



# CHIEF INSPECTOR'S REPORT

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2001-2004



INSPECTORATE

© Department of Education and Science, 2005  
ISBN 0-7557-1736-8

Designed by first impression  
Dublin

Printed by New Oceans

Published by the Stationery Office, Dublin

**To be purchased directly from the:**

Government Publications Sales Office  
Sun Alliance House  
Molesworth Street  
Dublin 2

**or by mail order from:**

Government Publications  
Postal Trade Section  
51 St Stephen's Green  
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## FOREWORD



It gives me great pleasure to introduce this Chief Inspector's Report on the work of the Inspectorate during the period 2001-2004. The aim in publishing this report is to provide an account of the professional activities of the Inspectorate and to communicate key messages concerning issues of quality in schools to the education community and to the public in general. While the report describes an extensive programme of work that has already been completed, the purpose is to highlight themes arising from this work that can impact on the further development of the education system.

The Chief Inspector's Report describes a range of evaluation activities. These include the evaluation of schools, inspection of the work of individual teachers, evaluation of curriculum subjects, and thematic evaluations of aspects of education provision. The report also details strands of work relating to the Inspectorate's significant advisory function, including the professional advice provided to schools and parents, and its work in disseminating evidence-based policy advice within the Department.

This report highlights many encouraging examples of best practice in schools, and in this context I wish to pay tribute to the professional contribution of teachers, school principals and school management authorities in improving schools and in enabling pupils to achieve their potential. I also wish to acknowledge the positive co-operation that inspection teams have encountered in carrying out evaluations in schools.

The evaluation findings presented in this report also highlight areas where development is needed in the system. Inspection reports point towards a need for sustained improvement within individual classrooms, in the leadership and management of schools, and in the development of a collaborative professional culture in schools. The entire school community, including principals, teachers, and parents, have a key role in supporting such change and development, and the support services for schools, funded by the Department, also have a very important part to play.

I hope that you will find this Chief Inspector's Report informative and that it will serve as a resource for discussion and action at classroom, school and system levels.

**Eamon Stack**

*Chief Inspector*

April 2005

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



*Brigid Mc Manus, Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science and Eamon Stack, Chief Inspector*

The content of this Chief Inspector's Report is based on the evaluation and advisory work of inspectors during the period 2001-2004. The involvement of every inspector is acknowledged in the listings in appendix 2 of this report, as is the work of retired colleagues and of inspectors who have transferred to the State Examinations Commission in 2003.

In the implementation of the programme of work from 2001 to 2004 the assistance of the administrative staff working directly with the Inspectorate and the support provided to the Inspectorate by officials in administrative sections throughout the Department are also gratefully acknowledged.

The preparation of this report for publication has been an intensive exercise, co-ordinated by a small team of inspectors. The project team included Eamonn Murtagh, Gary Ó Donnchadha, Suzanne Conneely, Kevin McCarthy, Suzanne Dillon, and Diarmuid Dullaghan. They wish to acknowledge the assistance received from the Senior Management Group of the Inspectorate and from individual inspectors throughout the division.





## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 PURPOSE OF THE CHIEF INSPECTOR'S REPORT

This Chief Inspector's Report describes the work of the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Science during the period January 2001 to December 2004. The purpose of the report is to communicate with the education community and with the public in general in relation to the wide range of evaluative, advisory and support activities that have been undertaken over the last four years. It is also hoped that this Chief Inspector's Report will serve as a means by which the activities and outputs of the Inspectorate division may be considered in a context of public accountability.

Above all, the report aims to place emphasis on the issue of quality in the education system. The evaluation activity of inspectors is described, and frequent reference is made to aspects of education provision and teaching and learning that are working effectively. The evaluation findings also point towards a need to sustain improvement within individual classrooms, in the leadership and management of schools, in the provision of curricular and managerial support for schools, and in the effectiveness of the education system in meeting the needs of pupils.

The report emphasises the importance of both the Inspectorate's external evaluation of schools and the internal self-evaluation and development activity undertaken by school staffs themselves. It is hoped that this report will serve as a resource for discussion and action regarding the use of evaluation as a tool for change and development in schools and centres for education.

### 1.2 ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE INSPECTORATE

The Inspectorate is a division within the Department of Education and Science and at present has a complement of 150 primary and post-primary inspectors. While inspectors are generally recruited to work in either the post-primary or the primary sector, the work of the Inspectorate is managed as a unified service. The Inspectorate has a statutory quality assurance obligation in relation to education provision, as set out in section 13 of the Education Act (1998).

The activities of the Inspectorate can be categorised broadly in four strands

- Operating an inspection and evaluation programme, including school, teacher and subject inspection, thematic evaluation, and whole-school evaluation
- Assessing and advising on the implementation of legislation and Department regulations, including undertaking inquiries, reviewing complaints as requested by the primary and post-primary administrative divisions of the Department, and reporting on compliance issues generally
- Advising schools, teachers and parents on all aspects of education provision within the Inspectorate's remit
- Contributing to and supporting policy development through provision of policy advice, participation in the work of internal and external committees, the preparation of ministerial and other briefings, and representation on national, local and international bodies and agencies.

### 1.2.1 Evaluative role and professional approaches in evaluation

The core function of the Inspectorate is to report on the quality of education provision in schools and centres for education. To that end it places particular emphasis on the operation of a programme of inspections and evaluations at primary and post-primary levels. Since 2001 more than 8,000 inspections have been conducted across a range of evaluation types including mainstream evaluations of teachers and schools, thematic evaluations, reviews and surveys by the Inspectorate.

The principles and guidelines that inform the evaluation work of inspectors are detailed in the *Professional Code of Practice on Evaluation and Reporting for the Inspectorate* (2002) (see section 2.1.3). The guidelines emphasise the importance of conducting evaluations in a fair, consistent and transparent manner and set out the Inspectorate's commitment to base findings and recommendations on the collection of dependable, high-quality data.

### 1.2.2 Advisory and support role

Inspectors fulfil an important advisory and support role through providing oral and written feedback on the quality of education provision in schools. They affirm good practice and provide recommendations in relation to school development and improvement. Inspectors are also called upon to advise the school management, principals, individual teachers and parents in relation to curriculum implementation, teaching and learning, the needs of individual pupils, compliance with legislation and regulations, and the organisation of education provision in schools.

The advisory and support work of the Inspectorate is increasingly complemented by the Department of Education and Science support services. External supports provided for schools include the curriculum support services at primary and post-primary level, the School Development Planning initiatives, services provided through education centres, and a range of other professional development opportunities available to teachers and members of management teams in schools.

Inspectors work closely with colleagues in administrative sections providing professional advice in relation to the operation of Department programmes and services to schools and in the day-to-day administration of the system generally. The Inspectorate also has a significant input into the policy development process through providing evidence-based recommendations in relation to the quality of educational services and through consultations at management levels

in the Department. In this regard consideration is given to the outcomes of research initiated by the Inspectorate.

## 1.3 INSPECTORATE ORGANISATION

### 1.3.1 Restructuring the Inspectorate

The organisation of the Inspectorate has been recast over the past four years, in parallel with other restructuring initiatives in the Department of Education and Science. The establishment of new agencies, such as the State Examinations Commission (SEC), the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB), and the network of departmental regional offices, and the continuing investment in school development planning and curriculum support for schools have facilitated the reorganisation of the Inspectorate in accordance with its evaluation and advisory remit.

The establishment of the State Examinations Commission (SEC) in March 2003 has been particularly important for the Inspectorate. Until then, inspectors at post-primary level had a dual role as managers of the state examinations and as evaluators of education provision in schools. With the establishment of the SEC a group of inspectors with extensive examination experience was assigned or appointed to the commission as examinations and assessment managers, and tasks related to examinations were removed completely from the work of the remaining post-primary inspectors. This has made possible a renewed concentration on evaluation work, which has had beneficial outcomes in the implementation of the annual inspection plan at post-primary level.

For many years the Inspectorate had a major role in the Department's resource allocation process for pupils with special educational needs. Since 2003, however, reorganisation in relation to the administration of special education within the Department has enabled the Inspectorate to reduce its involvement in work relating to resource provision very significantly and to concentrate to a greater extent on evaluating the quality of the services provided for pupils with special educational needs. This change in emphasis has been further consolidated as a result of the recent commencement of the operations of the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).

The establishment of the Teaching Council is also significant for the Inspectorate. The Teaching Council's work in regulating the teaching profession and in enhancing professional standards and competence among teachers will fit well with the Inspectorate's goals in this area.

### 1.3.2 Management structures

The Inspectorate, headed by the Chief Inspector, is managed as a single division, organised into two subdivisions, each headed by a deputy chief inspector. The Regional Services subdivision is responsible for the provision and management of evaluation and professional advisory services in five regional business units. The Policy Support subdivision, which also comprises five business units, is responsible for contributing to the development of departmental policy in a range of areas, for supporting the evaluation activities of the Inspectorate generally, and for operational services within the Inspectorate.

Each subdivision is divided into a number of business units, each managed by an assistant chief inspector and staffed by primary and post-primary inspectors. A full breakdown of the organisational structure of the Inspectorate is provided in appendix 2.

A small number of inspectors are assigned to work in other divisions or sections within the Department, providing full-time professional expertise and advice. These assignments include the Teacher Education Section, the Gender Equality Unit, the Planning and Building Unit, and the Department's network of regional offices.



### 1.3.3 Regional offices of the Department

In 2003 the Department established a Directorate of Regional Services and initiated a programme for the establishment of a network of ten regional offices, to be established in Cork, Blanchardstown, Galway, Waterford, Sligo, Limerick, Mullingar, Naas, Navan, and Tallaght. The main purpose of the regional offices initiative is to support effective co-ordination of the Department's services at local level. An assistant chief inspector and seven senior inspectors have been assigned to the regional offices network; the number of assigned inspectors will increase to ten when all the regional offices are operational.

In addition to the regional office staff, offices accommodate members of other agencies working within the region, such as the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), and the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS).

Regional office inspectors have both managerial and advisory roles within their regions. They have an evaluative function in relation to certain non-formal educational settings and will also report on aspects of the education system from time to time. An important contribution of the inspectors in the regional offices will be the provision of advice to schools, parents and the general public on a wide range of educational issues.

Inspectors will investigate issues at local level referred to them by administrative sections of the Department. They will also have responsibility for the preparation of briefings on local educational issues.

## 1.4 BUSINESS PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE INSPECTORATE

### 1.4.1 Business planning in the Inspectorate

During the period covered by this report the Inspectorate has engaged in strategic review and development activities under the Government's Strategic Management Initiative (SMI), which aims to make more effective use of resources and to provide a high-quality service to all users of the public service.

During the last four years the Inspectorate has further developed its business planning and management systems in order to ensure effective implementation of the annual school inspection plan through the Regional Services subdivision and to ensure effective co-ordination in the work of the Policy Support subdivision.

Exhibit 1: Number of schools and number of teachers in each sector, 2002/2003

	Number of schools	Number of teachers
Primary	3,283	24,700
Post-primary	746	22,062 (full-time) 3,630 (full-time equivalent or part-time)
Total	4,029	50,392

The planning process also links with the Department's Performance Management and Development System (PMDS). This supports the alignment of the work of individual inspectors in each business unit with the objectives of the Inspectorate and also enables the Inspectorate to build evaluation competence within teams and to identify the professional development needs of the division.

1.4.2 Recruitment and professional development

Since January 2001 there has been considerable development in the human resources of the Inspectorate, with the recruitment of seventy-one new inspectors. This recruitment has been undertaken to fill vacancies created through retirement and to replace inspectors who have been assigned or appointed to the State Examinations Commission. Recruitment associated with the appointment of inspectors to the regional offices has also been necessary. This cohort of new appointees represents 47 per cent of the current staffing complement. This renewal of personnel has been continuing since September 1998, and more than two-thirds of all inspectors now serving were appointed since that time. The new colleagues have brought a wide range of new skills, expertise and professional interests into the Inspectorate and have integrated effectively into the work of the division, with the assistance and leadership of experienced colleagues.

The Inspectorate has implemented an extensive programme of continuing professional development and training for all inspectors. This has yielded considerable benefits in the evolution of the Inspectorate as a professional group committed to achieving coherent strategic goals and adopting consistent, fair and reliable approaches in their everyday work.

1.5 RESPONDING TO THE EVALUATION NEEDS OF THE SYSTEM

The Inspectorate consistently emphasises the fact that the responsibility for the adoption of professional approaches in teaching and in the management and organisation of schools rests primarily with the school staff, the principal and school management team, and the school board. External evaluation by the Inspectorate aims to provide a significant point of reference for the school community in relation to the quality of its service to pupils. It also aims to assist the school to engage with change, where that is indicated, and to identify directions for development unique to that school.

Within this context the Inspectorate has a quality assurance remit in respect of more than four thousand schools and more than fifty thousand teachers. Exhibit 1 below presents a breakdown of school and teacher numbers for the year 2002/2003.

The Inspectorate's evaluation and advisory work in primary and post-primary schools, as described in the Chief Inspector's Report, reflects the diversity of the school system in type, size, location, language of instruction, and ethos. Each school has its own unique character and context, and the Inspectorate endeavours to take account of these factors in its evaluation and advisory work.



## 2 THE PROGRAMME OF INSPECTION IN SCHOOLS

### 2.1 CONTEXT OF EVALUATION IN SCHOOLS

#### 2.1.1 Types of evaluation in schools

The Inspectorate's annual inspection programme includes mainstream evaluation of the work of primary and post-primary teachers and schools and thematic evaluations of particular aspects of education provision. This chapter deals with the mainstream inspection programme. It describes each mode of evaluation and outlines the main findings and issues for development that have emerged from this evaluation activity in schools during the period 2001-2004.

#### 2.1.2 Development of evaluation criteria and evidence-based inspection

An important element of the work programme of the Inspectorate during the period 2001-2004 has been the development and refinement of evaluation materials and procedures. A specialist business unit within the Inspectorate, the Evaluation Support and Research Unit (ESRU), has had responsibility for co-ordinating the development of evaluation models, the design of evidence-gathering templates and the establishment of inspection procedures for different inspection activities. In refining its criteria and procedures the Inspectorate has engaged in productive consultations with a range of education partners.

#### 2.1.3 Inspectorate code of practice

The Inspectorate is committed to evaluating schools and teachers in a spirit of professional collaboration and in accordance with the highest professional standards. The *Professional Code of Practice on Evaluation and Reporting for the Inspectorate* (2002), developed in accordance with the provisions of section 13 (8) of the Education Act (1998), sets out general principles and guidelines under which members of the Inspectorate engage in the process of evaluation and reporting. In essence, the code seeks to make clear the professional standards to which the Inspectorate works.

Among the general principles of the code of practice, the Inspectorate is committed to

- fostering mutual respect, trust, positive professional relations and partnership between the Inspectorate and the school community
- consistent application of evaluation criteria and objectivity, reliability and reliance on first-hand evidence based on observation
- consistency and fairness, taking due account of school context factors and taking cognisance of school self-review
- engaging in dialogue with school staffs and the education partners and ensuring confidentiality, while having due regard to statutory provisions
- courtesy, respect and sensitivity towards both individual teachers and the school, and clarity in the manner in which findings are communicated
- acknowledging that the pupils are the ultimate beneficiaries of the evaluation process.

Exhibit 2: Number of section 13 (9) review applications arising from the conducting of 4,500 inspections between January 2003 and December 2004

Applications for review	Reviews in progress on 31/12/2004	Reviews completed	Inspections upheld	Inspections not in keeping with code, or report amended	Inspection report withdrawn
4	2	2	1	1	0

2.1.4 Procedure for the review of inspections

In accordance with section 13 (9) of the Education Act (1998), the Inspectorate published a *Procedure for Review of Inspections on Schools and Teachers* (2002). Under the review procedure, a teacher or the board of a school may request the Chief Inspector to review any inspection carried out by an inspector that affects the teacher or the school. The review procedure applies to all inspections affecting schools or teachers, including all evaluations and reports arising from such inspections and evaluations, other than those required under existing procedures for teachers experiencing professional difficulties.

A review of an inspection leads to one of three possible outcomes

- that the inspection and/or inspection report is upheld
- that an element or elements of the inspection is/are regarded as not in keeping with the *Professional Code of Practice on Evaluation and Reporting for the Inspectorate*, and/or that the inspection report is amended and reissued
- that the inspection and/or the inspection report is withdrawn and a further inspection or part inspection, as appropriate, is carried out by an inspector or inspectors other than the inspector/inspectors involved in the original inspection.

Exhibit 2 provides a breakdown of the section 13 (9) reviews conducted between January 2003 and December 2004.

2.2 SCHOOL INSPECTION AT PRIMARY LEVEL

2.2.1 Inspection of probationary teachers

Following their appointment to a teaching position, teachers in primary and post-primary schools are required to serve a probationary year. Within the probationary process at primary level inspectors have a dual role: the provision of advice and the evaluation of a teacher's practice to ascertain whether teaching is satisfactory. In most instances the inspectors submit two reports on a teacher's work to the Primary Administration Section in the first year. On completion of the probationary process the teacher receives a copy of the final general inspection report.

The Inspectorate's involvement in the probation process was a significant element of the work programme in the period 2001-2004. During 2004, for example, the Department issued 1,486 inspection reports in respect of primary teachers on probation. At the end of December 2004 primary inspectors had a probation case load of 1,614 teachers.

