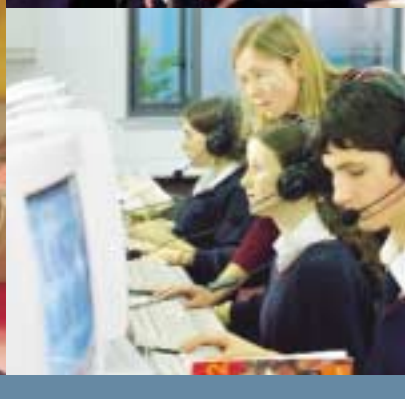
Department of Education and Science
An Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta



AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS AGUS EOLAÍOCHTA | DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Annual Report 2002

Tuarascáil Bhliantúil 2002

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Mission

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

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

High-Level Goals

The Department has the following high-level goals:

- To promote equity and inclusion
- To promote quality outcomes
- To promote lifelong learning
- To plan for education that is relevant to personal, social, cultural and economic needs
- To enhance the capacity of the Department of Education and Science for service delivery, policy formulation, research and evaluation.

Activities

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

- Policy planning and review
- Quality assurance
- Human and financial resource allocation
- Planning and provision of education infrastructure
- Examinations administration
- Administration of large-scale executive and operational functions
- Advice and support to educational management and staff.

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Foreword by the Minister

I am pleased to publish the Annual Report of my Department for 2002. It details the progress made towards the achievement of the high-level goals and objectives set out in our 2001-2004 Strategy Statement.

The primary purpose of education is to provide everyone with the opportunity to achieve his or her full potential both as an individual and as a member of society. Education is also crucial to our economic and social development - so our investment in the education of each individual is in turn linked to our well-being and cohesion as a nation.

We live in a changing world where the continuous acquisition of new knowledge and skills is vital. Many of us already enjoy the opportunities for learning. The challenge is to extend these opportunities to all and to try and offset any impediments that prevent children and learners from deriving full benefit from the education system.

This report details the targeted initiatives we have in place to address disadvantage at all levels of education. These include curriculum innovation, the provision of extra teachers and facilities and new programmes. Second chance education and training are very important here and these have changed considerably in recent years. We are, also, developing access programmes to support learners from backgrounds which were traditionally under-represented in third-level institutions. That said, there is a lot of ground to make up in this area.

Noel Dempsey, T.D.
Minister for Education and Science

As you read this report, I hope that you will agree that significant effort and resources have gone into meeting the objectives set out in the last Strategy Statement. However, you will also see the challenges that we face in the future. A new Strategy Statement has been framed which will assist us in meeting these challenges. With the continued support of the partners in Education and the dedication and willingness of the staff of the Department I am confident that we will be able to build on our achievements and work towards providing relevant and accessible education opportunities for everyone.

Noel Dempsey
Minister for Education and Science

Statement from Secretary General

John Dennehy
Secretary General

I am pleased to present the 2002 Annual Report of the Department of Education & Science.

The purpose of this report is to present the achievements of the Department in 2002, aligned to the 2001- 2004 Strategy Statement. The report shows the diversity of our work and our customer base and how our resources are allocated and accounted for.

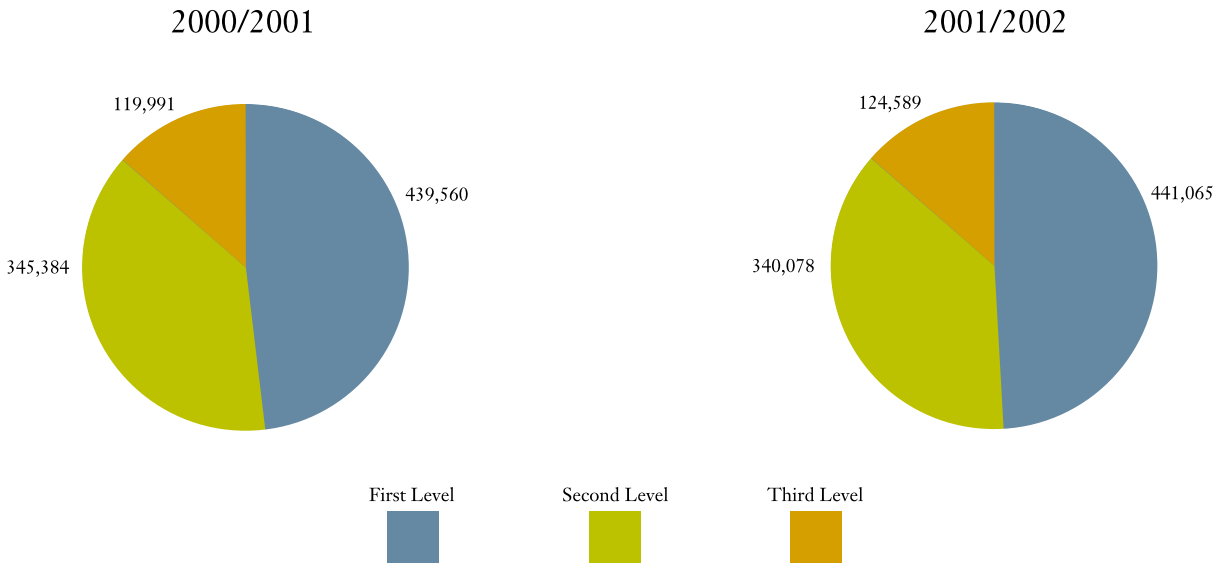
Along with effectively delivering education services, 2002 also saw the Department engaged in a major programme of structural reform that culminated in the setup of the State Examinations Commission and the Special Education Council. This programme of structural reform will enable us to focus more on our core work, including policy formulation and evaluation.

It is important to reflect on what has been achieved over the past year and I would like to express my thanks to all staff for their hard work and dedication.

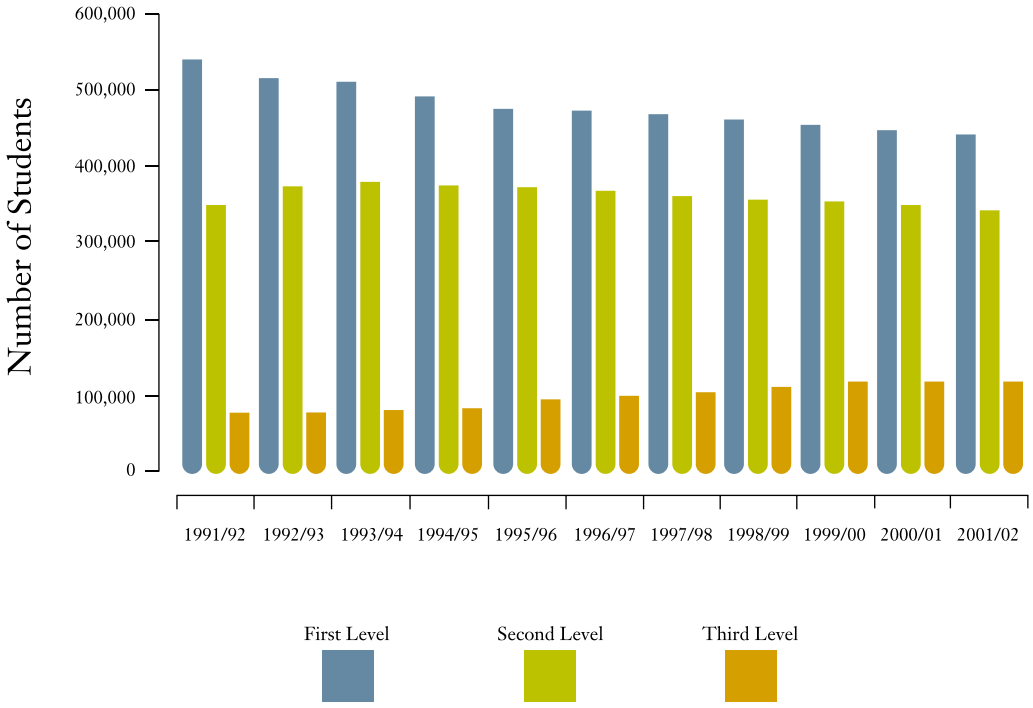
John Dennehy
Secretary General

Key Education Statistics

Number of full-time students in Institutions aided by the Department of Education & Science by level

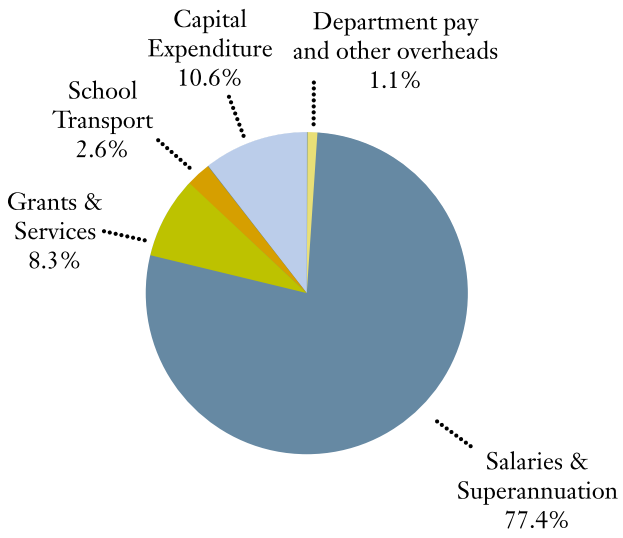


Full-time enrolments in Institutions aided by the Department of Education & Science

