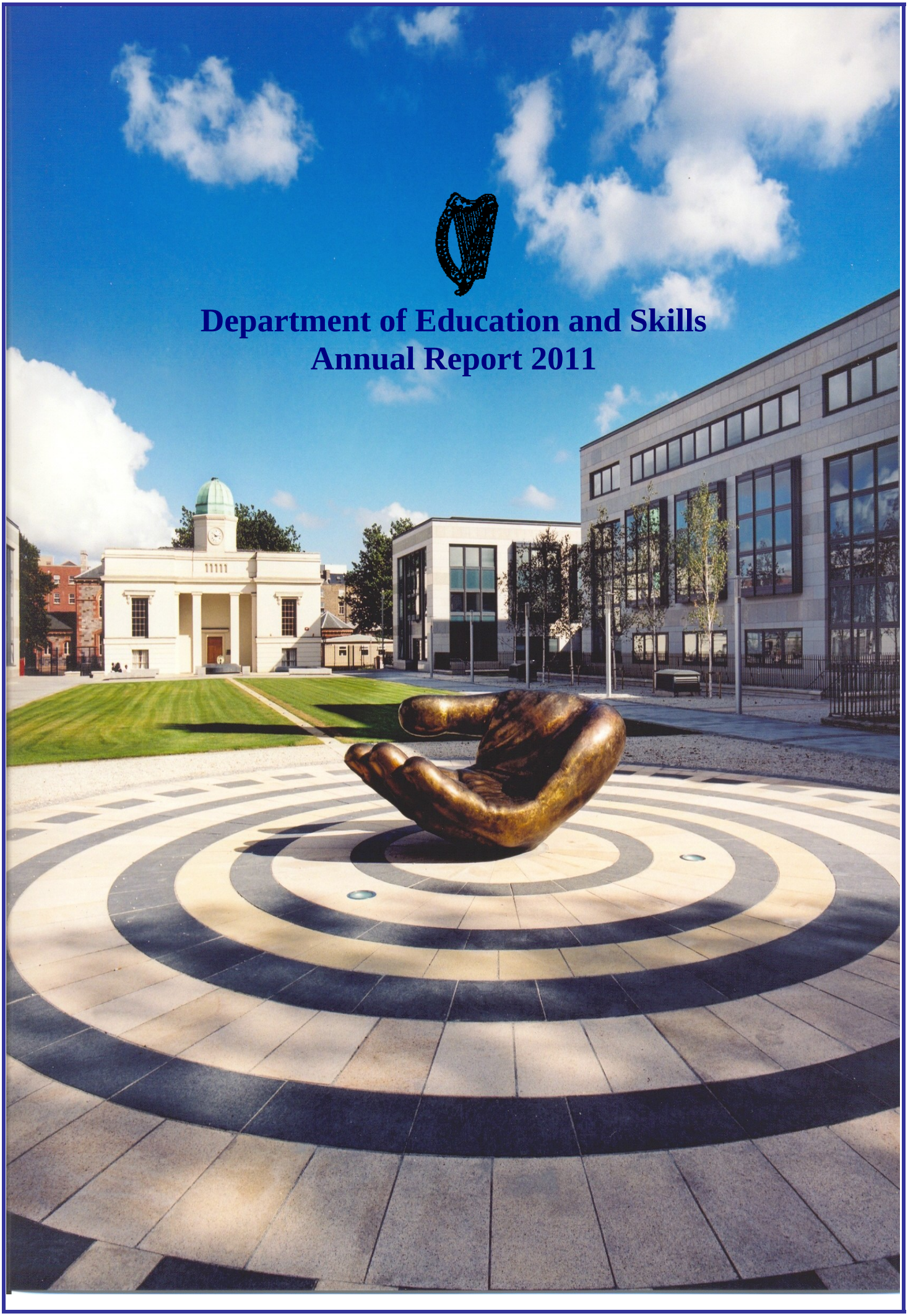
Department of Education and Skills
Annual Report 2011



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PART 1 Corporate Information

Our Mission and Goals

1.1 Our Mission

Our mission is to enable learners to achieve their full potential and contribute to Ireland's economic, social and cultural development.

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1.2 Our High Level Goals

We aim to ensure that the Department and the wider education and training sector provide a high quality service which delivers value for money for the taxpayer. Our overarching goal is to improve the quality of teaching and learning at all levels of the education and training sector and improve learning outcomes over time. In support of this we have identified the following high level goals:

1. Provide a quality inclusive school and early years education system, with improved learning outcomes
2. Provide opportunities for upskilling and reskilling that meet the needs of individuals and the labour market
3. Provide high quality learning, research and innovation opportunities in the higher education sector
4. Plan and provide appropriate infrastructure for learning environments

Foreword by the Minister

I welcome this first progress report on the goals and objectives set out in the Department's Statement of Strategy 2011-2014. This Report reflects the breadth of the remit of the Department's work and the extent to which the Department worked in 2011 towards achieving the changes set out in the ambitious reform agenda for the education sector.

Reform of the Junior and Senior Cycles represent two of the major reforms which I initiated in 2011. In late 2011, I endorsed proposals set out by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) which will embed active learning and provide a greater shift towards school based assessment in Junior Cycle. The Department is also committed to reforming senior cycle reform and last year, the NCCA and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) held a joint conference to examine the issues surrounding transition from second to third level.

At primary level, 2011 saw the establishment of the Forum of Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector to ensure that our school system reflects our changed society and the demand for pluralism and diversity. Debate on school enrolment policies was also initiated with the overall objective of ensuring an equitable and transparent system for the admission of students to schools.

At third level, the implementation of the National Strategy for Higher Education was commenced with a view to radically reforming the system to allow for more flexibility improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and ensuring that higher education connects more effectively with wider social, economic and enterprise needs.

I would like to thank all of the staff of the Department for their work in 2011 towards achieving our objectives and I look forward to continuing to work together into the future.

Ruairí Quinn
Minister for Education and Skills

Statement from the Secretary General

I am pleased to introduce this Annual Report which documents the work completed by the Department over the first year of our Statement of Strategy 2011-2014.

During 2011, a review of the Department was carried out under the Organisational Review Programme (ORP). One of the key findings of the review is that our main strengths as a Department are the high calibre of our management and staff, our strong values and commitment to education, our willingness to engage in problem solving and our dedication to dealing with a very challenging agenda. I welcome this finding as it clearly signals that we can successfully meet the challenges which are facing us, despite our economic circumstances and other testing environmental factors such as increasing demographic demands.

The progress achieved by the Department in 2011 towards implementing reforms and changes, along with its ability to successfully continue to perform on-going necessary operational tasks with reduced financial and human resources, as set out in this Report, reflects the commitment of the staff of the Department. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my predecessor, Brigid McManus, for her commitment and contribution to the Education sector during her tenure as Secretary General. I look forward to continuing to work with the staff of the Department and all our partners and stakeholders on the implementation and further development of our Strategy.

Seán Ó Foghlú
Secretary General

2. Review of the Year

In 2011, the Department of Education and Skills continued to endeavour to meet the needs of all of our customers and stakeholders by ensuring that our service is capable and efficient, and our education system is dynamic and responsive to our educational, cultural and economic requirements. Amid the environmental challenges, such as increasing demographic demands and fiscal constraints, which are currently being placed on the education system, the Department continued to strive to improve educational outcomes and achieve structural reform within the sector in line with the Government's reform agenda and its growth and employment strategy. Due to the challenging environment in which we are currently operating, there has been a need for organisations in all sectors to review their business processes in order to ensure maximum efficiency and cost-effectiveness in the delivery of their services and as a result there is now unprecedented momentum for reform and innovation throughout the public service. This presented new challenges and direction for all public service organisations in 2011, including the Department of Education and Skills, and will continue to do so into the future. The reform programme in the Education sector is highly complex, with interdependencies across a range of projects. These changes include reform of initial teacher education; curricular reform, including reform of the Junior Certificate; improving our national literacy and numeracy standards; school patronage; introducing new quality assurance and assessment measures in schools; adapting our education system to produce graduates to meet the needs of our labour market and to reduce unemployment and major reform of the third level sector to maximise existing funding.

2.1 Improving the Efficiency and Quality of Service provided by the Department

The Organisational Review Report of the Department of Education and Skills, which was published in June 2011, recognised that the Department operates in a very challenging and complex environment, shaped in particular by economic, social, technological, cultural and demographic changes... Some of the key findings of the Report were that the Department's main strengths are the high calibre of its management and staff, our strong commitment and dedication to education and our willingness to try to solve problems in dealing with a very challenging agenda. The Report also noted that the Department's adoption of a highly consultative approach with key partners in the education system in the development and implementation of its policies has helped to achieve a high level of shared understanding and commitment across the system as a whole.

As part of the Department's commitment to improving our service and in order to achieve our strategic goals more successfully and efficiently through the implementation of the improvements identified in the Report, we commenced the development of the Organisational Review Programme (ORP) Action Plan in mid 2011. The Action Plan was submitted to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in December 2011 and was published as part of the Third Report

of the ORP process in January 2012. The full report, which includes reviews of three other Departments, is available to download from www.orp.ie

2.2 Structural Reform of our Budgetary Process

In September 2011, this Department submitted its Comprehensive Review of Current Expenditure to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The aim of this process is to identify a key set of objectives and priority areas to be funded. The delivery of the objectives will be supported by ongoing reform in the sector, along with an agreed set of cross-cutting reform initiatives. The intent of the cross-cutting initiatives is to reduce duplication and support the delivery of more streamlined services and support structures throughout the public service. The Department's expenditure review fed into the overall Comprehensive Expenditure Report 2012-2014 for the public service which sets out multi-annual spending ceilings for Departments from 2012 to 2014. Performance Budgeting has been introduced as one of the key elements of an important structural reform of the budgetary process. This new approach involves Departments publishing their Estimates of planned expenditure on the basis of strategic programmes, as set out in their Statements of Strategy, rather than on the old accounting subhead basis. This Department's Estimate for 2012 included an illustrative appendix based on the new performance budgeting format, while the Estimates for 2013 will be fully based on this new format. The move to the new format is being accompanied by a restructuring of the Department's Vote to reflect the new strategic programme approach. The overall aim is to have an open and transparent process, whereby public funds are allocated to areas where they can be visibly used to optimum effect, improving the lives of citizens. Designing these reforms in a coherent and workable way, and introducing them without delay, is one of the key outcomes of the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure (CRE). This Department's review of expenditure along with the overall report for the public service can be viewed at http://per.gov.ie/comprehensive-review-of-expenditure/

2.3 Public Service Reform

In late 2011 the Government published its Public Service Reform Plan and an accompanying Government Statement which were informed by the public consultation process which was part of the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure (CRE). The Plan sets the basis for far-reaching change across all sectors of the Public Service for the coming years to ensure that the Public Service is customer focused, leaner, more efficient, better integrated and delivering maximum value for money. Central to the reform agenda is a focus on five major commitments to change which are prioritising customer service; maximising new and innovative service delivery channels; radically reducing our costs to achieve better value for money; leading, organising and working in new ways and maintaining a strong focus on implementation and delivery. As part of the Government's Public Service Reform programme, the Department commenced the development of its Integrated Reform Delivery Plan for the Education Sector which sets out the major sectoral reform projects, which are underway or planned, along with a number of cross-cutting reform projects. As part of this initiative Departments were required to develop Integrated Reform Delivery Plans to align actions under the Government's Public Service Reform Plan, the Public

Service Agreement 2010-2014 (Croke Park Agreement), the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure, where relevant, and organisational/sector specific reform initiatives.

Work on an integrated reform plan for the Education sector commenced in late 2011 and was completed in early 2012.

2.3.1 Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Bill 2011

During 2011 the Department commenced the process of delivering on the proposed structural reform of the education sector through the implementation of our reform plan. One aspect of this was the publication in 2011 of The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Bill, 2011. The Bill provides for the amalgamation of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) and the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC), which are the bodies responsible for qualifications and quality assurance in education and training, to form the QQAAI. The QQAAI will also take responsibility for the external quality assurance review of universities, which is a function that is currently performed by the Irish Universities Quality Board. This means that the QQAAI's quality assurance role will span all areas of further and higher education and training

2.3.2 SOLAS

The new further education and training authority, SOLAS, was announced in July 2011 with the mandate to ensure the provision of up-to-date high-quality further education and training programmes to jobseekers and other learners. The programmes will be integrated, flexible, value-for-money and responsive to the needs of learners and the requirements of our economic environment. SOLAS will place a greater emphasis on generic, transferable skills including people-related skills, problem-solving skills and digital literacy skills. SOLAS is underpinned by strong quality assurance, occupational standards, international benchmarks and course content reviews. It will fulfil a role for the further education and training sector similar to that exercised by the Higher Education Authority for higher education institutions. Its work will include identifying skills gaps in conjunction with the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, examining and improving existing provision and linking courses more closely to both the needs of the individual and the labour market.

2.3.3 Reconfiguration of the Vocational Education Committees

In June 2011, the Minister announced the approved revised reconfiguration of the Vocational Education Committees (VECs). Education and Training Boards will take over the work of the VECs and will have an expanded role in the delivery of further education and training across the country**.** In October 2011, the Government approved the heads of the Education and Training Boards Bill which provides for the reconfiguration of the VECs reducing the number from 33 to 16. The Bill will repeal all existing VEC Acts, update functions and powers and modernise the regulatory framework for the sector.

2.4 Improving our Standards in Literacy and Numeracy

One of the Department's key objectives is to ensure that the education system is achieving high quality learning outcomes to support all our learners in a fast changing society and workplace, from pre-school to third level. Improving the quality of our providers at all levels and the education system in general, along with implementing initiatives to improve our standards, particularly in literacy and numeracy, is central to achieving this goal. In 2011, *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life: The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020 (*The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy), which is a key pillar of the Programme for Government, was published. This wide-ranging Strategy aims at ensuring that every child leaves school having mastered literacy and numeracy.

