

Chief Inspector's Report 2010-12

PRESENTATION LAUNCH

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS



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What are we here today?

- ❑ To explain how and why we have changed the way we work with schools and the school system
- ❑ To share some key findings from aspects of our evaluation and inspection work during 2010-12
- ❑ To reflect on the context in which schools operated
- ❑ To help all of us to improve learning for students

Quality assurance in a school system

- ❑ Today is about **inspection**....
 - ❑ But inspection is one critical element in a wider quality assurance system for the education sector
 - ❑ OECD Framework for Evaluation and Assessment
 - student assessment
 - school evaluation – **inspection** and school self-evaluation
 - teacher and school leader quality
 - research and education system evaluation
- A balanced and coherent framework to support excellence in learning*

Overarching themes in our work

- ❑ **Clarity of purpose:** an external perspective that encourages school improvement *and* holds schools to account
- ❑ **Procedures:** getting the right instruments to ensure evaluation contributes to improving teaching and learning
- ❑ **Growing capacity:** developing our own competences and the competences of others for using and understanding evaluation
- ❑ **Using results:** organising and sharing evaluative information in ways that facilitate effective use by schools and others; *and* avoiding the mis-use of evaluation and assessment results

So, put simply, what does inspection in 2010-12 tell us about the school system?

In summary, 2010-12 saw...

- ❑ The school system operating in a challenging context
- ❑ Significant reforms in the work of Inspectorate, with better coverage, and inspections more focused on key elements of schools' work
- ❑ High level of parental and student satisfaction with schools
- ❑ Satisfactory or better standards in the majority of lessons but room for improvement in a significant minority
- ❑ Evidence that the DEIS initiative is working
- ❑ A challenge in the future to make sure we strive to improve weak areas and drive excellence
- ❑ Particular challenges in maths at post-primary level and in Irish at primary and post-primary level

The context in which we work: the Irish school system, 2010-12

KEY FEATURES AND FACTORS AFFECTING SCHOOLS AND LEARNERS



Context, 2010-12

□ Significant growth in student numbers

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Primary	498,914	509,652	516,460	526,422
Post-primary	341,312	356,107	359,047	362,847

□ Relative stability in teacher numbers

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Primary	31,709	32,489	31,928	32,175
Post-primary	25,801	26,185	25,808	25,374

Context, 2010-12

□ Growth in the pupil/teacher ratio

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Primary	16.0	15.7	16.2	16.4
Post-primary (excluding PLC)	13.6	13.6	13.9	14.3

□ Average class size in primary schools:

- 24.3 : 1 in 2010/11
- 24.8 : 1 in 2012/13

Context, 2010-12

- Spending on education rose in the period

	2010	2011	2012
Primary	€3.218 bn	€3.259 bn	€3.263 bn
Post-primary	€3.070 bn	€3.137 bn	€3.147 bn

- Expenditure per student on early childhood, primary and post-primary was above the OECD average in 2010

	Pre-primary education	Primary education	Post-primary education
Ireland	US\$ 6,121	US\$ 8,384	US\$ 11,380
OECD average	US\$ 5,643	US\$ 7,974	US\$ 9,014
Ranking in OECD	10 th of 29	8 th of 33	8 th of 33

Context, 2010-12

IMPACT OF FINANCIAL MEASURES ON SCHOOLS

- ❑ Salary decrease for teachers and other staff
- ❑ Decreases in capitation grants by 5% in 2011 & 2% in 2012
- ❑ Staffing thresholds changed in primary and post-primary schools
- ❑ Non-replacement of promoted posts of responsibility
- ❑ Limited alleviation measures for posts of responsibility in schools

Context, 2010-12

- ❑ Significant changes in the leadership and staffing of schools
- ❑ Spending on SEN resources represented about 15% of all spending: €1.2 bn in 2010; €1.3 bn in 2012
- ❑ A range of support services provided to schools
- ❑ Very substantial investment in school infrastructure: €1.327 bn over the period 2010-12
- ❑ Ambitious programme of reform in curriculum, assessment, evaluation and teacher education:
 - Literacy and Numeracy, Junior Cycle reform; Project Maths, school self-evaluation; reforming inspection