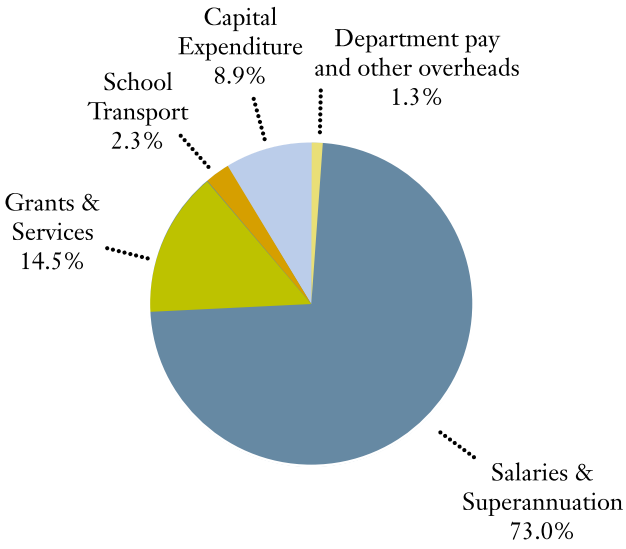


Education and Related Expenditure 2002

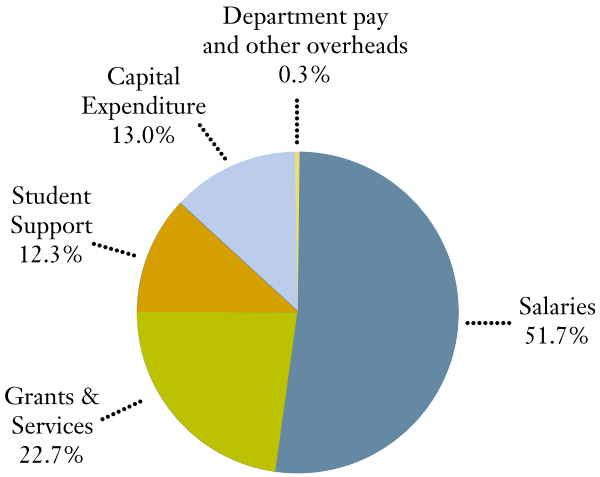
First-Level Education



Second-Level Education



Third-Level Education



How the money is spent

In 2002, funding of €5.3 billion was provided for the education sector. This funding is principally for three major education programmes, i.e., First Level, Second Level and Third-Level Education. The Department also provides funding for a number of other smaller programmes relating to non-school services mainly youth and cultural activities.

The following is a summary by principal programme of gross expenditure in 2002 compared to 2001:

First Level

	€000s	
	2001	2002 Estimate
Salaries & Superannuation	1,232	1,435
Grants & Services	149	153
School Transport	46	48
Capital Expenditure	169	196
Department Pay & Other Overheads	21	21

Second Level

	€000s	
	2001	2002 Estimate
Salaries & Superannuation	1,315	1,506
Grants & Services	277	299
School Transport	31	48
Capital Expenditure	188	184
Department Pay & Other Overheads	26	27

Third Level

	€000s	
	2001	2002 Estimate
Salaries	647	730
Grants & Services	303	321
Student Support	149	174
Capital Expenditure	198	184
Department Pay & Other Overheads	4	4

Focus - Teachers' Payroll

A central function of the Department is the payment of salaries to 42,000 serving teachers in first and second-level schools and 5,000 Special Needs Assistants. We also pay the pensions of 13,000 retired teachers.

The Department operates the largest payrolls in the country. These payrolls are complex as teachers are paid a number of different types of allowances. A further complexity is the fact that teachers and Special Needs Assistants are employed by Boards of Management of schools and the data required to operate the payrolls must be submitted by these Boards.

Statistics

Ninety per cent of serving teachers and all Special Needs Assistants are paid by the electronic transfer system referred to as Paypath. Although the figure for retired teachers paid through this mechanism is currently sixty per cent, it is increasing as people appreciate the benefits of the system.

The overall pay bill for the payrolls in 2003 is €2.8 billion. The accurate projection of estimates for future years and the monitoring of expenditure is a major function of the payroll sections.

Payroll continues to be an area of ongoing change. The payment of benchmarking arrears, the introduction of the *Protection of Employees (part-time work) Act 2001*, the introduction of job-sharing, parental leave, carers leave and other schemes all require adjustments to payroll systems. A team of dedicated IT people are continuously updating the payrolls so as to have the most modern facilities with a mission of providing a better customer service.

Customer Service

As part of its commitment to customer service, deduction facilities, in addition to statutory deductions, are provided on the teacher payrolls. These deduction facilities include union deductions, additional voluntary contributions and health insurance.

Change and Developments

A key recommendation of the Cromien report, which sets out a reform programme for the Department, was the establishment of a single payroll section, responsible for salary payments to all currently serving school staff and retired staff. The introduction of integrated payrolls will mean an improved customer service. Developments include: –

- The introduction of a revised payslip for all school staff
- The development of an online claims system, using web based technology for the payment, initially, of substitute and part-time teachers in first and second-level schools
- The introduction of fortnightly payment for retired teachers
- The introduction of a Paypath facility for all substitute teachers employed in schools.

Main Developments in 2002

Equity and Inclusion

The Department seeks to promote equality of access, participation and benefit for all in accordance with their needs and abilities. The Department's approach is based on a continuum of provision, from early childhood through adulthood, with the focus on preventative strategies and integrated community responses. The objective is to ensure that all young people leave the educational system with an adequate education and related qualifications to support their full participation in the economy, in employment and in society. The Department aims to improve equality of access and participation at all levels for students with special needs. Targeted funding and other supports are provided to encourage the optimum degree of integration of pupils with special needs in regular classes and schools, having regard to the needs and capacities of the pupils themselves. Access programmes, funded by the Department, are also being developed to support learners from backgrounds, which are traditionally under-represented in third-level institutions.

Strategy: Foster readiness of young children for learning

Early Childhood Education

The Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education became operational in 2002. The Centre is responsible for developing a quality framework for early childhood education in accordance with the objectives of the White Paper on Early Education *Ready to Learn*. It is developing appropriate forms of early intervention and support for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, and on a pilot basis, for children with disabilities. It is also developing a quality framework for early childhood education and is preparing the groundwork for the establishment of an Early Childhood Education Agency.

The work of the Centre is undertaken in close consultation with the Department and the various related agencies, advisory bodies and providers.

Expenditure provision	€3.4 million over 3 years

Early Start

1,570 pupils in 40 schools are benefiting from the Early Start programme. The Early Start pre-school intervention is a programme, for children aged 3 to 4 years, in areas of social disadvantage. It was initiated so that young children could experience an educational programme, which would enhance their overall development and prevent school failure and offset the effects of social disadvantage.

Expenditure in 2002	€1.88 million*

* Figure is exclusive of Teachers' salaries

Strategy: Provide for special learning needs

The National Council for Special Education

In July 2001, the Government approved the establishment of an independent National Council for Special Education.

Further information is included on this subject in one of our focus articles titled – Programme of Change & Structural Reform.

Special Needs Students

Developments in recent years include improving the provision of education services for children with special needs, both in ordinary and mainstream schools and in special schools. Schools apply for and receive additional teaching resources in respect of pupils who are assessed as having special needs and who require additional teaching support. This additional support includes the following:

Learning Support Teacher Service

This service provides assistance for children experiencing learning difficulties, particularly in the core area of literacy. All first and second-level schools now have access to learning-support teaching. Guidelines are in place to assist schools in planning and focusing on getting full benefit from this service.

	No of Teachers	Programme Cost in 2002 (€m)
First Level	1,531	54
Second Level	557	22

Resource Teacher Service

Resource teaching posts and hours are provided for pupils who are assessed as having special needs and who require additional teaching support.

	No of Teachers	Programme Cost in 2002 (€m)
First Level	2,300	92
Second Level	559	22

Visiting Teacher Service

The Visiting Teacher Service supports pupils with visual or hearing impairment or Downs Syndrome, in the first and second-level systems. The Inspectorate manages the service at present and each visiting teacher covers a geographical area of the country.

	No of Teachers	Programme Cost in 2002 (€m)
First & Second Level	40	1.8

Special Needs Assistants

Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) are appointed specifically to assist in the care of pupils with disabilities and provide general assistance to the class teachers. The allocation of SNA support can be made on a full-time or part-time basis (e.g., an hour or more per day) and can be on a shared basis.

	No of SNAs	Programme Cost in 2002 (€m)
First Level	3,800 (full-time) 1,000 (part-time)	100
Second Level	239	4.7

Educational Provision for Children with Autism

The Department funds a number of pilot projects, which are delivering a dedicated Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) model of response to children with autism. There are 121 special classes for children with autistic spectrum disorder - 64 classes in primary schools and 57 classes in special schools.

Educational Provision for Children with Dyslexia

Children with dyslexia are generally catered for, on an integrated basis, in primary schools where they can be supported by the learning support teacher service or the resource teacher service. Where the condition is of a more serious nature, provision can be made in one of the 4 special schools or 23 special classes attached to primary schools.

The following recommendations have been implemented arising from publication of the report of the Task Force on Dyslexia published in 2002:

- Provision of on-line training course for teachers catering for pupils with dyslexia

- The appointment of 10 new Learning Support Trainers to the Primary Curriculum Support Programme

- A reduction from 11:1 to 9:1 in the pupil teacher ratio applicable to special classes catering for children with dyslexia.

Strategy: Promote access and inclusion at all levels of education

Special Schools for Young Offenders

There are five special schools for young offenders under the aegis of the Department. These schools will become known as *Children Detention Schools* following the implementation of the *Children Act 2001*. The schools provide residential care, education and rehabilitation for young people referred by the Courts. These schools operate in accordance with the *Criteria and Standards for Children Detention Schools* developed and published in 2002.

Psychological Services for Schools

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) provides an educational psychological service to schools.

NEPS psychologists are located throughout the country in 10 regions to facilitate co-operation with the psychological services provided by the Health Boards and Voluntary Bodies. Pending the expansion of NEPS to all schools, funds have been allocated to allow for the commissioning of psychological assessments from private practitioners.

Educational Disadvantage

The Educational Disadvantage Committee was established in 2002, under the *Education Act, 1998*, to advise the Minister on policies and strategies to identify and correct educational disadvantage.

The Educational Disadvantage Committee is a statutory committee with members from voluntary and other bodies who have particular insights and experience in the area of tackling disadvantage.

There is a larger Forum on Educational Disadvantage, which met for the first time in November 2002 and was attended by approximately 240 delegates, representing a wide range of educational partners, as well as bodies and agencies active in tackling social exclusion. A report of the Forum proceedings was published early in 2003 and will inform the work of the Educational Disadvantage Committee.

