also represented on the Steering Group of the programme. The programme, which was set up as a direct response to one of the recommendations of the Task Force on the Physical Sciences, brings together a number of science-related promotional activities and aims to develop these into a more coherent awareness campaign.

# Main Developments in 2003

## High Level Goal Improving Standards and Quality

We will seek to improve the standard and quality of education and promote best practice in classrooms, schools, colleges and other centres for education.



### Objective 4.1

We will work to improve the quality of education provision through regular inspection, evaluation and planning.

Our systems and processes of internal and external monitoring and evaluation have evolved over many decades and continue to strive towards improved transparency and accountability. In 2003, the theme underlying the Department's activities remained working to maintain and improve educational standards, in order to promote confidence amongst students, employers and other educational stakeholders, nationally and internationally.

The Department has a central role in improving standards; by taking the lead in seeking to improve the quality of pupils' educational experience at every opportunity.

The role of the Department's Inspectorate is to evaluate the education system, to provide advice to those in the education system and to contribute to the development of policy. The Inspectorate's external evaluation of the work of schools and teachers is intended to affirm good practice in schools, promote continuing improvement and

self-review in schools and provide system-wide information on the performance of schools.

#### Inspections carried out in schools

	Individual School Reports (Tuairiscí Scoile)	Subject Inspections	Probationary Reports
Primary	419		2900 (spanning 2 years)
Post Primary		389*	

\* At post-primary level, 389 Subject Inspections were undertaken and reports issued to individual schools involving over 1100 post-primary teachers.

Inspections were also carried out on 19 Irish teachers in European Schools and 89 individual Coláistí Samhraidh were inspected and reported upon.

During 2003, thematic evaluations by the Inspectorate on particular aspects of the education system included:

- Provision for pupils with Specific Speech and Language Disorder
- Provision for pupils with Autism
- Implementation of the 1999 primary curriculum (phase 1)

**Publications produced by the Inspectorate during 2003 included the following:-**

Name of Document	Details
Looking at Our School	An aid to self-evaluation in primary schools
Looking at Our School	An aid to self-evaluation in post-primary schools
Guidelines on the Assessment of Education in Places other than Recognised Schools	Developed to support the work of the National Educational Welfare Board
Traveller Pre-Schools: National Evaluation Report	A national composite report on pre-school education for Travellers
Guidelines for Second-Level Schools on the Implications of Section 9(c) of the Education Act (1998) relating to Students' Access to Appropriate Guidance	To assist schools in complying with their obligations under Section 9(c) of the Education Act.

## Objective 4.2

We will support the development and implementation of a national framework of qualifications as provided for under the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999 and the co-ordination of the recognition of qualifications.

### Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment

The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQA), the Further Education Training Awards Council (FETAC) and the Higher Education Training Awards Council (HETAC) are responsible for the development of a single unified system for the accreditation of all non-university, further and higher education and training. A new framework of qualifications, spanning from basic education/literacy to doctorate level was launched in 2003.

This framework covers all learning whether for social, personal, citizenship or economic/vocational reasons. The aim is that this framework will be the single national and internationally accepted entity, through which all learning achievements may be measured and related to each other. The objective is to provide for access, transfer and progression to higher levels of learning across the education and training sectors.

## Objective 4.3

We will work to support excellence in the quality of academic teaching and learning in higher education.

Under provisions contained in the *Universities Act, 1997*, universities must engage in a process of self-evaluation as part of overall quality promotion. The Higher Education Authority (HEA) has a responsibility under the Act, to ensure that such quality assurance procedures are in place in the universities. Outside of the university, the NQA, in partnership with FETAC and HETAC, is responsible for setting standards for accreditation. An expert group was established to review the role of funding in supporting excellence and to make recommendations on protecting and improving the quality of academic learning and teaching.

## Objective 4.4

We will promote teaching as a profession and maintain and improve the quality of teaching by the establishment of a Teaching Council



The establishment of a Teaching Council will give teachers professional autonomy and regulatory powers over their own profession. The Teaching Council will fulfil a similar function to the Medical Council in place for doctors. Draft Regulations governing the first election of members to the Council were circulated in 2003 to the relevant bodies and were completed in 2004.