Arising from inspectors' evaluation work with probationary teachers in primary schools, the following observations were made

- Probation reports frequently referred to the positive rapport that teachers had created with pupils, and teachers were praised for their attention to the individual needs of pupils.
- The majority of probationary teachers prepared high-quality short-term and long-term plans and were diligent in the preparation and organisation of stimulating teaching and learning resources.



- Inspection reports at the end of the probationary process frequently acknowledged a development in classroom management skills and in the implementation of effective approaches to discipline.
- In many instances inspectors made recommendations in relation to the teaching of Irish, and the advice generally related to the creation of opportunities for pupils to communicate orally and to participate actively in language-learning activities.
- Probation reports were generally very positive in relation to the teaching of the range of subjects of the Primary School Curriculum. Where recommendations for development were made they frequently referred to lesson structure, pacing of the teacher's own lesson presentation, and the need to provide pupils with opportunities for effective consolidation of the concepts and skills that had been taught.

The probationary period is a critically important phase in every teacher's professional development. There is recognition at school and at system levels that newly qualified teachers should have access to supportive professional assistance within schools and opportunities to benefit from external in-service programmes offered through colleges and through the network of education centres.

### 2.2.2 *Tuairisc scoile*

Mainstream primary schools and special schools are inspected on a cyclical basis in line with an annual inspection programme. At present an individual school report (often referred to by its Irish title, *Tuairisc Scoile*) is furnished approximately every seven years, following a detailed school inspection. This evaluation of the school examines all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment, as well as school planning, implementation of curriculum, provision for individual pupils, organisation and management of the school, and quality of accommodation and resources. The *Tuairisc Scoile* provides the board of management, the principal and the school staff with an objective external evaluation of the school and a basis for development planning and school improvement initiatives within the school. Whole-school evaluation (WSE) (outlined in section 2.4) began during the year 2003/2004 and will replace the *Tuairisc Scoile* model of inspection.

Exhibit 3: *Tuairisc Scoile* Reports issued from 2001 to 2004

Year of school report	Number of <i>Tuairisc Scoile</i> reports issued to primary schools
2001	376
2002	421
2003	419
2004	336
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,552</b>

The Inspectorate's findings in relation to *Tuairisc Scoile* evaluations since 2001 have been generally positive. The Inspectorate publication *Fifty School Reports: What Inspectors Say* (2002), based on a detailed analysis of reports from a sample of fifty primary schools, revealed the existence of good or very good provision in many schools. The report also identified aspects of provision where there was scope for development. Some of the main findings are summarised below.

- The work of boards of management and school management teams was generally commended, and the inspectors made particular reference to the professional approaches of many school principals in promoting planning and development initiatives in schools.
- There was a need for more systematic approaches to collaborative planning in almost half the schools evaluated. The need to base whole-school and classroom planning on the strands and strand units of the Primary School Curriculum was emphasised.
- Inconsistent practice in relation to classroom planning by individual teachers was noted in a minority of schools.
- Good practice in relation to the use of a range of teaching methodologies was reported. Active, hands-on learning approaches and the promotion of collaborative learning in classrooms was emphasised in many reports. In a minority of schools the inspectors made recommendations in relation to improving the range of teaching approaches adopted. Teachers were advised to place an emphasis on their own lesson presentation and on facilitating active engagement by pupils, rather than relying on textbooks as the central teaching focus.

- The inspectors considered that the application of information and communication technologies (ICT) required further development in almost half the schools.
- The majority of schools administered standardised assessment in English and in Mathematics and also had written assessment policies that referred to the range of assessment approaches promoted in the Primary School Curriculum. The inspectors noted a significant gap between stated assessment policies and actual assessment practice in classrooms. The assessment of work and the recording of pupils' progress were limited in curriculum areas other than English and Mathematics.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs was considered to be effective in the majority of schools, and purposeful planning by resource and support teachers was commended. In a minority of schools an improvement was needed, and the inspectors referred to the need to review special needs policies, to adhere to recommendations in the Learning-Support Guidelines, and to introduce an appropriate differentiation of curriculum and more effective planning for individual pupils.
- Although the teaching of Irish was good in approximately half the schools, the inspectors expressed concern at the low levels of language competence being achieved by many pupils. The majority of recommendations related to the need to adopt communicative approaches in the teaching of Irish.
- Teaching and learning in the Visual Arts was regarded as good or very good in the majority of schools.
- In the teaching of Music inspectors identified the need to include more opportunities for listening and responding to music and recommended that pupils be introduced to composing and playing instruments.
- The lack of attention to the teaching of Drama in schools generally was raised as a concern by the inspectors, although it was noted that schools have not yet had in-service support in this area of the curriculum.

In advising primary schools in relation to addressing issues identified through the *Tuairisc Scoile* process, inspectors emphasised the need for schools themselves to engage in a process of self-review and development. In this context schools were urged to make the maximum use of internal expertise and to obtain access to support services funded by the Department of Education and Science, including the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP), the School Development Planning Support (SDPS) initiative, and the network of education centres.

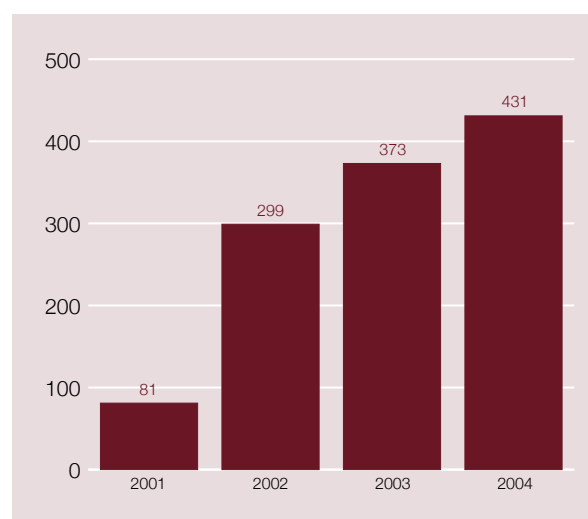
## 2.3 SCHOOL INSPECTION AT POST-PRIMARY LEVEL

### 2.3.1 Subject inspection

Post-primary inspectors conduct *Subject Inspections* in post-primary schools in curricular areas in which they have specialist knowledge and experience. Subjects are evaluated under the headings of whole-school provision and support, planning and preparation, teaching and learning, and assessment and achievement. The process is outlined in *A Guide to Subject Inspection at Second Level* (2004). Following the evaluation, a report is prepared and issued to the relevant teachers and to the management of the school. During the period 2001-2004 evaluation activity at post-primary level increased significantly.

Exhibit 4 shows the growth in the number of subject inspections undertaken since the model was reintroduced in September 2001. A total of 1,184 subject inspections was completed in the period.

**Exhibit 4: Number of subject inspection reports issued from September 2001 to December 2004**





Each subject inspection report affirms good practice and makes recommendations for improvement where necessary. Some of the main positive findings with regard to all subject areas included the following

- Subjects were allocated appropriate time in the school timetable, and appropriate teaching and learning resources were provided. Well-equipped specialist rooms were available, and teachers had access to audiovisual equipment and resources, ICT and printed material to support their work. In some instances, budgets were allocated to subject departments to facilitate the purchase of resources.
- Pupils were provided with a range of activities that directly supported the curriculum in classrooms. Participation in project-based competition such as the Young Scientist Exhibition, in debating in Irish, English and other languages and in musical and dramatic productions provided pupils with opportunities to practise skills taught in curriculum programmes. Inspectors commended the efforts of schools and teachers to facilitate these learning experiences.
- Teachers were familiar with syllabus and examination requirements, and there was evidence of good short-term planning for teaching. Lessons observed were generally well structured and purposeful, and relevant learning objectives were clearly established from the outset. Teachers prepared handouts, visual aids and other suitable resource material to stimulate pupils' discussion and to provide a focus for lessons.
- Pupils generally demonstrated good knowledge of essential concepts and understood the subject content that was taught. They were keen to participate in class and to demonstrate their learning. In the schools inspected it was evident that the pupils were making appropriate progress.
- Homework that provided pupils with opportunities to practise the skills taught in the classroom was assigned regularly.
- Lessons took place in well-managed classrooms where there was a caring and supportive atmosphere. Individual teacher-pupil interaction in classrooms was mutually respectful. Teachers knew their pupils and were interested in their progress, and their own enthusiasm for their subjects created a good working atmosphere.
- More emphasis needed to be placed on longer-term planning for the development of subject areas in schools. It was recommended that teachers collaborate as subject teams within a school to develop a formal plan for their subject on a term and yearly basis.
- Inspection reports in most subjects indicated that teachers should modify teaching methods and strategies in response to changes in syllabus design in subjects. In particular, teachers were advised to use appropriate, differentiated learning strategies in their classrooms to support pupils at all levels of ability. Active learning strategies that encourage pupils' engagement and independent learning were also recommended.
- Inspectors advised that pupils should receive a greater level of constructive verbal and annotated feedback on all work submitted, either in class, for projects or as homework.
- Schools were advised that greater use could be made of ICT in areas such as preparation, classroom implementation, methods and research and that students should be encouraged to use ICT constructively in their study of relevant subjects.
- Teachers were advised to adopt a wider range of support and assessment instruments to cater for the range of abilities found in most classes. It was recommended that strategies that encourage greater oral participation by students in the assessment process should be employed.
- Language inspectors expressed the view that that greater use should be made of teaching methodologies that reinforce, deepen and develop the learners' language skills. In some classrooms the target language was not being used as the language of instruction, and this was considered to have a negative impact on pupils' achievement.
- Subject inspection reports showed that the teaching and learning of Irish was of a good standard in the schools visited. Pupils demonstrated a good knowledge of texts being studied and achieved an understanding of all aspects of the Irish syllabus. However, the inspectors were concerned that Irish was not being used as the language of instruction in many classrooms, and in some instances the subject was being taught entirely through English. In addition, they advised that assessment strategies that encourage greater oral participation by pupils should be employed.

The inspectors also noted some areas where improvement was needed. The recommendations made most frequently in subject inspection reports were

Exhibit 5 presents the number of subject inspections undertaken in each subject area for the years 2001-2004.

Exhibit 5: Post-primary subject inspections, January 2001 to December 2004

Subject	Number of subject inspections	Subject	Number of subject inspections
English	99	Music	30
Irish	147	Physical Education	121
Mathematics	27	Guidance	103
History	100	Art, Craft and Design	37
Geography	85	Construction Studies and Materials Technology (Wood)	22
French	99	Engineering and Metalwork	36
German	23	Technology	5
Italian	8	Technical Drawing and Graphics	8
Spanish	6	Social, Personal and Health Education	9
Science (including Junior Cert. Science, Leaving Cert. Physics, Chemistry and Biology, and Agricultural Science)	158	Civic, Social and Political Education	6
Home Economics	20	Latin	3
Business (including Junior Cert. Business Studies and Leaving Cert. Business, Economics and Accounting)	30	Classics	2
Subtotal	802	Subtotal	382
		Total	1,184

2.3.2 Subject Inspection of Modern Languages

In 2004 a composite report, *Inspection of Modern Languages: Observations and Issues*, was published, which presented findings, based on subject inspections, in relation to teaching and learning in French, German, Italian and Spanish in forty-five post-primary schools. The report noted that almost all post-primary pupils in the selected schools studied at least one modern European language. In many instances the pupils were offered a choice of languages. In some schools, pupils with

special educational needs had restricted access to a modern language, and the report addressed this issue in its recommendations.

- The composite report noted some commendable use of the target language for classroom management, for the conduct of lessons, and for transactional classroom communication. However, it also suggested strongly that there was considerable scope for development in this area.

- The inspectors emphasised the importance of the use of the target language to support pupils' acquisition of vocabulary and of language skills.
- The inspectors noted that a wider range of teaching methodologies was necessary in order to encourage greater oral participation by pupils.
- the introduction of the Guidance Enhancement Initiative (GEI) in 2001 and its expansion in September 2004 have had very positive effects on guidance provision
- a sizeable number of schools have established and maintain careers libraries, some of which provide pupils with access to useful computer applications or internet sites relating to qualifications or guidance

An important challenge facing language education, particularly in classroom practice, was the need to find ways of placing greater emphasis on oral proficiency and on formal assessment of oral proficiency throughout post-primary schooling.

Exhibit 6 shows the number of inspections undertaken by category of inspection activity other than subject inspection for the period 2001-2004.

**Exhibit 6: Inspection activity at post-primary level other than subject inspection, 2001-2004**

Evaluation	Number
Junior Certificate School Programme	61
Whole-school evaluation	12
Transition year programme	21
Provision for non-nationals	3
Survey of Traveller education provision	6
Other	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>

### 2.3.3 Evaluation of school guidance provision

Since 2001, inspectors of guidance and counselling have undertaken a total of 103 evaluations of guidance provision and processes in post-primary schools and centres for education. Generally, the inspectors have found that

- guidance was provided in the majority of schools by qualified guidance counsellors
- parents were becoming more involved in the guidance process and in the career decisions of their children

Some concerns identified were that

- not all schools were using the allocation for guidance and counselling from the Department for the provision of guidance
- few of the schools visited had developed a written guidance plan
- an imbalance existed in the provision of guidance between senior and junior cycle; this is of particular concern if pupils at risk of early school leaving do not have access to appropriate guidance
- schools have been slow to network among themselves and with the communities in which they operate; models of good practice are being developed by a number of GEI schools, and the inspectors have encouraged all schools to examine and apply these models as appropriate.

Inspectors collaborated with the National Centre for Guidance in Education in drafting the document *Planning the School Guidance Programme*, which was issued to schools in 2003. Inspectors also assisted in the provision of related in-service training to guidance counsellors. In 2003 the Inspectorate issued a draft consultation document, *Guidelines for Post-primary Schools on the Implications of section 9 (c) of the Education Act (1998)*, relating to pupils' access to appropriate guidance. This was also circulated for discussion to the education partners.

The Inspectorate has also been active in supporting the further education sector and the objectives of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance. So far it has evaluated ten of the twenty-four Adult Education Guidance Initiative (AEGI) centres and advised on the development of good practice for the mainstreaming of this initiative in 2006.

## 2.4 WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION – PRIMARY AND POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Whole-school evaluation (WSE) is a model of external evaluation for primary and post-primary schools that was formally introduced in the system during the school year 2003/2004. First proposed at a consultative seminar hosted by the Inspectorate in 1996, the WSE approach has been developed and refined since that time, in consultation with a range of education partners. A pilot project was conducted in a sample of primary and post-primary schools in the year 1998/1999. Extensive work was completed on the framework of evaluation criteria for WSE, culminating in the publication in 2003 of the *Looking at Our School* guidelines on school self-evaluation for primary and post-primary schools.

From the beginning, WSE was viewed as an evaluation mechanism that would complement internal continuous improvement activity in schools. It is designed to

- facilitate the full participation of the whole school community in the evaluation process
- contribute to school development by affirming good practice in schools and by providing advice and support to enable schools to develop
- ensure school and system accountability by providing objective, dependable, high-quality data on the operation of the individual school and the system as a whole
- enable teachers and schools to use the evaluation criteria for school self-review and improvement, and
- contribute to system improvement by providing information that can inform the discussion and development of education policies.

WSE has been designed to facilitate a deeper and more wide-ranging evaluation of schools than previous inspection models. The WSE process evaluates schools under the headings of management, planning, curriculum provision, learning and teaching, and support for students.

During the evaluation the inspection team takes particular account of the school's own review and development work, and inspectors are also concerned to acknowledge and affirm good practice and achievement. During school and classroom visits the inspectors observe teaching and learning, interact with pupils, engage in discussion with teachers, and examine

planning documents. Information is gathered from a range of sources within a school to ensure that judgements made by the inspectors are valid, reliable, and consistent. The inspectors meet boards of management and officers of the parents' association or parents' council, where such a body has been established in line with the Education Act (1998).

Following the evaluation a draft report is prepared, in which the strengths of the school are acknowledged and clear recommendations made in relation to the further development of education provision in the school. Post-evaluation meetings with the principal and staff and with the board of management provide an opportunity for further dialogue in relation to the inspectors' findings and recommendations. Following the verification of factual content with the principal, the WSE report is issued to the school.

**Exhibit 7: Number of whole-school evaluation reports, 2004**

WSE reports, 2004	
Primary schools	53
Post-primary schools	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>

## 2.5 OTHER MAINSTREAM EVALUATION ACTIVITY

### 2.5.1 Inspection of Irish colleges (coláistí Gaeilge)

Irish summer colleges, or coláistí Gaeilge, make an important contribution to young people's acquisition of Irish, offering them an opportunity to learn and practise the language in an authentic setting. More than twenty thousand pupils attend Irish colleges each year. Most courses are held in June, July, or August, with a small number at Easter and in September. Undergraduate primary teachers and student teachers undergoing the postgraduate course also attend a three-week approved course in an Irish-speaking district as part of their training.

The Inspectorate carries out inspections of Irish colleges as part of the annual inspection programme to ensure accountability and to contribute to improvement in the service. Exhibit 8 shows the trend in the number of courses provided, the number of pupils attending in recent years, and the number of inspections undertaken in the colleges in each year from 2001 to 2004.