Giving Children an Even Break by Tackling Disadvantage

The objective of the Giving Children an Even Break Programme is to address educational disadvantage in targeted primary schools. The programme involves the appointment of over 200 extra teachers and extra funding of approximately €33million, to be spent over the three-year period 2001-2003. The schools in the programme were identified in a survey, carried out by the Educational Research Centre, which was the most comprehensive survey ever of the incidence of educational disadvantage in primary schools. Support for individual schools is based on the concentration of pupils from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

No. of Schools	2350
Expenditure in 2002	€5.02 million

*Figure is exclusive of Teachers' Salaries

Home School Community Liaison Scheme (HSCL)

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

Currently, 278 primary schools and 188 schools at second level are in the scheme.

The School Completion Programme (SCP)

This programme is an important part of the Department's strategy to discriminate positively in favour of children and young people who are at risk of early school leaving. The School Completion Programme aims to develop local strategies to ensure maximum participation levels in the education process. The Programme incorporates the elements of best practice established by the pilot phases of the 8-15 Year Old Early School Leaver Initiative (ESLI) and the Stay-in-School Retention Initiative at second level (SSRI). It is funded on a multi-annual basis under the National Development Plan with assistance from the European Social Fund.

Eligible schools were selected on the basis of their retention rates using data from the Department's Post-Primary Pupil database.

	No of Schools participating in SCP	Expenditure in 2002 (€m)
First Level	288	14.2
Second Level	112	

National Educational Welfare Board

The National Educational Welfare Board is an independent statutory body established by the Minister in 2002, under the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*. The Act

provides a framework for promoting regular school attendance and tackling the problems of absenteeism and early school leaving.

The Board has responsibility for ensuring that every child aged 6 - 16 years attends a recognised school or otherwise receives an appropriate minimum education. The Board is required to advise and assist parents who are experiencing difficulty in ensuring that their children attend school regularly. It is also required to assist schools in meeting their obligations under the Act. The Board also has responsibilities in relation to children who are educated outside of a recognised school and children who leave school to take up employment.

In 2002, the board appointed an interim Chief Executive Officer. In addition, 37 former school attendance officers, who were employed by Local Authorities under the previous legislation, were transferred to the Board.

Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998

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

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

- permanently exclude a student from the school

- suspend a student from the school for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days in any one school year, or

- refuse to enrol a student in the school.

Section 29 Appeals in 2002- First and Second Levels

	First Level	Second Level
Number of Appeals received	15	59
Withdrawn	3	10
Resolved at Local Level	2	0
Resolved at Facilitation	3	22
Upheld at Hearing	3	18
Not upheld at Hearing	4	9

Youthreach

Youthreach is part of a national programme of second-chance education and training in Ireland. Its focus is 15 to 18 year-olds who have left school before getting qualifications. In some cases, young people outside this age group may be able to attend the programme. Participants can acquire certification through FETAC (Foundation and Level 1), through the Leaving Certificate Applied, and through subjects in the Junior and Leaving Certificate. All Youthreach centres provide a substance misuse prevention programme and, in co-operation with other State agencies, a crime awareness programme "Copping On".

Number of Youthreach Centres	77
Number of Senior Traveller Training Centres	30
Number of Participants	7162
Spending in 2002	€34.15million

Youthreach is funded by the Department with assistance from the European Social Fund as part of the National Development Plan 2000-2006.

Traveller Education

Integration, an inter-cultural approach and age appropriate placement are key Department policies. The Department has implemented a range of provisions with the objective of significantly increasing the participation of Traveller children in the education process.

These include increased funding and additional teaching resources.

Resource Allocation (September 2002)	Number	No. of pupils	Grants per pupil
First-level Schools	458	5500	€266 (under 12) €472.50 (over 12)
Second-level schools in receipt of extra teaching hours	124	1400	€472.50
Traveller pre-schools	52	530	
Special schools for Travellers	3	164	
Junior Traveller Training Centres	3	100	
Senior Traveller Training Centres	28	1000	
Youthreach		220	

Educational Provision for non-nationals in Ireland

Ireland is evolving into a multi-ethnic society. This has implications for education provision.

There are a number of initiatives to deal with Ireland's growing ethnic diversity. These include:

- Additional teaching and non-pay resources for schools at first and second level to cater for the needs of pupils for whom English is not the mother tongue

- Language tuition for refugees through the Integrate Ireland Language Training unit

- Funding for the literacy and language needs of adults

- Information booklet for schools on asylum seekers
- Information on participation in further education of non-EU nationals.

Student Support Schemes for Further and Higher Education

The Department is responsible for the management of a range of student support schemes, which provide means-tested financial assistance to further and higher education students. There are four maintenance grant schemes.

Expenditure under the Four Maintenance Grant Schemes - 2002

Scheme	No of Grantholders[1]	Expenditure in 2002 €m
Higher Education Grants	23,340	67.6
VEC Scholarships	5,780	16.9
Third Level Trainees Maintenance Grants	13,870	35.5
Post Leaving Certificate Grants	6,000	12
TOTAL	48,990	132

Provision of Free Tuition Fees for Further and Higher Education

Under this provision, the Department meets the tuition fees of eligible students who are attending approved full-time undergraduate courses. The cost in 2002 was €240 million.

Access to Higher Education

The Department has responsibility for promoting access and participation opportunities for all students, irrespective of age, disability or social background. There is provision for a Third-Level Access Fund totalling €120 million, over the period 2000 - 2006 in the National Development Plan. The purpose is to tackle under-representation by three target groups:-

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

Access Measures

ESF-Aided Special Rates of Maintenance Grant

Following a review of the operation of the special rates of grant ("Top-up"), the annual income threshold for the special rates was increased by 32%. The grant was increased to €4,000 for students residing more than 15 miles from college and €1,600 for students resident within 15 miles of college. This was equivalent to a "top-up" of €1,490 and €596 respectively, for eligible students, on the ordinary maintenance grant. The number of students qualifying for the "top-up" grant increased from 3,000 in the 2001/02 academic year to approx 7,500 in the 2002/03 academic year.

The ESF-Aided Millennium Partnership Fund for Disadvantage

The Millennium Partnership Fund for Disadvantage was increased from €1.27 million to €2 million. Area Development Management Ltd (ADM) administers the Fund.

The ESF-Aided Student Assistance Fund

This Fund provides financial assistance to disadvantaged students who require additional support to enable them to fully benefit from their third-level studies. The third-level institutions administer the Fund. The provision for this Fund increased from €7.49 million in 2001 to €8.94 million in 2002.

The ESF-aided Fund for Students with Disabilities

The Department allocates funding towards the cost of services and the purchase of equipment for students with disabilities attending courses in third-level institutions. The number of approved applications increased from 809 in 2001 to over 1,050 in 2002. Expenditure under the Fund increased from €2.6 million in 2001 to €3.7 million in 2002.

[1] The numbers are for the 2001/02 academic year. Finalised figures for the 2002/03 academic year are not yet available.

Lifelong Learning

The White Paper on Adult Education *Learning for Life* sets out the framework for the development of adult education and promotion of lifelong learning. Recommendations include the implementation of a national adult literacy strategy, expansion of part-time options in further education through a Back to Education Initiative, and the enhancement of support services such as guidance, counselling and childcare. A number of these programmes are supported by funding from the European Social Fund as part of the National Development Plan 2000-2006.

Strategy: To promote access and inclusion at all levels of education

Early Literacy Measure

The Early Literacy Measure is a pro-active approach to preventing literacy difficulties. The budget for 2002 was €2.26 million and includes the following measures:

- The training programme for Learning-Support teachers and Resource teachers
- The extension of the Reading Recovery Pilot Scheme
- The Summer Camp Project
- Support for the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) Literacy Strategy. This includes the National Demonstration Project for the provision of libraries for JCSP schools.

Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)

The Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) is a second chance education and training programme, which provides courses of up to two years duration for unemployed people. The scheme has proved successful in opening up learning and progression opportunities for people who have been marginalised by unemployment. Trainees on VTOS can take subjects in the Junior or Leaving Certificate programmes or modules or awards certified by the Further Education and Training Awards Council at Foundation Level, Level 1, Level 2 or 3.

The VTOS scheme is operated through 33 Vocational Education Committees, with a total of 127 centres throughout the country.

Number of Participants	Programme Cost in 2002 €m
5,000	48.5

Post-Leaving Certificate Courses (PLC)

Post-Leaving Certificate courses are full-time, of one and two years duration, and offer integrated general education, vocational training and work experience for those who need further training to enhance their chances of gaining employment.

All programmes feature general education, ICT and a work experience programme in addition to the vocational

options. Overall, an increasing number of mature students are entering the programme, and over 40% of the enrolment in the sector is now over 21. Certification is provided through FETAC Level 2 and Level 3, and colleges also supplement this with certification from private/professional bodies in certain disciplines.

Numbers in 2002

Schools	215
Students	28,656

Adult Literacy

VECs provide adult literacy services funded through the Department's Adult Literacy and Community Education budget.

In 2002, a further series of the TV adult literacy and awareness programme was commissioned and broadcast on RTE. In addition, a quality framework, nationally certified staff development programmes, research on assessment, and international co-operation have all been undertaken. Other programmes have been expanded such as the family learning programmes, literacy and language for non-nationals, programmes for special needs and for Travellers. A joint FAS/VEC Return to Learning Programme, which combined work experience within the Community Employment Scheme with intensive literacy tuition, is also being expanded nationally.

A workplace literacy programme has been piloted successfully and is being extended to all local authority areas, in co-operation with LANPAG (the Local Authority National Partnership Board).

Total numbers in 2002		Programme Cost in 2002
Venues	746	€16.4m
Learners	28,363	

Adult Guidance

An educational adult guidance service has been developed to meet the needs of learners in adult literacy, VTOS and adult and community education. The National Centre for Guidance in Education oversees this initiative. Over 7,000 people availed of this service in 2002. The programme cost €2.6 million.

Back to Education Initiative

The Back to Education Initiative provides opportunities for young people and adults to return to learning. With its emphasis on part-time provision, it provides the opportunity to combine a return to education and training with family, work and other responsibilities. The priority is adults with less than upper second-level education. An ICT skills initiative is part of the programme. A scheme of free tuition and reduced fees applies.