## Objective 4.5

We will contribute, in the context of the Good Friday Agreement, to the development of North/South co-operation and common action in the field of education and to the development of co-operation with relevant Departments in England, Scotland, Wales and in the United States.

### North/South Ministerial Council

Under North/South co-operation, working groups are continuing to make progress in the following areas:

- Universities Ireland

A new all-island body, Universities Ireland, was established in 2003 to promote co-operation and collaboration between the universities on the island of Ireland and to enhance their reputations in Europe and overseas.

- North South Programme for Collaborative Research

In 2003, over €5.5m was allocated to 21 cross-border university research projects. The Programme is co-ordinated by the Higher Education Authority.

- EU Peace II Programme

Measure 5.5 of this Programme is dedicated to providing funding for cross-border school and youth projects and is jointly implemented by the two Education Departments. €5.3m will be made available for this Measure. Eight projects commenced in 2003.

- Centre of Excellence for children with ASD

The two Education Departments reached agreement with the St. Louis Order on the purchase of the former Training Centre in Middletown, Co. Armagh. It will be used to establish a Centre of Excellence for the education of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD). The all-island facility will provide expert advice and guidance on best practice in the field of assessment of children and young people with ASD, the training of teachers and other professionals, support for parents, and the development of education plans for individuals.

- Autism and Dyslexia Resources

CD-ROMs and videos on ASD were produced as an information resource for parents and teachers and were circulated to every school in Ireland in 2003. Similar information resources on dyslexia will be available in 2004.



## Objective 4.6

We will plan for and provide suitable cost-effective accommodation to underpin the delivery of quality education.

### School Building Programme

€326.9m was spent on primary and post-primary capital expenditure during the year.

A new feature of the 2003 School Building Programme was the publication of the programme together with details of the criteria used by the Department for the prioritisation of projects.

Two key new pilot initiatives were launched at primary level that gave funding, authority and responsibility to Boards of Management of 40 schools for the delivery of refurbishment and/or building projects in their schools.

The budget statement delivered by the Minister for Finance in December 2003 provided a 5 year capital envelope for the Education sector. This development will facilitate a move to a multi-annual approach to project initiation, planning and delivery.

#### Primary and Post-primary projects

15 new school buildings were completed with a further 12 projects at various building stages on-site. 53 large-scale extensions and/or refurbishment projects were completed with 36 other projects on-site.

Two Physical Education Hall projects were completed with three more continuing.

Over 1,440 grants were sanctioned for small-scale projects covering refurbishments, extensions, mechanical and electrical works, external works, temporary accommodation and the purchase of furniture.

#### Modernisation of Standards in school buildings at first and second levels

At the end of 2003, work was near completion on the development of generic designs suitable for greenfield sites that will further streamline the process as well as reducing the amount of exchequer funding spent on design team fees. It is expected that the first school to be constructed using generic design will start in 2004.

A further innovation was the commissioning of a modular style precast post-primary building which has delivered top quality accommodation in a thirteen week building programme in time for the start of the 2003/2004 academic year.

#### Remediation Programmes

**Asbestos:** By end of 2003, approximately 2/3 schools had been tested with remediation works carried out in 800 schools

**Radon:** only 565 (14%) schools which did not respond to the initial invitation to have radon measurements carried out or which failed to return radon detectors, have not been assessed.







**Dust extraction:** Payments were made in respect of 60 dust extraction projects.

A total of €11.5m was spent on asbestos, radon and dust remediation programmes.

### Third Level Building

Expenditure on the modernisation and development of third-level campuses amounted to €69.06m. There was a pause on the progression of capital projects which were in architectural planning in the third-level sector during 2003. A Review Group, under the Higher Education Authority, was established to carry out the review in order to assess the entire set of demands in all publicly funded third-level institutions, to establish prioritisation and agree re-phasing.

During 2003, in the Institute of Technology Sector a total of 19 capital projects were completed. Eight of these were new-build projects and 11 were refurbishment and infrastructure works. In addition, 8 projects were at construction in 2003, while a further 25 projects were paused in architectural planning pending the outcome of the capital review.