Exhibit 8: Number of Irish courses evaluated and reported on, 2001-2004

	2001	2002	2003	2004
Number of colleges	61	61	59	59
Number of courses	170	177	183	185
Number of pupils attended	22,993	25,779	24,854	24,238
Number of courses evaluated and reported on	153	74	91	85

The inspection reports are issued to each college management and include recommendations for further development. In the period 2001-2004 the findings were generally complimentary regarding the commitment of staff, the organisation of formal classes, and the appropriateness of accommodation for daytime activities. The areas most cited for development included

- the use of assessment approaches in order to better meet the learning needs of participants and to inform planning and programme provision in a more comprehensive manner
- the need for a broader range of teaching methodologies to promote the development of communicative skills
- the need for a greater range of teaching aids, such as illustrative materials, ICT, videos and audio tapes of native speakers.

In addition to the reports on individual courses provided to college managements the Inspectorate also produces composite reports on selected aspects of provision in a range of courses and colleges. These thematic reports inform policy-making and provide an opportunity to emphasise important issues for development.

### 2.5.2 Inspection of under-performing teachers

At primary level, rule 161 (6) of the Rules for National Schools is invoked where serious defects are identified in a teacher's work as a result of an inspection visit to a school. Under the rule 161 (6) procedure an inspector evaluates the work of a teacher on a number of occasions and provides advice in relation to the specific improvements that are necessary. The procedure provides the teacher with significant time and opportunity, including detailed advice from the inspector, to improve performance; but shortcomings identified must be

addressed within a defined time limit. A teacher whose work has been found to be unsatisfactory may have recognition to teach withdrawn. Rule 162 of the Rules for National Schools provides for an appeal process where a teacher's work is found to be unsatisfactory under the rule 161 (6) procedure.

During the period 2001-2004 twelve teachers were inspected in accordance with the rule 161 (6) procedures. Recognition to teach has been withdrawn in one instance, and another case is at the post-appeal stage. Two further cases are at various stages of the procedure, and five teachers were deemed satisfactory during the process. Three teachers resigned early on grounds of disability.

In the case of teachers employed in schools under vocational education committees, procedures for the inspection of individual teachers are set out in Departmental Circular 43/85. Five teachers were inspected in accordance with this procedure during the period 2001-2004. Two teachers resigned early, two were deemed satisfactory, and one case is continuing.

## 2.6 ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATION IN PLACES OTHER THAN RECOGNISED SCHOOLS

The *Guidelines on the Assessment of Education in Places Other Than Recognised Schools*, published in September 2003, represent an important change in the assessment of home education and education in private schools. Produced by a working group of the Inspectorate, the guidelines fulfil a requirement of section 16 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000). They provide detailed assistance to the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) in the assessment of education in places other than recognised schools.

Parents who choose to educate a child at home or in a private school are required to apply to the NEWB to have the child registered as receiving education in a place other than a recognised school. This necessitates an assessment by an authorised person so that the board may be satisfied that each child is receiving at least a certain minimum education. The Inspectorate's guidelines outline the legal background to the assessment process, giving detailed consideration to the Constitution of Ireland, the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), court judgements, and other aspects.

The guidelines provide a working definition of a "certain minimum education," and guidance is given on how this may be assessed, allowing for the nature of education provision in the home and other settings. Schedules to assist assessment are included in the guidelines. In autumn 2003, inspectors designed and delivered a training programme for staff of the NEWB involved in implementing the assessment procedures. In line with the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act, inspectors have also carried out a number of assessments on behalf of the NEWB.

## 2.7 REPORTING TO SCHOOLS AND TO THE SYSTEM

### 2.7.1 Feedback and reporting to teachers and schools

The types of inspection described in this chapter follow specified formats and involve the provision of oral and written feedback by inspectors. Feedback to individual teachers may happen in the context of any inspection activity undertaken

and individual reports are provided on probationary teachers at primary level. Although the WSE and subject inspection

processes are not designed to report directly on the work of individual teachers, there is provision for appropriate feedback opportunities to teachers on their professional work. Effective feedback to the school principal, to staff members with school management responsibilities and to members of a school's board of management in relation to the organisation and management of the school is also important for school improvement. Where possible, the inspectors relate their recommendations to the school's internal review and planning systems and to the current priorities of the school.

### 2.7.2 Composite reporting for the system

In addition to reporting directly to teachers and schools the Inspectorate promotes the improvement of the education system and development of education policy through substantial reports that communicate the findings of its evaluation activity to policy-makers, educational partners, and the general public. Processes have also been developed through which the Inspectorate compiles composite reports that present an analysis of the evaluation findings in school reports issued to schools. Two examples of composite reporting have been referred to in this chapter. These are *Fifty School Reports: What Inspectors Say* (2002) and *Inspection of Modern Languages: Observations and Issues* (2004).

Composite reporting facilitates the identification of national trends in the quality of education provision in schools. This can help to further promote accountability in the system and support decision-making in relation to education policy.







### 3 THEMATIC EVALUATIONS, REVIEWS, AND SURVEYS OF PUPILS' ACHIEVEMENT

The Inspectorate undertakes a number of detailed thematic evaluation projects each year that examine the quality of selected educational programmes or services in a sample of schools. Thematic evaluations involve a varied range of research methodologies, including first-hand observation of teaching and learning, analysis of documents and work samples, and the use of structured interviews, focused seminars, and questionnaires.

Thematic evaluations have become an important strategic mechanism in the inspection programme, as the approach can be modified to suit different areas of inquiry or scaled to match the nature and scope of a particular theme under review. Following a thematic evaluation a report is prepared that sets out significant trends and recommendations for service improvement and policy development.

#### 3.1 LITERACY AND NUMERACY IN SCHOOLS DESIGNATED AS DISADVANTAGED

In 2004 the Inspectorate carried out a focused evaluation of education provision in the areas of literacy and numeracy development in a sample of primary schools designated as disadvantaged. Twelve primary schools were selected for evaluation from among those serving areas with the highest levels of disadvantage. The evaluation involved the analysis of information provided by schools, structured interviews with school personnel, a review of school policies and planning documents, and a focused evaluation of teaching and learning by inspectors.

The report of the evaluation, entitled *Literacy and Numeracy in Disadvantaged Schools: Challenges for Teachers and Learners*, showed that teachers in the selected schools faced particular

challenges in developing the literacy and numeracy skills of pupils, and that a significant proportion of pupils had serious difficulties in both areas of learning. A high turnover of teachers in some schools was noted, and it was found that the schools generally had significant numbers of newly qualified teachers, who did not have a broad base of experience in teaching pupils with literacy and numeracy deficits.

The report emphasised and affirmed many strengths in the work of the schools involved, including the commitment of teachers and principals to providing a supportive school environment for pupils, effective approaches to discipline, concern for the holistic development of pupils, and individual initiatives aimed at promoting effective engagement between parents and the school. The report also outlined a series of recommendations relevant to all schools where disadvantage may be an impediment to the progress of pupils; these include the following

- school attendance should be a priority, as absenteeism is a major impediment to learning and access to the curriculum. Schools can best address this in consultation with parents, home-school-community liaison (HSCL) co-ordinators, and officials of the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB)
- each school should devise a clear teaching programme, with an emphasis on the development of skills and on the consolidation of pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy. Schools should monitor the effectiveness of programmes implemented in classrooms and develop an action planning process to address any weaknesses in provision
- at whole-school level, effective assessment techniques should be developed that identify the specific needs of pupils and inform the content and teaching methodologies of the literacy and numeracy programme

- teachers should adapt the curriculum to provide for different ability levels; the development of effective policies for curriculum differentiation at whole-school level was recommended, and the need for greater collaboration between class teachers and learning-support or resource teachers was emphasised
- policies in the areas of teacher education and continuing professional development should place an emphasis on building the capacity of school principals and members of school management teams to lead improvement and monitor programme implementation in literacy and numeracy.

### 3.2 EVALUATION OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The Primary School Curriculum was launched in September 1999 and is being implemented on a phased basis under the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP). This involves in-service professional development support for teachers and provision throughout the system for regular school-based planning days in all primary schools. So far, teachers have received in-service support in English, Visual Arts, Mathematics, Gaeilge, Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), and Science. The PCSP support during the period 2004-2005 deals with Music and Physical Education.

Exhibit 9: The structure of the Primary School Curriculum (1999)

Language		
Gaeilge		English
Mathematics		
Social, Environmental and Scientific Education		
History	Geography	Science
Arts Education		
Visual Arts	Music	Drama
Physical Education		
Social, Personal and Health Education		
Religious Education		

In the school year 2003/2004 the Inspectorate carried out an evaluation of curriculum implementation in English, Visual Arts and Mathematics in eighty-six primary schools. The purpose of the evaluation was to identify strengths and challenges in the implementation process, both for teachers and for school communities, and to make recommendations regarding future curriculum implementation. The evaluation involved school-based observation of teaching and learning, interviews with principals and teachers, and a review of school planning and curriculum programmes.

A report, entitled *An Evaluation of Curriculum Implementation in Primary Schools: English, Mathematics and Visual Arts*, set out detailed findings and recommendations. The general findings of the curriculum implementation evaluation showed that

- the majority of teachers were implementing aspects of each curriculum area effectively, and many teachers were successfully incorporating the teaching approaches and essential emphases of the curriculum in their teaching. Opportunities for pupils to be active, hands-on learners were provided, and teachers employed a wide range of materials and resources to assist in teaching and learning
- although schools had addressed the issue of planning, the effectiveness of school plans varied. Where effective plans were devised there was evidence of a collaborative approach to planning and an emphasis on developing relevant curricular programmes appropriate to the particular contexts of individual schools and the needs of pupils
- assessment policy and practice were found to require significant attention and improvement in all three subject areas. Few schools had developed whole-school plans for assessment, and assessment information was generally not used effectively to inform teaching and learning
- an over-emphasis on textbooks as the primary teaching aid meant that some of the teaching observed by the inspectors was didactic and that the learning tasks assigned to pupils were undemanding and repetitive
- there was significant scope for development in the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to support teaching and learning in the three curriculum areas reviewed.



The report made a number of recommendations relevant to all three curriculum areas. It was recommended that

- teachers should become fully familiar with the content objectives of the curricular areas and develop a detailed knowledge of appropriate teaching methodologies
- schools should engage systematically in curriculum review and plan for development and improvement. Any identified weakness in provision should be addressed, and a culture of continuous professional development should be promoted in all schools
- supports should be provided to schools to enable them to further develop policy and practice in the area of assessment.

Specifically in relation to the implementation of the **English** curriculum it was advised that

- the structure of the English curriculum posed difficulties for many teachers, and it was found that the majority of teachers planned under the strand unit headings of oral, reading and writing, rather than according to the four strands of *Receptiveness to language*, *Competence and confidence in using language*, *Developing cognitive abilities through language*, and *Emotional and imaginative development through language*
- schools and the support services should concentrate on assisting teachers to develop their understanding of the teaching of reading
- teachers' understanding of the writing process should be enhanced, and approaches to writing such as shared writing, modelling writing and conferencing should be promoted by schools and by the support services.

In relation to the implementation of the **Mathematics** curriculum it was recommended that

- the development of estimation strategies should be given priority in the Mathematics programme
- more emphasis should be placed on the *Data* strand of the curriculum. Teachers should be assisted to create meaningful contexts in which pupils can develop skills in data collection, data analysis, and constructing and interpreting graphs

- mathematics-rich environments and active collaborative teaching methods should be employed in all classrooms.

In relation to the implementation of the **Visual Arts** curriculum it was recommended that

- greater balance should be achieved in the implementation of curriculum programmes between the six strands of the Visual Arts curriculum
- particular emphasis should be placed on the development of the *Looking and responding* strand unit in all six strands
- the development of pupils' creativity should be central, and commercial or teacher-designed "templates" should be avoided, in order to ensure that pupils have genuine opportunities for individual expression through art.

### 3.3 EVALUATION OF THE JUNIOR CERTIFICATE SCHOOL PROGRAMME

The Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) is a support initiative within the Junior Cycle phase in post-primary schools for pupils at risk of leaving school early. The programme operates at present in 175 post-primary schools and concentrates on improving the literacy and numeracy skills of pupils and on personal and social development. During the programme each pupil works towards the achievement of specific short-term learning targets. The achievement of these targets is recorded in a profile of achievement.

In the year 2002/2003 the Inspectorate carried out an evaluation of the JCSP programme in thirty schools, and specific recommendations were made to each school. The evaluation involved a review of the JCSP curriculum provided by schools, the teaching and learning methodologies employed, pupil assessment techniques used, the nature and quality of programme planning and implementation, and the extent to which schools evaluated and reviewed the programme offered to pupils. The evaluation also reviewed the outcomes of JCSP in schools and resource issues associated with the programme.

The Inspectorate conducted a follow-up review in 2004 to assess the progress made by schools in implementing the recommendations. A composite report of the evaluation and follow-up is being prepared. An analysis of the inspection reports of both the initial and follow-up evaluations showed that

- pupils' engagement and improved attendance suggest positive attitudes to the JCSP programme
- whole-school commitment, effective co-ordination and staff collaboration were regarded as central to the success of the JCSP programme
- schools reported that the programme was successful in promoting the retention of pupils considered to be at risk of early school leaving.

The inspectors made the following recommendations in relation to the future development of JCSP

- schools should have clear policies and practices with regard to literacy and numeracy in order to ensure the success of the JCSP programme
- the identification and attainment of specific learning objectives and targets for participating pupils should be given priority in all participating schools, and comprehensive pupil profiles should be maintained
- there is a need for additional in-career professional development programmes for JCSP teachers, particularly in the area of special educational needs
- up-to-date records of pupils' progress should be maintained in all schools.

### 3.4 EVALUATION OF SPECIAL CLASSES FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIFIC SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DISORDER

In 2002 the Inspectorate undertook a comprehensive evaluation of education provision in classes for pupils with specific speech and language disorder (SSLD). The aim of the evaluation was to review the provision for pupils in language classes and to inform policy development in this area of special needs education. Information was gathered from all fifty-four language classes in the country through questionnaires. Sixteen language classes were selected for evaluation by inspectors.

The evaluation process involved meetings with personnel involved with the classes, consultation with groups of parents, and evaluation of teaching and learning in the language classes.

A follow-up survey of pupils who had attended a language class in 1998 and in 2000 was conducted, and a facilitated seminar was organised to gather the views of a range of professionals involved in provision for pupils with SSLD.

In February 2003 the Department issued individual reports to the sixteen schools in which classes were evaluated, and a composite report drawing on data from all language classes was compiled during 2004. This report is due for publication during 2005. The evaluation has identified many strengths and some shortcomings in provision. Among the strengths identified were the very high satisfaction levels of parents, the recognition of the language class model as an effective means of providing speech and language support for pupils within the classroom setting, and the competent teaching and effective engagement with pupils that was observed in many class settings.

Among the issues reported on were that a significant number of pupils attending the classes did not meet the admission criteria set by the Department, and in many classes the required allocation of hours for speech and language therapy was not being provided.

The Inspectorate has recommended that

- a comprehensive national policy for the future development of provision for SSLD should be formulated that includes a protocol for the integration, admission and discharge of pupils from SSLD classes. Agreed criteria for referral, admissions, composition of admissions board, time in class and discharge procedures should be established
- curriculum guidelines for teachers of pupils with SSLD are required, and these should be developed in consultation with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE)
- the Special Education Support Service (SESS) should be consulted in relation to the development of comprehensive professional development programmes that promote collaboration and teamwork between teachers and therapists
- formative planning for individual children, involving clear target-setting, monitoring, and review, is necessary, and the role of parents in identifying and implementing their children's individualised programmes should be made explicit

- the dissemination of information to parents regarding issues such as the availability of classes, enrolment procedures and school transport should be improved
- health authorities should ensure that high levels of speech and language therapy support are maintained in SS LD classes and other inputs such as psychological support, should be provided in consultation with the National Council for Special Education. The importance of occupational therapy and the role of trained language assistants should be examined closely
- a comprehensive protocol that details good practice with regard to the reintegration of children in mainstream provision is required
- alternative models of provision should be investigated and considered. The possibility of schools with classes having the status of “designated schools” and providing assistance and support for pupils with SS LD in individual schools could be explored further. The option of developing a peripatetic speech and language therapy service for schools should also be examined
- provision for children whose first language is Irish, for non-nationals and for Traveller children should be developed to meet the needs of pupils who may be assessed as having SS LD
- the compilation of a data-base of pre-school children with SS LD is required in order to ensure the effective planning and implementation of early intervention strategies in the future.
- the development of national policy in respect of the Traveller pre-schools should take account of the wider area of early childhood education and care and, in particular, the directing of state-aided provision at educationally disadvantaged groups
- the development and publication of guidelines on the composition, establishment, duties and operation of management committees for Traveller pre-schools was essential
- a concerted effort was required to improve the attendance of pupils at Traveller pre-schools
- further consideration should be given to the initial training and the in-career development of teachers and child-care assistants by the Department, in conjunction with the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) and the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) as well as existing and potential providers of courses
- given the need of children in Traveller pre-schools for very intensive and carefully structured inputs, the lack of focused planning for individual pupils’ needs should be addressed
- urgent action should be taken to develop comprehensive learning and teaching guidelines for Traveller pre-schools. These should include clear objectives and teaching suggestions in relation to personal and social development, language skills, early mathematical development, aesthetic awareness and expression, physical development, and environmental education
- linkages between pre-schools and parents, primary schools, health boards and the Department of Education and Science should be expanded further
- funding arrangements for the pre-schools should be clarified.