At primary and post-primary level, the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy aims to ensure that teachers and schools maintain a strong focus on literacy and numeracy skills within a broad and balanced curriculum. It sets out a wide-ranging programme of reforms in initial teacher education courses, in professional development for teachers and school principals and in the content of the curriculum at primary and post-primary levels in order to enable students to achieve these vital skills. In 2011, implementation commenced on a number of reforms including lengthening initial teacher education courses, providing increased time for literacy and numeracy in schools and increasing the use of standardised assessments in reading and mathematics.

The publication of the Strategy is also a milestone in the development of the early years sector in Ireland as it recognises the critical role played by experiences in early childhood in the development of literacy and numeracy skills. A number of recommendations refer directly to the importance of high quality early education provision. Core principles of the Síolta[1] and Aistear[2] programmes are referenced throughout the document including partnership with parents, the centrality of play and interactions in early childhood pedagogy and the key role of the skilled and qualified adult.

2.5 Curricular Reform and Development

Throughout 2011 the Department continued its work with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and the State Examinations Commission (SEC) in relation to curricular development prioritising the continued implementation of Project Maths and Junior Cycle reform.

Project Maths was introduced in order to transform the teaching and learning of mathematics at second level with the objective of improving our overall performance in maths and increasing the number of students taking higher level maths. Strands 3 and 4 of the Project Maths Syllabus issued to mainstream schools in September 2011. Candidates for the 2011 Leaving Certificate examination in the 24 project schools for Project Maths, which are ahead of national rollout to mainstream schools, sat examinations covering four of the five syllabus strands.

[1] Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education is a comprehensive set of practice guidelines for all settings where children aged 0-6 years are present.
[2] Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework was published by the NCCA in 2009. It focuses specifically on supporting children's early learning and development from 0-6 years.

In late 2011 the Minister welcomed the publication by the NCCA of the report *Towards a Framework for Junior Cycle* which makes recommendations relating to curricular reform of the junior cycle. The aim of the reform is to promote active learning and critical thinking and to move towards school based assessment. The key issues which the NCCA addressed in its review of the junior cycle were curriculum overload, rote learning, providing for greater creativity and innovation, strengthening of key skills, providing for more relevant and flexible forms of assessment and ensuring that the needs of all are better addressed by the junior cycle. The full report can be accessed at www.ncca.ie

At senior cycle level, due to concerns expressed by various interested parties about aspects of the transition of students from second-level to third-level education, a joint conference on improving this transition was convened by the NCCA and the Higher Education Authority and its subsequent report with recommendations was submitted to the Minister in December 2011. The report focused on the implications of the Leaving Certificate exam as the key determinant of access to higher education and the effects which approaches to learning acquired in second level have in third level and, conversely, the implications that practices in third level have on second level students.

2.6 Inspection and Quality Assurance in Schools

During 2011 the Inspectorate continued to revise and develop the inspection models it uses to evaluate schools. This resulted in a suite of inspection types, ranging from new unannounced school inspections in second level schools from 2011 to more intensive and specialised evaluations at both primary and post-primary level. Further detailed information on school inspections which were carried out in 2011 are contained on pages 23, 36, 37 and 38 of this Report.

New rules were introduced to place new limits on the employment of unqualified teachers in schools and to ensure as far as practicable, that people appointed to teach are registered teachers with qualifications appropriate to the sector and suitable to the post for which they are employed and that unemployed teachers are offered employment in preference to those who have retired. The new rules applied to all appointments made on or after 1 September 2011**.** Under the Croke Park Agreement, agreed revisions were made to the teacher contract resulting in the provision of some 36 additional hours at primary level and 33 hours at second level per annum to allow for essential issues, such as school planning and parent teacher meetings, to be addressed without loss of tuition time.

In September 2011 the document “Board of Management of National Schools Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011” was published in consultation with the education partners. The booklet includes an overview of the role of the Board and an outline of some key activities in which effective Boards typically and routinely engage. The booklet was published in advance of new primary Boards of Management taking office in December 2011. Relevant training was provided to the members of the Boards of Management who took office in 2011 as required.

2.7 Reform of Initial Teacher Education

The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy sets out a wide-ranging programme of reforms in initial teacher education courses at primary and post-primary levels. Under the Strategy improvements are to be made to initial teacher education courses including the setting of new higher entry requirements for teacher education courses and the reconfiguring of the content and duration of courses for primary teachers to ensure the development of teachers' skills in literacy and numeracy teaching.

Close consultation has taken place between the Department and the Teaching Council and the changes to teacher education, proposed in the National Strategy for Literacy and Numeracy, were incorporated into the Teaching Council's *Policy Paper on the Continuum of Teacher Education* and *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers* which were also published in 2011.

The duration of concurrent programmes will be a minimum of four years while the postgraduate programmes of teacher education will take place over two years thereby facilitating an innovative re-conceptualisation of current programmes. The reconfigured and lengthened Bachelor of Education (primary) will commence in September 2012.

2.8 Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector

The Minister for Education and Skills announced the establishment of the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector in March 2011. The Forum and Advisory Group to the Forum were officially launched in April 2011. The Advisory Group held a three day public session with stakeholders in late June 2011, which was broadcast live from the Department's website. Over 240 submissions were received from stakeholders and considered by the Advisory Group. In late 2011, the Advisory Group held a final public working session to share their reflections and to invite stakeholder responses prior to finalising their report to the Minister

2.9 Child Protection Procedures

In autumn 2011, updated Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, which were developed in consultation with the education partners, were published. These procedures are based on the publication *Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011* (Children First) which was produced by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. The new child protection procedures for schools incorporate significant improvements to the previous school guidelines and are intended to better ensure the consistent and uniform implementation of Children First across all schools. The improvements include a new child protection policy template, a requirement that all primary schools fully implement the Stay Safe programme and also the putting in place of improved oversight arrangements at Board of Management level.

2.10 School Building Programme

In November 2011, the Government committed over €2 billion in funding for school building projects as part of the Medium Term Infrastructure and Capital Investment to meet rising demographic demands. This investment will provide for 70,000 extra school places for children entering the system over the next six years. Planning commenced in 2011 for the provision of 40 new primary and second level schools over the next six years. The new schools will generally be sixteen-classroom primary schools and up to 1,000-student post-primary schools. The estimated capital cost of the establishment of the new schools is in the region of €380m and the programme of delivery will include some PPP projects.

A New School Establishment Group was established to advise on the patronage of the new schools, building on the establishment by the Minister of the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector.

In order to increase efficiency in the delivery of building projects, new arrangements were also put in place in 2011 with Vocational Education Committees, local authorities, the Office of Public Works and the National Development Finance Agency to assist the Department in delivering new schools and extensions required over the next five years. In 2011, the project management of in the region of 30 major school building projects was devolved to individual VECs around the country and also to a county council. Overall, these projects will deliver in excess of 21,000 student places, including over 14,000 additional new school places.

Major building projects for 55 schools were completed in 2011 providing permanent places for over 18,500 pupils. 14 new schools were delivered under the 2011 Rapid Delivery Programme. These schools will provide 3,500 current pupils and school staff with modern energy efficient buildings and improved learning environments while providing over 1,000 additional places. Over 450 primary and second level schools benefited from €41 million in funding under the Summer Works Scheme in 2011. €35 million was provided for an Education campus in Co. Monaghan, the largest building project to be funded by the DES in 2011. The campus will include new accommodation for a 16 classroom primary school and a 400 pupil post-primary school, together with the 700 student Monaghan Institute of Further Education and Training.

2.11 Further Education, Training and Skills

Through the establishment of SOLAS, the implementation of the National Skills Strategy and reform of the further education and training (FET) sector, the Department is working to improve the quality and relevance of further education and training provision to ensure that it meets the needs of individuals and the labour market.

In 2011, the further education and training sectors provided approximately 300,000 places for the unemployed. This includes places through FÁS, the VECs, Skillnets and the Labour Market Activation Fund. The Jobs Initiative, which was announced in May 2011, contained details of over 20,000 additional training, education and work experience places for the unemployed. An

additional €3.5 million in funding was provided for 1,000 extra places in the longer FÁS Specific Skills Training courses. 3,000 additional Back to Education Initiative places were allocated to VECs as part of the Jobs Initiative, increasing the number of places available to 12,000. 1,000 additional PLC places were also allocated to VECs as part of the Jobs Initiative increasing the number of PLC places to 32,688.

The Programme for Government provided for the establishment of the national employment and entitlements service with the objective of integrating the provision of employment services and benefit payment services within the Department of Social Protection to support jobseekers in their pursuit of employment among other things. Pending the establishment of SOLAS and the full roll out of the national employment and entitlements service, it was decided that interim protocols should be agreed between VECs and local welfare offices to enable the more effective referral of unemployed people to further education and training programmes. In this regard a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Department of Social Protection and FÁS in December 2011 and this Department issued Circular 76/2011, which relates to the implementation of the interim referral protocols between the VECs and local welfare offices, in December also.

Other developments in this sector in 2011 included the implementation of a new budget bidding process for Specialist Training Providers who work in conjunction with FÁS to deliver training to people with disabilities, the introduction of the revised Redundant Apprentice Placement Scheme to provide opportunities to redundant apprentices to complete on–the–job training and the introduction by FÁS of a Competency Determination Mechanism for redundant apprentices.

The new Springboard initiative provided over 5,000 free part-time higher education places for unemployed people in the areas of identified skills needs such as ICT, Medical Devices and the Green Economy. The Springboard initiative is targeted at those who were previously working but lost their jobs or were made redundant and who, with some up-skilling, could fill current or future job shortages.

In 2011, the Department also established an Enterprise Engagement Forum to provide an opportunity for strategic engagement with enterprise partners. The Forum is chaired by the Secretary General of the Department and provides for engagement with enterprise on all aspects of the Department's remit.

2.12 Higher Education

The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, which recommends considerable reform of our existing higher education system over the next two decades, was launched in early 2011. The Strategy sets out changes including the development of a more flexible system, improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and ensuring that higher education connects more effectively with wider social, economic and enterprise needs. A number of structural changes are proposed in the Strategy including reducing the number of institutions and providing for the establishment of Technological Universities. Projections prepared by the Department estimate that the scale of

demand for higher education will increase significantly over the coming decades due to the rising demographic of school leavers, augmented by an increase in adult students and international students. The Report recommends that the system should be set up to accommodate this demand by increasing the range and flexibility of the system to allow for it to be more responsive to the needs of adults seeking to up-skill or re-skill at higher education levels, particularly those in the workforce.

The Student Support Act 2011 was signed into law by the President in February 2011 and was published in April. The new Act provides a legislative basis for fundamental reform of the student grants system by providing for the creation of a single unified grants scheme, the transfer of responsibility for student grants to a single grant awarding authority and the establishment of an independent Appeals Board. In the first major step to overhaul the student grant system, the four existing schemes were replaced by a single unified scheme with effect from the 2011/12 academic year. A new system providing students with an online student grant application facility, which went live in 2010, was rolled out to an additional 24 grant awarding authorities in 2011 giving a total of 35 using the system in 2011. In January 2011, the Department issued an Expression of Interest invitation to the VECs, local authorities and other public bodies in relation to taking on the administrative responsibility for the centralised awarding and payment of student grants. Ten proposals were received. In April 2011, following the selection process, the City of Dublin VEC (CDVEC) was selected as the new centralised single authority for the operation of the student grant system subject to the development of an agreed implementation plan. Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI), a division of the City of Dublin VEC will gradually replace the existing 66 VEC and local authority grant awarding bodies. SUSI will operate on a transitional basis accepting all new applications from the 2012/13 academic year.

2.13 Residential Institutions Redress

The Residential Institutions Redress Unit (RIRU) in the Department supports the Residential Institutions Redress Board, which was established in 2002 to provide financial awards to victims of child abuse in residential institutions; the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse; the Barnardos Origins Service, which provides family tracing services for former residents; the Education Finance Board, which provides educational grants to former residents and their families and an information and referral service for former residents. The RIRU also provides personal records to former residents of industrial and reformatory schools.

Since the publication of the Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse in 2009, the Department has also pursued the relevant actions in the Government's implementation plan to progress the Report's recommendations, particularly in relation to education, along with the provision of a memorial and the establishment of a Statutory Fund to support the needs of survivors in keeping with the all-party motion approved by Dáil Éireann. The Department continues to pursue the realisation of contributions pursuant to the Government's view that the cost of the response to residential institutional abuse should be shared on a 50:50 basis between the State and those who were responsible for the management of institutions.

In 2011, the Residential Institutions Redress (Amendment) Act 2011 was enacted and the General Scheme of the Residential Institutions Statutory Fund Bill was published together with the report of a public consultation process in relation to the Statutory Fund. The Memorial Committee launched the competition for the design and commissioning of the memorial, a jury was appointed and a shortlist of successful applicants was compiled. The Government considered the responses of the congregations to the call for additional contributions and informed them of the property offers which it proposed to pursue. A number of property transfers pursuant to the 2002 Indemnity Agreement were finalised. The Redress Board processed 467 applications resulting in 427 awards and finalised 566 late submissions. Barnardos finalised 169 family tracing requests. The Education Finance Board approved 2,108 grants. The Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse continued to finalise and pay legal bills while the Department processed some 760 requests for records of former residents.

RIRU Expenditure in 2011 amounted to some €47m comprising:

€44.2m on the Residential Institutions Redress Scheme;
€2.17m on the Commission;
€0.63m on family tracing services and
€0.27m on information and referral service supports.

By the end of 2011 €21.05m of the cash contributions offered by congregations in 2009 had been received and placed on deposit in the Central Bank of Ireland pending the establishment of the Statutory Fund.

2.14 North South Cooperation

During 2011 the Department continued to contribute to the development of North South cooperation through the exchange of information and learning and joint action in agreed areas of common interest. Part 1 of the comprehensive joint study of North South cooperation in education, comprising a scoping exercise of current and previous North South cooperative activity in the education and youth sectors in the period 2005 – 2010, has been completed and was agreed by the two Education Departments North and South in June 2011. Officials from this Department and the Department of Education Northern Ireland met in December 2011 to discuss Part 2 of the study to draw up an action plan for the next few years.

Two meetings of the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) in Education Sector format were held in January and September 2011 in Armagh. Ministers reviewed developments in North South cooperation in the areas of Educational Underachievement, Special Educational Needs, Teacher Qualifications and Teachers' Superannuation and School, Youth and Teacher Exchanges.