In the Higher Education Authority and Small Colleges Sector, a total of 20 capital projects were completed during 2003, including 7 projects under the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions. Of the 20 projects completed in the year, 11 were new-build projects and 9 comprised refurbishment and infrastructure works. In addition, 4 projects were at construction in 2003 while a further 11 projects were paused in architectural planning pending the outcome of the capital review.

### Public Private Partnership

The contract for the new National Maritime College Public Private Partnership Project was signed in 2003. The college is being built in Ringaskiddy, Co. Cork and developed in conjunction with Focus Education Ltd. The capital value of the project is €51.3m.

The new facility will provide training facilities for both the Cork Institute of Technology and the non-military needs of the Irish Naval Service.

# Main Developments in 2003

## High Level Goal Developing our Capacity to Deliver

We will support the delivery of education by quality planning, policy formulation and customer service.



### Objective 5.1

We will create a greater capacity within the Department to concentrate on our core functions, especially that of strategic planning.

The Cromien Report on the operations, systems and staffing of the Department, charted a programme of structural reform which would enable the Department to concentrate on its core functions of policy development and evaluation.

Implementation of this programme includes the setting up of a State Examinations Commission and the National Council for Special Education and the putting in place of a regional office structure.

#### State Examinations Commission

The Commission was established by statutory order under Section 54 of the *Education Act, 1998* on 6 March 2003. The Commission undertook its functions from the date of its establishment. This now places the delivery of the high stakes and high integrity State Examinations on the same model as other services delivered by a commission, e.g., taxation

and public procurement. The examinations service was delivered seamlessly in 2003. In addition, service was enhanced by the taping of over 105,000 oral tests, giving candidates for the first time, the opportunity to appeal that part of their exam.

#### National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

The NCSE was established by the *National Council for Special Education (Establishment) Order, 2003* in December 2003. The Order was made under *Section 54 of the Education Act, 1998*. Under the terms of the Order, the NCSE must undertake all of its functions by October 2004.

#### Regional Offices

Regional offices will be an integral part of the Department and will be led by a Directorate of Regional Services located in head office. The offices will work closely with other service providers to provide a single point of contact for customers. The following table details the location of each of the Regional Offices and the areas that they will service.

Location	Regional Area served
Cork	Cork, Kerry
Sligo	Donegal, Leitrim, Roscommon, Sligo
Limerick	Clare, Limerick, Tipperary NR
Waterford	Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary SR, Waterford, Wexford
Naas	Kildare, Wicklow
Mullingar	Laois, Longford, Offaly, Westmeath
Tallaght	South Dublin County Council, Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown
Navan	Cavan, Louth, Meath, Monaghan
Galway	Galway, Mayo
Finglas/Blanchardstown	Dublin City, Fingal County Council

## Objective 5.2

We will recruit, deploy, develop and support staff to enable them to contribute to their fullest in a well-managed, performance-driven culture and in an open and positive working environment.

### Human Resource Strategy

The Department's human resource strategy is aligned with its business objectives. The focus is on supporting the continuous improvement of staff performance, both to enhance our ability to deliver better quality services to our clients, and also to support staff in their career development.

Following the re-structuring programme and re-organisation of the Department, 70% of Principal Officers and 47% of Assistant Principal Officers were either newly appointed or re-deployed in 2003.

The Department employed 1,234 people in 2003, in administrative, inspectorate, professional, technical and support grades.

### Training for staff

In 2003, in excess of 3,000 training days were delivered to staff in areas such as information technology, specific skills training, personal

development and management development, at a total cost of €1.3m, approx 3% of payroll.

In addition, pilot schemes for the refund of fees for ECDL and advanced payment of fees for post-graduate study were introduced in 2003 at a cost of €213,000.

### Gender Equality

The Department is committed to the development of a gender equity policy within the overall Human Resource Management (HRM) policy and within the context of overall Civil Service Policy. With 36.7% of Assistant Principal Officer posts held by women, the Department has already exceeded the 2006 target of 33% of posts to be filled by women. Women hold 29% of Principal Officer posts.