Reforming inspection

EXTENSIVE PROGRAMME OF REFORM AND CHANGE

Reforming inspection

Inspectorate's role

- ❑ to improve the quality of learning for children and young people in Irish schools and centres for education
- ❑ to support the development of the Irish education system by providing high quality evaluation and advice
- ❑ 3,100 primary schools, 723 post-primary schools, 141 special schools, 105 centres for education

Reforming inspection

- ❑ Reduction in Inspectorate staff: 154 (2009) – 116 – 124 (2012)
- ❑ Introduction of a *range* of inspection models: better tools
 - More efficient whole-school type evaluations
 - Unannounced incidental inspections
 - Revisions to all models to improve efficiency and improve reporting
 - Follow-through inspections
- ❑ Significant increase in inspection coverage
 - Inspection of some type in half of all primary schools and in 93% of post-primary schools in 2010-12
 - In addition, inspection of 6,424 probationary primary teachers

Reforming inspection

- ❑ More focused inspections:
 - Focus on improvement
 - Focus on teaching, learning, leadership, management
 - Risk-based elements to inspection planning
- ❑ Better data, including parental voice and student voice
- ❑ Introduction of school self-evaluation to encourage improvement in schools and to complement inspection
- ❑ Collaboration with partners
- ❑ Very significant work changes for inspectors

Primary schools

WHAT DOES INSPECTION TELL US ABOUT PRIMARY SCHOOLS?

Primary: analysis of evidence from....

- ❑ Almost 800 whole-school evaluations
- ❑ Over 1,100 incidental inspections
- ❑ Thematic inspections in 34 DEIS schools
- ❑ Almost 36,000 confidential pupil questionnaires
- ❑ More than 47,000 parental questionnaires

- ❑ Data simplified under headings
 - Inspectors' findings: "Satisfactory or better" / "Less than satisfactory"
 - Questionnaire data: "Agree" / "Disagree" / "Don't know"

Teaching and learning in primary schools

- ❑ 97% of parents agreed that teaching was good in their child's school
- ❑ 97% of parents agreed that their child was doing well in school
- ❑ Inspectors judged 86% of lessons were satisfactory or better in incidental inspections; 14% less than satisfactory

Teaching and learning in primary schools

ENGLISH

□ Findings

- Teaching in 89% lessons satisfactory or better in incidental inspections
- Learning in 86% lessons satisfactory or better in incidental inspections
- Very good outcomes in PIRLS 2011

□ Areas needing improvement/common recommendations

- Assessment – but improved since earlier report from 2009/2010
- Recommendations about oral language, writing, comprehension, explicit teaching of reading skills
- Teachers' preparedness to teach

Teaching and learning in primary schools

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□ Findings

- Teaching in 80% lessons satisfactory or better in incidental inspections
- Learning in 76% lessons satisfactory or better in incidental inspections

□ Areas needing improvement/common recommendations

- Sizeable proportion of schools need to change their teaching approach
- Use communicative approach, use of language throughout school
- Richness of language inputs from teacher a significant factor
- Assessment less than satisfactory in 35% of lessons
- Need for comprehensive language programme for Irish

Teaching and learning in primary schools

MATHEMATICS

□ Findings

- Teaching in 83% lessons satisfactory or better in incidental inspections
- Learning in 85% lessons satisfactory or better in incidental inspections
- Good outcomes in TIMSS international survey in 2011

□ Areas needing improvement/common recommendations

- Assessment – less than satisfactory in 28% of lessons
- Need for formative assessment and differentiated teaching
- Use of resources, though increasing use of ICT was noted
- Collaborative working in only 53% of lessons

Supports for pupils in primary schools

- ❑ Satisfactory or better provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs in 81% of schools where WSE conducted
 - Effective implementation of staged approach to SEN provision
 - Good use of assessment information to plan programmes
 - Well structured delivery of supports
 - Clarity of roles and cooperation between class and resource teachers
- ❑ Schools' support and use of resources to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils from minority groups: satisfactory or better in 89% of schools where WSE conducted