Participants - 6,000 Expenditure 2002 - €3.8 million

Education Equality Initiative

The Education Equality Initiative, which supports funding of 18 projects, aims to address gaps in provision of education and training for specific marginalised groups. The target groups include early school leavers, lone parents, Travellers, men and women experiencing rural isolation or urban deprivation, adults with special needs, literacy difficulties or drug abuse problems, and women experiencing domestic violence.

The projects support the development of models of good practice, which address gaps in the provision for educationally disadvantaged adults. Phase 1 is coming to an end and an evaluation report has been commissioned.

Total numbers in 2002		Spending in 2002
Projects	18	€700,000
Participants	355	

Community Education Facilitators

34 Community Education Facilitators were appointed in 2002 to the Vocational Education Committees to develop networks and liase with community education groups. Their role is to promote and assist groups in adult education provision. They also develop partnerships between statutory and voluntary interests, particularly in addressing the needs of those who are most marginalised.

National Adult Learning Council

The National Adult Learning Council was established in March 2002. It will play a key role in advising on future developments in adult education, promoting co-ordination and liaison, engaging in research and staff development. It will establish an advisory group on the integration of people with physical and learning disabilities into adult education.

Focus on Inspectorate

The role of the Inspectorate

The role of the Inspectorate is to evaluate the education system (particularly at primary and second level), to provide advice to those involved in the education system, and to contribute to the development of policy. This role was underpinned by legislation with the enactment of the *1998 Education Act*. The work of the Inspectorate involves significant co-operation with other divisions of the Department of Education and Science.

Quality assurance in the educational system

Quality in schools cannot be achieved by any single measure. It is best achieved where a range of measures work together to improve learning and teaching, and where everybody involved in the educational system is focused on improvement. During 2002, the Inspectorate continued to make a direct contribution to this process through the evaluation of schools. It also worked to support a range of other activities that contribute to enhancing teaching and learning. Together, all of these activities provide ongoing quality assurance for the educational system.

Evaluations in schools

The Inspectorate's external evaluation of the work of schools and teachers is designed to affirm good practice in schools, promote continuing improvement and self-review within schools, and provide system-wide information on the performance of schools. National evaluations, sometimes undertaken in co-operation with other countries, can provide valuable data and assist in policy development.

Evaluations in primary schools

Primary school inspections (tuairiscí scoile) were completed in over 470 schools in 2002. These inspections focus on the work of schools as a whole. Inspectors prepared and discussed draft reports with the staffs of the schools concerned before issuing the finalised reports to the principal and Board of Management.

An analysis of a representative sample of these reports was prepared and published as *Fifty School Reports-What Inspectors Say* in December 2002. This report provided a synthesis of inspectors' findings throughout the country. It described overall national trends and identified both strengths and areas where further development was necessary with primary schools.

The work of over 1500 newly qualified teachers was also inspected and reported upon as part of the probationary and registration process for these teachers. In addition, the work of 17 Irish primary teachers serving in European Schools in a number of EU member states was inspected.

A number of thematic evaluations, incorporating school visits and observations, were completed during the year. The work of 18 classes catering for children with Specific Speech and Language Disorders was evaluated. Reports on these classes were issued to the schools concerned and work started on a national evaluation report based on the data collected. Work also started on a similar evaluation of provision for children with Autism and was completed during 2003. An evaluation was also completed and

described in *Report on the Additional Allocation of Resources for Pupils with Special Educational Needs in a Number of Mainstream Primary Schools.*

Summary Table - Inspections in Primary Schools 2002

Types of inspection	Numbers
Tuairiscí scoile	474 (schools)
Probationary teachers	1500+ (teachers)
Specific Speech and Language Disorder Classes	18 (classes)
Autism specific provision	3 (units)
Primary teachers in European Schools	17 (teachers)

Evaluations in second-level schools

At present, the main form of inspection in second-level schools is subject inspection, where the teaching of individual subject areas is evaluated. The range and number of schools in which subject inspection was undertaken was increased significantly in 2002. Inspections were carried out in 330 second-level schools drawn from the voluntary secondary, community/comprehensive, and vocational education sectors.

A range of other inspections was completed, including inspections of provision in the case of Transition Year, Leaving Certificate Applied and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programmes, and in a number of Junior and Senior Traveller Education Centres. The provision of guidance education was evaluated in over 60 schools while the work of 22 Irish second-level teachers serving in European Schools in a number of EU member states was inspected.

School visits and observations were completed in respect of a thematic evaluation of the Junior Certificate Schools Programme—a special programme designed to encourage lower achieving students to complete the junior cycle of second-level education. Draft reports on the individual schools concerned were prepared and discussed with the staffs of the individual schools. Lessons from this evaluation process will be disseminated on completion of a national evaluation report.

Primary and post-primary inspectors also monitored the effectiveness of Irish language summer courses in Gaeltacht colleges by visiting and reporting on two-thirds of the courses in operation.

Summary Table - Inspections in Second-level Schools 2002

Types of inspection	Number of schools/centres
Subject inspections	330
Programme inspections (TYP/LCA/LCVP)	20
Guidance inspections	66
VTOS schemes	3
Junior Traveller Education Centres	3
Senior Traveller Education Centres	6
Irish teachers in European Schools	22
Junior Certificate Schools Programme	30
Coláistí Samhraidh (Irish summer colleges)	107

Supporting evaluative work

The Inspectorate seeks to constantly improve the techniques used in the collection of objective, dependable, high-quality data and to produce fair and balanced reports. The principles and guidelines that inform this evaluation work are detailed in the *Professional Code of Practice on Evaluation and Reporting for the Inspectorate.*

During 2002, the Inspectorate completed consultation and development work on a complementary review procedure

by which teachers and schools may seek a review of an inspection report or the work of an inspector. This was published as *Procedure for the Review of Inspections on Schools and Teachers under Section 13(9) of the Education Act 1998* and represents further progress in ensuring transparency and accountability.

Significant development work was also undertaken on the observation schedules and reporting templates used by inspectors when conducting inspections in primary and second-level schools and for use during the forthcoming implementation of Whole School Evaluation.

Quality assurance through participation in international evaluations

Through our participation in international surveys of achievement, the Irish educational system can avail of valuable comparative data. During 2002, the Inspectorate was involved directly in or supported a number of these projects including:

- OCED[1] Review of Early Childhood Education
- OECD Project on Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers
- OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)
- SICI[2] Project on Effective School Self-Evaluation (ESSE)
- SICI Project on Quality Partnerships in the Regions.

Supporting quality assurance in the educational system

While evaluation of schools is at the heart of the Inspectorate's work, inspectors engage in a number of other activities that support and improve the quality of the education system.

In 2002, inspectors contributed to improving the curricula for schools by participating in the curriculum and course committees of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. They also worked with the Department's In-Career Development Unit, the Primary Curriculum Support Programme and the Second-Level Support Service. Inspectors worked in the establishment and management of a pilot project to provide materials for the teaching of Irish in Gaeltacht and all-Irish schools, pending the establishment of An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta. Inspectors were also involved in the management of the School Development Planning Services (at first and second level) and the Leadership Development in Schools initiative.

During the year, inspectors worked on the development and implementation of policies designed to tackle educational disadvantage. This work included the development of guidelines for schools for the Giving Children an Even Break initiative, overseeing the School Completion Programme, managing the Home/School/Community Liaison initiative, editing and publishing Guidelines on Traveller Education (editions for both primary and second-level schools) and planning and organising a Reading Recovery initiative.

During 2002, post-primary inspectors acted as Chief Examiners for the State Examinations and a range of Chief Examiners' Reports was published. In addition, the Inspectorate, in conjunction with staff of the Department's Examinations Branch, worked to improve the training of assistant examiners and the monitoring of the marking process, and to enhance the appeals mechanisms. They also undertook further developmental work on the monitoring of oral examinations and the assessment of practical and project work.

Other areas of work included investigating complaints regarding schools and teachers, participating in Appeals Boards on admissions and exclusions of students under Section 29 of the *Education Act*, advising on provision for children with special educational needs, and participating on Local Drugs Task Forces. Members of the Inspectorate also chaired and participated in the work of the Department's Research & Development Committee, which published a compendium of outcomes from research supported in recent years, and on the editorial board of Oideas, the educational journal of the Department.

[1] OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
[2] SICI = Standing International Conference of Central and General Inspectorates of Education

Providing advice on educational policy and operational matters

The Inspectorate makes available professional expertise and advice on a wide range of educational matters to other divisions of the Department. This advice may be on policy development, matters of educational concern or debate, or on operational matters. During 2002, some of the issues on which the Inspectorate provided advice included the recognition of teacher qualifications, the effectiveness of special educational provision, the education of non-national children, the improvement of Traveller education, measures to improve science education, and the implementation of new or revised curricula in schools.

Quality Outcomes

Ensuring quality in education is one of our core responsibilities, with the Inspectorate playing a key role at first and second levels. The Department, together with the Higher Education Authority, the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, the Further Education and Training Awards Council and the Higher Education and Training Awards Council have a role in relation to quality of the further and higher education sectors.

The Department aims to improve the standard and quality of education and promote best practice in classrooms, schools, colleges and other centres for education. Evaluation of education programmes, assessment and certification, staff development and ongoing curriculum review all support this function.

The promotion of excellence in research is key to international competitiveness. The link between research and teaching and the role of third-level colleges as a major supplier to research efforts in Ireland is recognised. The involvement of the Department in international organisations supports the development of educational policies in line with best international practice.

Strategy: Promote high-quality outcomes for learners

Role of the Inspectorate

The Inspectorate is committed to an integrated quality assurance approach that will enhance the educational experience for students and improve learning outcomes. The work of the Inspectorate is highlighted in one of our focus articles.

Curricular Developments at Primary Level

The Primary School Curriculum, launched in September 1999, continues to be implemented on a phased basis over a seven-year period.