Location	Number of Staff
Athlone	344
Dublin	460
Tullamore	197
Other	233
<b>Total</b>	<b>1234</b>

Table 1: Staffing levels by location

Work/Life Balance Scheme	Number of Staff
Worksharing	161
Term Time	49
Parental Leave	74
Career Break	51

Table 2: Work/Life Balance Options

## Objective 5.3

We will support managers and staff in effectively delivering high quality services within a strategic and value-for-money framework

### Implementation of the modernisation programme for the public sector

The Department published its Statement of Strategy 2003-2005 setting out its high level goals and objectives for the next 3 years. Business plans are aligned with this strategy.

The social partnership agreement 'Sustaining Progress' sets out an accelerated programme of public service modernisation. The Civil Service Performance Verification group considered that, the progress made in delivering on the commitments in this agreement, warranted payment of the benchmarking pay awards to all staff in the organisation.

The Partnership model was further developed and supported in 2003 with a focus on quality customer service, internal communications and records management.

Preparatory work, on producing a Customer Charter and a new Customer Service Action Plan (2004 - 2007), included a staff survey to identify existing standards of service.

### Improvements in service delivery – structural re-organisation

The integration of the serving primary and post primary teachers, retired teachers and special needs staff payrolls into a single business division was completed at the end of October 2003. This new Payroll Division ensures a common approach to all payroll and financial control matters. Other improvements in payroll service include the introduction of a revised payslip and a payroll bureau service for caretakers and school secretarial staff, who were paid directly by schools.

## Objective 5.4

We will provide IT services within our organisation, which support policy formulation, policy evaluation and modern, effective service delivery to our clients.

### Operate, maintain, support and enhance IT services

Core IT systems and services were maintained throughout the year with remote access to IT services provided for 40 staff. Significant upgrades to the teachers payroll and personnel systems were implemented.

### Education Services Interactive (ESI) Project

The purpose of the Education Services Interactive (ESI) project is to develop a web based portal and specific applications through which on-line services can be delivered to schools. The first two applications to be developed are the On-Line Claims System and the Primary Pupil Database.

The On-Line Claims System will provide a mechanism to allow schools make claims online, in respect of hours/days worked by part-time employees. These claims will generate payments directly to the employee, from the Department's payrolls.



The Primary Pupil Database will provide an online facility to allow primary schools submit an annual return of pupil specific data. This data will inform policy decisions and facilitate the production of the annual Statistical Report.

A comprehensive procurement process was completed in 2003 to select a company to work with the Department in developing the ESI services. Work commenced on the development of the portal and the analysis for the first two applications.

### Financial Management System

A new Financial Management System was implemented in 2003. It provides an updated financial system capable of supporting an accrual accounting base. The introduction of the new system is a key enabling step in providing for an enhanced management information network.

## Objective 5.5

We will provide a range of financial functions and supports to underpin improved financial management in the provision of education services, including monitoring and reporting on progress in relation to educational measures that are part-financed by the European Union, which are incorporated in the National Development Plan for 2000-2006.

### Amalgamate the four existing education Votes into a single consolidated Vote.

A single Vote (Vote 26: Education and Science) was established in 2003. The single vote structure will enable greater clarity and transparency in relation to the financial and budgetary dimensions of the Department's various programmes and activities. It

will progressively enable a revised alignment of subheads in order to provide more readily for programmatic or thematic treatment of expenditure across sectors. The new structure is more efficient in terms of the budgetary management and eliminates the potential for multiple supplementary estimates as was previously the case in a multi-vote scenario, even though the Department's overall expenditure aggregated across votes might be within allocation.

### Internal Audit Plan

Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes.

The Internal Audit Unit in the Department is responsible for reviewing and appraising the adequacy, efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's Internal Control Systems. The Unit also reviews the arrangements that are in place for the economic and efficient use of resources and for avoiding waste (value for money auditing).

The Unit has responsibility for the audit arrangements in the educational sector generally in respect of EU funds and assists in the development of a risk management programme.

The work of the Unit is carried out in line with the *Guidelines for Professional Practice of Internal Auditing*, issued by the Institute of Internal Auditors (UK and Ireland) and *Government Internal Audit Standards* and relevant EU audit guidelines.

An End of Year Report for 2003 detailed the individual audit evaluations that occurred during the year.

A statement of closure on the 1994/99 round of ESF funding was completed and submitted to the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment.

## Objective 5.6

We will promote good industrial relations practice throughout the education sector and encourage and support the modernisation of the sector through a partnership process.