### 3.5 EVALUATION OF PROVISION FOR TRAVELLER EDUCATION

#### 3.5.1 Pre-schools for Travellers: National Evaluation Report

In May 2003 the *Pre-schools for Travellers: National Evaluation Report*, based on an evaluation of twenty-three of the fifty-two Traveller pre-schools supported by the Department, was published. The report acknowledged that the pre-schools play an important role in the provision of early learning experiences for Traveller children, and it made recommendations in relation to measures to further enhance the early educational experiences of children attending the pre-schools. Among the recommendations were that

Many of the areas of concern identified by the evaluation in the provision for Traveller pre-school children were attributed to the lack of a co-ordinated approach among relevant parties in providing pre-school services for Travellers. It was suggested that the work of the Centre for Early Childhood Education and of the National Childcare Co-ordinating Committee would be important in promoting further coherence in the provision of services in this area.

### 3.5.2 Survey of Traveller education provision in primary and post-primary schools

In 2004 the Inspectorate initiated a detailed survey of Traveller education provision in thirty primary schools and six post-primary schools. The aim of the survey was to report on good practice and to make recommendations for future policy development. The evaluation process provided an opportunity for school management personnel, visiting teachers for Travellers, resource teachers for Travellers, class teachers, Traveller parents and others to contribute suggestions regarding the development of provision in the light of their practical experience.

The evaluation data gathered offers insight into patterns of attendance and attainment. It was found that although the great majority of Traveller pupils in the sample surveyed were in settled accommodation, their school attendance was very irregular. On average the pupils at primary level missed 20 per cent of the school year, and absenteeism rates were higher than this in the post-primary schools. There were many individual examples of chronic absenteeism.

The survey showed that the levels of achievement of Traveller pupils were not on a par with their non-Traveller peers. An analysis of standardised test results showed that the measured achievement levels of approximately half the group surveyed were below the 10th percentile in English and Mathematics. It was found that the Traveller parents expected their children to acquire a mastery of literacy and numeracy skills in primary school. Some Traveller parents expressed their deep concerns about the low attainment of their children, particularly in relation to reading standards.

The inspectors observed that pupils were frequently assigned low-level tasks that did not challenge and extend them sufficiently. Many pupils did not engage in whole-class activities, especially in such areas as History, Geography or Science.

The survey also drew attention to the poor retention rate of Traveller pupils at post-primary level, with many pupils leaving school early and without qualifications. Furthermore, the evaluation revealed low transfer rates from junior to senior cycle in the post-primary schools evaluated.

Among the recommendations made to schools were

- schools should concentrate more systematically on individual levels of Traveller pupils' achievement in literacy and numeracy
- teachers should engage in systematic individual planning and the setting of specific targets for improvement in literacy and numeracy among Traveller pupils
- a co-ordinated response from the various support services is required to assist teachers to develop teaching strategies and approaches to cater for the individual needs of pupils
- Traveller parents should be provided with information about their schools and the education system in a variety of formats so that they can be involved as education partners
- retention rates and the transfer of Traveller pupils from junior to senior cycle in post-primary schools should be addressed by the education partners in a concerted manner.

## 3.6 REVIEWS OF ASPECTS OF EDUCATION PROVISION

### 3.6.1 Provision for children with autism-spectrum disorder (ASD)

During 2003 and 2004 the Inspectorate engaged in a detailed evaluation of the various types of education provision for children with autism-spectrum disorder (ASD). This included the evaluation of autism-specific special schools, special classes for pupils with ASD in both mainstream primary and special schools, centres in which applied behavioural analysis (ABA) approaches are used, and the inspection of provision for pupils with ASD in ordinary classes in mainstream primary schools.

The evaluation process was completed by the end of 2004, and it is expected that the report of the evaluation, now in preparation, will provide valuable information on provision for children with ASD.

### 3.6.2 Review of provision for pupils with special educational needs

During 2002 the Inspectorate conducted an internal review of provision for resource teaching for pupils with special educational needs in a selected number of mainstream primary schools. The objective of the evaluation was to provide a detailed account of the additional allocation of resources for pupils, with particular reference to the terms of relevant Department circulars. The report, which was completed at the end of 2002, described many excellent aspects of practice in schools and also found areas requiring amendment and improvement. The report included detailed recommendations about matters such as application procedures, training needs, integration and inclusion, appropriate curricula, support teaching, collaborative work practices, allocation and deployment of special needs assistants, school planning, and the role of the National Council for Special Education.

The report also identified a range of unsatisfactory practices that resulted in the over-identification of pupils with special educational needs who were described as requiring an additional allocation of resources. The findings and recommendations of this report have informed the Department's decision-making in relation to special needs provision and are reflected in recent Department circulars.

### 3.6.3 Review of deployment of special needs assistants (SNA)

In 2003 the Inspectorate conducted a review of the provision of special needs assistants (SNAs), based on evaluation work in a sample of twenty schools at both primary and post-primary level. Inspectors examined all documents and reports relating to the SNA allocation in the schools. In addition, pupils who had been allocated additional support were observed in their classrooms to determine whether the support provided met the terms of the relevant Department circular and whether the level of provision allocated was necessary in each case.

The review made recommendations regarding the allocation, role, appointment, and training of special needs assistants. These recommendations had significant impact on current SNA allocation procedures and will inform the development of future policy in this area.

## 3.7 SURVEYS OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

### 3.7.1 National Survey of English Reading and Mathematics Achievement

The Department commissions surveys of English reading and Mathematics in primary schools every five years. The survey instruments are developed by the Educational Research Centre (ERC) in consultation with an advisory committee on which there are representatives of teachers, parents, school management bodies, and the Department. The advisory committees for the English and Mathematics surveys are chaired by members of the Inspectorate.

The most recent surveys were conducted in May 2004, and almost all primary inspectors were involved in monitoring the administration of the survey in primary schools. The surveys involved more than 12,000 primary school pupils at three class levels in 150 schools, making them among the largest surveys of achievement ever conducted in Irish primary schools. As in four previous surveys conducted over the past twenty-five years, the reading ability of pupils in fifth class was assessed, and for the first time pupils in first class also undertook a reading assessment test. The mathematics achievement tests were administered to fourth-class pupils. In addition, pupils and their parents responded to questionnaires about matters related to reading and mathematics in the home environment and in school.

These national surveys make an important contribution to monitoring achievement trends nationally and assist in identifying home and school variables that have an impact on children's educational attainment. As with past surveys, the response rate for the parent questionnaire was exceptionally high, with more than 90 per cent of parents returning completed questionnaires. Previous national assessments of reading, in 1998 and 1993, revealed that standards of reading among fifth-class pupils have remained unchanged for almost twenty years. Boys in general achieved lower levels than girls, and more boys had reading difficulties. The 2004 survey will provide an important benchmark of achievement, in that it is the first survey of reading and mathematics since the introduction of the Primary School Curriculum in 1999. The results of the survey will be published in the autumn of 2005.

### 3.7.2 Benchmarking student achievement – contribution to the preparation of national reports on PISA

The OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), a test administered to fifteen-year-olds that started in 2000, takes place every three years. PISA adopts a broad, literacy-based approach to achievement and measures the knowledge and skills considered important for pupils' future lives, rather than mastery of specific curricular content.

The Educational Research Centre (ERC) administers PISA in Ireland, with support from the Inspectorate. Since its establishment the National PISA Advisory Committee, which advises the ERC in its work, has been chaired by a deputy chief inspector and laterally by an assistant chief inspector. In addition, inspectors have actively engaged in the development and review of test items on reading, Mathematics and Science for each cycle and also for the field trial phases.

In 2003 the main emphasis was on Mathematics and three other areas – reading, Science and cross-curricular problem-solving – were tested as minor domains. Regarding Ireland's performance in Mathematics in 2003,

- Irish pupils were ranked 20th out of forty participating countries and 17th out of 29 OECD countries.
- The mean score of Irish pupils was not significantly different from the OECD average, suggesting average levels of performance in Mathematics.
- Pupils in Ireland achieved scores that were significantly higher than the corresponding OECD mean score in two of the four content areas assessed in Mathematics: uncertainty, and change and relationships.
- Irish pupils achieved at the OECD average in quantity.
- They achieved below the OECD average in space and shape.
- Fewer Irish pupils performed at the lowest proficiency levels (level 1 or below): 16.8 per cent, as against the OECD average of 21.4 per cent.
- Performance levels for Mathematics in 2003 were similar to the levels achieved in 2000.

As in 2000, Ireland's performance in reading in 2003, ranking 6th of 29 OECD countries and 7th of 40 countries, was very good. However, compared with 2000 there was evidence of some decline in achievement levels at the upper end of the performance spectrum in 2003.

In Science, the mean score for Ireland in 2003 was significantly above the OECD average. Ireland ranked 13th out of 29 OECD countries and 16th out of 40 countries. The results for Ireland in Science did not differ significantly from those in the PISA 2000 study. In problem-solving, which was a new domain in the 2003 study, Ireland performed at the OECD average.

Overall there is less variation in the distribution of achievement outcomes in the PISA results for Ireland than in most other participating countries. In addition, the variation between schools in Ireland is low. This is regarded as a significant strength of the Irish education system.







## 4 INSPECTORATE'S ROLE IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

The Inspectorate, in fulfilling its remit, acts in an advisory role to the Minister and to the relevant administrative sections within the Department. It also formulates and supports the implementation of proposals for educational initiatives that inform school and system development. In this context it liaises actively with a range of institutions and agencies within the education community.

Under the Policy Support subdivision of the Inspectorate, three business units have responsibility for Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment (QCA), Teacher Education (TE), and Special Education (SE). These business units provide specialist support for the sections in the Department that have linked administrative remits.

This chapter of the Chief Inspector's Report sets out the range of areas covered by these business units and provides information on the role played by inspectors in this work and on the outputs achieved in the period 2001-2004.

### 4.1 SUPPORTING CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT

The Inspectorate contributes to curriculum development and implementation through its work with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and through the provision of policy advice within the Department and to the Minister. The Standing Committee on Curriculum, Assessment and Quality Assurance was one of a number of committees established in 2003 as part of the decision-making process within the Department. It is chaired by the Chief Inspector, and its members include a deputy chief inspector and two assistant chief inspectors as well as a number of assistant secretaries general, principal officers, and assistant principal officers.

#### 4.1.1 Contributing to the formulation of policy on curriculum and assessment

Members of the Inspectorate represent the Department on all primary and post-primary curriculum-related committees of the NCCA and also on each of its overarching committees: the Early Childhood and Primary Committee and the Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle committees. An assistant chief inspector is the representative of the Department on the NCCA Council.

In the period 2001-2004 the Inspectorate contributed significantly to the NCCA's work on assessment at primary level. By December 2004 documents on assessment policy for primary schools and accompanying guidelines on assessment in the Primary School Curriculum were close to completion.

During the year 2003/2004 – the year designated for consolidation and review of the primary curriculum – the NCCA carried out a review of teachers' and children's experiences of the new programmes for English, Mathematics and the Visual Arts. In parallel, the Inspectorate carried out an evaluation of the implementation of these curricula.

At post-primary level the period from 2001 was characterised by a programme of continuing review and revision of individual subjects. By the end of 2004 the first stage of the NCCA's plan to rebalance the content of all junior cycle subjects had neared completion. This involved five subjects: English, History, Business Studies, Home Economics and Music.

Exhibit 10: New or revised syllabuses introduced

2001	2002	2003	2004
LC Russian	LC Biology	JC Physical Education	LC History
JC Social, Personal and Health Education	LC Home Economics	JC Science	LC Geography
	LC Japanese	LC Religious Education	
	LC Arabic		

Exhibit 11: Revised syllabuses examined for the first time

2001	2002	2003	2004
LC English	LC Physics	JC Mathematics	LC Biology
	LC Chemistry	JC Religious Education	LC Home Economics
		LC Russian	LC Japanese
			LC Arabic

**JC** denotes Junior Certificate

**LC** denotes Leaving Certificate

Eleven new or revised syllabuses were introduced between 2001 and 2004. Ten were examined for the first time during this period.

Other areas of NCCA work to which post-primary inspectors contributed include the development of a curriculum framework for Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) for senior cycle and the council's most recent and substantial proposals for reform of the senior cycle.

Some of the NCCA's work during the period 2001-2004 spans both primary and post-primary education. This includes the development of advice on the implications of standardised testing in compulsory schooling and guidelines on intercultural education.

In total, 96 NCCA committee meetings with Inspectorate involvement were held in 2002, 120 in 2003, and 94 in 2004. Exhibit 12 shows the relevant NCCA committees. In 2004, the NCCA Council met on seven occasions.

## 4.2 INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

### 4.2.1 Modern language initiatives

The Modern Languages in Primary Schools Initiative, established in 1997 as a pilot project, now involves 394 schools. In these schools pupils in fifth and sixth classes are taught French, German, Spanish, or Italian. The teachers are supported by a team of project leaders and a national co-ordinator, who provide professional development programmes for teachers and develop teaching materials. The initiative is overseen by a steering committee chaired by an inspector.

The Post-Primary Languages Initiative, set up in September 2000 under the National Development Plan to encourage diversification in language teaching, supports schools offering Spanish, Italian, Japanese, or Russian. An inspector has chaired the Initiative's steering committee since its inception.



Exhibit 12 Inspectorate involvement in NCCA committees, 2002, 2003, and 2004

Committee	2002	2003	2004	Committee	2002	2003	2004
Assessment Technical Working Group	2	8	6	Language Committee, Primary	—	—	2
Board of Studies Business	—	3	2	LC Syllabus Committees*	36	43	28
Board of Studies Classics	—	—	1	Leaving Cert. Applied	1	—	—
Committee on Guidance	—	1	2	Modern Language Steering Committee	—	2	2
Early Childhood and Primary Committee†	—	5	5	Post-Primary Driver Education	1	—	—
Early Childhood Technical Work Group/Committee	—	5	2	Post-Primary SPHE	1	—	—
Hebrew/Jewish Studies	4	6	3	Primary Co-Ordinating†	2	—	—
ICT Steering Committee	—	—	5	Religious Education	5	—	—
ICT Technical Working Group	—	6	3	Religious Education Steering Committee	—	1	—
Interculturalism Steering Committee	3	5	2	Senior Cycle Review Committee†	8	4	6
JC Board of Studies Review of Technology	8	2	1	Special Education Steering Committee	4	2	4
JC Review Committee†	7	5	5	Special Education Working Groups	4	—	3
JC Syllabus Committees*	10	22	12				
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>45</b>
				<b>Total meetings</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>94</b>
				<b>Total meetings, 2002-2004</b>	<b>310</b>		

\* Total of individual subject committees.

† Overarching committees.

#### 4.2.2 Reading recovery

In 2000 the Inspectorate set up a centre in conjunction with Monaghan Education Centre to train teachers to implement the Reading Recovery programme for young pupils experiencing literacy difficulties. Fifty-six schools in the Monaghan and Louth areas are now participating in the programme.

Following an evaluation of the outcome of the two-year pilot project in Monaghan, the programme was extended to designated disadvantaged schools in Dublin. A second training centre was set up in Coláiste Mhuire, Marino, in 2002. There are now thirty-four schools in the Dublin area participating in the programme.

In the light of its success in both centres it was decided to extend Reading Recovery to selected designated disadvantaged schools in Cork, Limerick and the mid-west from September 2005. The Department is funding the training of three teachers as Reading Recovery teacher leaders in the University of London. So far the Inspectorate has played a leading role in developing the Reading Recovery initiative as an early intervention programme to support pupils experiencing literacy difficulties.

#### 4.2.3 Contributing to policy proposals for early childhood education

The Inspectorate makes a continuing contribution to the development of policy on early childhood education through its participation in

- the Early Childhood committee of the NCCA
- the Early Childhood and Primary overarching committee of the NCCA
- the steering committee of the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE)
- evaluations of junior and senior infant classes in primary schools.

The work of the two NCCA committees has concentrated on developing a curricular framework for children from birth to six years of age. The framework is intended to provide continuity in children's learning as they move from early education into its formal stages. It is designed for the use of adults responsible for children's early learning and development, including parents and guardians, child-minders and practitioners working in settings outside the home.

Through its work with the CECDE, which was established in October 2002, the Inspectorate has contributed to the development of quality standards in relation to all aspects of early childhood education. The design of a support framework to encourage compliance with quality standards by early education providers is an important aspect of this work.

In a two-year process that began in November 2002, members of the Inspectorate assisted OECD experts in their review of early childhood policies and services in Ireland. The review process culminated in the publishing of the *OECD Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Ireland* in September 2004. The policy implications of this review are now being considered within the Department and by the Government's high-level group on child care and early education.

#### 4.2.4 Policy for information and communication technologies (ICT)

Members of the Inspectorate have been involved in ICT policy development through their work with the

- ICT Policy Unit within the Department
- National Council for Technology in Education (NCTE)
- ICT Steering Committee and Technical Working Group of the NCCA
- Steering Committee for the European SchoolNet
- various EU Commission committees related to ICT in education.

An inspector worked full-time with the ICT Policy Unit of the Department from 2000 to 2004 to provide assistance and advice on the integration of ICT in schools. The Inspectorate contributed to the *Blueprint for the Future of ICT in Irish Education*, 2001-2003, which marked the introduction of the broadband infrastructure programme that is now being implemented.