In the context of joint work on tackling educational underachievement, both Departments jointly organised a successful post-primary literacy conference on 23rd February 2011 in Cavan.

The table below sets out the number of participants in North South schools and youth-based educational exchange projects funded by the Department in 2011. The figures provided reflect the total numbers of schools/youth groups/teachers/trainers, and students/young people from Ireland and Northern Ireland which were involved in the relevant projects.

Participants in North/South Projects	2011
Total No. of Schools	2,462
Total No. of Youth Groups	60
Total No. of Teachers/Trainers	1,005
Total No. of Students	143,580
Total No. of Young People	7,831

Total expenditure by this Department in supporting these activities in 2011 amounted to approximately €1,187,408.

3. General Corporate Data in 2011

This section of the report provides general corporate data. Data in relation to specific initiatives can be found in Part 2 of the report. Key education statistics can be found on the statistics page of the Department's website via the following link: www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/

3.1 Supporting the Parliamentary Process

- **3,103 Parliamentary Questions were responded to in 2011**
- **147 Memoranda for Government were received for observations in 2011**
- **The Offices of the Minister and Ministers of State received in the region of 13,000 representations in 2011**
- **60 Topical Issues were replied to in the Dáil and 32 Adjournments Debate motions were replied to in the Seanad.**

3.2 Information Services

- **Over 7,000 email enquiries were received through** info@education.gov.ie
- **There were 1,646,145 visits to our website** www.education.ie **in 2011, 41% of which were new users**
- **1,170 requests under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Acts 1997 and 2003 were received in 2011. Over 1,000 decisions were made on FOI requests in 2011.**
- **Press Office - 112 Press Releases were issued and 4 Press Conferences were held in 2011**

3.3 School Inspection Reports

Further information on school inspections and the work of the Inspectorate can found in Part 2 under Goal 1 page 36.

Type of Inspection	2011
Whole-school evaluation (WSE) Primary	291
Whole-school evaluation (WSE) Post-primary	8
Whole-school evaluation - (WSE-MLL) Post-primary	92
Subject inspections–stand-alone	501
Subject inspections–within WSE	28
Programme evaluations	23
Probation of teachers (Primary) in 2011	2261*
Incidental Inspection (Primary)	405
Incidental Inspection (Post-Primary)	92
Inspections of improvement planning in DEIS schools	32
Evaluation reports on Irish Colleges *(Coláistí Gaeilge)*	36
Evaluations of Cursaí Samhraidh (Teachers)	11
Centres for Education (Youthreach, Senior Traveller Training Centre)	10
Other	
Evaluations of Dissolving Boundaries	16
Inspections of Literacy Summer Camps	6
Inspections of Campaí Samhraidh	5
Inspections as part of SNA Review	16
Follow-through inspections	7
Inspections of Children's High Support Units	8
Total inspections	3848

* Note: A total of 4996 visits to probationary teachers were completed in the period Jan-Dec 2011.

3.4 Prompt Payments[3] Summary January to December 2011

Department of Education & Skills

Details	Number	Value (€)	Percentage (%) of total payments made (Number)
Number of payments made within 15 days	**12,525**	**318,478,385**	**78.53%**
Number of payments made within 16 days to 30 days	**2,857**	**13,846,009**	**18.32%**
Number of payments made in excess of 30 days	**481**	**1,288,697**	**3.15%**
Total payments made in 2011	**15,863**	**333,613,091**	**100.00%**
Total Disputed Invoices in 2011	**73**	**302,514**	

Source: Summary of 2011 Quarterly reports for the Department pursuant to Government Decision No.S29296 of 19th May 2009

[3] Payments made on or before the date on which payment is due under the terms of a written contract, or where there is no written contract, or if the written contract does not specify a payment date, within 45 days of receipt of the invoice or delivery of the goods or services, whichever is the later.

Part 2 Progress in 2011 on our High Level Goals

This section of the Report sets out our progress in 2011 on the four High Level Goals in our Statement of Strategy for the years 2011-2014.

Goal 1 - Provide a quality inclusive school and early years education system, with improved learning outcomes

One of the Department's key priorities is to enable education providers to deliver high quality education services to all of our learners in an inclusive environment to achieve improved educational outcomes over time. To this end the Department supports the education system through a range of measures including financial, policy, legislative, infrastructural and regulatory supports**.** In 2011, the Department introduced a number of new initiatives to improve the quality and efficiency of our education system including the introduction of measures to improve the curriculum, inclusiveness, teaching, learning, school leadership and accountability.

4.1 Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Care and Education Settings

The Department supports the quality of provision in the early years education sector through work force development and through the promotion of effective practice. The Early Years Education Policy Unit in the Department is co-located with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to ensure that policy developments in the early childhood sector are developed within an overall strategic policy framework for children.

The Workforce Development Plan for the Early Years Sector, which was published by the Department in 2010, acknowledged national and international research evidence which establishes a strong correlation between the availability of an appropriately trained workforce to staff early years services and the ability to deliver high quality pre-school provision. As part of the implementation of the Plan, Common Award Standards for early childhood care and education courses at National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) Levels 4, 5 and 6[4] were published in 2011 and will come into full effect in 2013. The new Common Award Standards incorporate both Síolta, the quality framework for early childhood education and Aistear, the curriculum framework for children from birth to six years. The Common Award Standards will ensure that graduates of early childhood care and education programmes are fully prepared to enter the workforce.

An independent evaluation of a field test of Síolta, which was commissioned by the Department, was also completed in 2011. The evaluation was conducted in parallel with the ongoing development of the programme in the field and its recommendations are contributing to the continuing review and refinement of Síolta materials, processes and supports. The evaluation report is available to download from our website www.education.ie .

[4] The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) provides a way to compare qualifications, and to ensure that they are quality assured and recognised at home and abroad. Further information on the NFQ can be viewed via the following link http://www.nfq.ie/nfq/en/

The online Aistear toolkit, which is a web-based resource providing audio and visual podcasts to providers of early childhood education continued to be updated in 2011. The NCCA and the network of Education Centres continued to plan and oversee the Aistear Tutor Initiative in 2011. Aistear Tutors deliver professional development activities for infant class teachers through the education centre network nationally.

With the phasing out of segregated Traveller pre-school provision, the Department secured funding under for Education Disadvantage Strand of the Dormant Accounts for a pre-school education initiative which would support clusters of early years services to undertake equality and diversity training. The scheme is being administered through the City and County Childcare network almost all of whom have worked collaboratively on this initiative.

4.2 Curriculum and Assessment in Schools

Throughout 2011 the Department continued its work with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and the State Examinations Commissions (SEC) in relation to curricular development and prioritised the continued implementation of Project Maths and Junior Cycle Reform.

4.2.1 Project Maths

Project Maths is a ground-breaking curriculum development initiative in post-primary mathematics. The project, which is scheduled to run from 2008 to at least 2013, will see the incremental development of revised syllabi in Junior and Leaving Certificate mathematics alongside a significant programme of teacher professional development. The project is implementing the syllabus change on a phased basis in pilot schools. Syllabus revision will be informed by classroom experience and changes in assessment will be aligned with and underpin changes in syllabi. The programme has been introduced in order to transform the teaching and learning of mathematics at second level with the objective of improving our overall performance in maths and increasing the number of students taking higher level maths. Strands 3 and 4 of the Project Maths syllabus issued to mainstream schools in September 2011. Candidates for the 2011 Leaving Certificate examination in the 24 project schools for Project Maths, which are ahead of the national rollout to mainstream schools, sat examinations covering four of the five syllabus strands.

4.2.2 Junior Cycle Reform

In 2011, the NCCA published the report *Towards a Framework for Junior Cycle* making recommendations relating to curricular reform of the junior cycle. The aim of the reform is to promote active learning and critical thinking and to move towards school based assessment. The key issues which the NCCA addressed in its review of the junior cycle were curriculum overload, rote learning, providing for greater creativity and innovation, strengthening of key skills, providing for more relevant and flexible forms of assessment and ensuring that the needs of all are better addressed by the junior cycle. The full report and further information on the curriculum and curricular reform can be viewed on the NCCA's website at www.ncca.ie

4.2.3 Supporting the Examinations Process

The Department provided on-going support to the SEC in providing an objective and transparent State examinations process. It also supported the SEC in relation to the practical implications of the changes which related to the re-weighting of components in the Irish language examinations and in examining the reform of the examination system in line with curriculum changes, in particular Junior Cycle Reform. Further information on State examinations can be viewed on the SEC website www.examinations.ie

4.2.4 Post-Primary Languages Initiative

The Department supported the Post-Primary Languages Initiative (PPLI) with a view to diversifying, enhancing and expanding the teaching of languages in second-level schools. A new PPLI website www.languagesinitiative.ie was further developed and launched. 600 resources were shared by teachers for teachers on the website in 2011. A series of short films (Japanese, Russian and More Languages, More Options) was created to increase awareness of the value of learning foreign languages at post-primary level. Under language competitions run by the PPLI, scholarships were provided to students of Italian, Russian and Spanish to study in the target language countries.

An electronic version of the Italian textbook *In Bocca Al Lupo1…Crepi!* was created, plus a new edition of the Leaving Certificate Japanese textbook *Nihongo Kantan*. Further information in relation to the PPLI and the aforementioned textbooks can be viewed at www.languagesinitiative.ie.

A series of videos *Videoing Ideas for Teaching and Learning Languages (VITALL)* was produced for the purpose of continuing professional development for modern foreign language teachers in collaboration with the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) and the Education Department at the National University of Ireland Maynooth. For further information see www.vitall.ie.

4.2.5 The Road Safety Programme

The Road Safety Programme targeted at Transition Year students was extended to a further 25 schools in 2011. The programme covers safety for pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and motorists, with issues such as seatbelts and airbags, driver fatigue, drink and drug driving, and basic first aid at crash scenes included. The programme was introduced as part of the National Road Safety Strategy and is collaboration between the Road Safety Authority (RSA), the NCCA and this Department. Several agencies have also had an input, including the ambulance service, fire service and An Garda Síochána.

4.3 Improving our Standards in Literacy and Numeracy

Central to the improvement of educational outcomes for our learners is the implementation of *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life: The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011 to 2020*, which was launched in 2011, and which includes a range of measures to improve educational outcomes at early childhood, primary

and post-primary levels. The actions in the Strategy include changes to initial teacher education, continuing professional development (CPD), the curriculum and the monitoring and evaluation of schools. The implementation of the actions will result in the revision of elements of the curriculum to allow for:

- The revision of elements of the primary curriculum in infant classes to ensure consistency with the Aistear curriculum framework for pre-schools announced in 2009 and putting a greater emphasis on early language and numeracy development
- The revision of the English curriculum in all primary schools and the Irish curriculum in Irish-medium primary schools to clearly identify the skills which children are expected to learn at each stage and subsequently the revision of the Irish curriculum for English medium schools
- An increase in the amount of time spent on the teaching of literacy and numeracy in primary schools
- The requirement for the use of standardised assessments in literacy and numeracy at end of second, fourth and sixth classes in primary schools and at the end of second year in post-primary schools
- Prioritisation of the reform of the English and Irish curricula in the review of the junior cycle to ensure that literacy skills are prioritised
- An increase in the time available for the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills by encouraging post-primary schools to ensure that mathematics and English be taught for a minimum of five periods per week (and Irish in Irish medium schools)
- The requirement that schools use assessment data as part of the self-evaluation process to inform the development of a school improvement plan
- The putting in place of better arrangements for the transfer of pupil achievement data from pre-schools to primary schools and from primary to post-primary schools
- The collection of the aggregated outcomes of standardised tests nationally and using this information to monitor standards
- The improvement of the evaluation of schools regarding literacy and numeracy using both school self-evaluation and external inspection
- Participation in international assessments, e.g. OECD PISA, that facilitate the benchmarking of Irish students' achievement with that of students in other countries

The Department issued Circular 56/2011 to all primary schools in November 2011 to draw the attention of the school management bodies to the publication of The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy. This Circular stated that from January 2012 all primary schools are required to increase the time spent on the development of literacy skills, particularly in the first language of the school, by one hour overall per week and to increase the time spent on mathematics by 70 minutes per week. School management bodies were also asked to make provision for these arrangements in their schools through a combination of approaches, including integrating literacy and numeracy skills with other curriculum areas, using some or all of discretionary curriculum time for literacy and numeracy activities, re-allocating the time spent on the other subjects in the

curriculum to the development of literacy and numeracy and prioritising the curriculum objectives which are considered most valuable in supporting children's learning by delaying the introduction of elements of some subjects to later in the primary cycle.

A high level implementation Advisory Group was established to monitor the implementation of the Strategy. There has been significant progress in implementing the early actions of the Strategy and work is ongoing on medium and longer term actions. A team of literacy and numeracy advisors has been appointed to support teachers and schools in implementing the Strategy and a national programme of professional development for primary and second level teachers is underway. Programmes in literacy, including Irish and mathematics, accounted for almost half of all attendance at summer courses in 2011.

Proposals on revised entry standards for initial teacher education have been incorporated into the Teaching Council's *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers*. The Criteria also provide for an expansion of the primary Bachelor of Education from 3 to 4 years, and for an expansion of the Professional Diploma in Education to 2 years. Units of literacy and numeracy are in place within the National Induction Programme for Teachers for the 2011/12 school year. The National Strategy to improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011 – 2020 can be viewed or downloaded from our website at www.education.ie. Publications produced by the Teaching Council may be viewed on their website at www.teachingcouncil.ie.

4.4 Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS)

DEIS, the action plan for educational inclusion, which was launched back in May 2005, focuses on addressing the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities, from pre-school through to second-level education (3 to 18 years). DEIS provides for a standardised system for identifying levels of disadvantage and an integrated School Support Programme (SSP).

The SSP includes a suite of interventions including in-school and out-of-school supports. These include enhanced teaching resources in primary schools with the highest levels of disadvantage, enhanced financial resources for all DEIS schools, access to literacy and numeracy supports, curricular supports, planning and professional development supports and transfer and access supports. In addition the SSP includes two major interventions which are the Home School Community Liaison Scheme and the School Completion Programme.