The External Staff Relations Unit in the Department operates an industrial relations framework and service at national level for the education sector.

### Sustaining Progress

The industrial relations climate improved considerably in 2003 with the re-engagement by ASTI members in supervision /substitution in schools. The 'Sustaining Progress' agreement was accepted by all unions in the education sector. This agreement provides for significant pay increases in return for co-operation with flexibility and change, satisfactory implementation of an agenda for modernisation, maintenance of stable industrial relations and the absence of industrial action in respect of any matter covered by the agreement. Payment of the first phase of the increase recommended by the Public Service Benchmarking Body was made on ratification of the new agreement.

### Standardised School Year, Parent/Teacher Meetings in 2003/2004

In accordance with the requirements in Sustaining Progress, agreement was reached on arrangements for the mid-term and Christmas and Easter breaks during the school year 2003/2004. Discussions were continuing with a view to extending the existing arrangements for the holding of parent/teacher meetings in a manner which minimises disruption to students' tuition time and their parents and at times convenient to parents and teachers.

## Objective 5.7

We will support improved administration and forward planning by developing policy and legislative proposals and by collecting and analysing relevant education statistics.

### Preparation of Legislation

#### Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill

In July 2003, the Minister for Education and Science published the Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill. This Bill will provide a statutory guarantee of education services for people with a disability by providing a statutory framework within which the education of children and people who have special educational needs because of disabilities can be guaranteed as a right enforceable in law. The Bill sets out a range of services which must be provided, including assessments, individual education plans and support services and provides for a process of mediation and appeals where needs are not met. A central role of parents in the education of their children is also provided for. The Bill establishes the National Council for Special Education through which the Bill, as enacted, will be given effect.

The publication of the Bill followed a widespread consultation process with the education partners and voluntary and statutory bodies having experience and knowledge of special educational needs. The Bill completed Second Stage in Dáil Éireann on 28 November 2003 and is expected to begin Committee Stage in January 2004.

#### Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (Amendment) Bill

The purpose of this Bill is to make certain amendments to the legislation governing the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse. In particular, it is intended to include provisions to assist expediting the operations of the Investigation Committee, to reduce the risk of prejudice as a result

of delays and to reduce the risk of exposing victims of abuse to cross-examination at the Investigation Committee where this would be inappropriate. In 2003 the Government approved the Bill for drafting and work on its text was ongoing in partnership with the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel to the Government.

#### **Grangegorman Development Agency Bill**

The purpose of this Bill is to oversee the development of a modern new campus at Grangegorman, Dublin for the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) and for upgraded facilities of the Eastern Regional Health Authority (ERHA). The Agency, to be established by the Bill's provisions will manage the development of the site as agent for the ERHA, DIT and the Departments of Education and Science, and Health and Children. The Bill was approved by the Government for drafting and work on its text was continuing at the end of 2003.

#### **Higher Education Authority (Amendment) Bill**

This Bill will provide for the transfer of funding of the Institutes of Technology from the Department of Education and Science to the Higher Education Authority. It will also transfer responsibility for certain operational matters of Institutes of Technology to the Higher Education Authority.

#### **Register for Persons Considered Unsafe to Work with Children**

The purpose of this legislation is to establish a confidential mechanism for the identification of people who are considered unsafe to work with children and young people.

#### **Disability Bill**

During 2003, the Department worked with the Department of Health & Children and the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform on progressing the general Disability Bill which will, amongst other things, provide for access by adults with disabilities to education services.

## **Enacted legislation**

### **State Examinations Commission (Establishment) Order 2003**

This Order established the State Examinations Commission as a statutory body, separate from the Department of Education and Science, charged with responsibility for the operation of the State Examinations. The Order was made following Government approval and a resolution of both Houses of the Oireachtas.

### **National Council for Special Education (Establishment) Order 2003**

This Order established the National Council for Special Education as a statutory body, separate from the Department of Education and Science. Its functions initially will be of a research and advisory nature but these will be extended to include provision of services, coordination with health boards, dissemination of information and monitoring of the educational progress of children with disabilities. The Order was made following Government approval and a resolution of both Houses of the Oireachtas.