The Evaluation Support and Research Unit of the Inspectorate will conduct an evaluation of the impact of ICT on teaching and learning in primary and post-primary schools during the school year 2005/2006.

#### 4.2.5 Contributing to development of policy on gender equality in education

The Inspectorate contributes to the work of the Gender Equality Unit (GEU) set up within the Department in 2001.

- In the period 2001 to 2004, the Inspectorate organised and provided training through the GEU and has been active in promoting an awareness of gender equality issues in schools.
- Inspectors have been involved in the production of a programme, *Discovering Women in Irish History*, designed to make the history of women in Ireland more accessible, interesting and attractive to Transition Year and other Leaving Certificate pupils in post-primary schools in Ireland.
- Inspectors have been involved in the production of a programme for primary schools called Equal Measures, designed to assist schools in the development of equality policies. It consists of guidelines for boards of management, principals, teachers, parents and pupils and will be accompanied by a video illustrating best practice and containing exemplars for teachers.

- Statistical reports over the last three years show that there is a significant gender bias in relation to the uptake of some subjects, for example the practical subjects at post-primary level. While the reasons for this are rooted in society generally, it is also clear that schools have a role to play. In their reports to schools, inspectors have suggested ways this might be addressed, for example by reviewing subject options and providing “taster courses” in the optional subjects in first year.
- Inspectors continued to organise the pilot courses “Women into Educational Management” in response to demand from teachers.

#### 4.2.6 Provision for non-national students

The Inspectorate contributes to policy development related to educational provision for non-national students within the Department and through its participation on the NCCA Interculturalism Steering Committee. Additional educational support is provided to schools catering for non-national students who have significant language deficits and the Inspectorate has advised the primary and post-primary administrative sections of the Department in relation to its provision.

- In 2004, the Inspectorate made a significant input into a Eurydice survey of the different modes of integration of immigrant pupils adopted in European education systems. The survey results and analysis were published in July 2004 in the report entitled *Integrating Immigrant Children into Schools in Europe*.

### 4.3 TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

The Department’s Teacher Education Section (TES) has responsibility for policy formulation and implementation in relation to the three stages on the teacher education continuum: initial education, induction, and continuing professional development. The contribution of the Inspectorate to this work is provided through the co-ordination of policy advice by the relevant assistant chief inspector and through the assignment of three inspectors to the TES on a full-time basis.

#### 4.3.1 Initial teacher education

Each year the Inspectorate undertakes an evaluation of 10 per cent of students in the colleges for primary teachers and one of the colleges for Home Economics during final teaching practice. The purpose of this work is to review the quality of the teaching practice aspect of initial teacher education in the colleges,

to promote collaboration and communication between the Department and the colleges, and to support the formulation of policy in respect of initial teacher education.

The colleges in which the Inspectorate carries out evaluations include

- Mary Immaculate College, Limerick
- Coláiste Mhuire, Marino
- St Patrick’s College, Drumcondra
- Froebel College of Education, Blackrock
- Church of Ireland College of Education, Rathmines
- St Catherine’s College, Sion Hill
- Hibernia College.

During the school year 2003/2004 a team of nine inspectors carried out an evaluation of 100 students studying for a bachelor of education degree and 43 postgraduate students from the first five colleges listed above. The selection of students was made according to a range of criteria, including preliminary teaching practice results supplied by the colleges, the location and school type where the teaching practice took place, and the classes the students were assigned to teach.

The evaluation dealt with four main areas: planning and preparation, quality of teaching, quality of learning, and assessment. The outcome of the 2003/2004 evaluation was as follows

- the majority of the students were rated either good or very good practitioners
- most students were enthusiastic and purposeful and created a positive, supportive atmosphere in their classrooms
- the majority of students were effective communicators, who employed good teaching methodologies.

Among the areas for development were

- the need for students to employ a wider variety of teaching methodologies and in particular to concentrate on methodologies that facilitate active learning for pupils
- the development of pupils’ higher-order thinking skills
- the use of assessment strategies
- the pacing of lessons.

A composite report on the evaluation will be published in 2005.

#### 4.3.2 Induction for newly qualified teachers

A pilot project on teacher induction for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) was established by the Department in September 2002 with the aim of developing a national policy on teacher induction. Members of the Inspectorate were involved in the establishment, management and development of this project. The initiative also involved St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, the Education Department of the National University of Ireland, Dublin, the teachers' unions, and education centres.

The project is managed by a National Steering Committee, consisting of members of the Teacher Education Section, the Inspectorate, and representatives of the partner groups.

A report based on the research conducted in phases I and II of the project is being prepared for the Department.

#### 4.3.3 Continuing professional development (CPD)

The Department of Education and Science funds a wide range of initiatives that assist teachers in enhancing their managerial, pedagogical and professional skills. The Inspectorate assists in the identification of priorities for continuous professional development programmes and monitors the quality of some of the courses offered to teachers.

A major element of the CPD programme provided for teachers is associated with curriculum and programme reform, and a range of support services, managed by the TES, assists schools in initiating change and development.

#### Primary

Since September 1999 the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP) has had responsibility for the phased introduction of the Primary School Curriculum (1999) through the provision of comprehensive professional development programmes for all primary teachers in each curriculum area.

During the period 2001-2004, inspectors contributed to the work of the PCSP in the following ways

- the Inspectorate was represented at deputy chief inspector, assistant chief inspector and senior inspector levels on the Implementation Group for the Primary School Curriculum

- the PCSP Management Committee included two inspectors
- inspectors with expertise in the various curriculum areas worked with each subject team and were involved in the recruitment and training of trainers, the provision of expert advice to the subject design teams, and the provision of feedback arising from their evaluation activities
- at local level, four divisional inspectors were nominated to liaise with members of the PCSP team on implementation issues arising in schools.

In respect of the implementation of the Primary School Curriculum, the Inspectorate initiated a number of evaluations that cover the support programme itself and the implementation of the curriculum. An external evaluation of the PCSP, part-funded by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, was commissioned by the Department in 2002. An inspector chairs the Steering Committee for this evaluation, and another inspector is a member of the committee.

#### Post-primary

At post-primary level, inspectors act as advisors and as links between the dedicated support services, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, and the Department. In the case of each support service a nominated subject inspector

- is a member of the Steering Committee
- contributes to the recruitment and training of trainers
- advises on the design of professional development programmes
- visits courses and provides feedback and advice to course providers
- evaluates outcomes during inspection activities in schools.

During the period 2001-2004 specialist curriculum support services were operating in the following areas

- Junior Certificate: Religious Education, Mathematics, Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Science, and Physical Education
- Leaving Certificate: Biology, Home Economics, Geography, History, Religious Education, and Relationships and Sexuality Education.

In addition, the Inspectorate played a significant role in the establishment and management of the Second-Level Support Service (SLSS) and is represented on its management committee. The SLSS provides for staff development programmes to support teaching and learning and continuing professional development in the following curriculum areas and programmes

- Leaving Certificate English, Chemistry, and Physics
- Junior Certificate School Programme and Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE)
- Transition Year, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, and Leaving Certificate Applied.

#### 4.3.4 Evaluation of the Summer Course Programme for Primary Teachers

Summer courses are an integral part of the range of professional development activities available for primary teachers. The Summer Course Programme is co-ordinated by a senior inspector based in the Teacher Education Section and involves regionally based inspectors in assessing the applications and evaluating the quality of a sample of courses each year.

A report on the evaluation of the 2003 programme found that 15,086 teachers attended 682 summer courses, the total number of participants representing 61 per cent of primary teachers. The following were among the findings in the report:

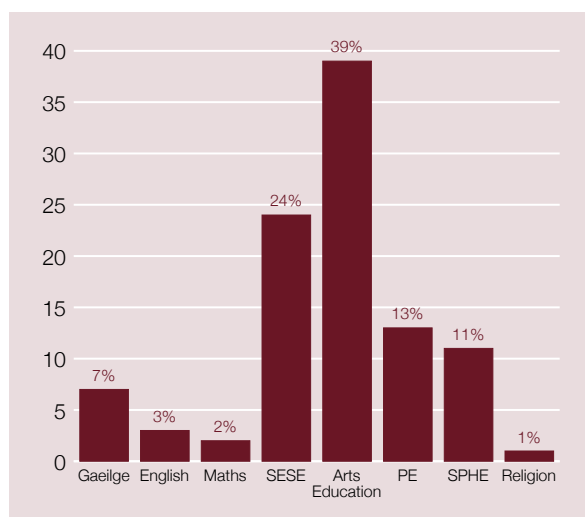
- Course were well organised and presented and generally reflected official guidelines.
- The majority of courses facilitated professional development by referring to the content and methodologies in the Primary School Curriculum.
- While there was a general level of satisfaction with course content in relation to the Primary School Curriculum, the area of pupils' assessment was identified as needing further development.

- Visual Arts and Physical Education were heavily represented in curriculum-specific courses but there were relatively few courses in English and Mathematics.
- Concern was expressed that courses may not be sufficiently influencing the development of teaching skills in literacy and numeracy, because of the imbalance in course provision.

The report recommended that:

- Course providers that deliver a range of courses (such as education centres) should make sure there is an appropriate balance between all curriculum areas, and that courses in literacy and numeracy in particular receive due attention.
- Course providers should make sure that courses are selected on the basis of the findings of relevant analyses of needs.
- Course providers whose background is not in primary education should ensure that the relationship between course content and the teaching of such content to primary pupils in the context of the Primary School Curriculum is fully developed for participants.
- Course providers should establish that each session of a curriculum course is based on the strands and strand units of the Primary School Curriculum and should include assessment of pupils' progress as an element of the course.

**Exhibit 13: Evaluation of the Summer Course Programme, 2003: Scope of curriculum courses**



The findings of the report have been communicated to the education centres, which play a significant role in the provision of summer courses.

## 4.4 TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

### 4.4.1 Advising on the recognition of teacher qualifications

The Inspectorate advises the Primary Administration Section of the Department in relation to primary teachers' qualifications, including applications from those who may have a teaching qualification from another jurisdiction and who wish to be recognised as teachers in primary or special schools in Ireland.

- All applications for recognition are considered individually, in accordance with the regulations governing such recognition outlined in Circular 25/00, *Recognition of Teacher Qualifications for the Purposes of Teaching in National Schools*.

The Inspectorate assists in maintaining standards in relation to the recognition of post-primary teachers' qualifications through advising in the following areas

- the work of the Registration Council and its regulations in respect of the registration of teachers for appointments in voluntary secondary schools
- the conditions of the Department as specified in Memo.V7 and Circular Letter 32/92 for appointments in vocational education committee schools
- the requirements for appointments to community and comprehensive schools.

## 4.5 INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

### 4.5.1 School development planning – primary and post-primary

The School Development Planning Initiative was established in 1999 to promote collaborative development planning aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of schools. It has two separate teams, primary and post-primary, each of which involves a support team.

From the inception of the initiative the Inspectorate has been centrally involved in the management of both consultative and management committees for each team. In addition, nominated inspectors liaise closely with the two support teams.

In 2002 a committee of primary inspectors was established to act as a liaison between the Inspectorate and the primary branch of the initiative. This committee carried out a focused evaluation of planning in thirty primary schools during the school year 2003/2004. A report of this evaluation is in preparation and will be published by the Inspectorate in 2005.

Issues identified in the course of inspectors' evaluations in schools inform the work of the School Development Planning Initiative. On a national and regional basis, inspectors work with the support services to ensure that schools are supported in focusing their planning on improving the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms.

### 4.4.2 Leadership development for schools

In 2002 the Department initiated the Leadership Development for Schools (LDS) programme to promote professional development for principals and deputy principals of primary and post-primary schools. The management committee that oversees the day-to-day work of the LDS programme is chaired by an assistant chief inspector, and an advisory committee that includes all the partners in education supports the work of the initiative.

The present emphasis of LDS is the Misneach programme, which offers first-time principals the opportunity to participate in residential workshops during the first eighteen months of their principalship.

The programme is now being extended to include provision for existing school leaders. A pilot programme for deputy principals (post-primary), carried out in collaboration with the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD), began in August 2004, and a pilot programme for principals (primary), carried out in collaboration with the Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN) and Cork Education Centre, began in January 2005.

### 4.5.2 Promoting self-evaluation: Publication of Looking at Our School

The Inspectorate is centrally involved in supporting and promoting the achievement of quality through its evaluation activities in schools. Recognising the fact that schools themselves can contribute significantly to improving quality through self-evaluation, the Evaluation Support and Research Unit of the Inspectorate published

- *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.*

These publications, issued in 2003, provide schools with a framework to support internal review of school policies and to promote school effectiveness and school improvement in five broad areas: management, planning, curriculum provision, quality of learning and teaching, and support for pupils.

This framework is also used by the Inspectorate in conducting whole-school evaluation (WSE) and as a basis for other external evaluations of the work of schools and centres for education.

## 4.6 SUPPORT FOR IRISH IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Inspectorate contributes to the development, promotion and use of Irish in schools and centres for education through its central involvement in the management and co-ordination of a range of specific initiatives and in accordance with section 13 (3) (f) of the Education Act (1998).

### 4.6.1 Policy development for Irish in the education system

In 2003 a committee comprising primary and post-primary inspectors was established to consider policies for Irish in the education system. The brief for the committee was to consider the implications of legislation contained in the Education Act (1998) and *Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla* (2003) for the Inspectorate, for the Department generally, and for the school system.

The committee had the following terms of reference

- to clarify the Department's statutory obligations towards Irish and the implications for the Inspectorate
- to analyse the situation regarding the teaching and learning of Irish in different categories of schools
- to explore the role and function of the Inspectorate with regard to the promotion of Irish in the context of children's education
- to initiate the drawing up of policies to enhance the status of Irish in the education system.

The committee identified the following policy challenges

- the need for better-quality teacher training at primary and post-primary levels to sustain a communication-based curriculum
- the need for teachers' oral competence to receive further emphasis at pre-service
- the need to make additional courses available for teachers studying for the *Scrúdú le haghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge* (SCG)
- the need for schools to have better material resources for teaching Irish
- the increase in the number of pupils being granted exemption from Irish.

In addition to the above the committee advised that a survey should be conducted to establish the degree of competence in Irish of the staff of the Department, including members of the Inspectorate. Priorities for long-term and short-term action based on this report are now being examined within the Department.

### 4.6.2 Qualifying Irish examination for teachers trained outside the state – *Scrúdú le haghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge* (SCG)

Primary teachers trained outside the state must satisfy the Department that they are competent to teach Irish and to teach the full range of primary school subjects through the medium of Irish before being granted full recognition to teach in mainstream classes in primary schools. Such teachers may be granted provisional recognition to teach in mainstream primary schools or restricted recognition to teach only in special schools or classes where Irish is not a curriculum requirement. Holders of provisional recognition normally have five years in which to pass the written, aural and oral components of a qualifying examination in Irish, the *Scrúdú le haghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge* (SCG).

Up to the end of 2004 members of the Inspectorate had responsibility for the preparation of syllabuses and examination papers, the conduct of the SCG examination, and the marking of scripts. Arrangements for the management and administration of the examination have changed to cater for a rapidly increasing number of candidates and to take account of the recommendations of a review body that reported on the SCG in 2004. This review body, which was chaired by an assistant chief inspector, acknowledged



- that the support services for the SCG had not kept pace with the changing circumstances surrounding the examination
- that a number of important policy changes were necessary to improve methods of examining candidates and the supports available to them.

Some supports have already been established, including a comprehensive language syllabus, *Siollabas Teanga: An Scrúdú le haghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge* (SCG). The Inspectorate was centrally involved in the production of the syllabus as well as in the preparation of a handbook for the examination, *Lámhleabhar an SCG: Nósanna Imeachta*. The handbook contains comprehensive information regarding the rules and procedures of the examination and includes past examination papers together with sample answers.

The report of the review body also noted the absence of a literature textbook for the SCG; work on the preparation of a textbook has now been completed by the Inspectorate. The report recommended that a body such as a college of education should assume responsibility for the full administration of all aspects of the SCG. The Department has recently agreed arrangements for the administration of the examination with the Marino Institute of Education.

#### 4.6.1 Development of resource materials

In 2001 the Department established Scéim na nDearthóirí, a resource design and development initiative to address the specific needs of teaching Irish at primary level in Gaeltacht and all-Irish schools. The scheme was drawn up by the Inspectorate. Four teachers were seconded to develop modern teaching aids for Irish-medium schools in line with the requirements of the Primary School Curriculum (1999). The design team now comprises seven people and includes a national co-ordinator. The project is governed by a steering committee, which includes two members of the Inspectorate.

The design team has collaborated with the Inspectorate and with a number of external experts to identify and address the needs of native-speaker pupils in Gaeltacht schools and of pupils in Irish-medium schools.

Arising from the piloting of materials in schools, a new set of materials, known as *Séideán Sí*, has been produced for infant classes as part of an integrated pack of teaching aids. The main emphasis of the materials is on the child's own language requirements and interests. Included in the pack are a teacher's handbook, a set of "real" books, a set of oversized or "big books," posters, picture cards, compact discs, puppets, and card games. The resource materials have been received favourably in schools. Work on materials for first class is at an advanced stage of preparation.