864 schools, comprising 669 primary schools and 195 second level schools, which have a total of 164,000 pupils enrolled in them, are participating in the DEIS programme. A number of measures have been rolled out to date under the DEIS action plan including

- A reduction in class size of 20:1 in junior classes and 24:1 in senior classes in urban primary schools with the highest concentrations of disadvantage
- The implementation of literacy and numeracy initiatives

- The allocation of administrative principals in urban primary schools based on lower enrolment and staffing figures which are required for the allocation of such posts generally in primary schools
- The School Books Grant Scheme which allows for an additional €1m in primary and post-primary schools to supplement the book grant provided to all schools
- The School Meals Programme which is operated by the Department of Social Protection
- The extension of the Junior Certificate School Programme and the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme.

DEIS schools are asked to undertake a 3 year action planning process using standardised planning templates. The planning process facilitates self-evaluation as well as being a useful resource for the Inspectorate in their evaluations of DEIS schools.

The report on Retention Rates in Second Level schools which was published by the Department in 2011 provides for the first time, data relating to pupils who entered the first year of the junior cycle in DEIS schools in the years from 2001 to 2004 and who completed second level schooling no later than 2010. The report shows that the average (unadjusted) Leaving Certificate retention rate in DEIS schools increased by 5 percentage points from 68.2% to 73.2% between the 2001 to 2004 entry cohorts while the (unadjusted) retention rate in non-DEIS schools increased from 85.0% to 87.4% for the same entry cohorts. The Report also shows that in 2010 the proportion of early school leavers in Ireland was 10%, down from 13% in 2004.

4.4.1 DEIS Action Plan Initiatives to Improve Literacy and Numeracy

Under the terms of the DEIS action plan, high priority has been given to specific measures and supports to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes which include the programmes listed below.

DEIS Supports for Literacy and Numeracy in Primary Level Schools:

- **Reading Recovery** – This is a school-based early intervention involving a period of intensive, individual teaching designed to reduce literacy problems within the education system
- **First Steps** - This is a programme which involves addressing literacy needs in primary schools and which includes professional development courses and support materials for primary teachers
- **Maths Recovery –** This is a systematic response to the problem of chronic failure in school mathematics which involves a programme of intensive individualised teaching
- **Ready, Set, Go Maths-** This is an intervention programme which contains a practical handbook of guidance for teachers in the use of a wide range of activities and materials to enable them to improve the quality and effectiveness of early learning in numeracy for children.

DEIS Supports for Literacy and Numeracy in Post-Primary schools:

- **Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) -**This programme is an intervention for second level students, who are potential early school leavers.
- **Demonstration Library Project -** The JCSP Literacy Strategy includes a National Demonstration Project for the provision of Libraries for JCSP Schools. Libraries staffed by full-time qualified librarians have been set up in 30 participating DEIS schools.

The participant rates in the above initiatives for the years 2006-2011 are as follows:

Primary	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Reading Recovery	97	162	198	215	229	229
First Steps	50	221	283	339	344	344
Maths Recovery	0	89	242	272	301	313
Ready Set Go Maths	0	0	245	248	261	261
Post-primary						
Junior Certificate Schools Programme	118	141	162	184	186	186
Demonstration Library	10	20	30	30	30	30

4.4.2 Evaluation of DEIS

This Department commissioned the Educational Research Centre (ERC) to undertake an evaluation of DEIS, the aim of which was to monitor the implementation of the programme and assess its impact on students and schools at primary and post-primary levels. This evaluation was completed in 2011. In addition, the Inspectorate of the Department conducted evaluations of planning in a sample of 36 DEIS schools which consisted of 18 primary and 18 post-primary schools in 2010. Based on these evaluations, a national composite report on the Inspectorate's evaluations of the effectiveness of DEIS planning in primary and post-primary schools was produced in 2011 and this report along with the ERC report were published in early 2012. Both reports show that the DEIS programme is having a positive effect on tackling educational disadvantage.

4.4.3 Traveller Education Strategy

Progress on the implementation of the Traveller Education strategy continued in 2011. The Visiting Teacher Service and Resource Teachers for Travellers ceased with effect from 31st August 2011.

4.4.4 Limerick Regeneration

The Department, through its Limerick Office, ensures that the resources for education are applied coherently and effectively to the task of giving all children and young people, in the regeneration areas, the capacity to build better lives from a sound educational base. This is achieved by the Department contributing to the long-term physical and social regeneration agenda as set out in the Limerick Regeneration Masterplan.

4.4.5 Implementation of the Intercultural Education Strategy

Progress on the implementation of the Intercultural Education Strategy 2010-2015 continued in 2011.

A conference on *The Intercultural Education Strategy – One Year On*, involving key stakeholders in intercultural education was held in October 2011.

The **Inspectorate** conducted a thematic evaluation of the provision for EAL students in thirty primary schools and fifteen post-primary schools. The individual reports are available on the Department's website. The focus of the thematic evaluations was on reviewing the challenges and opportunities provided to schools in terms of ethos, teaching and learning and the supports available to EAL.

These evaluations were an integral informative component of the **Value for Money Review of Expenditure on the Education of Migrant Students at Primary and Post-primary Level who do not Speak English (or Irish) as a First Language**. This Value for Money Review was published in March 2011 and is available on the Department's website.

4.4.6 Transfer of the Functions of the National Educational Welfare Board

The functions under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, including the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) and the integrated services under the remit of the Board, have transferred from the Minister for Education and Skills to the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. The transfer of functions was effected by an order under Section 6 (1) (c) and (d) of the Ministers and Secretaries (Amendment) Act 1939 and signed on 10th May 2011. A Working Group was established with officials from the two Departments in order to progress issues of joint concern.

4.5 Special Education

The Department provides for a range of educational supports and services for children with special educational needs in mainstream and special schools including teachers, special needs assistants, assistive technology, specialist equipment, enhanced capitation and special transport arrangements. The Department is committed to ensuring that all children with special educational needs can have access to an education appropriate to their needs, preferably in an inclusive mainstream school setting through the primary and post-primary school network. Where children with special educational needs cannot be provided for in mainstream settings, the Department provides for specialised special class and special school places. The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) is responsible for processing applications from schools for supports for children with special educational needs. 1.4 of Table 1 below sets out the special education supports provided in 2011.

4.6 School Patronage

In order to address the diverse cultural needs of our society, the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector was established in 2011 and an Advisory Group was appointed to oversee the work of the Forum. The significant societal changes which have taken place in Ireland have led to increased demand for new forms of multi-denominational and non-denominational schooling. The terms of reference of the Forum were to advise the Minister on how it can best be ensured that the education system can provide a sufficiently diverse number and range of primary schools catering for all religions and none; the practicalities of how the transfer or divesting of patronage should operate for individual primary schools in communities where it is appropriate

and necessary and how such transfer or divesting can be advanced to ensure that demands for diversity of patronage, including those from an Irish language perspective, can be identified and met on a widespread basis nationally. In undertaking this work the Forum had particular regard for the expressed willingness of the Catholic Church to consider divesting patronage of primary schools and the current financial constraints within which the State is operating, along with the need for continued restraint into the future and the requirement in this context to make maximum use of existing school infrastructure in catering for future demands.

A three day public session with stakeholders, which was broadcast live from the Department website, was held in late June 2011. Over 240 submissions were received from stakeholders and considered by the Advisory Group. In late 2011 the Advisory Group held a final public working session to share their reflections and to invite stakeholder responses prior to finalising their report to the Minister which is due to be completed in 2012 along with an implementation plan.

4.7 School Enrolment Policies

A discussion document on school enrolment policies was published in 2011 to develop a new regulatory framework for school enrolment. The document, *Discussion Paper on a Regulatory Framework for School Enrolment* contains suggestions on how to make the process of enrolling in schools more open, equitable and consistent. The aim of the discussion document was to initiate debate leading to changes in how primary and post primary schools allocate places to students in order to ensure a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory enrolment system. The Minister invited education partners and interested parties to submit their views to the Department by the end of October 2011. A total of 90 submissions were received, which will inform the nature and scope of a new regulatory framework for school enrolment which the Minister intends to bring to Government early in 2013.

4.8 Development of a New Post Primary On-line Database (P-POD)

The Department decided in October 2011 to replace the current school administration software capturing post-primary pupil data with a new database to be known as P-POD. P-POD is currently being developed to bring greater efficiency and effectiveness to how post-primary schools make their returns of student data to the Department. The P-POD system, which will be hosted by the Department, will be a central database for student and some school data. When P-POD is developed, post-primary schools will be able to access the system using the Department's *esinet* portal to maintain their students' data. It is expected that from October 2014 all post-primary schools will be able to make their returns of student data known as the October Returns via P-POD.

4.9 ICT in Schools

The Department's ICT in Schools Programme is focused on the integration of ICT into teaching and learning and promotes the development of pupils' digital literacy. The programme addresses the provision of essential ICT infrastructure and networking within schools, the provision of access

to broadband connectivity in schools, up-skilling teachers' ICT skills, integrating ICT within the curriculum and providing curriculum relevant digital content and software. Strategies are pursued through the work of the ICT Policy Section and the Dublin West Education Centre (DWEC) in collaboration with other agencies, support services and representative bodies as appropriate. The Programme for Government outlined plans to end the treatment of ICT in education as a stand-alone issue and to integrate it across education policy. In this context, the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) was brought within the remit of DWEC in September 2011, alongside the Department's largest support service, the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). This new configuration ensures greater integration of ICT within teaching and learning both in terms of policy and practice. Also certain functions relating to curriculum development were transferred from the NCTE to the NCCA.

4.10 School Transport

The Department's School Transport Scheme is a very significant operation covering 82 million kilometres on approximately 6,000 routes. A Value for Money Review of the School Transport Scheme was published in 2011. A number of changes to the school transport scheme, deriving from recommendations in the Review, were implemented to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Scheme. The School Transport Scheme for Children with Special Educational Needs was also revised to incorporate the provision of transport on a concessionary basis. Overall expenditure on the School Transport Scheme amounted to approximately €170 million in 2011.

4.11 School Books

In recognition of the difficult economic circumstances of many families in 2011, commitments were secured from the main educational publishers to give substantial discounts to schools that run book rental schemes. Following two meetings with Minister Quinn, the majority of publishers confirmed that schools which purchase in bulk for book rental schemes will benefit from discounts in the range of 12% - 17.5%.

4.12 The Effective Governance and Management of Schools

An important role of the Department is the development of policy to support the effective governance, management and operation of schools in consultation with the Education Partners and other interested stakeholders. In September 2011, *Board of Management of National Schools Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011* was published in consultation with the Education Partners. The booklet includes an overview of the role of the Board and an outline of some key activities in which effective Boards typically and routinely engage. The booklet was published in advance of the new primary Boards of Management taking office in December 2011.

4.13 School Inspection and Quality Assurance in Schools

The Inspectorate Division of the Department has statutory responsibility for evaluating the quality of educational provision in schools and centres for education. During 2011, the Inspectorate continued to revise and develop the inspection models it uses to evaluate schools. This has resulted in a suite of inspection types, ranging from unannounced inspections to more intensive

and specialised evaluations at both primary and post-primary level. In 2011, following consultations with the education partners, the Inspectorate extended incidental (unannounced) inspection to include post-primary schools and centres for education from November 2011. A total of 92 such inspections were conducted in post-primary schools in 2011.

The Whole-School Evaluation: Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE-MLL) model introduced in the previous year was firmly established in 2011 at post-primary level. This model focuses on the quality of management and leadership and on the quality of teaching and learning, which are key elements in the work of the school. The majority of whole-school type inspections carried out at post-primary level in 2011 were WSE-MLLs.

The on-going revisions to the models of evaluation deployed have facilitated increased inspection coverage of schools and centres for education and improved reporting to school communities, the Oireachtas and the public.

During 2011, a total of 1,015 school inspection reports, were published on the Department's website (www.education.ie). The publication of reports ensures that schools, parents and the general public have access to meaningful information on quality and standards in the education system. The publication and dissemination of inspection findings also supports the provision of relevant policy advice for the education system.

In addition to the publication of school inspection reports, the following reports were published by the Inspectorate in 2011:

- *An Evaluation of Planning Processes in DEIS Primary Schools*
- *An Evaluation of Planning Processes in DEIS Post-primary Schools*

School Inspection Reports published in 2011	
• **WSE Primary**	**299**
• **WSE Post-primary & WSE-MLL Post-Primary**	**54**
• **Subject inspection (within WSE)**	**109**
• **Subject inspection (stand-alone)**	**496**
• **Programme evaluation (within WSE)**	**6**
• **Programme evaluations (stand-alone)**	**41**
• **Evaluation of centres for education**	**10**
Total	**1,015**

The Inspectorate greatly values the views of parents and students as key stakeholders in the school community. As part of whole-school evaluations, from September 2010, questionnaires have been administered to a representative sample of parents and pupils in order to get their

views on the operation of their schools. In 2011, questionnaires were returned by 20,941 parents and 15,066 pupils in primary schools, and by 9,908 parents and 13,713 students in post-primary schools. Data from the questionnaires is used to identify issues for further exploration during an inspection visit to a school. The aggregated data is also provided to the school as a support to school self-evaluation. The Inspectorate intends to extend the use of questionnaires during whole-school evaluations to teachers.

4.13.1 School Self-Evaluation

In 2011, the Inspectorate continued to encourage schools to engage in school self-evaluation (SSE). The key objective of this is to make schools responsible and accountable for their educational outcomes. A unit with specific responsibility to promote school self-evaluation was established. Comprehensive new draft guidelines were developed to assist schools to engage in self-evaluation. These draft guidelines are being trialled in six primary and six post-primary schools in the school year 2011-12. Inspectors are supporting the schools in the pilot as they use the draft Guidelines and develop their SSE processes. The following guides have been published by the Inspectorate:

- *Draft Guidelines on School Self-Evaluation for Primary Schools*
- *Draft Guidelines on School Self-Evaluation for Post- Primary Schools*

4.14 Payroll Division

The Payroll Division at the Department is responsible for the payment of salaries and pensions to teaching and non-teaching staff who are, or were, employed in primary, secondary and Community and Comprehensive schools. In 2011, the Division implemented the measures announced in Budget 2010 on the payrolls including the Universal Social Charge and the Public Service Pensions Reduction. An on-line facility for the submission of claims by the managerial authorities of schools for the payments under the supervision or substitution scheme to teachers in primary, secondary and community and comprehensive schools was introduced. The introduction of this on-line facility reduced the administrative burden for the managerial authorities of schools. Further details on payroll and pension activities are set out at 1.2 of Table 1 below.