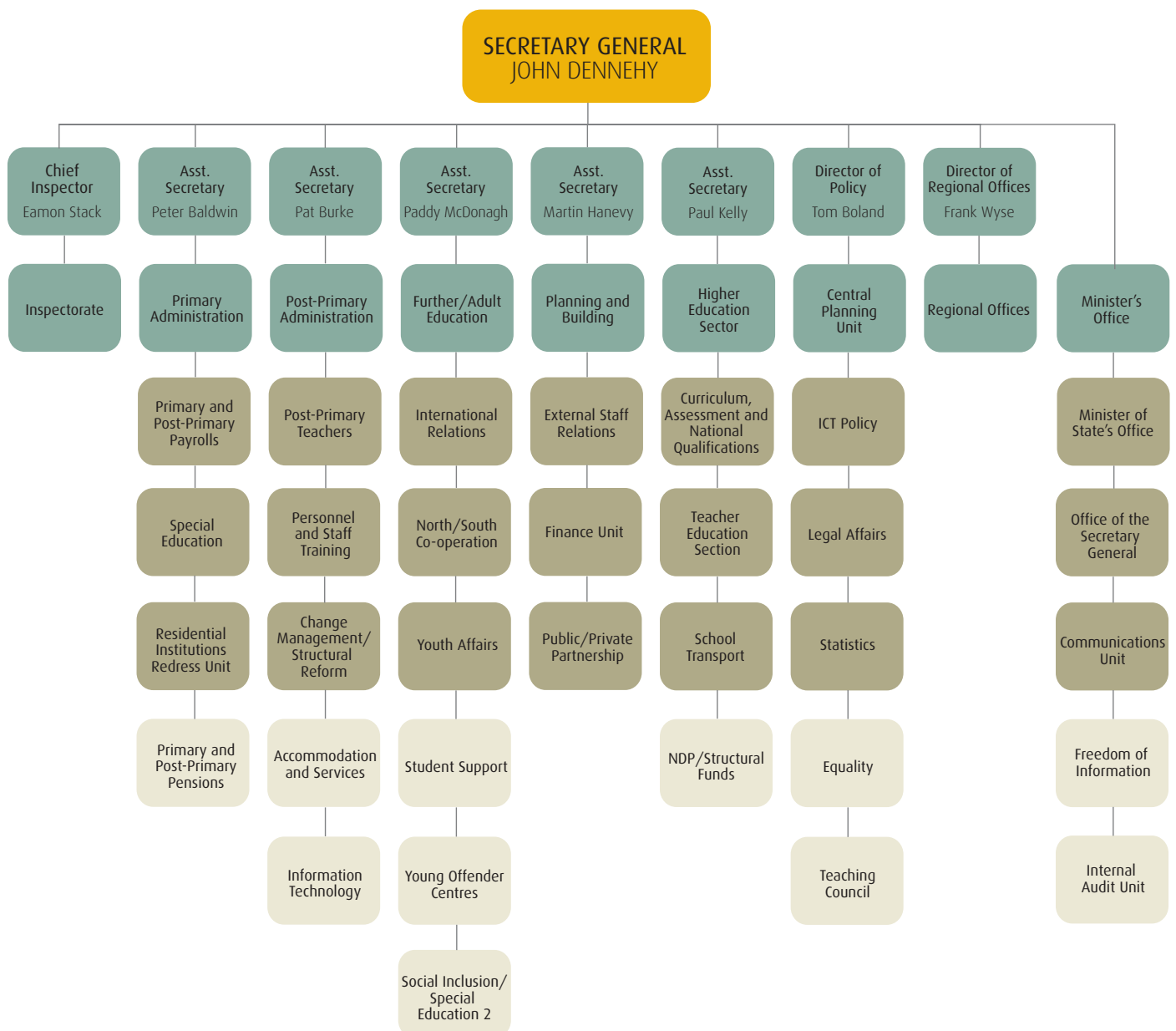
Other secondary legislation promulgated in 2003:

- Children Act 2001 (Section 159 (1)) Commencement Order 2003
- Education and Science (Delegation of Ministerial Functions)(No. 2) Order 2003
- Employment Equality Act 1998 (Section 12) (Church of Ireland College of Education) Order 2003
- European Communities (Recognition of Qualifications and Experience) Regulations 2003
- European Communities (General System for the Recognition of Higher Education Diplomas and Professional Education and Training) (Amendment) Regulations 2003.