#### 4.6.2 Participating in the work of An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG)

An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG) was established under the provisions of section 31 of the Education Act (1998). The role of the council relates to both primary and post-primary education, and the three main areas of work are the provision of teaching resources, the provision of support services, and research. The council has twenty-two members, including parents, teachers and other experts who were appointed in 2002 for a four-year term. An assistant chief inspector is a member of the council and provides linkage between the council and the Department.

A central function of the council is planning and co-ordinating the provision of textbooks and aids to learning and teaching through Irish. This is done through committees that report to the council, as outlined in section 4.6.1 above.

#### 4.6.3 Responsibility under Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla (2003)

Under section 11 of Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla (2003) the Department of Education and Science, along with twenty-four other public bodies, is required to draw up a three-year scheme outlining the services it can provide through Irish, bilingually, or through English.

A working group was set up in late 2004 to establish the present capacity to provide services in Irish and to frame policy proposals for enhancing services through Irish throughout the Department. A deputy chief inspector and an assistant chief inspector represent the Inspectorate on the working group.

The scheme will build on the Department's existing language policy and will be informed by the principles already outlined in the Department's Customer Service Charter.



#### 4.6.4 Referrals for exemption from Irish

Schools have the authority to grant a pupil an exemption from the study of Irish in accordance with circulars M10/94 and 12/96. Where uncertainty arises regarding the eligibility for an exemption, school authorities may refer the case to the Department. Members of the Inspectorate prepare advice on cases submitted to the Department for decision.

The increasing level of exemptions from Irish has given cause for concern. This has increased from 2.6 per cent of students in 1993 to 9 per cent in 2003.

A review of the relevant circulars and the operation of the scheme in general has been initiated by the Inspectorate, and this will incorporate the views and recommendations of the administration sections of the Department, the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), the Inspectorate itself, and the education partners. A new circular detailing procedures for exemption in primary and post-primary schools is being prepared.

#### 4.6.5 Monitoring of An Teastas Gaeilge do Mhúinteoirí Iarbhunoiideachais

Post-primary teachers who do not use Irish in their everyday work are no longer required to pass the oral component of the Ceardteastas Gaeilge examination. Teachers of Irish and those employed in Gaeltacht schools and in other schools where Irish is the medium of instruction are required to be fully proficient in Irish and are required to hold the Teastas Gaeilge do Mhúinteoirí Iarbhunscoile. Before the establishment of the State Examinations Commission (SEC), members of the Inspectorate provided policy advice to the Examinations Branch of the Department on the administration and conduct of this examination. This now comes under the responsibilities of the SEC.



#### 4.6.6 Managing the Ardteastas sa Ghaeilge

The Ardteastas sa Ghaeilge is an advanced qualification in Irish for people who hold a primary teacher's qualification. Its origins can be traced back to the highest qualification awarded to primary teachers attending summer in-service courses in Irish colleges in the 1920s. The examination is managed by a member of the Inspectorate, who sets the papers, marks the scripts, approves the project titles, grades the completed projects, and conducts the oral examinations. The award of the Ardteastas to a successful candidate denotes a very high standard in Irish language and literature and attracts an additional salary allowance.

### 4.7 DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROVISION

#### 4.7.1 Supporting development of the National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

The establishment of a council for special education was first proposed in the report of the Planning Group on Special Education chaired by the Chief Inspector. Since then there has been considerable involvement by the Inspectorate in the preparatory work leading to the establishment of the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).

Members of the Inspectorate, particularly those with assigned duties related to special education, made a significant contribution to the preparation for the operational launch of the NCSE on 1 January 2005. Appropriate functions for transfer from the Inspectorate to the council's Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs) were identified. Existing procedures, time requirements and policy parameters were documented and discussed with officers of the council.

In September 2004 inspectors contributed to five regional training seminars for SENOs, and in November 2004 the Inspectorate, with the support of the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), organised a three-day workshop for seventy SENOs, addressing policy issues and practical procedures related to the allocation of special needs assistants to schools.

It is intended that the establishment of the council will allow the Inspectorate to refocus its special education work on evaluation, policy development, and advice. A deputy chief inspector is a member of the NCSE.

#### 4.7.2 Supporting development of NCCA special education curriculum guidelines

During the year 2001/2002 members of the Inspectorate with special responsibility in the area of special education participated in NCCA committees drafting curriculum guidelines for teachers of pupils with general learning disabilities (GLD) in primary and post-primary settings. The Inspectorate contributed to the various committees at all levels, and the draft guidelines were produced and circulated towards the end of 2002. They covered the broad range of curricular areas for the different groupings within the GLD category.

During 2003 teachers piloted the draft guidelines in schools, and consultative meetings were held between the NCCA and the different interest groups, such as teachers, parents, and voluntary bodies. Inspectors with special education duties assisted the NCCA in collating the views of all inspectors on the draft curriculum guidelines.

#### 4.7.3 Collaboration with the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

Throughout the period covered by this report the Inspectorate liaised and collaborated with the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and worked closely with other sections of the Department in relation to policy development in special needs education and in the provision of additional resources for children with special educational needs. These areas included

- providing support to mainstream and special schools that were establishing new special education provision
- organising and implementing reviews of the provision for pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools
- advising on new circulars on special education
- developing a weighted system for allocating resource-teacher posts to primary schools
- identifying the needs of children involved in litigation and providing advice to administrative sections of the Department.

#### 4.7.4 European involvement in special needs education

The Inspectorate participated in the activities and projects of the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education during 2004. The agency is a network of national policy-makers

in special education. It organised the biannual meeting of the agency in Dublin in March 2004, and representatives of more than twenty European countries attended. In conjunction with the biannual meeting, and to mark Ireland's EU Presidency, a seminar was organised in Dublin Castle on the theme of Provision for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. This seminar was attended by staff and members of the agency and by invited guests from the colleges of education and universities.

#### 4.7.5 International network: Students with Special Educational Needs, Difficulties, Disabilities and Disadvantages (SENDDD)

Over a number of years, under the OECD the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) has developed a framework for developing statistics and indicators in the field of special education that can be used to compare special education systems in different countries. The Students with Special Educational Needs, Difficulties, Disabilities and Disadvantages (SENDDD) study, in which Ireland is represented by the Inspectorate, attempts to provide a unifying framework to allow for an improved international comparison of education provision for pupils with special educational needs.

The development of the framework envisaged by SENDDD poses major challenges, not least in that categories for collecting statistical data in this area vary considerably and that different definitions of the categories are in use among OECD countries. Furthermore, the location of education in regular schools, special classes or special schools varies greatly from country to country. The resource model under development in the study will make possible better identification of pupils and allow for more valid international comparison.

#### 4.7.6 Inspectorate's involvement in the Special Education Support Service (SESS)

The impact on schools of the increased integration of pupils with special educational needs has emphasised the fact that individual teachers and school staffs require specific support in this area. Through the Teacher Education Section of the Department, inspectors have been involved in the recent establishment and development of the Special Education Support Service (SESS). The SESS supports schools and also has a co-ordinating and liaising role in the planning and provision of continuing professional development in the area of special educational needs.



## 5 INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Inspectorate is involved in several international educational projects and represents the Department on a number of multinational bodies. This involvement allows the Inspectorate to contribute expertise and Irish views on educational issues at an international level and to become acquainted with best practice and innovation in other countries. In this context inspectors participate in North-South activities within Ireland, on European bodies established by the European Union and the Council of Europe, and on multinational bodies such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). This chapter outlines the main areas of the Inspectorate's involvement in the period 2001-2004.

### 5.1 PARTICIPATION IN NORTH-SOUTH ACTIVITIES

The Inspectorate, in collaboration with the administrative staff of the North-South Co-operation Unit of the Department, responded to and progressed the work given priority for co-operative activity by the North-South Ministerial Council (NSMC). This work concerned education for children with special needs; tackling educational disadvantage; and school, youth and teacher exchanges. In this context the Inspectorate

- contributed to the development of teaching and learning resources (CD-ROMs and videos) on autism and dyslexia
- co-ordinated meetings and cross-border visits of the North-South Literacy and Numeracy Working Group. Meetings between representatives from the Belfast Education and Library Board, the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) and the Department of Education and Science were held approximately three times per year, alternating between Dublin and Belfast

- facilitated joint training initiatives involving trainers from the Primary Curriculum Support Programme in the First Steps literacy programme and in the teaching of Mathematics, and facilitated fact-finding visits in relation to initiatives such as Reading Recovery and the Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP) demonstration libraries project
- contributed to all-Ireland projects such as the Author-on-Line Project, European Studies Project, Civic-Link, Primary Cross-Border Human Rights Education, and the Dissolving Boundaries project
- assisted with an all-Ireland survey on the reading choices of young people in primary and post-primary schools, the findings of which were published in *What's the Story: The Reading Choices of Young People in Ireland*
- helped in the establishment of the North-South Exchange Consortium (NSEC), whose function, when operating to full capacity, will be to administer all North-South educational co-operation programmes and exchanges. In the interim the Inspectorate provides advice and support to the North-South Co-operation Unit of the Department in respect of student, youth and teacher exchanges.

### 5.2 PARTICIPATION IN EUROPEAN PROJECTS

Continuing involvement by the Inspectorate in European activities intensified considerably in 2004, when Ireland held the Presidency of the European Union. In particular, there was significant involvement in relation to the following activities.

### 5.2.1 European Year of Education through Sport (EYES 2004)

The year 2004 was designated European Year of Education through Sport (EYES). In Ireland a National Steering Committee was drawn from different sporting organisations, interest groups, and government departments. Two inspectors represented the Department, one acting as chairperson of the Steering Committee. EYES funded a number of sporting projects during the year, with an inspector on the evaluating panel that awarded grants and selected schools for special sporting awards. Other EYES activities with participation by the Inspectorate included a conference on the theme "Women in Sport: Action 4 Progress".

### 5.2.2 European Network of Policy-Makers for the Evaluation of Educational Systems

The European Network of Policy-Makers for the Evaluation of Educational Systems is an intergovernmental organisation composed of senior officials in ministries of education, inspectorates and evaluation agencies in EU member-states and other European countries. The network seeks to promote best practice and co-operation in the evaluation of school-based education, both in external evaluation and in school self-evaluation. In 2004 the Inspectorate and the Department's International Section hosted the first meeting of the network following the enlargement of the European Union. The meeting reviewed the work of a number of international co-operative research projects, including those projects led by Ireland. These are the Evaluation of Foreign Languages in Upper Secondary Level Project (EFLUSL) and the Co-operative School Evaluation Project (CSEP).

### 5.2.3 Evaluation of Foreign Languages in Upper Secondary Level Project (EFLUSL)

The Evaluation of Foreign Languages in Upper Secondary Level Project (EFLUSL) is a co-operative project concerning the design, piloting and refinement of an agreed set of quality indicators to be used in evaluating the teaching and learning processes in foreign languages at upper secondary-school level. Ireland is the lead country for the project, and the Inspectorate manages the project on behalf of the EU Network of Policy-Makers for the Evaluation of Educational Systems. A number of inspectors serve on the Irish Steering Committee for EFLUSL while others have evaluated language teaching in a number of Irish post-primary schools during pilot testing of the project's evaluation instruments.

### 5.2.4 Co-operative School Evaluation Project (CSEP)

The Co-operative School Evaluation Project (CSEP) involves the design, piloting and refinement of an agreed set of quality indicators for the evaluation of schools' policy formulation processes in non-curricular areas. The Inspectorate participates on the Irish Steering Group for the project. In 2004 an initial plenary meeting of representatives from participating countries was held in Ireland. Anti-bullying policy was selected for the initial trial of the indicators, and progress was made in the development of the evaluation instruments.

### 5.2.5 European Network on Teacher Education Policies (ENTEP)

An inspector represents the Department at the European Network on Teacher Education Policies (ENTEP). ENTEP seeks to provide opportunities for member-states to learn from each other, to compare policies and issues, and to contribute to raising the quality of teachers' education. It also deals with improving the public image of the teaching profession and promoting the standardisation of teachers' qualifications and teachers' mobility in the European Union. In November 2004 the ENTEP committee meeting was held in Ireland. A concurrent conference was organised by the Department's International Section in collaboration with members of the Inspectorate. The conference provided opportunities for representatives of the colleges of education and the education departments of the universities to meet and discuss issues of common interest on future developments in a European context.

### 5.2.6 EU committees and committees of the Council of Europe

During the period 2001-2004 inspectors represented the Department on a number of EU committees, including the EU Schools Education Subcommittee and Expert Working Groups on Improving the Education and Training of Teachers and Trainers, Languages, Mathematics, Science and Technology and on Guidance Education. Inspectors also contributed to the working of committees established under the auspices of the Council of Europe, including its Committee on Special Education (which has been considering the education and training of children with autism) and the Governing Board of the European Centre for Modern Languages based in Graz, Austria.

### 5.2.7 Initiatives in European guidance education

Inspectors participated on working groups in relation to active citizenship, social cohesion and an open learning environment and have contributed to the OECD survey on guidance provision in fourteen countries. In addition, inspectors have participated in EU working groups and expert groups on the development of guidance objectives within the Lisbon Accord. In 2004 the Inspectorate jointly organised an international ministerial conference on the theme “Guidance and Lifelong Learning: Future Directions” with the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE).

## 5.3 INVOLVEMENT OF THE INSPECTORATE IN THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS

The European Schools system is established and maintained by the European Union and its member-states. The schools are based in a number of member-states and are multicultural, multilingual and multinational in character and structure. Primarily they exist to provide education for the children of officials who work for the European Commission and its agencies. Legally the schools are an intergovernmental body that is the joint responsibility of the Ministers for Education of the member-states.

### 5.3.1 Board of Governors

The member-states and the European Commission are represented on the Board of Governors of the schools. The Chief Inspector is the head of the Irish delegation at the Board of Governors, and Ireland also appoints two inspectors, one primary and one post-primary, to the Boards of Inspectors of the European Schools.

### 5.3.2 Boards of Inspectors

The Boards of Inspectors contribute significantly to the development, support and monitoring of curricular implementation in the European Schools. Under the Irish presidency of the Board of Governors during the academic year 2002/2003 the work of revising aspects of the primary curriculum was completed, and in May 2003 five new programmes for Art, Music, Physical Education, Social and Environmental Studies and French as a second language were presented for approval to the Board of Governors.

During 2002/2003 the Secondary Board of Inspectors was chaired by the Irish inspector. Syllabuses were updated in seven subject areas, including Irish (as language II, III and IV). During the Irish presidency the Irish post-primary inspector had a general responsibility for the operation of the European baccalaureate examination.

### 5.3.3 Teacher Inspection

Between 2001 and 2004 all the Irish primary and secondary teachers with class, subject, learning-support or second-language responsibilities, sixty-nine in total, were inspected. Formal assessment reports for the renewal of contracts were submitted to the Bureau of the European Schools in Brussels, and individual reports on teachers were submitted to the Department. The inspection and evaluation work culminated in the preparation and submission of a full report, *Teaching and Learning in the European Schools*, in 2003.

### 5.3.4 European Schooling in Ireland

In recent years the question of how to provide European schooling where a full-scale European School is not viable has become an issue. The establishment of the EU Food and Veterinary Office in Grange, County Meath, is a case in point. The Department of Education and Science has established the Centre for European Schooling in Dunshaughlin, County Meath. The new centre has both European and national significance. It involves a special form of educational co-operation, whereby a primary school – Scoil Náisiúnta Sheachnaill – and a community college – Dunshaughlin Community College – have become equal partners under the aegis of County Meath VEC to provide this new form of European schooling. The Irish inspectors involved in the European Schools played an important role in advising the centre on curricula and on establishing links with the mainstream European School system.

## 5.4 PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES OF THE ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD)

As a long-standing member of the OECD, Ireland participates in a number of committees and activities. A major activity of the OECD is the development of indicators and the measurement of achievement in education systems. In this regard it develops and publishes a broad range of comparative indicators that provide insights into the functioning of education systems.



This work and the publications that emerge from it are an influential source of information for policy-makers and others. They provide an opportunity for each country to see its education system in the light of other countries' performance. For policy-makers, for example, the outcome of the OECD research can help to identify successful approaches or innovations in education provision that may be applied in other contexts. Measures of the effectiveness of education systems can also be influential in attracting global investment to successful countries.

During the period 2001-2004 the Inspectorate made a significant contribution to the OECD activities described in sections 5.4.1 to 5.4.3 below:

#### 5.4.1 Indicators of Educational Systems Programme (INES)

An assistant chief inspector is the Irish national co-ordinator for this programme, which develops, analyses and publishes internationally comparative indicators of education systems. The programme works through a network of INES national co-ordinators, three task-centred networks (one on pupil achievement, the second on educational attainment in the adult population, the third on schools and their decision-making, curriculum, teachers and teaching, and ICT) and a Technical Group. The Inspectorate, working in conjunction with the Department's Statistics Section, supports the compilation of data for the INES publication *Education at Glance*.

#### 5.4.2 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

This is a long-term study for the measurement of learning achievement. The Inspectorate is involved in supporting Irish participation in the design and administration of this survey of educational achievement, which is being carried out by the Educational Research Centre, Drumcondra, on behalf of the Department. The PISA survey and a summary of results for Ireland have been presented in section 3.7.2.