4.15 Teachers and Special Needs Assistants' (SNAs) Terms and Conditions

In co-operation with the Payroll Division and External Staff Relations, this section regulates the employment terms and conditions governing Teachers and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) developing evidence-based policy in order to promote effective utilisation of human resources in recognised schools. In 2011, the section published a number of Circulars and documents designed to advise school management and employees of entitlements in a clear and transparent manner.

In this regard the section published updated terms and conditions for registered teachers in the area of career breaks; maternity protection entitlements; extension of existing schemes to recognise civil partnerships; teacher recruitment, registration and qualifications and revised

promotion procedures at primary level. Updated qualification requirements for SNAs were also published.

Revised appointment procedures for teachers, principals and special needs assistants at primary level were agreed with the education partners and were incorporated within the updated *Boards of Management of National Schools Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011* document. For the first time, recruitment advertising for special needs assistants can now be placed online, reducing advertising costs for schools and bringing primary SNA advertising procedures in line with existing provisions for teaching staff. Another development in 2011 was the successful tendering by the Department for an Employee Assistance Service for teachers and SNAs.

4.16 Teacher Education and Continuing Professional Development

The remit of the Teacher Education Section (TES) of the Department covers the continuum of teacher education from initial teacher education, to induction and CPD, ensuring cohesion in teacher education policy and practice in a way that will best support teachers and school leaders. The work of the Section encompasses policy formulation along with the co-ordination, management, quality and financial control of measures to support the provision of education for teachers and schools leaders throughout their careers. The Section is responsible for devising and implementing effective policies and measures to ensure the adequate supply of suitably qualified and trained primary school teachers in the short, medium and long terms. This involves a high-level of communication and interaction with the Colleges of Education, the Teaching Council and others. The Department is also responsible for implementing policies in relation to the postgraduate diploma programme for post-primary teachers which is provided by the Education Departments of participating Universities.

4.16.1 Initial Teacher Education

Throughout 2011, the Department engaged in continued efficient communication and administration with the Colleges of Education on a range of matters relevant to initial teacher education, in particular the Bachelor of Education Degree and the Postgraduate Diploma in Education for primary teaching. As referred to earlier in this Report, following close consultation between the Department and the Teaching Council, proposals for changes to initial teacher education, which were set out in the National Strategy for Literacy and Numeracy, have been incorporated into the Teaching Council's *Policy Paper on the Continuum of Teacher Education* and *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers* which were produced in 2011. The Criteria provide for an expansion of the primary Bachelor of Education from 3 to 4 years, and for an expansion of the Professional Diploma in Education to 2 years. The reconfigured and lengthened Bachelor of Education (primary) will commence in September 2012.

4.16.2 Professional Development Support Service for Teachers (PDST)

In recent years there has been some consolidation and re-structuring of the teachers' support service system. This process led to the re-conceptualisation by the Department of its provision for school support and teacher professional development resulting in a move to a new generic and

integrated cross-sectoral support service, the PDST, from September 2010. The main aim of the service is to ensure quality, consistent and cohesive CPD support in response to national priority areas and emerging local needs.

The PDST is charged with leading the teacher support element of the National Strategy for Literacy and Numeracy. An integrated plan to support the strategy has been developed by the PDST. In 2011, seminars were held for school leaders which outlined the responsibility of the school in the implementation of the strategy at a local level. Since then, a wide range of other sessions have been developed in areas such as school self-evaluation, courses for link teachers and courses specific to the language medium of the school. There has also been provision in areas such as guided reading, oral language, writing and comprehension.

4.16.3 An tSeirbhís Tacaíochta Dara Leibhéal don Ghaeilge (STDLG)

One of the primary objectives of this service is to support the use of Gaeilge as a communicative language in schools and classrooms by:

- Promoting the importance of oral skills as an integral part of the Junior and Leaving Certificate syllabi
- Enabling teachers to develop a range of teaching and learning strategies that will promote oral language proficiency, as recommended in Circular 0042/2007
- Building on the strengths of the Revised Curriculum for Primary Schools.

In November 2011 the STDLG organised An Tionól Teagaisc, a national forum for Irish Language secondary school teachers, which was held in NUI Maynooth, with a choice of over thirty workshops. Over 450 Irish Language teachers attended.

The STDLG is a key component in the delivery of support for the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language and also in providing support to Irish medium schools in relation to the implementation of the National Strategy for Literacy and Numeracy. The STDLG will merge with the PDST in 2012.

4.16.4 Special Education Support Service (SESS)

The need for additional continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers to enable them to meet the needs of students with special educational needs continues to be a high priority in the education system. Currently, funding is provided for the provision of places in third level institutions for teachers who wish to pursue post-graduate qualifications in special education.

All teachers are also encouraged to seek assistance from the Special Education Support Service (SESS) and to pursue specialised CPD in relation to the learning and teaching of students with a wide range of special educational needs. The SESS was established in September 2003, to deliver in-service training and support to schools on a nationwide basis. The service consolidates, co-ordinates, develops and delivers a range of professional development initiatives and support structures for school personnel working with students with special educational needs, in a variety

of educational settings. These settings include mainstream primary and post-primary schools, special schools and special classes.

A specialised CPD programme designed for new special schools for students with autism was provided in 2011. A peer-support principal from an existing special school was also assigned to each new principal.

In 2011 18,903 places were provided for CPD via the SESS, while 338 places were provided on college based programmes in Learning Support and Special Education.

4.16.5 Project Maths Development Team (PMDT)

The National roll-out of teacher professional development to support Project Maths began in September 2009 as PMDT commenced the provision of in-service in advance of the implementation of the revised syllabi. This work continued through 2011 with strands 3 and 4 of the new curriculum being implemented from September. In addition, the PMDT provide a range of resources including:

- Teaching & Learning Plans which provide a detailed plan of what an effective classroom would/should look like terms of aims, learning outcomes, lesson interaction and student activities
- Student's CD's, which allows students to not only enhance their understanding of mathematics, but they can also enjoy the experience. They contain activities to help students use the ICT tools more effectively to access and facilitate their learning
- Teacher Handbook to help teachers plan on a daily basis, introduce imaginative innovations, place the learner at the centre of the mathematics classroom and enhance the range of resources available. This Handbook is based on the experiences and feedback from the teachers in the Project Schools

In collaboration with the National Centre for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching & Learning (NCE-MSTL) UL, content/pedagogy courses for teachers have been developed and delivered by local facilitators through the local Education Centre network. These modular courses address content relevant to the revised syllabi such as Statistics & Probability and Geometry & Trigonometry.

4.16.5a Introduction of a Project Maths Post Graduate Programme

Reports in recent years indicate a deficit in the content knowledge and mathematics qualifications of a significant proportion of the cohort of teachers who are currently teaching mathematics in post-primary schools. Teachers must have sufficient mathematical knowledge to develop and support good mathematics teaching and learning for every pupil. With a view to facilitating 'out of field' teachers in enhancing their qualifications in terms of mathematics and the teaching of mathematics, in 2011, the Department issued a request for tender to contract suitable programme/s of study to be available on a phased basis to this cohort of teachers.The course/s should aim to provide teachers with suitable mathematical content knowledge along with appropriate pedagogical strategies in line with the Project Maths initiative which will help teachers

in areas such as identifying learning needs, responding to pupils' questions, choosing useful examples, planning lessons, assessing pupils' learning and so on.

4.17 Number of Graduate Teachers from the Primary Colleges of Education in 2011

Colleges	Graduates – Bachelor of Education & Post Graduate 2011
Non HEA Colleges	
Froebel College	96
Coláiste Mhuire, Marino	165
Church of Ireland CoE	29
HEA Colleges	
St Patricks College	505
Mary Immaculate College	522
Total	**1317**

4.18 The National Educational Psychological Service

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) was established in 1999 to support the personal, social and educational development of all children in primary and post-primary schools through the application of psychological theory and practice in education, having particular regard for children with special educational needs. All primary and post primary schools have access to psychological assessments either directly through the assigned NEPS psychologist or through the Scheme for Commissioning Psychological Assessments (SCPA). Schools that do not currently have NEPS psychologists assigned to them may avail of the SCPA, whereby the school can have an assessment carried out by a member of the panel of private psychologists approved and paid for by NEPS.

NEPS provides, upon request, assistance to all schools and school communities that experience critical incidents. NEPS also processes applications for Reasonable Accommodation in Certificate Examinations (RACE) and responds to queries in relation to individual children from other sections of the Department and from specialist agencies.

NEPS contributes to policy development and provides a wide range of advisory and consultative functions with other divisions within the Department and with its agencies, especially in the area of special needs provision.

In early 2011 NEPS re-organised its regional structure to rationalise service provision from a ten to an eight region division. Four Regional Directors were appointed in the period replacing personnel lost to retirement in 2010.

Thirteen new psychologists were recruited to the service in 2011, during which time five were lost due to resignation or retirement; the overall number of psychologists at years end was 173 (166.4 whole-time equivalents).

In relation to its core provision during 2011, NEPS psychologists were assigned to some 86% of primary schools (representing 91% of pupils) and 93% of post-primary schools (representing 95% of pupils). Overall this represented an increase in NEPS psychologist assignment to schools.

During the 2010/11 academic year NEPS psychologists were involved in casework, which consists of assessment and intervention, in relation to over 7,880 named students; it is also estimated that they provided advice to teachers regarding interventions for a further 12,000 un-named students. Additionally some 2,508 assessments were funded under the SCPA.

In the second half of the academic year NEPS psychologists provided training to over 1,000 newly qualified primary school teachers in classroom behavioural management, based on Continuum Guidelines, as part of their formal induction process. NEPS continued the process of providing information sessions on the Continuum process to post-primary Principals nationally as part of its 3-year embedding plan.

In addition, NEPS psychologists made recommendations on some 4,700 additional pupils under the Reasonable Accommodation in Certificate Examinations scheme (RACE) on behalf of the State Examinations Commission and attended some 98 critical incidents in schools at the request of school authorities.

Overall expenditure on the NEPS in 2011 amounted to €17.76m, including some €0.75m on SCPA assessments.

4.19 Table 1 - Outputs under Goal 1 in 2011

Objective		Outputs in 2011
1.1	• **Support a high quality early years education system, for children aged 0-6 years.**	**2011 Output** Over 125,000 places were provided in infant classes • Continued implementation of the Síolta and Aistear frameworks • An independent evaluation of the field test of the Síolta was completed • Common Award Standards for Early Childhood Care and Education courses were published • The Aistear on-line toolkit continued to be updated • 67,000 or 94% of eligible children enrolled in the free pre-school year for 2011/12
1.2	**Support the operation of a high quality school system.** **2011 Output** **Funding and Administration** • Funding and administrative services were provided to over 800,000 students in over 4,100 schools through the provision of 60,150 teaching posts.	**Pensions** • Approximately 13,500 primary level teachers were in receipt of a pension • Approximately 9,500 post-primary level teachers were in receipt of a pension • Approximately 300 non-teaching staff at Primary level were in receipt of a pension • Approximately 70 non-teaching staff at post-primary level were in receipt of a pension

	Objective	Outputs in 2011
	• €330,000 was provided to fund the National Parents' Council (NPC) at Primary level • €202,000 was provided to fund the NPC at second level, including €12,000 for an examination results helpline and a once off provision of €25,000 to pilot the implementation of phase 1 of their Strategic Plan • €197m was provided for capitation, ancillary and school support services at primary level • €117m was provided to voluntary secondary schools for capitation, ancillary and school support services • Capitation and ancillary grants at primary level were provided at a rate of €325 per pupil in 2011 • The combined capitation and school services support fund was €529 per pupil • Enhanced levels of capitation, ranging from €469 to €903 per pupil depending on category, were payable in respect of children with special educational needs attending special schools and special classes in primary schools. • €47.4m was provided for non-teaching pay and non-pay costs in Community and Comprehensive schools • €63m was provided for non-pay costs in VECs **Processing Pupil Data** • The Department processed 732 returns relating to pupil data from post-primary schools in respect of 360,000 students in 2011 • The decision was made to introduce the new on-line database P-POD **Teacher Allocation** • The teacher allocation process was managed within the tight constraints of the payroll budget and ceiling on teacher numbers. • The re-deployment took place of approximately 1,100 surplus permanent teachers at primary and post-primary level to schools with vacancies.	• There were 1,089 retirements at primary level • There were 779 retirements at post-primary level • Lump sums amounting to a total of approximately €106m were paid to primary teachers, while lump sums amounting to a total of approximately €75m were paid to post-primary teachers • Non Teaching Staff lump sums amount to approximately €1m at primary level and €188,000 at post-primary level **Section 29 Appeals** • Section 29 appeals were processed and heard in a timely and professional manner in accordance with statutory timeframes and stipulations • 367 section 29 appeals were admitted. 59% went to full hearing, while the remaining 41% were either resolved at local level, through facilitation or withdrawn. **Parental Complaints** • 798 complaints were recorded in 2011 • Information was provided to parents and pupils on structures and processes for the making and resolution of complaints in relation to schools • The Department liaised with the Office for Children and Youth Affairs in relation to Student Councils and Youth participation. • The Teacher Education Section of the Department liaised with the Teaching Council as appropriate on policy and other matters of interest to both the Department and the Council.
1.3	• **Provide targeted supports to schools included in the DEIS programme.** **2011 Output** • 864 schools participated in the DEIS programme comprising of 669 primary schools and 195 second level schools with 164,000 young people enrolled in them • 405 Home School Community Liaison Coordinators provided a service to 543 schools under DEIS in the 2011/12 school	• 229 DEIS primary schools were included in the Reading Recovery programme with 263 teachers trained by July 2011 • 313 DEIS primary schools were included in the Maths Recovery programme • There are 318 DEIS primary schools with a 'First Steps' Writing Tutor, 276 with a 'First Steps' Reading Tutor and 181 with a 'First Steps' Speaking and Listening Tutor. • There are 261 DEIS schools participating in 'Ready Set Go- Maths' programme • 186 DEIS post-primary schools participated