# Appendix 1

## Organisation Chart for the Department





# Appendix 2

## Bodies under the Aegis of the Department

### **An Chomhairle um Oideachais Gaeltachta agus Gaelscoilaíochta**

22 Plás Mhic Liam  
Baile Atha Cliath 2  
Tel: (01) 6340831

### **Commission on School Accommodation**

Floor 1, Block 4  
Irish Life Centre  
Talbot Street  
Dublin 1  
Tel: (01) 8787747

### **Further Education and Training Awards Council**

East Point Plaza  
East Point Business Park  
Dublin 3  
Tel: (01) 8659500

### **Higher Education Authority**

Third Floor  
Clanwilliam Court  
Dublin 2  
Tel: (01) 6612748

### **Higher Education and Training Awards Council**

26/27 Denzille Lane  
Dublin 2  
Tel: (01) 6314567

### **Léargas – The Exchange Bureau**

189/193 Parnell Street  
Dublin 1  
Tel: (01) 8731411

### **National Centre for Guidance in Education**

1st Floor, 42/43 Prussia Street  
Dublin 7  
Tel: (01) 8690715

### **National Centre for Technology in Education**

Dublin City University  
Glasnevin  
Dublin 9  
Tel: (01) 7008200

### **National Council for Curriculum and Assessment**

24 Merrion Square  
Dublin 2  
Tel: (01) 6617177

### **The National Educational Psychological Service**

National Headquarters,  
Frederick Court  
24/27 North Frederick Street  
Dublin 1  
Tel: (01) 8892700

### **National Educational Welfare Board**

Premier Business Centre  
11-15 Tara Street  
Dublin 2  
Tel: (01) 2409408

### **National Qualifications Authority of Ireland**

5th Floor  
Jervis House  
Jervis Street  
Dublin 1  
Tel: (01) 8871500

### **The President's Awards – Gaisce**

State Apartments  
Dublin Castle  
Dublin 2  
Tel: (01) 4758746

### **Residential Institutions Redress Board**

Block 5  
Belfield Office Park  
Beech Hill Road  
Clonskeagh  
Dublin 4  
Freephone: 1800-200086

### **State Examinations Commission**

Cornamaddy  
Athlone  
County Westmeath  
Tel: (090) 6442700

# Appendix 3

## Contact Details

### HEAD OFFICE/ADMINISTRATION

General Information/Communications Unit	(01) 8892388
Change Management Unit/Customer Services Office	(01) 8896690
Corporate and Internal Services	(01) 8896400
Minister's Office	(01) 8892276
Minister of State's Office	(01) 8892301/8892302
Secretary General's Office	(01) 8892280
Freedom of Information	(01) 8892240/8896462
Press Office - Media Queries	(01) 8892162/8892322

### POLICY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Central Planning Unit	(01) 8892190
External Staff Relations	(01) 8892410
Gender Equality Unit	(01) 8896458
ICT Policy Unit	(01) 8896413
International Section	(01) 8892379
Legal Services	(01) 8892189
Residential Institutions Redress	(01) 8896574
Social Inclusion	(01) 8892382
Statistics Unit	(01) 8892403
Structural Funds Unit	(01) 8896581
Youth Affairs	(01) 8892179

### VEC AND SCHOOL SERVICES

#### Post-Primary Administration:

General Queries, inc. Boards of Management, Bullying, Discipline and Enrolments  
(0506) 24328/24330/25411

Equipment Grant for LCA/LCVP Schools  
(01) 8892077

Equipment Grant for Special Needs Students  
(01) 8892049

School Books for Needy Pupils  
(01) 8892360/8892291

Second Level Curricular Programmes  
(01) 8892038/8892041

VEC Outdoor Education Centres  
(01) 8892360/8892291

World Skills Apprentice Competition  
(01) 8892072/8892061

#### Primary Administration:

General Queries, inc. Boards of Management, Bullying, Discipline and Enrolments  
(090) 6483721 - 6483725