#### 5.4.3 Teachers matter: Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers

An inspector acted as national co-ordinator for this study conducted in the period 2002-2004. The study involved twenty-five countries and examined country-specific issues and policy responses to teacher preparation, recruitment, work and careers, which were outlined in individual country background reports, supplemented by intensive case studies in nine countries. The final report, due for publication in 2005,

will provide a valuable resource to the Department's Teacher Education Section, the Inspectorate, the Teaching Council, and the education system generally. It will inform the development of teacher education policies on a broad range of issues.

#### 5.4.4 Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI)

The Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) is a focal point for information and discussion on trends in education systems throughout the industrialised world. Its activities aim to encourage better links between research, policy innovation and practice. CERI enriches knowledge about educational trends internationally and actively involves educational researchers, practitioners and government officials in international discussions. A deputy chief inspector serves as Ireland's representative on the Governing Board of CERI and is responsible for disseminating the outcomes of CERI discussions and research within the Department.

#### 5.4.5 Standing International Conference of Inspectorates (SICI)

As a member of SICI, the Irish Inspectorate works with inspectorates in other countries to examine and share best practice in evaluation. Links between inspectorates are maintained in order to exchange knowledge and expertise, to facilitate joint inspection and evaluation work in various countries, and to engage in international inspection workshops to develop evaluation practice. Irish inspectors have participated in and contributed to workshops and projects on such issues as follow-up inspection, self-evaluation in schools, evaluation of teacher training, and the promotion of information and communication technologies.

#### 5.4.6 Effective School Self-Evaluation (ESSE) project

The ESSE project was an initiative managed by SICI between 2001 and 2003. The project sought to identify evaluative indicators in school self-evaluation and to develop methodologies for inspecting school self-evaluation among SICI members. Irish inspectors participated in the project, in partnership with representatives from thirteen European countries or regions. An evaluation instrument and a methodology for use by inspectors in evaluating the quality of self-evaluation in schools was developed and tested during the lifetime of the project. The project also examined the quality of the external supports available for schools' self-evaluation in participating countries and identified those that were most successful.



## 6 OTHER INSPECTORATE ACTIVITIES

In addition to the evaluative and advisory activities described in previous chapters the Inspectorate is involved in the management, co-ordination and development of a range of initiatives and services that support the work of the Department and the provision of services to schools. This chapter summarises some of this work.

### 6.1 COMPLIANCE AND REGULATION ISSUES

#### 6.1.1 Monitoring and reporting on compliance with legislation and regulations

In carrying out evaluation and quality assurance functions, inspectors report to the Department on the compliance of schools with legislation and regulations, as necessary. In this work the inspectors advise schools and centres for education in relation to the provisions of the Education Act (1998) and other relevant legislation, Department circulars, the Rules for National Schools, and the Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools. Among the specific areas reported on in the period covered by this report were

- the integrity of time in school
- the operation of appropriate class sizes
- the retention of pupils at various levels in schools
- the operation of appropriate enrolment policies in schools.

#### 6.1.2 Investigation of complaints

Under current procedures, the investigation of a complaint against a teacher or school is the responsibility of the board of management in the first instance. If a person or agency making a complaint to a school is not satisfied that the process has been brought to a resolution in a fair way, the Inspectorate may be requested by the Primary or Post-primary Administration sections of the Department to review the manner in which the complaint was investigated.

#### 6.1.3 Participation on section 29 appeals committees

Section 29 of the Education Act (1998) confers on parents, pupils over eighteen and the National Educational Welfare Board the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against a decision by a school management regarding exclusion, suspensions of more than twenty days, or refusal to enrol. Where informal processes or facilitation at local level have been exhausted an appeals committee may be appointed.

- The Education Act stipulates that each committee must have an inspector as one of its members. Following the hearing of an appeal the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science considers the recommendations of the appeals committee and then informs the school, whose board of management is bound by the determination.



Exhibit 14 gives a breakdown of section 29 appeals processed during 2003 and 2004.

Exhibit 14: Breakdown of cases involving section 29 appeals process, 2003 and 2004

Appeal statistics, 2003 and 2004						
Primary schools						
	Withdrawn	Local resolution	Facilitation	Appeal upheld at hearing	Appeal not upheld at hearing	Total
Permanent exclusion	0	0	1	0	2	3
Refusal to enrol	32	6	19	53	16	126
Suspension	1	0	0	1	1	3
Total	33	6	20	54	19	132
Post-primary schools						
	Withdrawn	Local resolution	Facilitation	Appeal upheld at hearing	Appeal not upheld at hearing	Total
Permanent exclusion	12	2	25	17	31	87
Refusal to enrol	60	10	27	49	40	186
Suspension	3	1	1	3	3	11
Total	75	13	53	69	74	284

6.1.4 Inspectorate’s responsibility under the Freedom of Information Acts (1997 and 2003)

The Inspectorate complies with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Acts, and the records of inspectors come under their scope. Exhibit 15 shows the number of requests made for access to documents created by the Inspectorate in the period 2001-2004.

In that time, most requests related to the involvement of inspectors in the processing of complaints about schools and teachers and in the area of special education provision. Exhibit 16 gives the principal categories of those making requests for information and the number of requests made in 2004.

Exhibit 15: Number of Freedom of Information requests received, 2001-2004

Year	Number of requests
2001	33
2002	57
2003	78
2004	76

**Exhibit 16: Principal categories of requesters of information, 2004**

Requester	Number of requests
Teachers	27
Former pupils	17
Parents	21
Chairpersons of boards of management	4
Journalists	3
Others	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>

## 6.2 SUPPORTING DEPARTMENT SERVICES

### 6.2.1 Responsibility for state examinations, 2001-2003

Until March 2003 post-primary inspectors, acting as chief examiners, were involved at every stage of the examination process. This included responsibility for the examination papers, adapting papers for candidates with learning disabilities, and advising on the appointment of examiners. During examinations the inspectors monitored examination centres, including practical and oral elements, ensuring that the examinations were conducted in a fair and equitable manner. Inspectors also had responsibility for developing marking schemes and overseeing the marking of scripts.

In December 2001 the Inspectorate initiated a review of all aspects of the procedures involved in the marking of the state examinations. Many of the recommendations were implemented for the 2002 examinations, including increased monitoring of scripts, improved appeals procedures, and the holding of appeals conferences. Further work was done in the autumn of 2002 on revised procedures for the conduct and marking of oral, aural, practical and project examinations, and the recommendations were forwarded to the State Examinations Commission (SEC) in March 2003. Initiatives such as the appeals process, the viewing of scripts by candidates, the availability of marking schemes and the publication of chief examiners' reports have all contributed to ensuring the greatest possible degree of transparency and fairness to candidates.

The involvement of post-primary inspectors in examinations work ceased with the establishment of the SEC in March 2003.

### 6.2.2 Involvement in school planning and buildings

A number of inspectors are assigned full-time to the Planning and Building Unit of the Department and provide advice and support in relation to the planning of new schools and colleges and extensions, demographic and enrolment trends, area development planning, the viability of existing schools, and rationalisation. The inspectors assist in briefing design teams, in preparing building briefs, and in drawing up equipment specifications. They also contribute to determining procedures and satisfactory standards in relation to the supply of facilities and room layouts, including specialist spaces in order to ensure compliance with curricular needs and health and safety standards.

### 6.2.3 Management of Model Schools

Model Schools are primary schools financed and administered by the Department of Education and Science. Traditionally the Minister, as patron, appointed a member of the Department's Inspectorate to function as chairperson of model schools' boards of management. There are nine model schools, three of which are in the immediate vicinity of the Department's offices in Marlborough Street, Dublin, and one each in Athy, Baillieborough, Dunmanway, Galway, Limerick, and Monaghan. Inspectors discharged all functions for which a chairperson of a board of management is responsible. A process of replacing inspectors as chairpersons of boards for model schools was completed in September 2004.

### 6.2.4 Management duties in relation to post-primary schools

Post-primary inspectors represent the Department on the boards of management of comprehensive schools. These are mostly three-person boards and carry out a full range of duties, including the selection and promotion of teachers. Inspectors will cease to be members of the boards of management in the near future in the context of proposed changes to these boards to include representation by parents and teachers.

Until 2000 post-primary inspectors served on all selection boards for the appointment of full-time teachers in the vocational system and also for community schools. Since then inspectors serve only on interview boards for the appointment of principal teachers in vocational schools (including designated community colleges) and community schools where the pupil population exceeds five hundred.

### 6.2.5 Management and co-ordination of support initiatives

In addition to supporting national initiatives such as the Primary Curriculum Support Programme, the Second-Level Support Service, the School Development Planning initiatives and curriculum related support services, the Inspectorate has been involved in the management and co-ordination of specific initiatives for schools in areas such as social inclusion, home-school liaison, and pre-school provision. In the period 2001-2004 this has included policy support and management activities in relation to

- the Visiting Teacher Service for Sensory-Impaired children
- the Visiting Teachers for Travellers scheme
- the Home-School-Community Liaison (HSCL) scheme
- the Early Start pre-school project.
- Breaking the Cycle
- Youth Encounter Projects
- Youthreach
- the Early School Leavers' Initiative
- the Stay in School Retention Initiative
- the School Completion Programme.

As part of recent reorganisation, responsibility for the management and co-ordination of these initiatives has been reallocated to other sections or agencies of the Department.



## 6.3 SUPPORTING RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION

### 6.3.1 Involvement in the work of the Research and Development Committee

The Inspectorate is represented on the board of the Department's Research and Development (R&D) Committee, which has a remit in relation to

- identifying research priorities for the Department
- managing the Department's research programme
- disseminating funds to individuals and agencies for specific research projects.

The Research and Development Committee also disseminates the findings of this research through seminars and publications. *Research and Development in Education Projects, 1994-2000*, published in 2002, provides information on recent research supported by the committee.

### 6.3.2 Publication of Oideas

*Oideas* is the academic journal of the Department. Since its inception in 1968 a member of the Inspectorate has edited the journal, and inspectors have been involved in the work of the editorial board.

More than four hundred papers have been published on a variety of topics that centre on the interests of educators at all levels of the education system. The most recent edition was the fiftieth and carries an index of each paper published so far. *Oideas* is distributed to every educational institution in the country from first to third level.

### 6.3.3 Other Inspectorate publications

The Inspectorate has published reports and guidelines on a range of issues in Irish education. The reports aim to promote discussion in relation to quality and standards in schools and are intended to support the dissemination of good practice in schools. An annotated list of publications is included in appendix 1.

## APPENDIX 1

## PUBLICATIONS OF THE INSPECTORATE, 2001-2004



*Leaving and Junior Certificate Chief Examiners' Reports, 2001 and 2002*

DES (2001),  
(2002) Inspectorate

Until 2003, post-primary inspectors acted as chief examiners for the Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations. The Inspectorate published a number of chief examiners' reports in 2001 and 2002.

2001 Junior Certificate reports on Science, Science – Local Studies, History and Civic, Social and Political Education.

2001 Leaving Certificate reports on Home Economics (Social and Scientific), English, Construction Studies, Gaeilge, Biology, Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry, Agricultural Science and Art

2002 Junior Certificate reports on Technical Graphics, Technology, Materials Technology (Wood), Environmental and Social Studies, Metalwork, French, German, Spanish, and Italian

2002 Leaving Certificate reports on History, Geography, Economics, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Engineering and Technical Drawing

In 2002 a report on all aspects of the Leaving Certificate Applied examination was prepared.



*Fifty School Reports: What Inspectors Say*

DES (2002)  
Inspectorate

A composite report that comments on quality and standards in fifty primary schools. It is based on an analysis of the Inspectorate's findings from fifty school reports furnished during the school year 2001/2002.



*Professional Code of Practice on Evaluation and Reporting for the Inspectorate*

DES (2002)  
Inspectorate

This code sets out the principles and guidelines to which members of the Inspectorate adhere in their evaluation and reporting on work in schools. The guidelines apply to the evaluation of, and reporting on, the work of schools, individual teachers, curricular programmes, and implementation of regulations.



*Procedure for Review of Inspections on Schools and Teachers under section 13 (9) of the Education Act, 1998*

DES (2002)  
Inspectorate

This publication outlines the procedure for review of inspections and teachers under section 13 (9) of the Education Act (1998). A teacher or board of a school may request the Chief Inspector to review any inspection carried out by the Inspectorate.



*The Inspectorate: A Brief Guide*

DES (2002),  
(2004) Inspectorate

This publication provides the general education community with an overview of the objectives, functions, structure, management and contact details of the Inspectorate. An updated version of the guide is available in electronic form on the Department's website.



*Guidelines on Traveller Education in Primary Schools*

The guidelines for primary and post-primary schools outline best practice in relation to inclusive Traveller education and aim to assist schools in developing effective teaching and learning programmes. The Advisory Committee on Traveller Education, comprising the partners in education, including Traveller organisations and school management and staff representatives, was consulted in the preparation of these guidelines.



*Guidelines on Traveller Education in Second-level Schools*

DES (2002)  
Inspectorate



*Research and Development in Education Projects, 1994-2000*

This publication presents accounts of research in the field of education for the period 1994-2000, ranging from pre-school to third-level education and from the education of pupils with special needs to adult education.

DES (2002),  
Inspectorate



*Oideas: Journal of the Department of Education and Science*

An academic journal published by the Department. Teachers and academics contribute articles about aspects of education of current or historical interest. The Inspectorate has edited the journal since its inception, and members of the Inspectorate also sit on the editorial board. Oideas 49 was published in 2001 and Oideas 50 in 2003.

DES (2003)  
Inspectorate



*Pre-Schools for Travellers: National Evaluation Report*

This composite report comments on quality and standards in pre-schools for Travellers. It is based on an evaluation carried out by the Inspectorate in the school year 2000/2001. The report comments on the management, accommodation and funding of pre-schools for Travellers. It also draws attention to issues relating to staffing, teaching and learning, and parental and community involvement.

DES (2003)  
Inspectorate



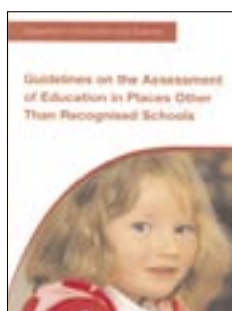
*Looking at Our School: An Aid to Self-Evaluation in Primary Schools*

DES (2003) Inspectorate



*Looking at Our School: An Aid to Self-Evaluation in Second-Level Schools*

DES (2003) Inspectorate



*Guidelines on the Assessment of Education in Places Other Than Recognised Schools*

DES (2003)  
Inspectorate

These guidelines were prepared by the Inspectorate to assist the National Educational Welfare Board in fulfilling its responsibilities under the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) with regard to the registration of children educated at home or outside the recognised school system. The guidelines clarify what constitutes a "certain minimum education" and provide examples of assessment methods to evaluate this.



*Inspection of Modern Languages: Observations and Issues*

DES (2004)  
Inspectorate

This composite report is based on the findings of subject inspections in forty-five post-primary schools. The report describes good practice in schools' provision for modern languages and comments on aspects of practice in relation to modern language teaching that require development.



*Olltuairisc ar na Coláistí Gaeilge, 2003*

DES (2004)  
Inspectorate

This report is based on the evaluation of courses in Irish colleges (coláistí Gaeilge) for pupils learning or improving their knowledge of Irish. A number of themes are discussed, including planning for the courses, use of educational resources, and teaching methodology.



*Report of the Review Committee on Scrúdú le haghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge*

DES (2004)  
Inspectorate

Published as *Tuarascáil an Choiste Athbhreithnithe*, this report reviews the Irish Qualifying Examination for teachers trained outside the state. The report charts the context of the review, its terms of reference and its modus operandi and outlines new initiatives being undertaken, including recommended changes to the examination paper itself, the syllabus, and the preparation of a handbook for those about to sit the examination.



*Lámhleabhar don Scrúdú le haghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge*

DES (2004)  
Inspectorate

The *Lámhleabhar* (handbook) is designed to assist teachers preparing for the Irish Qualifying Examination. It includes information on the structure of the examination, an explanation of marking schemes, and sample papers and answers. The publication provides guidance to candidates and to tutors preparing candidates for the examination.



*Siollabas Teanga don Scrúdú le haghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge*

DES (2004)  
Inspectorate

This publication provides the syllabus for the Irish Qualifying Examination (SCG). The syllabus reflects international standards in relation to qualifying language examinations.





*A Guide to Subject Inspection at Second Level*

DES (2004)  
Inspectorate

This is a guide to all aspects of subject inspection at post-primary level, covering the stages of inspection from the initial contact with a school to the issuing of the final report. It includes examples of reporting templates, letters of notification and other documents associated with subject inspection.



*Nuachtlitir do Chigirí na Roinne*

DES (2004)  
Inspectorate

The *Nuachtlitir* is a periodical produced by the Inspectorate's Evaluation Research Support Unit (ESRU), providing inspectors with information and commentary about issues relevant to their work.



*Literacy and Numeracy in Disadvantaged Schools: Challenges for Teachers and Learners: An Evaluation by the Department of Education and Science Inspectorate*

DES (2005)  
Inspectorate

This report is based on an evaluation of twelve primary schools serving areas of economic disadvantage. The report seeks to identify impediments to the development of literacy and numeracy skills and to make recommendations for improvement. Issues such as absenteeism, parental involvement, the quality of teaching and assessment are discussed.