Objective		Outputs in 2011
	year. Home School Community Liaison operates in DEIS urban primary schools and DEIS post-primary schools • 124 projects under the School Completion Programme were operated in 224 post-primary and 467 primary schools, specifically targeted at 36,000 children and young people • €14.9m funding was allocated to DEIS under the School Books Grant Scheme in 2011 • For the 2011/2012 school year, DEIS grants amounting to approximately €10.7m issued to DEIS primary schools and €3.4 m to DEIS post-primary schools • Two evaluations of DEIS conducted by the ERC and the Inspectorate were completed by the end of 2011 • Literacy and numeracy initiatives were implemented in DEIS schools • From September 2011 a dedicated literacy and numeracy team has been employed to assist with the implementation of the Department's Literacy and Numeracy Strategy	in the Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP) • The Demonstration Library Project has set up school libraries in 30 Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) schools nationally • Grants were allocated to 16 projects in 2011/12 under the Family Literacy Project • 652 DEIS schools participated in the School Meals Programme. The number of children benefiting under this Programme increased from 125,138 in 2006 to over 189,000 in 2011. Expenditure on the School Meals Programme increased from €13.6m in 2006 to €34.975m in 2011.
1.4	• **Provide targeted supports for children with special educational needs (SEN).** **2011 Output** • There were 9,854 whole time equivalent learning support/resource teachers in mainstream primary and post-primary schools at 31/12/11 • Over 1,100 teachers provided education to children attending special schools with reduced pupil teacher ratios • 10,575 whole time equivalent Special Needs Assistants were provided for the school year beginning in September 2011 • 1,135 grants, totalling €940,391, issued to primary and special schools for the purchase of specialist equipment to assist children with special needs in the classroom. • All centres participating in the Applied Behavioural Analysis pilot scheme funded by the Department applied for and were granted recognition as special schools for children with autism • An additional 86 classes for children with autism attached to mainstream and special schools were approved bringing the total number of special classes for children with autism to 450 by the end of 2011 • 56 early intervention classes for children on the autistic spectrum were also provided in 2011 • Approximately 980 pupils availed of home tuition during the school year ending June 2011	• 149 schools participated in the July Education Programme in 2011 • Additional capitation of €7.5m was provided for pupils in special schools and special classes attached to mainstream schools • A Value for Money Policy Review of the Special Needs Assistant Scheme was published in June 2011. • Officials from the Departments of Health, Education and Skills, the new Department of Children and Youth Affairs, the Health Service Executive and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) comprise a cross-sectoral group which meets regularly to co-ordinate an approach which will ensure delivery of the most effective response for children living with disability and special educational needs. • A specialised CPD programme for new special schools for students with autism was provided in 2011. • 18,903 places were provided for CPD by SESS in 2011 • 338 places were provided on college based programmes in Learning Support and Special Education

	Objective	Outputs in 2011
1.5	• **Improve the external evaluation of schools and centres for education by expanding and improving the range of inspection models used and by including better opportunities for follow-up and advisory work in schools within the inspection programme.**	**2011 Output** • Incidental inspections were introduced in 2011 to include post-primary schools and centres of education. 92 unannounced inspections were conducted in post-primary schools • The Whole-School Evaluation: Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE-MLL) model was firmly established at post-primary level in 2011. • There was increased inspection coverage of schools and centres for education, along with improved reporting to school communities, the Oireachtas and the public in 2011. • Over 3,800 inspections were conducted in 2011. • 961 school inspection reports were published on the Department's website at www.education.ie/
1.6	• **Encourage boards of management and school communities to engage in robust self-review and ongoing improvement of teaching and learning in their schools and centres for education by providing relevant support materials.**	**2011 Output** • A pilot school self-evaluation project was introduced • A unit with specific responsibility to promote school self-evaluation was established • Comprehensive new draft guidelines were developed to assist schools to engage in self-evaluation: *Draft Guidelines on School Self-Evaluation for Primary Schools* and *Draft Guidelines on School Self-Evaluation for Post- Primary Schools* • The Guidelines are being trialled in six primary and six post-primary schools. • Inspectors are supporting the schools in the pilot as they use the draft Guidelines and develop their SSE processes. • The PDST developed sessions in school evaluation A programme of training is in place for New Boards of Management appointed in 2011.
1.7	• **Provide a quality educational psychology service to schools.**	**2011 Output** • A quality educational psychological service was provided by NEPS in 2011 • NEPS psychologists provided training to over 1,000 newly qualified teachers • 13 new psychologists were recruited in 2011 • There was an increase in NEPS psychologist assignment in schools • During the 2010/11 academic year NEPS psychologist engaged in case-work for over 7,880 named students. • 2,508 assessments were funded under the SCPA • Overall expenditure on NEPS services in 2011 amounted to €17.76m
1.8	• **Provide a safe, efficient and cost effective transport service for eligible**	**2011 Output** • School transport was provided to 120,000

Objective		Outputs in 2011
	children to and from school.	students each day of the school year, including 8,000 children with special educational needs • The report of the Value for Money Review of School Transport was published • 12 recommendations of the Value for Money Review were implemented • The School Transport Scheme for Children with special needs was revised
1.9	• **Develop and provide, in conjunction with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment ("NCCA"), curricula and syllabi that enable children and young people to develop skills for life, learning and work.**	**2011 Output** • The NCCA published the report *Towards a Framework for Junior Cycle* making recommendations relating to curricular reform of the junior cycle • Project Maths continued to be rolled out. Strands 3 and 4 of the Project Maths syllabus issued to mainstream schools • Candidates for the 2011 Leaving Certificate examination in the 24 project schools for Project Maths sat examinations covering four of the five syllabus strands. • The PPLI was supported • The Road Safety Programme was extended • 4,920 students sat the Leaving Certificate Examination in the targeted languages of Spanish, Italian, Russian and Japanese in 2011 • The National Strategy for Literacy and Numeracy provides for the revision of elements of the primary curriculum in infant classes to ensure consistency with the Aistear curriculum framework for pre-schools announced in 2009 and putting a greater emphasis on early language and numeracy development. • The Strategy also provides for the revision of the English (for all schools) and Irish curricula (for Irish-medium schools) in primary schools to show clearly what skills children are expected to learn at each stage; subsequently to revise the Irish curriculum for English medium schools
1.10	• **Develop, promote and implement a National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy to improve learning outcomes for children and young people.**	**2011 Output** • *Learning for Life: The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011 to 2020* was published in 2011 • An Advisory Group was established to monitor the implementation of the Strategy • A dedicated literacy and numeracy team was employed to assist with the implementation of the Strategy • Significant progress has been made in implementing the early actions of the Strategy • The PDST is leading the teacher support

Objective		Outputs in 2011
		element of the Strategy and has developed an integrated plan to support the Strategy • Units of literacy and numeracy are in place within the National Teacher Induction Programme for the 2011/12 school year.
1.11	• **Support the use of ICT in teaching and learning.**	**2011 Output** • The daily average of aggregate schools broadband network traffic has doubled from 600 Mbit/s in September 2010 to 1200 Mbit/s in September 2011 • Approximately 12,000 ICT continuing professional development (CPD) teacher training places have been provided • 9 new ICT CPD courses were added to the current provision • 1.54 million visits were made to the website www.scoilnet.ie which is the national portal for ICT in education and offers access to a growing repository of advice, information and evaluated and categorised web sources, software and multimedia resources.
1.12	• **Improve assessment and evaluation to support better learning, especially in literacy and numeracy.**	**2011 Output** • Circular 56/2011 issued to all primary schools in November 2011 to promote the National Strategy for Literacy and Numeracy • The Strategy outlines the arrangements for the assessment of pupils' progress which are designed to support better literacy and numeracy teaching in schools and describes how assessment information on pupil's progress should be recorded, used and reported. • The Strategy provides information on national and international assessments of reading and mathematics in which Irish schools are involved and sets out requirements on schools regarding participation in these studies • The Strategy requires the use of standardised assessments in literacy and numeracy at the end of second, fourth and six classes in primary schools and at the end of second year in post-primary schools. • All-English medium post-primary schools are to administer standardised tests of English reading and mathematics to all eligible students at the end of second year. All Irish-medium post-primary schools are to administer standardised tests of Irish reading, English reading and mathematics to all eligible students at the end of second year. • Schools are to report to parents using information from a range of assessment approaches including the outcomes of standardised assessment tests and information on how their child is progressing

Objective		Outputs in 2011
		compared to national norms. • Schools must also collect aggregated data on student achievement on standardised assessment tests. • Reports are to be given on the national achievement trends in reading and mathematics in primary and post-primary schools at least every two years using aggregated data from standardised tests in schools. • 151 schools and approximately 4,500 pupils in fourth class participated in two main studies relating to literacy and numeracy, namely: *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)*
1.13	• **Develop and operate, in conjunction with the State Examinations Commission, appropriate programmes for assessment, accreditation and certification of second-level examinations.**	**2011 Output** • Project Maths was examined in 24 Project Schools in the Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate 2011 and the results were published by the SEC • Examinations were provided to candidates across all examination programmes • The SEC arranged for examinations in 90 curricular and 15 non-curricular examination subjects • A range of measures were provided to facilitate candidates with particular needs to participate in the State examinations • 1.9m individual test items such as art and craftwork pieces were examined • The Examination results were awarded and appeals were processed • The SEC prepared approximately 1.9m component items for 114,380 candidates who sat the Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations in 2011 • 18,156 reasonable accommodations were granted by the SEC to 11,437 candidates to facilitate their participation in the State examinations • 985,257 grades were generated leading to the award of 114,380 examination results • 12,731 appeals were processed at Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Applied and Junior Certificate levels. • The Department supported the SEC in relation to examining reform of the examination system in relation to curriculum changes including, in particular, junior cycle reform
1.14	• **Work with the Teaching Council and teacher educators to provide high quality initial teacher education programmes**.	**2011 Output** • Continued communication and liaison between the Department and the Teaching Council on matters of mutual concern such as legislation, policies, governance, registration of teachers. There was continued efficient communication and

Objective		Outputs in 2011
		administration with the Colleges of Education on a range of matters relating to initial teacher education, in particular the Bed degree and the Postgraduate Dip. In Education for primary teaching. • Consultation took place between the Department and the Teaching Council in relation to the changes proposed to initial teacher education under the National Strategy for Literacy and Numeracy.
1.15	• **Provide high quality, relevant continuing professional development (cpd) programmes for teachers.**	**2011 Output** • Relevant CPD programmes were provided in the context of national and sectoral priorities. • The Aistear on-line toolkit continued to be updated in 2011. • The PDST arranged seminars in 2011 in relation to the implementation of the National Strategy for Literacy and Numeracy for school leaders • The PDST developed sessions in school self-evaluation, courses for link teachers and courses specific to the language medium of the school • The STDLG provided workshops for Irish teachers and organised An Tionól Teagaisc, which over 450 teachers attended • The PMDT supported teachers by providing 2 workshops and via a range of supplemental resources in relation to Project Maths • A request for tenders (RFT) was issued by the Department in December 2011 for the provision of courses to support the teaching of maths • The Education Centre Network continued to host national CPD programmes for teachers • The Summer Course Programme, which relates to the advancement of teachers pedagogic and management skills continued in 2011 • The Social Personal and Health Education support service continued to offer training on the Department's Child Protection Guidelines. Training in the new Child Protection Procedures introduced in 2011 will be rolled out by Designated Liaison Persons (DLPs) and Boards of Management • The Teacher Fee Refund scheme continued to provide funding towards the cost of in-career development courses • Overall number of CPD events would be useful here, or number of events other than local and summer courses. • €4.71m was spent in supporting the Education Centres and their Local Courses in 2011

Objective		Outputs in 2011
		• 31,803 teachers attended 1,492 local courses • 27,579 teachers attended 703 Summer Courses in 2011 • 382 DLPs and Deputy DLPs attended training in Child Protection Guidelines
1.16	• **Support the Teaching Council's role in regulating the teaching profession.**	**2011 Output** • The General Scheme of the Education (Amendment) Bill 2012 was approved in 2011. This allowed for changes to be made that will pave the way for the commencement of section 30 of the Teaching Council Act (TCA), 2001 which requires that all teachers in State recognised schools, whose salaries are funded by the Department, are registered with the Teaching Council. The Bill also provided for the amendment of section 33 of the TCA which would allow for the requirement for teachers to submit additional information when renewing their registration • On-going support was provided to the Teaching Council by the Department
1.17	• **Support improvements in the teaching of Irish at primary and post-primary levels**	**2011 Output** • Work which will improve the teaching of Irish in our primary and post-primary schools is underway, including the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy i.e. revision of the contents of the L1 and L2 curriculum and standardised tests in Irish • Circular 0056/2011 sets out that the time spent on the development of literacy in primary schools, particularly in the first language of the school (Irish or English), should be increased by one hour overall per week • A revised Leaving Certificate curriculum in Irish (with 40% of the Leaving Certificate examination marks being allocated for the oral) began in all schools in September 2010 for first examination in 2012. The NCCA has been asked to review this syllabus in light of the experiences in the first exam in June 2012 • As part of the overall approach and the phasing in of the Junior Cycle Reforms, the Irish syllabus will be reviewed • Support was provided to An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG) in providing advice, research, resources and texts in Irish and support services for the teaching of Irish and through Irish. • The COGG website, which was re-designed during the year, contains a database of all teaching and learning resources for Gaeltacht and all-Irish schools, as well as

Objective		Outputs in 2011
		COGG publications and other information. COGG has won a number of awards for its website. • A number of textbooks, mock examination papers and past examination papers in Irish which were published in 2011 can be viewed on their website at www.cogg.ie.
1.18	• **Put in place patronage arrangements for newly established schools and support the work of the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector**	**2011 Output** • In 2011, the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector was launched and an Advisory Group was appointed • A 3 day public session with stakeholders was held in July and broadcast live from the Department's website • 247 submissions were received and considered by the Advisory Group • A final public working session was held in November 2011 • Expenditure on the Patronage Forum amounted to €26,755 in 2011 • Following on from the establishment of the Forum, a New Schools Establishment Group was established to advise on the patronage of new schools in the context of identified criteria
1.19	• **Work in co-operation with the Irish Youth Justice Service to develop strategies and policies to meet the educational needs of young people placed in detention schools**.	• The Department maintains a residual policy role for education provision in detention schools • The Department supports the implementation of the Education Strategy for the Children Detention School Service September 2010 - 2013

Goal 2 - Provide opportunities for upskilling and reskilling that meet the needs of individuals and the labour market

Further Education and Training

One of the roles of the Department is to promote, co-ordinate, fund and monitor the development of further education and training (FET) programmes for young people and adults who have either left school early and/or who need FET to enhance their employment prospects and to enable them to achieve a higher level of qualification on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

FET provision offers access, transfer and progression opportunities to learners. Courses, both full-time and part-time, are open to all but the main purpose is to provide a range of supports which will meet the needs of young early school-leavers, provide second-chance education for people who did not complete upper second level and provide vocational preparation and training for labour market entrants and re-entrants. Through the establishment of SOLAS, the implementation of the National Skills Strategy and reform of the FET sector, the Department is working to improve the quality and relevance of FET provision to ensure that it meets the needs of individuals and the labour market. In 2011, approximately 300,000 people, including significant numbers of unemployed people, participated in FET opportunities delivered by FÁS, the VECs, Skillnets and the Labour Market Activation Fund.