Management of primary schools

- ❑ Work of boards: satisfactory or better in 88% of schools inspected
- ❑ In-school management: less than satisfactory in 18% of schools inspected
- ❑ Management of pupils was very highly rated in both incidental and announced inspections (96%)
- ❑ Parents' views: Discipline is good in the school – 95% agree

Management of primary schools

- ❑ 87% of pupils agreed that they felt they could talk to a teacher if they felt upset about something at school
- ❑ 94% of pupils agreed that they felt safe in class and playground
- ❑ However, only 70% of parents felt their child's school was dealing well with bullying and 24% of parents didn't know
- ❑ At the very least a communication issue

Management of primary schools

- ❑ 95% of parents agreed that their child's school was welcoming of parents
- ❑ 92% of parents felt that school reports gave them a good picture of how their child was doing
- ❑ Only 70% agreed that the school regularly sought the views of parents on school matters
- ❑ Only 65% agreed that they knew about the work the BOM was doing for the school
- ❑ 77% agreed that the parents' association kept them informed about its work

Post-primary schools

WHAT DOES INSPECTION TELL US ABOUT POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS?

Post-primary: analysis of evidence from....

- ❑ Almost 190 whole-school evaluations
- ❑ Over 1,400 subject inspections & 62 programme evaluations
- ❑ Over 430 incidental inspections
- ❑ Thematic inspections in 34 DEIS schools
- ❑ Over 29,000 confidential pupil questionnaires
- ❑ More than 20,000 confidential parental questionnaires

- ❑ Data simplified under headings
 - Inspectors' findings: "Satisfactory or better" / "Less than satisfactory"
 - Questionnaire data: "Agree" / "Disagree" / "Don't know"

Teaching and learning in post-primary schools

- ❑ 87% of parents agreed that teaching was good in their child's school; 7% disagreed
- ❑ 70% of students agreed that their classes were interesting; 16% disagreed and 14% did not know
- ❑ 74% of students agreed that their teachers explained things clearly for them and 12% disagreed
- ❑ WSE inspections found teaching satisfactory or better in 87% of lessons, problematic in 13% of lessons

Teaching and learning in post-primary schools

□ Common weaknesses/recommendations:

- Use of differentiated teaching and learning activities to suit needs of different students – satisfactory in only 64% of lessons
- Use of assessment
 - less than satisfactory in 23% of schools during subject inspections;
 - students' work monitored satisfactorily in 79% of lessons during incidental inspections
- Collaborative learning – satisfactory or better in 77% of lessons
- Literacy and numeracy opportunities in lessons – satisfactory or better in 76% of lessons (in incidental inspections)

Teaching and learning in post-primary schools

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- ❑ 2012 was first year in which Leaving Certificate oral examination attracted 40% of marks – has helped use of target language – improved since 2007 report on Irish
- ❑ Increasing numbers of students taking oral at Junior Cycle
- ❑ Many schools encourage use of Irish outside classroom
- ❑ Quality of students' learning problematic in one third (32%) of subject inspections
- ❑ Quality of teaching: satisfactory or better in 72% of lessons

Teaching and learning in post-primary schools

GAEILGE

- Common recommendations/areas for development:
 - Need to enrich written and oral language of students
 - Stronger focus needed on the acquisition of language structures, grammar and consolidation of newly acquired aspects of language
 - Need to use a wide range of resources including authentic materials
 - Need to challenge more able students
 - Better assessment practices – less than satisfactory in almost 40% of schools
 - Small but significant number of classrooms – teachers' own language skills were deficient
 - Better whole school and classroom planning – less than satisfactory in 30% of Irish subject departments

Teaching and learning in post-primary schools

ENGLISH

- ❑ Quality of teaching satisfactory or better in 87% of lessons
- ❑ Quality of learning satisfactory or better in 84% of lessons
- ❑ PISA 2009 data, but subsequent analysis has to be considered
- ❑ Common recommendations/considerations
 - Planning of a good programme of learning and provision was satisfactory or better in 77% of schools
 - Junior Cycle curriculum had too narrow focus with limited range of texts being studied
 - Lack of opportunities to engage in listening and speaking
 - Lack of challenge in writing tasks