By June 2002, in-service training to support the curriculum was provided nationally in the areas of English, Irish, Visual Arts, Mathematics, and Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE). The Mathematics in-service programme comprised two consecutive day seminars and one school-based planning day. The days were structured around the five strands of the mathematics curriculum, with hands-on activities for participants in all sessions. There was one in-service day on SPHE. The Developmental Project in Science continued in the schools that participated in the previous year. Two extra trainers were added to the team and new schools were included in the project bringing the total number involved to almost 300.

From September 2002, in-service training continued in Science, SPHE, Irish, Learning Support and Children First.

Modern Language in Primary Schools Initiative

There are currently 378 schools participating in the Modern Languages in Primary Schools Initiative. Teacher Guidelines, to complement the Curriculum Guidelines already issued, were circulated during the 2001/2002 school year. Extensive in-service training is provided to all schools participating in the initiative.

The initiative is now funded under the National Development Plan. Participating schools receive a maximum resource grant of over €600 for the first two years in the scheme and an ongoing grant to employ a visiting teacher, where necessary.

The Department commissioned Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann to undertake an independent evaluation of the Pilot Project. This report was published in 2002.

Task Force on the Physical Sciences

The Task Force on the Physical Sciences was established to address concerns about the declining numbers of students opting to study the physical sciences in Irish schools and colleges. The final report, presented to the Minister in March 2002, was circulated to interested parties for observations. It is intended to prioritise key areas and to approach the implementation of the recommendations on a phased basis.

Curricular Developments at Second Level

Second-level education consists of a Junior Cycle catering for the 12-15 age group followed by a Senior Cycle catering for the 15-18 age group. The Junior Certificate Programme is three years in duration followed by the Junior Certificate examination. Senior Cycle may be two or three years depending on whether students take an optional one year Transition Year Programme. The established Leaving Certificate is a two year programme. Syllabuses are available in 34 subjects.

The *Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP)* is an alternative programme targeted only at schools already participating in the School Completion Programme. The programme is now available in 136 schools and attracts special funding.

The *Transition Year* is a one-year optional programme taken when the Junior Certificate programme has been completed. Some 500 schools are now offering Transition Year to over 23,000 students.

The *Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)* is a distinct, self-contained two-year Leaving Certificate programme aimed at preparing students for adult and working life. The LCA puts an emphasis on forms of achievement and skills that have not in the past been recognised by the established Leaving Certificate. Over 260 schools are now offering the LCA to approximately 8,000 students.

The *Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)* is a two-year programme with a strong vocational dimension. It provides students with the opportunity for self-directed learning, for innovation and for enterprise. Over 490 schools are now offering the LCVP to approximately 32,800 students.

Post-Primary Languages Initiative

The initiative was established in September 2000 to enhance the teaching of languages in second-level schools. It offers incentives to schools to provide or develop one of its target languages - Italian, Spanish, Japanese or Russian - in their curricula. There are currently 230 schools involved.

The European Language Label 2002 was awarded to this initiative.

Graduate Diploma courses for teachers of Spanish and Italian have commenced at DIT, Kevin Street. These courses will run over two years and include a summer course in the country of the chosen language.

Substance Misuse Prevention Programmes

The Department progressed initiatives to address the issue of drug misuse. Training was provided in the area of substance misuse prevention and in the implementation of relevant resource materials such as "Walk Tall" for primary schools and "On My Own Two Feet" for second-level schools. In addition, specific support was provided for all schools in Local Drugs Task Force areas.

Guidelines were issued to all schools in October 2002, as required under the National Drugs Strategy 2001 to 2008. Schools are currently in the process of drawing up such policies with support from the Health Boards, the Primary Curriculum Support Programme and Social Personal and Health Education Programmes (SPHE) support services. Department staff serve on each Local Drugs Task Force.

An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta

The Council for Gaeltacht and Gaelscoil Education - An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta was launched in March 2002. This is a new statutory body to promote education through Irish and the teaching and learning of Irish. The Council will have an advisory and support role in Irish language education and in the planning and co-ordination of textbooks and learning aids. It will be involved in the development of policies to facilitate education through Irish in primary and post-primary schools.

Occupational and Skills Requirements

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) is the planning and development body for higher education in Ireland. One of its principal functions is to maintain a continuous review of the demand and need for higher education and within this context, the HEA recommends to the Minister, the overall provision of student places.

The provision of 175 extra professional therapy training places for students was announced in May 2002 for physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech and language therapists. This will almost double the number of therapy places previously available. The first intake to the extra places commenced in the academic year 2002/03.

Information Technology Skills Investment Fund

The Third Report of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, published in July 2001, recommends investment in the IT area to provide for increased part-time training, increased places on post-graduate conversion courses, improved completion rates, and equipment renewal. An Expert Advisory Group was established, with responsibility to oversee the implementation of the recommendations.

The Department provided €8million in 2002, distributed to all third-level institutions as follows:

Renewal of IT equipment, etc.	€5.5million
Measures to increase completion rates in IT courses	€1.5million
Provision of part-time/ post-graduate courses	€1.0million

Response of the Technological Sector to Skills Needs

The Institutes of Technology continue to respond to skills needs by increasing capacity on existing courses, introducing new courses and developing a number of special skills initiatives as follows:

Accelerated Technician Programmes (ATP)

The ATP was introduced in a number of Institutes of Technology in 1998. Courses of 18-months duration are offered at National Certificate level in a range of skills needs areas including Computing, Manufacturing Technology, Industrial Science, Precision Engineering and Computer Aided-Mould Making Design. In 2002, over 440 students participated on these courses. A follow-on one-year National Diploma course, which was introduced in 2001, continued to run in a number of Institutes of Technology in 2002. These courses provide progression opportunities for graduates of the ATP National Certificate programme.

Institute Trainee Programme (ITP)

The ITP was launched in 2001, to provide additional third-level places in a number of designated skills shortage areas including Construction, Electronics Manufacturing, Pharmaceutical, Chemical, Healthcare, Food Technology, e-Business and Computing. This work-and-study based programme is aimed at enhancing access opportunities for non-traditional categories of learners and combines

employment with formal educational components. In 2002, there were almost 200 trainees on these courses.

Apprenticeship

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

The total number of training places in the education sector is in the region of 10,400. In response to increased numbers of apprentices seeking training, some 500 additional training places were provided in 2002/03.

A number of special courses were run during the summer of 2002 in a range of high demand trade areas. These special summer courses provided training for a further 746 apprentices.

National Framework of Qualifications

The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland and the Further and Higher Education and Training Awards Councils were established in 2001 to provide a unified framework for accreditation of all non-university education and training at further and higher levels.

Building on extensive consultations undertaken in 2001, the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland published a number of documents in 2002 setting out

- The principles, policies and criteria which would underpin the development of the framework of qualifications *(Towards National Framework of Qualifications – Establishment of Policies and Criteria, April 2002)*

- A discussion paper on the inclusion of professional and international awards in the framework *(Towards a National Framework of Qualifications –Inclusion of Professional and International Awards, May 2002)*

- The employment perspective on the framework *(Towards a National Framework of Qualifications – The Employment Perspective, November 2002)*

A key element of the new system is a focus on the achievement of learning outcomes (standards of knowledge, skills and competencies), which is designed to ensure that all learners can access accreditation irrespective of the learning site, whether in the formal, non-formal, community or workplace setting.

Strategy: Promote and ensure quality in educational provision and performance at all levels

Supply of Primary Teachers

There were 24,600 teaching posts in primary schools in December 2002. The projected pupil teacher ratio for the school year 2002/03 was 18:1.

The total intake to the Colleges of Education for primary teaching in 2002 was 1,461. Overall, there were 3,746 students in the colleges in 2002. Almost 1,280 primary teachers graduated from primary teacher training courses.

Supply of Second-level Teachers

There were 25,270 whole time equivalent teachers in the second-level system in the school year 2002/03. The pupil teacher ratio in this sector is now 13.6:1.

The Higher Diploma in Education is a one-year full-time course leading to the qualification to teach in secondary schools. Successful completion of an eligible primary degree course is an essential prerequisite. This degree

must be adequate to enable the holder to teach at least one subject or area of study approved in the Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools. A total of 938 students completed the Higher Diploma in Education in 2002.

In-Career Development

The In-Career Development Unit in the Department is responsible for the development, management, monitoring, funding and evaluation of a national programme of in-service training for teachers/tutors/management at first, second and further education levels and for parents involved at first and second levels. Programmes include:

- The Primary Curriculum Support Programme
- Second-level programmes to support curricular change
- The Second Level Support Service to provide support for teachers working with school programmes such as the Transition Year Programme
- School Development Planning programmes at primary and second level

New programmes include:

- A comprehensive programme of training in the special needs area
- A Leadership Development Programme for Schools focusing on developing the skills of school management
- A pilot induction programme for newly qualified teachers.

The In-Career Development Unit also has responsibility for the national network of Education Centres. These centres provide a wide range of professional development courses at local level.

School Development Planning Initiative

The School Development Planning Initiative aims to stimulate and strengthen a culture of collaborative development planning in schools with a view to promoting school improvement and effectiveness. From September 2002 in-service training in school development planning has been provided for all primary schools. Schools that have participated in the initiative have put in place development plans for aspects of their practice and operation.

At post-primary level, in-service training in school development planning has been provided for all schools through programmes of regional seminars since the inception of the Initiative. A survey of 209 schools which was conducted in the first half of 2002 revealed that 91% of post-primary schools surveyed had engaged in the school development planning process by June 2002.

Student Council Guidelines

Section 27 of the *Education Act, 1998* provides that students of post-primary schools may establish a student council. Guidelines "*Student Councils: A Voice for Students*", were published in June 2002.

The guidelines outline best practice, giving a number of models regarding size and composition of councils. They also contain advice for students on the development of a constitution, the election of officers, and the planning and management of the council's work. Support materials are also included, such as a sample calendar of activities, and a sample constitution.

Support for Principals at Primary Level

Administrative support is provided for principals in primary schools. The enrolment figure for the

appointment and retention of administrative principals in ordinary schools is 180 and in Gaelscoileanna is 158.