The Department of Social Protection assumed overall responsibility for the policy and funding of FÁS employment programmes and employment services from 1st January 2011. This includes the Work Placement Programme and the JobBridge Programme. The Department of Education and Skills has responsibility for the training provision through FÁS. Through the restructuring of the Labour Market Training Policy Section in the Department in 2011, a number of new work areas were assigned to the Section which will consolidate policy and service delivery including the Labour Market Activation Fund (LMAF), apprenticeships and training for people with disabilities.

The total investment in FET by the Department was just over €740m in 2011.

5.1 SOLAS

In July 2011, the Government announced the establishment of a new further education and training authority called SOLAS. FÁS will be disbanded and its training provision transferred to the VECs, which are being reconfigured as the new Education and Training Boards (ETBs). SOLAS will co-ordinate the delivery of FET on an integrated basis by the ETBs. In this role, SOLAS will modernise and reform the delivery of FET in Ireland to bring it up to world-class standard. The SOLAS Implementation Group chaired by Minister Ciarán Cannon, Minister for Training and Skills, and comprising representatives of the Department of Education and Skills,

FÁS, the Irish Vocational Education Association, Department of Social Protection, Department of the Taoiseach and a representative of the private training sector, was established in August 2011 and meets regularly. The Group reported to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery in November 2011. Legislation was prepared and a public consultation process undertaken. Drafting of an Action Plan was commenced, dealing with SOLAS's mission, structure, staffing and funding.

SOLAS will facilitate a coherent integrated strategic national response across the further education and training sectors both to the National Skills Strategy objectives and to the significant increase in demand due to the current employment situation.

SOLAS will facilitate the FET sector in playing a significant role in the activation of the unemployed through its inclusion in the National Employment Action Plan referral process to be implemented by the national employment and entitlements service of the Department of Social Protection.

5.2 Supporting the Implementation of the National Skills Strategy – FET

The National Skills Strategy (NSS) highlights the fact that virtually all occupations in the future will require up-skilling and/or re-skilling and continual learning. In order to achieve the objectives of the NSS for the period to 2020, an additional 500,000 individuals within the workforce will need to progress by at least one level on the NFQ. Significant progress has already been made towards achieving its objectives. The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) Statement of Activity Report 2011 indicates that the most significant challenge for the period to 2020 is upskilling those at Levels 1-3 to Levels 4 and 5. There has been some progress at Levels 1-3, which applies to Junior Certificate and below, with the percentage of the labour force at these levels falling from 27% in 2005 to 19% in 2011. In relation to Levels 4 and 5, which apply to upper secondary including Leaving Certificate, the percentage rate in 2011 remains at 40%, the same level as in 2005.

This Department commissioned the EGFSN to investigate the potential for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) in assisting in meeting the up-skilling objectives of the NSS. The report was published in April 2011 and concluded that while significant experience of RPL has been developed in Ireland, a coordinated national policy approach is required.

Further information in relation to the number of participants, places made available and awards granted is available at 2.1 of Table 2 below.

5.3 National Employment and Entitlements Service

The 2011 Programme for Government provided for the establishment of a new national employment and entitlements service. The objective is to integrate the provision of employment services and benefit payment services within the Department of Social Protection, inter alia, to support jobseekers in their pursuit of employment. Upskilling and re-skilling has a major role to

play in the targeted support offered to jobseekers. As part of its activation agenda and the accompanying programme of institutional reform, the Government decided that, pending the establishment of the new further education and training authority, SOLAS, and the full roll out of the national employment and entitlements service, interim protocols should be agreed between Vocational Education Committees (VECs) and local welfare offices to enable the referral of unemployed people to further education and training programmes funded by this Department and delivered by VECs.

Referral mechanisms already exist between the Department of Social Protection (DSP) and FÁS and in December 2011 a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between both bodies. In December 2011, the Department issued Circular 76/2011 which relates to the implementation of the interim referral protocols between welfare offices and VECs in order to enable the more effective referral of unemployed people to further education courses and to complement the FÁS-DSP MOU.

5.4 Jobs Initiative

The Jobs Initiative, which was announced in May 2011, contained details of over 20,000 additional training, education and work experience places for the unemployed. 6,000 of these additional places were provided by FÁS for Specific Skills Training (SST), of which 5,000 places were in short, evening and blended SST courses delivered by FÁS within existing resources. An additional €3.5 million in funding was provided for 1,000 extra places in longer FÁS SST courses. Courses available under Specific Skills Training include engineering, information technology, office and administration, sales, marketing, management, construction, electronics and clothing. Specific Skills Training allows job-seekers to acquire specific job-related skills and formal vocational qualifications to facilitate re-entry to the workforce. The courses lead to FETAC Major Awards at levels 4, 5 and 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications and/or industry recognised certification.

In 2011, part of the Jobs Initiative an additional 3,000 Back To Education Initiative (BTEI) places were allocated to VECs as, increasing the number of places available to 12,000. Total 2011 expenditure was just over €20 million. The BTEI provides a range of part-time options across the full suite of further education programmes and is aimed at adults with a less than upper second level education. Also under the JI, an additional 1,000 Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) places were allocated to providers for the 2011/2012 academic year, bringing the total number of places to 32,688. The PLC programme is targeted at school leavers and adults seeking a return to education in order to upskill or re-skill to enter or re-enter the labour market.

Budget 2011 provided for the phasing out of segregated provision for adult Travellers in Senior Traveller Training Centres (STTCs) by June 2012. The implementation of this decision was progressed in 2011. Travellers can continue to access the full range of full-time and part-time further education and training programmes.

5.5 Training for People with Disabilities

FÁS works in conjunction with 18 Specialist Training Providers (STP) countrywide to deliver training for people with disabilities. This client group requires more intensive support than is available in non–specialist training provision. The features of this specialist vocational training include additional training duration, adapted equipment, special transport arrangements, enhanced programme content and enhanced trainer–learner ratio. For the January to June 2011 period, a new budget bidding process was implemented with STPs based on the achievement of agreed objectives and targets for training service provision for people with disabilities. In 2011, FÁS funded 18 Specialist Training Providers in 47 locations, to provide a total of 2,110 STP learner places for people with disabilities, of which 1,804 places were provided by the National Learning Network (NLN). A total of 1,442 participants completed their programme.

5.6 Apprenticeships

In 2011, the total number of apprentices across all phases of FÁS training was approximately 13,000. The number of new apprentice registrations for 2011 was 1,307. The population of redundant apprentices notified to FÁS by employers at the end of December 2011, was 4,673 across all trades.

FÁS amended the Apprenticeship Rules in 2008 to permit redundant apprentices to progress to their next off–the–job phase of their apprenticeship and in 2011, 1,272 redundant apprentices attended FÁS and the Institutes of Technology under these revised rules.

The revised Redundant Apprentice Placement Scheme was introduced in February 2011 to provide opportunities to redundant apprentices to complete on–the–job training at Phases 3, 5 and 7. Redundant apprentices were placed with public and private sector employers during the year. By the end of the year, 2,359 redundant apprentices had availed of the scheme.

A Competency Determination Mechanism for redundant apprentices was introduced by FÁS in 2011. This mechanism is for apprentices who have successfully completed Phases 1 – 7 of their apprenticeship but have a time deficit. It was piloted during 2011 for the Bricklaying, Carpentry & Joinery, Electrical, Plastering and Plumbing trades.

5.7 Skillnets

Skillnets is a state-funded, enterprise-led support body which has facilitated enterprise training since 1999. The objective of this training is to assist companies in remaining competitive and ensure workers continue to develop industry-specific skills, particularly across emerging sectors. Skillnets training promotes worker mobility and skills transferability.

In 2010 Skillnets included for the first time an element of training for the unemployed and trained some 4,800 unemployed persons. In 2011 Skillnets trained over 42,000 persons, of which up to 5,875 were unemployed.

5.8 Adult Literacy and Numeracy Skills

The Department provides annual funding to the VECs to provide a range of literacy and English language tuition to adults. Tuition is provided flexibly during the day and night to groups or one-to-one in traditional and atypical settings. Targeted and focused programmes have been devised and developed including Intensive Tuition in Adult Basic Education (ITABE) which provides 6 hours literacy tuition per week to small groups. There were 2,000 participants in the programme in 2011. There are also many other literacy programmes, including those for deaf people, Irish language speakers, people with dyslexia, Travellers etc. The VECs have established referral networks with local stakeholders and staff development programmes are organised in co-operation with the National Adult Literacy Agency and Waterford Institute of Technology.

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

Ireland is participating in the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) which involves surveying adults, between the ages of 16-64, in their homes on a range of skills covering the interest, attitude and capacity of individual adults to access, manage, understand, integrate and evaluate various types of information, principally text and numerical, as well as to respond and communicate with others in the information age. It will focus on the key cognitive and workplace skills that are required for successful participation in the economy and society of the 21st century. The Central Statistics Office has responsibility for administering the survey in Ireland and the results are expected to be published in 2013. The process of interviewing adults in their homes commenced in August 2011 and is due to run until March 2012. It is planned to interview over 5,000 adults over the course of the survey.

The number of participants availing of tuition through adult literacy programmes has increased annually from 5,000 in 1997 to over 56,000 in 2011. In the period 2000-2010, there have been approximately 450,000 participants, including over 90,000 ESOL participants. In 2011, funding of €30 million was provided for the Adult Literacy Service. In 2011, the Department commenced the preparation of new operational guidelines for adult literacy and community education provision which highlight the importance of integrating literacy into further education and training programmes.

The National Strategy for Literacy and Numeracy which was published in 2011 also contains a number of recommendations in relation to adult literacy, specifically in relation to the promotion of the importance of family literacy.

5.9 The Labour Market Activation Fund (LMAF)

The Labour Market Activation Fund (LMAF) was introduced in 2010 and ran into 2011. Its focus was on support for innovative, market-led activation measures aimed at improving the employability of unemployed persons by providing 'progression pathways' and up-skilling and re-skilling measures, which boost human capital by enhancing education and skills levels in line with the National Skills Strategy and the needs of the Smart Economy. Approximately €30 million was invested in the Fund, supporting 55 projects led by 42 providers and providing approximately 12,500 education and training places for the unemployed. Unemployed Individuals who participated in training under the LMAF achieved a number of different qualifications aligned to the NSS and were provided with a pathway into employment or further education and training. Programmes under the LMAF were innovative, relevant programmes geared towards enhancing the employability of individuals who participated on the programmes.

Following on the success of the LMAF 2010/2011, a new fund has been sanctioned for 2012 called the Labour Market Education and Training Fund (LMETF) and this has been designed in the context of recommendations arising from an evaluation of the LMAF.

In 2011, Forfás, Ireland's policy advisory board for enterprise, trade, science, technology and innovation, also progressed the drafting of guidelines for aligning further education provision with enterprise skills needs, which included a review of further education statistics.

5.10 Table of Further Education Programmes

Further Education Programmes	
Full-time (Places)	
PLC	32,688
VTOS	5,000
Youthreach	3,692
STTC	684
Total	**42,064**
Part-time (Participants)	
BTEI	32,030
Adult Literacy	56,391
Community Education	57,939
Total	**146,360**
Training Programmes (FÁS) (numbers who completed in 2011)	
Apprenticeship	7,618
Skills Training	16,902
Foundation Skills	9,002
Sponsored Training	1,869
Redundant Apprentice Placement	1,678
Miscellaneous	700
Evening Courses	29,384
Total	**67,153**
Training Programmes (Other)	
LMAF (2010/2011)	**12,629**
Skillnets	**40,000**

5.11 Establishment of an Enterprise Engagement Forum

In 2011, the Department also established an Enterprise Engagement Forum to provide an opportunity for strategic engagement with enterprise partners. The Forum is chaired by the Secretary General of the Department and provides for engagement with enterprise on all aspects of the Department's remit.