Teaching and learning in post-primary schools

MATHEMATICS

- ❑ Significant period of change – roll-out of Project Maths
- ❑ Quality of subject department planning satisfactory or better in 80% of schools
- ❑ 20% of schools had deficiencies in planning and preparation for teaching
- ❑ Quality of teaching – satisfactory or better in just 77% of lessons
- ❑ Quality of learning – less than satisfactory in 26% of lessons
- ❑ Evidence of better transfer of information between primary and post-primary schools

Teaching and learning in post-primary schools

MATHEMATICS

□ Common recommendations/areas for development:

- Planning and preparation
- Resources used to enhance lesson presentation – should be used to actively engage students in their own learning
- Considerable scope to improve how students are enabled to recognise connections between mathematical ideas, explore maths ideas in contexts, find multiple solutions to problems.....
-not correct answers to well-rehearsed questions in familiar contexts
- Depth of mathematical understanding required to teach Project Maths is challenging for some teachers

Management and leadership in post-primary schools

- ❑ WSE inspections judged the quality of leadership and management to be satisfactory or better in 89% of schools
- ❑ 91% of parents agreed that their child's school was well run
- ❑ 91% of parents agreed that their child felt safe and well looked after in school

BUT

- ❑ 71% of students and 68% of parents agreed that the school dealt well with bullying and 24% of parents "didn't know"

Management and leadership in post-primary schools

☐ Students' response

- I got helpful advice from teachers when choosing subjects: Agree-58%; Disagree-25%; Don't know-17%

☐ Parents' responses

- I received helpful advice from the school when my child was choosing subjects: Agree-61%; Disagree-29%; Don't know-10%
- The school regularly seeks the views of parents on school matters: Agree-44%; Disagree-32%; Don't know-24%
- The school's parents' association keeps me informed about its work: Agree-51%; Disagree-28%; Don't know-20%

Spotlights on other themes and topics

- ❑ Special Educational Needs inspections in post-primary schools
- ❑ Evaluations of target setting and planning in DEIS schools
 - Significant improvement in many primary schools
 - Evidence not yet clear at post-primary level
- ❑ Educational provision in Gaeltacht
 - Initial findings from analysis of inspection reports
- ❑ SPHE at primary and post-primary level

Making sure improvement happens

- ❑ Improvement is firstly, the responsibility of the principal, teachers and board of the school
- ❑ School Responses show many take recommendations seriously
- ❑ School self-evaluation is designed to make improvement part of normal work of the school
- ❑ Follow-up inspections have a role
- ❑ School Improvement Group – serious risks to learning and teaching

Making sure improvement happens

- ❑ Analysis of 90 of the initial follow-up (follow-through) inspections in primary schools
 - 84% of recommendations partially or fully addressed
 - 15% no progress
 - Further FT planned/recommended in 12% of cases
- ❑ Analysis of 80 of the initial follow-up inspections in post-primary schools
 - ❑ 90% of recommendations fully or partially addressed
 - ❑ 10% no progress
 - ❑ Further FT recommended/planned in 14% of cases

Our challenging agenda ahead...

- ❑ Continue to make sure that inspection respects the contexts in which we and school communities work and develop
- ❑ Continue our own learning and improvement so that evaluation supports improvement and accountability in the school system
- ❑ Support reforms the Minister and Department are implementing
- ❑ Seek best ways in which we can add value to schools, school leadership and the educational system
- ❑ Listen and learn from parents and students
- ❑ Identify areas requiring improvement – support and challenge
- ❑ Help to ensure that learners experience excellence in learning and teaching

And a word of thanks to...

- ❑ The teachers, principals, board members and parents with whom we work in schools
- ❑ The education partners that engage with us about our shared goal of improvement
- ❑ Our colleagues and former colleagues in the Inspectorate and Department

- ❑ And most of all, to the children and young people that we meet and interact with every day