From September 2002, the following level of support is provided to primary schools with an enrolment of less than 180 pupils (158 for Gaelscoileanna):

Number of Teachers	Support provided
Principal plus nine teachers, when all ex-quota posts are counted	An additional mainstream class teacher to enable the principal become an administrative principal
6 mainstream teachers or less	14 to 22 days paid substitution in each school year, depending on the size of the school, to allow the teaching principal undertake administrative functions

Strategy: Promote excellence in research

Programme for Research in Third-Level Institutions (PRTLI)

This programme provides integrated financial support for the institutional research strategies, programmes and infrastructure. A key element in PRTLI proposals is the provision of post-graduate and post-doctoral research posts. By 31 August 2002, a total of 540 post-graduate researchers had been assigned. The Higher Education Authority manages the programme.

Since the launch of the programme in 1998, awards of €605 million have been made. These include:

- New research funding to 15 third-level institutions in total, including 6 Institutes of Technology
- 9 Research Centres completed in 2002 (in addition to the 4 completed in 2001)
- 62 new and expanded research programmes established
- 40 new inter-institutional programmes/initiatives have been established

Technological Sector Research

A specific allocation of €38.09 million has been assigned under the National Development Plan to support and strengthen the research capabilities of the technological sector. In the 2002 financial year, €5.7 million was expended for the three strands of this initiative.

Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology

The Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology was set up to promote excellence and the highest standards in research in the three broad disciplines of science, engineering and technology. In 2002, the Council funded 219 post-graduate scholarships, which involves expenditure of €10.9 million up to 2005. A further 58 basic research grants were awarded by the Council. These will involve expenditure of €7.9 million up to 2005. The Council also launched a Post-doctoral Fellowship scheme in November 2002.

Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences

The Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences was established in 1999. The Council's mission is to encourage excellence and the highest standards in the humanities and social sciences and to develop opportunities and policies for the promotion of research. In 2002, the Council made a total of 165 awards under its 5 Government of Ireland scholarship schemes. The estimated cost of these awards is €3.3 million.

Strategy: Invest in education infrastructure

Commission on School Accommodation

The Commission on School Accommodation was established to inform national policy decisions on school provision at first and second levels.

As a result of the Commission's report on *Criteria and Procedures for the Recognition of New Primary Schools*, the New Schools Advisory Committee was set up to process applications for the recognition of new primary schools. There is also an appeals process.

The Commission's reports *Amalgamation of First-Level Schools and Amalgamation of Second-Level Schools* contain a blueprint on amalgamation policy for first and second-level school amalgamations. The recommendations contained in the reports are widely used.

The Commission's report *Planning School Provision - Three Praxes* was finalised in December 2002. The report contains demographic analysis and praxes for planning school provision in a developing area, an urban area of population decline and a rural area.

Provision of Educational Accommodation

The Department's capital programme is geared to plan for and meet, as far as resources permit, the accommodation needs of primary and second-level schools and third-level institutions. It involves developing and managing multi-annual capital programmes for each of these sectors so as to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is put in place within a quality and value for money framework.

A pilot inventory of accommodation of 115 primary and post-primary schools in County Kildare commenced in 2002. The information gained from the survey will be placed on a Geographic Information System (GIS) database for ease of access.

Primary School Buildings

Expenditure on Primary School Buildings in 2002 amounted to €172.8 million. Progress in 2002 includes:

- Construction was completed on over 50 major primary school building projects (i.e., projects of €317,000 or more) in 2002

- 39 major projects in the 2002 School Building Programme at Primary Level were given approval to proceed to construction
- Architectural planning on 426 major primary school building projects was underway
- 1772 minor grants (i.e., grants less than €317,000) were approved
- The process of acquiring 57 new sites for primary schools was underway
- A programme of asbestos remediation is ongoing
- A programme of radon mitigation is ongoing

Post-Primary School Buildings

Expenditure on Post-Primary School Buildings in 2002 amounted to €171.4 million. Progress in 2002 includes:

- Construction was completed on 32 major post-primary school building projects (i.e. projects of €634,869 or more) in 2002
- 35 post primary school projects each costing €634,869 or more were given approval to proceed to construction.
- Architectural planning on over 150 large-scale projects was underway
- 179 minor grants (i.e. grants less than €634,869) were approved

- A programme of asbestos remediation is ongoing
- A programme of radon mitigation is ongoing
- A programme to control airborne dust levels in woodwork rooms in post-primary schools is ongoing.

Third-level Buildings

The Department invests in the modernisation and development of third-level campuses. Expenditure in 2002 amounted to €183.9 million.

Institute of Technology Sector

- 10 new accommodation projects were completed along with 33 refurbishment projects and 15 infrastructure works projects across the various Institutes of Technology
- 5 furniture and equipment projects, 2 site acquisitions and a number of minor capital works were completed
- 22 projects were at construction, 28 projects progressed through architectural planning and 9 new projects were initiated
- Funding of €11.1 million was provided for over 400 minor capital refurbishment/upgrading projects in institutes of technology.

Higher Education Authority (HEA) Sector & Other Third-Level Colleges

- 23 projects, including 9 projects under PRTLI, were completed and 15 capital projects were under construction. In addition, 16 projects continued through architectural planning
- Funding for equipment upgrading was provided
- Funding of €9 million was provided for approximately 115 projects under the Building Element Replacement Programme.

Public Private Partnerships (PPP)

The Department completed the first pilot PPP in the State in 2002. In November 2001, following an EU-wide tendering process, the Department entered into a contract with Jarvis Projects to design, build, finance and operate five second-level schools located in Sligo, Monaghan, Clare and two in county Cork. All of the schools were completed on time and four of them were completed ahead of schedule. As part of the contract, Jarvis Projects operate the schools under a maintenance/facilities management concession for twenty five years. The management of the schools and their day to day running remains with the school management authorities.

Under the PPP model, the new National Maritime College in Ringaskiddy, Co. Cork will be designed, built, financed and operated for twenty five years by Focus Education. It will accommodate approximately 750 full-time equivalent students and will provide training facilities that will service the existing needs of both the Cork Institute of Technology and the non-military needs of the Irish Naval Service.

Energy Conservation measures in the Education Sector

The Planning and Building Unit within the Department continues to improve energy conservation in educational buildings. This process involves what is called the DART approach i.e., Design, Awareness, Research and Technology.

Design

At the design stage the emphasis is on improved thermal envelope design and improved passive solar design, natural ventilation and daylighting.

Awareness

Working with a number of external agencies, the Department has developed energy efficient competitions, Energy Awareness week and Green Flag schools.
A greater focus on training and demonstration of new schools to management and staff is also being developed.

Research

A number of projects are currently underway through cross border partnering with the Southern and Educational Library Board in Armagh under the InterReg funding programme.

Technology

A number of projects are progressing under joint funding by the Department and Sustainable Energy Ireland, in areas such as improved natural ventilation and daylighting, the application of heat pump technology, wind turbine and better energy controls.

Strategy: Provide for information and communications technologies (ICT) in support of learning

Schools Information Communications Technologies Initiatives

The Department's *Blueprint for the Future of ICT* in Education sets out a three-year strategy for supporting schools in the promotion of greater access and use of ICT in teaching. Grants amounting to approximately €23 million were provided to primary and post-primary schools in 2002. Key elements of this strategy include:

- Enhancement of computer facilities and networks in schools - since 1998 average pupil/ computer ratios have fallen from 37:1 to less than 12:1 at primary level and from 16:1 to 9:1 at post-primary level;
- Improved access to the Internet - during the 2002/03 school year, schools were provided with up to 10 hours per week free access time on the Internet;
- Provision of ICT advice and support services to schools - This is provided by the National Centre for Technology in Education.
- Further development of teaching skills in classroom use of ICT
- Development of educational software/ multimedia resources for use in schools.

Strategy: Support the development of young people outside formal education

Youth Work Service

Schemes for the provision of youth work programmes and services are as follows:

Youth Service Grant Scheme	32 organisations/programmes
Special Projects for Youth	165 community based youth projects
Youth Information Centres	27 Youth Information Centres
Local Youth Club Grant Scheme	Assists local Youth Clubs and Groups in areas such as start up cost, insurance, etc.
Young Peoples' Facilities and Services Fund	Assists in the development of youth facilities, including sports and recreational facilities, and services in disadvantaged areas where drug problems exist.

Funding for the youth work sector in 2002 amounted to a total of €25.7 million.

A new National Youth Work Advisory Committee (NYWAC) was established in April 2002, under the terms of the *Youth Work Act, 2001*. The main role of the NWYAC is to advise the Minister on youth work policy.

In September 2002, the *Code of Good Practice, Child Protection for the Youth Work Sector* was published.

Strategy: Contribute to North/South co-operation

North/South Co-operation

The Department, through the North/South Ministerial Council agreed a number of joint actions in each of the following areas:

- Special Educational Needs Provision
- Educational Underachievement
- Teacher Qualifications
- School, Youth and Teacher Exchanges

The Department supported a variety of school-based initiatives aimed at enhancing co-operation and understanding between North and South.

Under the EU Peace II Programme, nine projects were recommended for funding including Exchange programmes and Special Education Needs.

Strategy: Provide an industrial relations framework and service

Provision of an Industrial Relations Framework and Service

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

The industrial relations climate in second-level schools continued to be difficult. The ASTI maintained their pursuit of a 30% pay claim and instructed their members to withdraw from co-operation with the implementation of new curricula, syllabi and programmes. They also issued a directive to their members to withdraw from supervision and substitution with effect from 4th March 2002. The directive applied to supervision at break times and before and after school and to substitution by permanent teachers for absent colleagues. The ban on supervision and substitution necessitated the recruitment of external supervisors by those schools affected by the directive.

Pay settlements within the sector were within the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness pay parameters.

Strategy: Promote Partnership and modernisation in education institutions under the aegis of the Department

Modernisation programme throughout the education sector

The Department actively promotes the development of Partnership in education institutions aimed at facilitating organisational change and improving service delivery. Education institutions developed modernisation plans through a partnership process in accordance with the requirements of the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness. A Quality Assurance Group composed of management, trade union and customer/client representatives carried out an assessment of progress. The Group concluded that progress in achieving the objectives of the modernisation programme throughout the sector was commensurate with the programme requirements. Expenditure on the partnership programme in 2002 amounted to €1.4 million.