*An Evaluation of Curriculum Implementation in Primary Schools: English, Mathematics, and Visual Arts*

DES (2005)  
Inspectorate

This report comments on the implementation of the Primary School Curriculum in English, Visual Arts and Mathematics in eighty-six primary schools. It considers the extent to which schools and teachers are implementing the new teaching methodologies and approaches for each subject area. Factors that support the implementation of the curriculum, such as effective whole-school planning, are also explored.

Most of the publications listed above are available on the Department of Education and Science website at [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)





*Eamon Stack, Chief Inspector and Gary Ó Donnchadha, Senior Inspector, Office of the Chief Inspector*

## APPENDIX 2

### ORGANISATION OF THE INSPECTORATE DIVISION

April 2005

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Inspectorate Division			
<b>Eamon Stack</b> <i>Chief Inspector</i>			
Regional Subdivision		Policy Support Subdivision	
<b>Cearbhall Ó Dálaigh</b> <i>Deputy Chief Inspector</i>		<b>Gearóid Ó Conluain</b> <i>Deputy Chief Inspector</i>	
BU 1	North and Dublin North Region	BU 6	Evaluation Support and Research Unit
BU 2	South-East and Dublin South Region	BU 7	Teacher Education
BU 3	West and Mid-West Region	BU 8	Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment
BU 4	South Region	BU 9	Special Education and Traveller Education
BU 5	Midlands and Dublin West Region	BU 10	Inspectorate Services and International Links
Office of the Chief Inspector			
<b>Gary Ó Donnchadha</b> <sup>S/D</sup>			
Office of the Chief Inspector, Room G-08, Block 1, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 Phone: (01) 8896425			

**BU** *Business unit.*

**S/D** *Senior or Divisional Inspector.*

+ *Assigned to two business units.*



Standing: Pádraig MacSitríc, Hilde Bean Mhic Aoidh, Lorcán Mac Conaonaigh, Séan Ó Floinn  
Seated: Cearbhall Ó Dálaigh, Maura Clancy

## INSPECTORATE REGIONAL SUBDIVISION

Head of Subdivision

CEARBHALL Ó DÁLAIGH, DEPUTY CHIEF INSPECTOR

### BU 1: North and Dublin North Region

**Pat Mac Sitríc** Assistant Chief Inspector

Carlow, Dublin South, Dún Laoghaire and Rathdown, Kildare (North), Kilkenny, Wexford, Wicklow

#### Primary Inspectors

Brendan Doody  
Diarmuid Dullaghan  
Noreen Fiorentini  
Máire Ní Ghógáin<sup>S/D</sup>  
Máire Ní Mháirtín

Marina Ní Threasaigh<sup>S/D</sup>  
Rita Nic Amhlaoibh  
Seán Ó Cearbhail<sup>S/D</sup>  
Anne O'Gara  
Caitríona Uí Ghrianna

#### Post-primary Inspectors

Sylvia Corcoran  
Oilibhéar de Búrca  
Suzanne Dillon  
Nora Friel  
Amanda Geary  
Sheelagh Hickey

Gerard McGuill  
Noreen McMorro  
Caitlín Ní Bhraonáin<sup>+</sup>  
Deasún Ó Riain  
Audrey Scott

#### Inspectorate Secretariat, Dublin

Department of Education and Science, Room G-13, Block 3, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 Phone: (01) 8896553/8892002

#### Inspectorate Secretariat, Sligo

Office of the Inspectorate, Kempton Promenade, Bridge Street, Sligo Phone: (071) 9143218

### BU 2: South-East and Dublin South Region

**Lorcán Mac Conaonaigh** Assistant Chief Inspector

Cavan, Donegal, Dublin (Fingal), Dublin (North), Leitrim, Louth, Meath, Monaghan, Sligo

#### Primary Inspectors

Pádraic Bearnais<sup>S/D</sup>  
Mags Jordan  
Yvonne Keating<sup>S/D</sup>  
Gerry MacRuairc  
Deirdre Mathews<sup>S/D</sup>  
Maria McCarthy

Miriam Ní Dhúill<sup>S/D</sup>  
Liam Ó Leathlobhair<sup>S/D</sup>  
Eileen O'Sullivan  
Gerard Quirke  
Liam Walsh

#### Post-primary Inspectors

Declan Cahalane<sup>S/D</sup>  
Margaret Condon<sup>S/D</sup> +  
Carmel Donoghue  
Mary Gilbride<sup>S/D</sup>  
Robert Kirkpatrick<sup>S/D</sup>

Kevin McClean  
Jacqueline Ní Fhearghusa  
Catherine O'Carroll  
Linda Ramsbottom

#### Inspectorate Secretariat, Dublin

Department of Education and Science, Room G-13, Block 3, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 Phone: (01) 8896553/8892002

BU 3: West and Mid-West Region			
<b>Hilde Bean Mhic Aoidh</b> <i>Assistant Chief Inspector</i> <i>Clare, Galway, Limerick, Mayo, Roscommon, Tipperary (North Riding)</i>			
Primary Inspectors		Post-primary Inspectors	
Mícheál Báicéir Colm Cregan Dolores de Bhál Tony Kelly Teresa Kirk	Páraic MacDonncha <sup>S/D</sup> Antoinette Ní Ghallchobhair Patrick O'Neill <sup>S/D</sup> Mary O'Shea Martin Whyte	Maureen Bohan <sup>S/D+</sup> Liam Bolger Richard Coughlan <sup>S/D</sup> Joe Harrison Niall Kelly	Alan Mongey Nóra Nic Aodha Brendan O'Regan
<b>Inspectorate Secretariat, Limerick</b> Mid-Western Regional Office, Rosbrien Road, Punch's Cross, Limerick Phone: (061) 430000/430004			
<b>Inspectorate Secretariat, Galway</b> Department of Education and Science, Ross House, Merchants' Road, Galway Phone: (091) 568922/500009			

BU 4: South Region			
<b>Seán Ó Floinn</b> <i>Assistant Chief Inspector</i> <i>Cork, Kerry, Tipperary (South Riding), Waterford</i>			
Primary Inspectors		Post-primary Inspectors	
Noreen Bambury Tom Colgan Patrick Delea Cristíne Ní Nualláin Pádraig Ó Conchubhair <sup>S/D</sup> Pádraig Ó Donnabháin <sup>S/D</sup>	Séamus Ó hÉilí <sup>S/D</sup> Seán Ó Murchú <sup>S/D+</sup> Eoghan Ó Súilleabháin <sup>S/D+</sup> Fionnbarra Ó Tuama <sup>S/D</sup> Máire Uí Chonghaile Máire Uí Shé	Elaine Collins Diarmuid Haicéid Miriam Horgan Colum Layton Kevin McCarthy <sup>S/D</sup> Kevin O'Donovan	Fionnbarra Ó Murchú Ruth Richards Tony Weir
<b>Inspectorate Secretariat, Cork</b> Department of Education and Science, 1A South Mall, Cork Phone: (021) 4906011			

BU 5: Midlands and Dublin West Region			
<b>Maura Clancy</b> <i>Assistant Chief Inspector</i> <i>Dublin (West and South West), Kildare (South), Laois, Longford, Offaly, Westmeath</i>			
Primary Inspectors		Post-primary Inspectors	
Anne Feerick <sup>S/D</sup> Joan Hanrahan Michael Hayes Karina Holton Nollaig Huston Una Kelly	Éamon Mac Coitir <sup>S/D</sup> Éamonn Ó Breacáin <sup>S/D</sup> Seán Ó Díomasaigh Micheál Ó Lionáird <sup>S/D</sup> Eoghan Ó Súilleabháin <sup>S/D+</sup>	Gráinne Conachy John Curran Alan Dunne Gerry Fee Maria Lorigan Niamh Mernagh <sup>+</sup>	Eibhlín Ní Scannláin Kate O'Carroll Lily O'Donovan Gerardine Skelly
<b>Inspectorate Secretariat, Dublin</b> Department of Education and Science, Room G-13, Block 3, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 Phone: (01) 8896553/8892002			

**BU** Business unit.

**S/D** Senior or Divisional Inspector.

<sup>+</sup> Assigned to two business units.



Standing: Gearóid Ó Conluain, Harold Hislop, Doreen McMorris, Gabriel Harrison  
Seated: Emer Egan, Eamonn Murtagh

## INSPECTORATE POLICY SUPPORT SUBDIVISION

Head of Subdivision

GEARÓID Ó CONLUAIN, DEPUTY CHIEF INSPECTOR

### BU 6: Evaluation Support and Research Unit

**Eamonn Murtagh** Assistant Chief Inspector

*Support of all inspection activities and Inspectorate involvement in research and development*

#### Primary Inspectors

Suzanne Conneely<sup>S/D</sup>

Carmel O'Doherty<sup>S/D</sup>

#### Post-primary Inspectors

Domnall Fleming<sup>S/D</sup>  
Pádraig Kirk<sup>S/D</sup>

George Porter<sup>+</sup>

#### Inspectorate Secretariat, Dublin

Department of Education and Science, Room G-13, Block 3, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 Phone: (01) 8896553/8892002

#### Evaluation Support and Research Unit (ESRU)

Department of Education and Science, Room G-14, Block 3, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 Phone: (01) 8892445

### BU 7: Teacher Education

**Emer Egan** Assistant Chief Inspector

*Involvement in policy advice and development in first and second-level pre-service and in-service; support programmes and initiatives and advising on teacher qualifications*

#### Primary Inspectors

Martin Lally  
Risteard Ó Broin<sup>S/D</sup>

#### Post-primary Inspectors

Niamh Murray  
Chris Ó Conghaile<sup>S/D</sup>

#### Inspectorate Secretariat, Dublin

Department of Education and Science, Room G-13, Block 3, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 Phone: (01) 8896553/8892002

**BU 8: Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment****Doreen McMorris** *Assistant Chief Inspector**Involvement in policy advice and development in curriculum and assessment issues for early childhood, first and second-level education***Primary Inspectors**

Pádraig Mac Fhlannchadha

Déirdre Ní Lidéadha<sup>S/D</sup>**Post-primary Inspectors**Maureen Bohan<sup>S/D+</sup>  
Paul Caffrey<sup>S/D</sup>  
Elke Hughes  
(German Advisor)Niamh Mernagh+  
Caitlín Ní Bhraonáin+  
George Porter+**Inspectorate Secretariat, Dublin**

Department of Education and Science, Room G-13, Block 3, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 Phone: (01) 8896553/8892002

**BU 9: Special Education and Traveller Education****Gabriel Harrison** *Assistant Chief Inspector**Involvement in policy advice and development in special education and Traveller education***Primary Inspectors**Séamus Caomhánach<sup>S/D</sup>  
Don Mahon<sup>S/D</sup>Seán Ó Murchú<sup>S/D+</sup>  
Michael Travers<sup>S/D</sup>**Primary and Post-primary Inspectors**

Geraldine Emir Duffy

Emer Ring<sup>S/D</sup>**Post-primary Inspectors**Thomas Donoghue<sup>S/D</sup>**Inspectorate Secretariat, Dublin**

Department of Education and Science, Room G-13, Block 3, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 Phone: (01) 8896553/8892002

**BU 10: Inspectorate Services and International Links****Harold Hislop** *Assistant Chief Inspector**Management of operational services for the Inspectorate and Inspectorate involvement in international forums***Primary Inspectors**Margaret Dunning  
Proinsias Ó Ceallaigh<sup>S/D</sup>Seán Terry<sup>S/D</sup>**Post-primary Inspectors**Margaret Condon<sup>S/D+</sup>Orlaith O'Connor<sup>S/D</sup>**Inspectorate Secretariat, Dublin**

Department of Education and Science, Room G-13, Block 3, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 Phone: (01) 8896553/8892002

**BU** *Business unit.***S/D** *Senior or Divisional Inspector.*+ *Assigned to two business units.*

## ASSIGNMENTS TO OTHER DUTIES AND TO REGIONAL OFFICES

### Assigned to other duties

Planning and Building Unit		Teacher Education Section	
Martin Bryan <sup>S/D</sup> Liam Corcoran <sup>S/D</sup>	David Nash <sup>S/D</sup> Seán Ó Ciarba <sup>S/D</sup>	Clare Breslin <sup>S/D</sup> C. Breandán Ó Murchú <sup>S/D</sup>	Lynda O'Toole
<b>Planning and Building Unit</b> Department of Education and Science, Tullamore, Co. Offaly Phone: (0506) 24310			
<b>Teacher Education Section</b> Department of Education and Science, Floor 1, Block 2, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 Phone: (01) 8892154			



*Ian Murphy*  
*Assistant Chief Inspector*

*Directorate of  
Regional Services*

### Directorate of Regional Services (DRS)

#### **Ian Murphy** *Assistant Chief Inspector*

*Reporting to the Directorate of Regional Services, inspectors in the regional offices support the co-ordination of Department services at local level. A total of ten regional offices is planned*

Seamus Kelly <sup>S/D</sup>	<i>Kildare-Wicklow Regional Office</i>
Nicola Muckley <sup>S/D</sup>	<i>North-Eastern Regional Office</i>
Tadhg Ó Gláimhín <sup>S/D</sup>	<i>Southern Regional Office</i>
Anthony O'Gorman <sup>S/D</sup>	<i>Mid-Western Regional Office</i>
Anne O'Sullivan <sup>S/D</sup>	<i>North-Western Regional Office</i>
Máirín O'Sullivan <sup>S/D</sup>	<i>Dublin South County Regional Office</i>
Joan Williams <sup>S/D</sup>	<i>South-Eastern Regional Office</i>

### Directorate of Regional Services (DRS)

Floor 2, Tyrone House, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 Phone: (01) 8892045

## ASSIGNMENTS TO STATE EXAMINATIONS COMMISSION

### Inspectors Assigned or Appointed to the State Examinations Commission by April 2003

#### **Head of Examination and Assessment Division**

Tadhg Ó Síocháin  
John Mc Ginty (Retired 2003)

#### **Assistant Heads of Examination and Assessment Division**

Pat Coffey                      Bríd Uí Ríordáin                      Peadar Ó Máille

#### **Examination and Assessment Managers**

Tom Anderson Mary Burns Joseph Codyre <sup>S</sup> Alexander Corcoran <sup>S</sup> John Corcoran Eugene Currihan <sup>S</sup> Padraic de Bhaldrath <sup>S</sup>	Margaret Desmond <sup>S</sup> Tim Desmond <sup>S</sup> Oliver Duggan Raymond Frawley <sup>S</sup> Pádraic Harvey Jerome Leonard <sup>S</sup> Helen McIntyre <sup>S</sup>	Hugh McManus Ann Mulcahy <sup>S</sup> Seán Ó Broin <sup>S</sup> Gearóid Ó Catháin <sup>S</sup> Pádraig Ó Conghaile <sup>S</sup> (Retired 2003) Oilibhéar Ó hEidhin <sup>S</sup> Hugh O'Neill	Sheila Smyth Hazel Stapleton Joan Sutton Fionnghuala Uí Chathasaigh <sup>S</sup> (Retired 2005) Mary Varilly <sup>S</sup>
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#### **State Examinations Commission**

Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath Phone: (090) 6442700

## RETIREMENTS, RESIGNATIONS AND CAREER BREAKS

Retirements 2001-2005	
<b>2001</b>	
Patrick Fox <sup>S/D</sup> Breandán Ó Bric Seán Ó Breasláin <sup>S/D</sup> Ruairí Ó Cillín <sup>S/D</sup> Mícheál Ó hEidhin	Pádraig Ó Loingsigh <sup>S/D</sup> Colm Ó Maoláin <sup>ACI</sup> Silvester Ó Muir <sup>S/D</sup> Annraoi Ó Sibhéir
<b>2002</b>	
Seán Mac Conmara <sup>S/D</sup> Seán Mac Gabhann <sup>ACI</sup> Seamus Ó Conghaile <sup>S/D</sup>	Colm Ó Ceallacháin <sup>S/D</sup> Tadhg Ó Siochfhradha <sup>S/D</sup> William White <sup>S/D</sup>
<b>2003</b>	
Uinsin Mac Domhnaill <sup>S/D</sup> Proinsias Ó Maolmhuidh	Proinsias Ó Donnchadha <sup>S/D</sup> Edward Kelly
<b>2004</b>	
Dominic de Búrca <sup>S/D</sup> Frank Holohan Gabriel Martin <sup>S/D</sup> Proinsias Mac Suibhne <sup>S/D</sup>	Márie Ní Luain Torlach O'Connor <sup>ACI</sup> Mícheál Ó Mathúna <sup>S/D</sup>
<b>2005</b>	
Breandán E. Ó Murchú <sup>S/D</sup> Peadar Mac Cana <sup>S/D</sup>	Mícheál Ó Conghaile <sup>S/D</sup>
Resignations 2001-2005	
Mary Meaney Siobhán Ní Mhurchú Geraldine O'Connor Eugene Toolan	
Career Breaks and Secondments 2001-2005	
Siobhán Broderick Muireann Ní Mhóráin <sup>S/D</sup> Nuala Nic an Iomaire Noreen Kavanagh Eileen Kent	
Colleagues Deceased 2001-2005	
Seán Ó Fiachra <sup>DCI</sup> (Retired 2001), (RIP 09/2001) Michael Darmody <sup>S/D</sup> (RIP 02/2003) Eoghan Ó Baoighill <sup>S/D</sup> (Retired 2002), (RIP 11/2004)	

**DCI** Deputy Chief Inspector.

**ACI** Assistant Chief Inspector.

**S/D** Senior or Divisional Inspector.



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