Grants e.g. Capitation, Modern Languages Initiative  
(090) 6483731 - 6483733

### FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION SERVICES

Financial Support for Further and Higher Education  
(0506) 24381 - 24387

#### Further Education Section:

Adult Guidance in Further Education  
(01) 8892015

Adult Literacy/Community Education  
(01) 8892076/8896431

Post Leaving Certificate (PLC)  
(01) 8892428/8892432

Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)  
(01) 8892069/8896477

#### Higher Education

Policy, Research and Science Section  
(01) 8892220

Technology and Training Section  
(01) 8892165

## SCHOOL STAFFING AND PAYROLL SERVICES

Teacher Education Section (01) 8095018

### Payroll Unit:

Community and Comprehensive Teachers  
(090) 6483810/6484015

Primary Substitute Teachers  
(090) 6484146

Retired Teachers  
(090) 6483995

Special Needs Assistants, Clerical Officers, Caretakers  
(090) 6484136

Voluntary Secondary School Teachers  
(090) 6483801/6483964

Statement of Earnings, Voluntary Payroll Deductions and Re-issue of misplaced/out of date cheques for:

- Primary and Post-Primary Teachers  
(090) 6483707/6483710
- Retired Teachers, SNAs, Clerical Officers, Caretakers  
(090) 6484141

### Pensions:

Primary Teachers (090) 6483993

Secondary Teachers (090) 6483994

VECs, Institutes of Technology, Colleges of Education  
(090) 6483658

### Post-Primary Teachers Personnel Services:

Personnel Policy  
(090) 6483813/6484018/6484091/6484092

Allocations  
(090) 6483828/6483829/6483965/6483966

Qualifications (Comm. and Comp and VEC)  
(090) 6483808/6483832

Registration (Secondary Teachers)  
(090) 6483825/6483826

Registration Council Secretariat  
(090) 6483822/6483823/6483824

### Primary Teachers Personnel Services:

Appointments, Personnel, Conditions of Service  
(090) 6483600

Qualifications - SCG Exam  
(090) 6483732/6483735

Registration and Probation  
(090) 6483739/6483740

## SPECIAL NEEDS/ SOCIAL INCLUSION

Children Detention Schools  
(090) 6483769/6483770

Disadvantaged Primary Pupils  
(090) 6483774/6483775

Early School Leaving Initiatives  
(090) 6483764

High Support Special Schools and Youth Encounter Projects  
(090) 6483765

Learning Support and Special Needs Pupils Allocations (Primary); Special Schools  
(090) 6483754/6483756/6483759

School Transport  
(0506) 24351/24353

## BUILDING SERVICES

School Building Unit (0506) 21363

School Planning Unit (0506) 21363

Third-Level Building Unit (0506) 24407

### Building Unit Finance

Post-Primary Payments (0506) 24343

Primary Payments (0506) 24318

Third-Level Payments (0506) 24344

### OFFICES OF THE INSPECTORATE

#### Cork

Irish Life Buildings, 1a South Mall, Cork  
(021) 4906011

#### Dublin

Marlborough Street, Dublin 1  
(01) 8896553

#### Galway

Floor 3, Ross House, Merchants Rd, Galway  
(091) 568922

#### Limerick

Rossbrien Rd., Punches Cross, Limerick  
(061) 430004

#### Sligo

Kempton Promenade, Bridge Street, Sligo  
(071) 9143218

### REGIONAL OFFICES OF THE DEPARTMENT

Regional Offices Directorate  
(01) 8896442/8896594

**Cork**

Heritage Business Pk, Bessboro Rd, Mahon, Cork  
(021) 4536304

**Limerick**

Rossbrien Rd, Punches Cross, Limerick  
(061) 430003

**Mullingar**

Friar's Mill Road, Mullingar, Co Westmeath  
(044) 37000

**Naas**

The Maudlins, Dublin Rd., Naas, Co Kildare  
(045) 848500

**Navan**

7 Trimgate St., Navan, Co Meath  
(046) 9067410

**Sligo**

Kempton Promenade, Bridge Street, Sligo  
(071) 9135700

**Tallaght**

County Hall, Belgard Sq Nth, Town Centre,  
Tallaght, Dublin 24  
(01) 4635506

**Waterford**

Johnstown Business Park, Johnstown, Waterford