Strategy: Contribute to international co-operation in education

EU/International Affairs

The Department works closely with the EU on education issues and in implementing programmes such as *Socrates* and *Leonardo da Vinci*. It also works with the OECD, the Council of Europe and UNESCO.

During 2002, European Education Ministers adopted a Declaration on the Promotion of Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training. The Department contributed to the formulation of this declaration.

Following on earlier discussions, education agreements with China and with Malaysia were approved by Dáil Éireann. These agreements help to promote the Irish education system to the wider world.

Bologna Process

In June 1999, the Ministers with responsibility for higher education from 29 European countries signed the Bologna Declaration. It established a number of objectives including:

- The adoption of easily readable and comparable degrees
- The adoption of a system based on two main cycles of higher education
- The use of European Credits Transfer to promote mobility
- Co-operation in the area of quality assurance.

The ultimate objective of the declaration is the creation of the European Higher Education Area by 2010.

The Department established a High Level Steering Group to oversee this process. Its immediate task in 2002 and 2003 is the preparation of a National Report, the opening of a communications channel within the Higher Education system and preparation of Ireland's position for the Intergovernmental Conference of Ministers with responsibility for Higher Education.

Focus - Programme of Change & Structural Reform

In June 2001, the Government agreed to a programme of structural reform of the Department. The programme is based on the recommendations contained within Mr Seán Cromien's review. The common theme is that the involvement of the Department in the detailed operation of many aspects of the education system leaves little time for medium to long-term planning and policy development.

Specific Measures

The Government, agreed in principle, to the following:

- The establishment of a State Examinations Commission to which responsibility for the operation of the certificate examinations would be transferred;
- The establishment of a National Council for Special Education tasked with the provision of research, expert advice and certain operational functions for students with disabilities;
- The establishment of a framework of regional offices of the Department reporting to a new Directorate of Regional Services based within the Department.

Implementation

The implementation of this major change programme required intensive discussions with six different union groupings representing staff within the Department. These discussions concluded within a nine month period and an agreed understanding was put in place.

State Examinations Commission

Preparations to establish a State Examinations Commission took place throughout 2002, culminating in its establishment on 6 March 2003. The Commission is a statutory body under Section 54 of the *Education Act 1998*, staffed by civil servants and headed up by six Government appointed Commissioners. From the school year 2002/2003 the Commission assumes responsibility for the operation of the Junior and Leaving Certificate Examinations.

In looking at the scale of the operation during a typical year, the following volumes give an indication of the logistics and organisation required in running the Examinations. 130,000 candidates sit examination in 4,500 centres. 300 test instruments are needed, printed on 20 million pages. This results in the marking of 2 million examination components leading to the issue of 1 million grades in August/September.

To ensure that there was no loss of experience in the setting up of the State Examinations Commission, the agreed implementation plan provided for the secondment of staff of the Department's Examinations Branch and members of the Inspectorate to the new body.

The National Council for Special Education

The Council will be established as a statutory body under Section 54 of the *Education Act 1998*, in 2003. It will be headed by a Council of thirteen members, all of whom will have a special interest or knowledge relating to the education of children with disabilities.

The broad functions of the Council will be to commission and conduct research into issues relating to the education of children with disabilities. Through the deployment of a new grade of Special Education Needs Organisers, the Council will provide a direct service to children, their parents and education providers.

The Council will undertake its research and advisory role from its establishment. It will assume its direct service role in 2004.

Regional Offices

Regional offices will be an integral part of the Department and will be led by a Directorate of Regional Services located in head office. The regional offices will be located in Cork, Limerick, Waterford, Navan, Naas, Mullingar, Sligo, Tallaght, Finglas and Galway. The regional offices are a single point of contact for information and advice on the education services available in each area. The offices will work closely with other service providers.

Work on the practical accommodation and staffing arrangements for these offices commenced in 2002 and is on-going. A number of regional offices will open in 2003 with the remainder following on in 2004.

The Bigger Picture

The major developments of 2002 are part of a wider programme of change within the Department. This wider programme also involves very real changes in the way business is done. Appeal Instruments are being put in place to allow those aggrieved with Department decisions an opportunity to have their case heard. Operational activities such as pensions and payroll payment are being moved from a sectoral model (separate sections handling payroll for primary and post-primary) to an integrated (one payroll) model. Greater responsibility is being delegated to education providers with less need for Department sanctions. Finally, the planning and policy capacity of the Department is being improved and is better integrated than in the past.

Organisation Developments

Strategies to maintain and strengthen organisation and capacity

The Department continued with its extensive modernisation programme to reform its structures and enhance organisational capability.

Human Resources

In 2002, the Department employed in excess of 1,300 people in administrative, inspectorate, professional, technical and support grades. These employees were principally based in the Department's offices in Dublin, Athlone and Tullamore. The following table depicts the staffing levels by location:

Athlone	454
Dublin	543
Tullamore	197
Other	161
Total	1,355

In mid-2002, agreement was secured with the representative trade unions on the restructuring of the Department. As an initial step, applications were sought from staff interested in either a lateral transfer or promotion to the State Examinations Commission, National Council for Special Education and Regional Offices.

Training and Development

Training and Development (T&D) is a key element in helping the Department's staff to acquire and develop the necessary skills to carry out their work. The Staff Training and Development Unit manages the organisation and delivery of T&D opportunities for all staff and provides support for our staff undertaking third-level programmes. In 2002, over €680,000, i.e., 4% of payroll expenditure was spent on these activities.

During 2002, some 6,500 training days were delivered to staff at all levels in areas such as information technology, specific skills training, personal development and management development. An induction programme for new staff, which commenced in the autumn of 2001, was continued and extended in the course of 2002. Staff also attended relevant courses and seminars provided by external agencies.

Performance Management and Development System

The objective of the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) is to manage work performance and career and development needs at all levels in the Department. It is a three-phase process involving performance planning, ongoing management of performance and an annual performance and development review. Training for all three stages of PMDS was conducted by the Department's own team of trainers with phases 2 and 3 completed by the end of 2002.

Equality

The Department is committed to providing a positive working environment for its entire staff and to ensuring that the principle of equality underpins its human resources policies.

The Department has already achieved one of the Government gender equality targets with 33% of Assistant Principal posts filled by women.

Family Friendly Policies/Work-life Balance

The Department continued to promote a range of flexible working options for staff:

- Worksharing: The work patterns now available include week on/week off, split week, mornings only, 3- and 4-day week. In 2002, 147 staff availed of the various worksharing options
- Termtime: In 2002, 50 staff availed of the pilot Termtime scheme
- Parental Leave: In 2002, 68 staff availed of parental leave
- Career-break: In 2002, 50 staff took career-breaks.

Programme of Change and Structural Reform

The programme of change and structural reform is the subject of one of our focus articles.

Partnership

Partnership is well established within the Department with a number of working groups reporting to the main committee. A review of partnership carried out in 2002 drew on the views of a large cross-section of staff, management and unions to chart how partnership could be used more effectively within the organisation. The importance of a participative management approach is also emphasised in the latest Social Partnership agreement. In 2002, partnership sub-committees worked on a Quality Customer Service (QCS) programme for our internal and external customers.

Quality Customer Service

Key initiatives in implementing the QCS action plan include:

Access to Information

A new website with bi-lingual content was launched in 2002. The range of information available on line has been increased and customer feedback and suggestions are incorporated into the continuing development of the site.

Evaluation of Services

The Department has invested in a telephone evaluation system that provides valuable statistics on the volume of incoming and outgoing calls and will assist in the improvement of the telephone service to our customers.

Physical Access

As part of the re-development of the Marlborough Street Complex, the quality of reception areas and meeting room areas has been improved.

Appeals Procedures

Independent appeals processes are now in place for:

- Teacher allocations
- School transport
- Recognition of new primary schools

Strengthen Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Capability

In 2002, work was completed on:

- The rollout of the upgraded network infrastructure. This new infrastructure provides improved office systems (e-mail, word processing etc) and a more secure, reliable and robust network.
- The introduction of the PPSN (Personal Public Service Number) as the key identifier for teachers on the Primary Teachers' Payroll Database
- A pilot project to create an inventory of school accommodation in the Kildare region.
- A Department-wide browser based system for distributing and responding to Parliamentary Questions.

Contribution to e-Government

The main e-Government related developments in 2002 were:

- Enhancements to the Examinations on-line services to allow Leaving Certificate candidates apply for a review of their results and to allow external candidates apply to take the Leaving Certificate examinations
- The commencement of a process to select a partner to work with the Department's IT Unit to deliver further on-line services.

Financial Framework

The Department provides a range of financial functions and support services which underpin the provision of education services. Functions include:

- Payment of teachers and teacher pensioners
- Disbursement of capitation payments to schools at first and second-level
- Administration of other miscellaneous grants and once-off payments to first and second-level schools
- Funding for the Institutes of Technology
- Funding of the second-level examinations system

Funding is also provided for a wide range of other bodies and services, including youth and community based services and the Vocational Education Committees. Funding of the higher education sector is provided either directly by the Department or indirectly through the Higher Education Authority.

Management Information Framework

Implementation of a Financial Management System (FMS)/Management Information system is fundamental to the SMI process and will facilitate effective resource allocation, planning, programme evaluation and decision–making.

After a detailed evaluation process, Oracle Financials was selected as the Department's new FMS. The contract was signed with Oracle Consulting in October 2002 and work began in early November, with implementation targeted for July 2003.

Prompt Payment of Accounts Act

In line with the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act, the Department has discharged its statutory responsibility in the payment and recording of interest paid. Interest penalties in accordance with Section 4 of the Act were paid in a very small number of cases, as indicated below:

Description	Amount
Total Value of all Expenditure	€5.3b
Total Number of Late Payments	23
Total Value of Late Payments	€62,133
Amount of Interest paid	€1,525

Appendices

Legislation

Education (Welfare) Act 2000

The Act provides a framework within which issues relating to the educational welfare of children, including the causes and effects of truancy and school attendance problems generally, can be addressed effectively. The legislation provides a statutory framework for addressing the factors behind educational disadvantage and promoting equality of opportunity in education. One Ministerial Order commencing the sections relevant to the establishment of the National Educational Welfare Board was made in March and all remaining sections came into force automatically on 5 July 2002.

Residential Institutions Redress Act 2002

This legislation was enacted in April 2002, the purpose of which is to put in place a structure for the making of financial awards to assist in the recovery of persons, who as children were resident in institutions in the State and who suffered injuries consistent with abuse received while so resident. The Act establishes a Residential Institutions Redress Board to make awards, and a Residential Institutions Redress Committee as an appeals body to review awards.

Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill 2002

The Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill was published in March 2002. Its purpose was to provide a statutory framework within which the education of children and people who have special educational needs because of disabilities, can be guaranteed as a right enforceable in law. The Bill adopted a rights based approach to education and will enable the parents of children with disabilities to enforce the right to education and sets out a range of services which must be provided, including assessments, individual education plans and support services. The Bill provided for the establishment of the National Council for Special Education. The Bill was initiated in Seanad Éireann and passed all stages prior to the dissolution of the Dáil in April. Following the dissolution, consultations took place with the various interest groups in education and particularly with those who have a special expertise and interest in special educational needs. These consultations were continuing at the end of the year.

Appendices

Publications

The Department publishes a wide range of information leaflets and policy documents.

The following is a list of some of the documents most frequently requested from the Department. Documents are available from the Communications Unit, Department of Education and Science, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 Tel 01 8892388 (www.education.ie) and/or from the Government Publications Sales Office, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2 Tel 01 6476000.

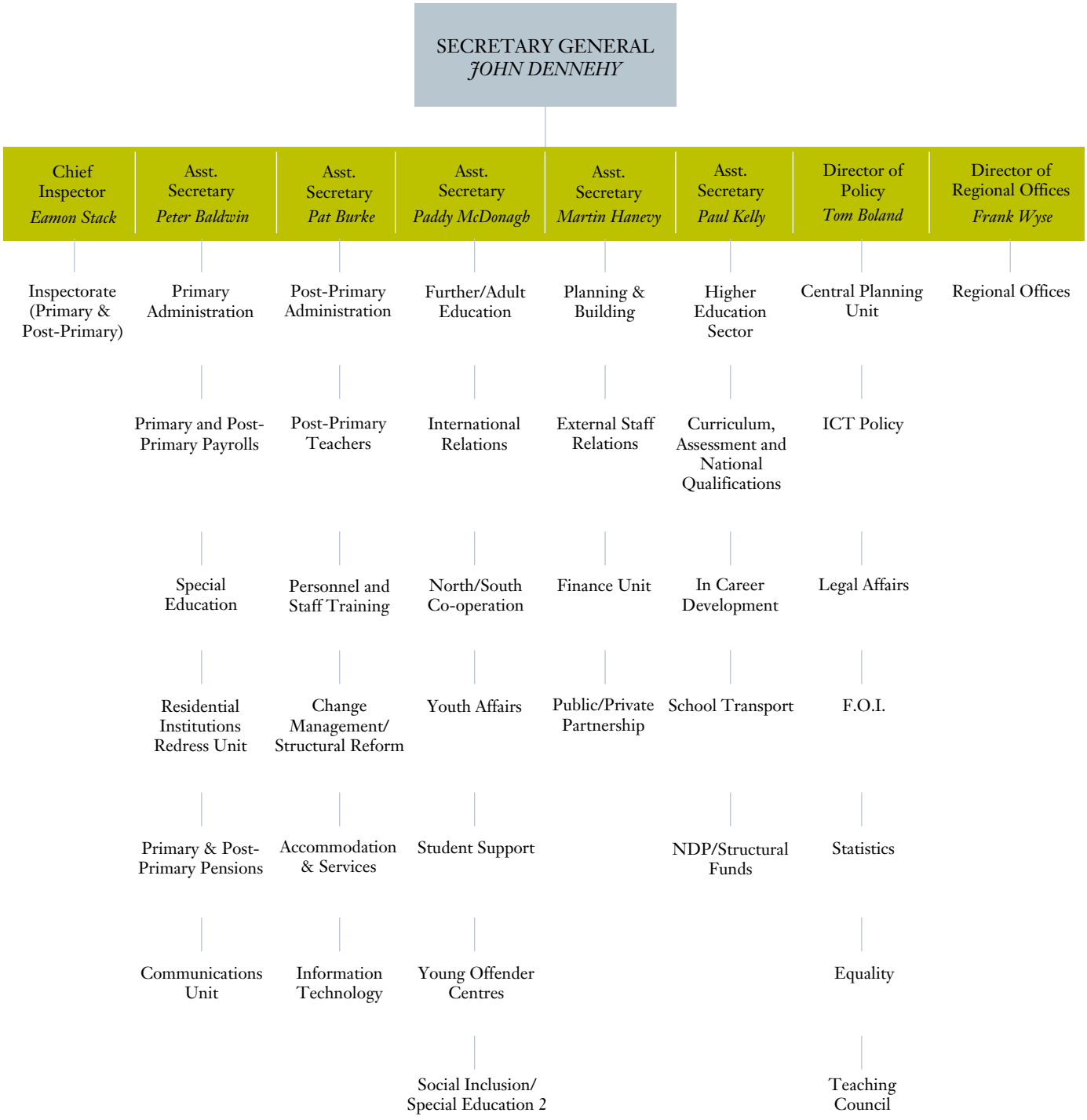
Name	Source
Strategy Statement 2001-2004	Communications Unit
Brief Description of the Education System	Communications Unit
Quality Customer Service Action Plan 2001-2004	Communications Unit
Guide for Mature Students	Communications Unit
The Inspectorate - A Brief Guide	Communications Unit
Annual Statistical Report	Government Publications Sales Office
Annual Report 2001	Communications Unit
Primary School Curriculum Your Child's Learning- Guidelines for Parents	Communications Unit
List of Post-Primary Schools	Government Publications Sales Office
Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools	Government Publications Sales Office
Revised Syllabuses for the Junior and Leaving Certificate Examinations	Government Publications Sales Office
Third-Level Student Support Booklet	Student Support Unit and the Communications Unit

Appendices

Inspectorate Publications in 2002

Name	Source
Procedure for Review of Inspections on Schools and Teachers under Section 13(9) of the Education Act 1998	Communications Unit
Fifty School Reports: What Inspectors Say	Communications Unit
Research and Development in Education: Projects 1994-2000	Communications Unit
Guidelines on Traveller Education in Primary Schools	Communications Unit
Guidelines on Traveller Education in Second-Level Schools	Communications Unit

Department of Education and Science – Organisation of Functions



Main Bodies under the Aegis of the Department

Higher Education Authority
Third Floor,
Marine House
Clanwilliam Court
Dublin 2
Tel: (01) 6612748

Léargas – The Exchange Bureau
189/193 Parnell St.
Dublin 1
Tel: (01) 8731411

National Centre for Technology in Education
Dublin City University
Glasnevin
Dublin 9
Tel: (01) 7008200

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
24 Merrion Square
Dublin 2
Tel: (01) 6617177

Higher Education and Training Awards Council
26/27 Denzille Lane
Dublin 2
Tel: (01) 6314567

Further Education & Training Awards Council
East Point Plaza
East Point Business Park
Dublin 3
Tel: (01) 8659500

National Centre for Guidance in Education
1st Floor, 42/43 Prussia Street,
Dublin 7
Tel: (01) 8690715

The National Educational Psychological Service
National Headquarters
Frederick Court
24/27 North Frederick Street
Dublin 1
Tel: (01) 8892700

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

National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
5th Floor
Jervis House
Jervis Street
Dublin 1
Tel: (01) 887 1500

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

An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta
22 Plás Mhic Liam
Baile Átha Cliath 2
Tel: (01) 6340831

Residential Institutions Redress Board
Block 5,
Belfield Office Park,
Beech Hill Road,
Clonskeagh,
Dublin 4.
Freephone: 1800-200086

State Examinations Commission
Cornamaddy
Athlone
Co. Westmeath
Tel: (090) 6483600

The President's Awards - Gaisce
State Apartments,
Dublin Castle,
Dublin 2
Tel: (01) 4758746

Contacts

Contact details for the Department's offices, the main offices of the Inspectorate and Bodies under the aegis of the Department, are available in the Green Pages Section of the Eircom Telepone Directory and on the Department's website www.education.ie

Offices of the Department/Units/Sections

Department of Education and Science
Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
Mainline Number (01)889 6400

Offices of the Minister for Education and Science
Office of the Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science.
Secretary General,
Assistant Secretaries
Chief Inspector
Central Planning Unit
NDP/Structural Funds
Communications Unit
Corporate Services
External Staff Relations
Freedom of Information
Higher Education (Universities)
Higher Education (Colleges)

Internal Audit
International Affairs
North/South Co-operation
Social Inclusion
In-Career Development
Inspectorate
Post Primary Administration
Public Private Partnership
Residential Institutions Redress Unit
Statistics
Youth Affairs
Finance Unit
IT Systems
Further Education

Department of Education and Science
Cornamaddy
Athlone
Co.Westmeath
Mainline Number (090)6483600

Examinations (see State Examinations Commission in the State Offices section of the Eircom Directory 2004
Post-Primary Teachers

Primary Administration and Primary Teachers Payments
Special Education
Teachers Pensions

Department of Education and Science
Portlaoise Road
Tullamore
Co.Offaly
Mainline Number (0506)21363

Inspectorate
Planning &Building
Post -Primary Administration
School Transport
Student Support (Third Level/Post Leaving Cert)

Main Offices of the Inspectorate

Office of the Inspectorate
Department of Education &Science
Block 3
Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
Tel: (01)889 6553

Office of the Inspectorate
Irish Life Buildings
1A South Mall
Cork
Tel: (021)4906011

Office of the Inspectorate
Model School
O 'Connell Avenue
Limerick
Tel: (061)315966

Office of the Inspectorate
Floor 3
Ross House
Merchants Road
Galway
Tel: (091)568922

Office of the Inspectorate
Kempten Promenade
Bridge Street
Sligo
Tel: (071)9143218

Department of Education & Science
Change Management Unit,
Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1.

Prn 1495