5.12 Table 2 – Outputs achieved under Goal 2 in 2011

Objectives		Outputs in 2011
2.1	• **Support the implementation of the National Skills Strategy.**	**2011 Output** • The percentage in the labour force at Levels 1-3 has fallen from 27% to 19% in 2011 • Over 360,000 places on full and part-time courses were provided by the Further Education and Training Sector, including over 165,000 places through FÁS, 12,500 places through the Labour Market Activation Fund, 4,800 places through Skillnets and 182,000 through the VECs. • 20,000 additional training, education and work experience places were made available for the unemployed under the Jobs Initiative announced in May 2011. • Over 180,000 FETAC awards were delivered in 2011, which is an increase of 2.3% from 2010. A breakdown of the awards is available at www.fetac.ie/fetac/providers/statistics/2011stats.htm (See also 3.3 of Table 3 - Goal 3)
2.2	• **Establish SOLAS, the new further education and training authority, to reform, co-ordinate and fund further education and training programmes nationally.**	**2011 Output** • SOLAS was launched in July 2011 • The SOLAS Implementation Group was established in August 2011 • The Group reported to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery in November 2011 • Legislation has been prepared and a public consultation process undertaken • Drafting of an Action Plan relating to the mission, structure, staffing and funding of SOLAS was commenced
2.4	• **Establish formal links between the NEES and SOLAS and VECs to ensure appropriate referral of unemployed people.**	**2011 Output** • Referral mechanisms already exist between the Department of Social Protection and FÁS and in December 2011 a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between both bodies • In December 2011 the Department issued Circular 76/2011 on the implementation of the interim referral protocols between welfare offices and VECs to enable the more effective referral of unemployed people to further education courses and to complement the FÁS-DSP MOU.
2.5	• **Ensure the provision of high quality, learner centred, relevant and flexible educational and training opportunities to allow people, particularly jobseekers and people**	**2011 Output** • The Jobs initiative, which was announced in May 2011, contained the details of over 20,000 additional training, education and work experience places for the unemployed • 6,000 of these places were provided by FÁS for Specific Skills Training (SST)

Objectives		Outputs in 2011
	with disabilities, to upskill and reskill.	• An extra €3.5 million in funding was provided for 1,000 extra places in longer FÁS SST courses • An additional 3,000 Back to Education Initiative places were allocated to VECs under the Jobs Initiative • An additional 1,000 Post Leaving Certificate places were allocated to providers for 2011/12 academic year under the Jobs Initiative • In 2011, approximately 300,000 people, including significant numbers of unemployed people, participated in FET opportunities delivered by FÁS, the VECs, Skillnets and the Labour Market Activation Fund • FÁS funded 18 Specialist Training Providers (STP) in 2011 providing over 2,000 learner places for people with disabilties • There were just over 13,000 apprentices across all phases of FÁS training in 2011 • The figure for new apprentices was over 1,300 • Over 1,200 redundant apprentices were enabled to progress to their next off-the-job phase of their apprenticeship under revised Apprenticeship Rules introduced in 2008 • The revised Redundant Apprentice Placement Scheme was introduced in February 2011 allowing 2,359 redundant apprentices to avail of the scheme. • Approximately €30 million was invested in the LMAF providing over 12,500 education and training places for the unemployed • Skillnets trained over 40,000 unemployed and employed individuals in 2011 • Over €740 million was invested in the Further Education Sector by the Department.
2.6	• **Work with providers to incorporate literacy training into a wide variety of further education and training programmes.**	**2011 Output** • In 2011 the Department commenced the preparation of new operational guidelines for adult literacy and community education provision which highlight the importance of integrating literacy into further education and training programmes. • The National Strategy for Literacy and Numeracy contains a number of recommendations in relation to adult literacy • The process for interviewing adults in their homes under the PIACC commenced in August 2011 • The number of participants in adult literacy tuition has increased from 5,000 in 1997 to over 56,000 in 2011 • In the period 2000-2010 there have been approximately 450,000 participants, including 90,000 ESOL participants • In 2011 funding of approximately €30 million was provided for the Adult Literacy Service.
2.7	• **Conduct evaluations of further education and training programmes with a view to ensuring maximum efficiency and effectiveness of provision.**	**2011 Output** • Forfás progressed the drafting of Guidelines for aligning further education provision with enterprise skills needs, which included a review of further education statistics • LMAF education and training programmes were designed to enhance the employability of participants • An Evaluation of the LMAF was completed in 2011.

Objectives		Outputs in 2011
		• Following on the success of the LMAF 2010/2011, a new fund has been sanctioned for 2012 called the Labour Market Education and Training Fund (LMETF)
2.8	• **Work with providers to implement a robust quality assurance process**	**2011 Output** • In consultation with FETAC, FÁS introduced significant changes to the processes relating to the processing and approval of Assessment Results. The changes primarily related to the internal verification of results and external authentication processes • In 2011, VECs developed a range of new awards at Levels 1-6 on the NFQ, in line with the introduction of the Common Awards System

Goal 3 - Provide high quality learning, research and innovation opportunities in the higher education sector

Higher Education has an important role in supporting personal opportunity, social, civic and cultural development. It is also recognised as an increasingly important element of our national infrastructure for supporting enterprise development, innovation and economic growth. Within that context, supporting quality teaching and learning, research and innovation in higher education and enhancing the capacity of the sector to respond to the changing needs of learners, the economy and society are a priority for the Department. The Department aims to promote access to higher education, particularly for under-represented groups, by providing flexible learning opportunities. Our long term objectives are to increase the levels of overall educational attainment in the workforce and to increase the participation of under-represented groups in higher education.

6.1 The National Strategy for Higher Education

The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 was launched in 2011 with the overall objective of bringing a more coherent and coordinated approach to the development of the higher education sector. There are four keys strands to the Strategy, namely; excellence in teaching, learning, research and engagement; system development; sustainability and funding and governance (HR/IR). The Higher Education Authority (HEA) has a key role in the implementation of the Strategy, which will also require the involvement of the QQAAI to a large extent. An Implementation Oversight Group, chaired by the Secretary General, was established in early 2011 and an Implementation Plan with assigned responsibilities and agreed timeframes was published on the Department's website.

All of the partners involved have commenced work to progress the implementation of the recommendations of the Strategy. In 2011, system restructuring was examined through the commissioning and submission to the HEA for further consideration and advice of a report on criteria for the designation of institutes of technology as Technological Universities. The first phase of a sustainability study was completed and published by the HEA in 2011. The study arose from the findings of the Strategy that we need to ensure better alignment of the objectives of maintaining a high-quality higher education system which can also facilitate the expected significant demand for higher education into the future. Student grant reforms are underway with the publication of the Student Support Act 2011 and the consolidation of grant schemes into one scheme. A joint NCCA-HEA conference was held in September 2011 to discuss reform proposals for transition from second to third level. The Report of the conference along with its recommendations were submitted to the Minister and published in December 2011.

6.2 Supporting the Implementation of the National Skills Strategy – Higher Education

The Higher Education-Equity of Access section in the Department has responsibility for leading the development of national policy on equity of access to higher education for all students, but particularly among those groups who are currently underrepresented in the sector. The section supports a range of measures which facilitate greater levels of participation by disadvantaged students, mature students and students with disabilities. The principal support in financial terms is provided for under the student grant scheme, which makes available means-tested financial assistance to students in further and higher education. In 2011, the scheme is administered by the local authorities and VECs. Other targeted access supports include the Student Assistance Fund and the Fund for students with Disabilities. A number of third-level scholarship opportunities, including scholarships targeting disadvantaged students are also provided by the section.

6.3 Promoting Equity of Access to Higher Education

The Higher Education-Equity of Access section in the Department has responsibility for leading the development of national policy on equity of access to higher education for all students, but particularly among those groups who are currently underrepresented in the sector. The section supports a range of measures which facilitate greater levels of participation by disadvantaged students, mature students and students with disabilities. The principal support in financial terms is provided for under the student grant scheme, which makes available means-tested financial assistance to students in further and higher education. The scheme is administered by the local authorities and VECs. Other targeted access supports include the Student Assistance Fund and the Fund for students with Disabilities. A number of third-level scholarship opportunities, including scholarships targeting disadvantaged students are also provided by the section.

6.4 Reform of the Student Grants System

The Student Support Act, signed into law and published in 2011, provides for fundamental reform of the student grants system. It makes provision, *inter alia*, for the creation of a single unified grants scheme, by way of regulation, to replace the four existing grants schemes, the transfer of responsibility for student grants to a single grant awarding authority and the establishment of an independent appeals board.

In the first major step to overhaul the student grant system, the four existing schemes were replaced by a single unified scheme with effect from the 2011/12 academic year. In addition, a new online student grant application facility which went live in September 2010 was rolled out to an additional 24 grant awarding bodies in 2011, giving a total of 35 using the system in 2011.

In January 2011, the Department sought expressions of interest from the VECs, local authorities and other public bodies, in relation to their interest in taking on the responsibility for the centralised awarding and payment of student grants. Ten proposals were received. Those short listed presented detailed proposals to an independent selection panel. The Minister accepted the selection panel's recommendation that City of Dublin VEC (CDVEC) be selected as the single awarding authority subject to the development of an agreed implementation plan. Approval was

received from the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform for the overall proposal to establish a single agency within CDVEC to be called Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) for the processing and payment of student grants in further and higher education. The planning and development of SUSI was progressed significantly in 2011.

SUSI will accept all new applications from the 2012/13 academic year through a single on-line applications system. The existing grant awarding bodies will continue to deal with the renewal of existing grants on a wind-down basis over the next three to four years.

6.5 Establishment of the Student Grant Appeals Board

The Student Grants Appeals Board was established under the Student Support Act 2011 and is independent in the performance of its functions. Its establishment allows students who have applied for a grant under the 2011/12 student grant scheme and subsequent schemes to have any appeals determined by the Board**.** The Board, comprises a Chairperson and six ordinary members all appointed in their individual capacities based on their knowledge and expertise.

6.6 Expansion of the payment of student grants by EFT

In 2009 the Department worked closely with a number of local authorities and VECs to advance the planned payment of student grants by electronic funds transfer (EFT) directly into a student's bank account. A review of the initial test phase was carried out by the Department in 2010. The response to the EFT system from the participating grant awarding bodies and institutions was unanimously positive enabling an expansion of this payment system to additional grant awarding bodies and institutions in 2010 and 2011. Three additional grant awarding authorities migrated to EFT in 2011/2012 academic year.

6.7 Expenditure on Student Support

In 2011 the maximum standard rate of maintenance grant was €3,120. Students qualifying for the special rate of grant received a maximum of €6,100 in 2011. The total spend on student grants in 2011 was some €355m for 71,532 students, compared with a spend of some €362m in 2010 for 69,486 students. A total allocation of €13.7m was approved for support for students under the Fund for Students with Disabilities in 2010/2011. This compares to some €12.1m in the academic year 2009/10. A total of 6,097 students benefited from the Fund for Students with Disabilities in 2010/11, compared to 4,964 in the 2009/10 academic year. A gross allocation of €9m was approved for the Student Assistance Fund in 2011/12. A total of 8,301 students benefited from the Student Assistance Fund in 2010/11. In the academic year 2010/11, 279 students benefited from the Department's scholarship schemes and a total of some €2.25m was expended in 2011.

Expenditure in 2010/11 on Student Supports is as follows:

Schemes	No. of beneficiaries	Expenditure in 2011 Financial Year
Student Grant Schemes	71,532	€355m
Third Level Access Measure (including NAO Admin Budget)	14,398	€16m
Scholarships	279	€2.25m

6.8 Research and Finance

The Higher Education - Research and Finance Section in the Department is responsible for the development and implementation of policy, along with formulating and reviewing the budgetary allocations for the provision of higher education and research in approved institutions in the State. This involves financial management and reporting on the funding framework which combines a system grant funding model with the Free Fees schemes; the provision of funding to the HEA for direct allocation to institutions; liaison with the HEA, which deals with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) on a day-to-day basis and the provision of direct funding to non HEA designated HEIs. The section is also responsible for the review and development of robust systems of monitoring and evaluation to promote accountability within the institutions, including compliance with code of governance requirements. It also engages in the on-going review of the impact of changes in legislation, both Irish and EU, on the free fees schemes and the ongoing review of research programmes in the universities and institutes of technology to determine their effectiveness. Support is also provided in relation to the implementation of the Strategy for Science and Innovation (SSTI) and for collaboration, innovation and change across HEIs via programmes such as the Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF).

During 2011 the Department supported the objectives of the SSTI which relate to the development of world class research in higher education institutions. This includes increasing the number of PhD graduates and developing and supporting inter-departmental SSTI structures and policies to support the development of fourth level education.

Recurrent provision to the university and institutes of technologies amounted to €1.177 billion in 2011. Recurrent funding to the third level sector includes grant in lieu of the cost of tuition fees which amounted to some €416 million in the 2010/11 academic year covering 124,474 full-time undergraduate students. Recurrent expenditure under the SIF amounted to some €14 million. A total of 234 new PhD awards and 95 Postdoctoral awards were made by the research councils in 2011. Recurrent expenditure under Research and Development amounted to €38.5 million in 2011.

6.9 Promoting Education in Ireland Internationally

During 2011 the Department continued to provide the policy and coordination framework for the promotion of education in Ireland. Significant progress was made in the implementation of Ireland's International Education Strategy 2010-2015, including the launch and roll-out in key markets of the new national brand and marketing initiative *Education in Ireland,* which encompasses higher education and the English language sector. Also high-growth priority markets were designated in North America, Latin America, Asia and the Gulf, and market specific initiatives were rolled out. High-level visits were exchanged to enhance inter-governmental engagement with a number of the priority countries. Support was provided by the Department for the hosting of major international education conferences in Ireland, including the Asia Europe Classroom Network 2011 and the conference of the International Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement 2011.

Enterprise Ireland conducts an annual survey to determine the numbers of international students registered in 48 public and private higher education institutions. These include full-time, part-time and exchange students and also students registered in Irish institutions but studying overseas (e.g. on branch campuses, joint degree programmes etc). Enterprise Ireland reports the number of such students in 2011 as 32,000. Of these, 7,000 were offshore or studying through distance education.

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6.9.1 Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013

In keeping with its role in supporting and supplementing the actions of the Member States in the area of education and training, the European Commission has adopted a range of programmes supporting cross-border mobility, networking and sharing of best practice. The European Commission has integrated its various educational and training initiatives under a single umbrella: the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) 2007-2013. With a budget of nearly €7 billion for 2007 to 2013, this programme enables individuals at all stages of their lives to pursue learning opportunities across Europe. It consists of four sub-programmes: Erasmus, Comenius, Leonardo DaVinci and Grundtvig, as well as transversal programmes covering inter-sectoral themes such as ICT and languages. Funding provided under the Programme is administered by the national agencies in the member states. In Ireland, the administering agencies are Léargas and the Higher Education Authority. This Department and the Department of Health and Children oversee the administration of the programme by the agencies.

Between 2007 and 2013, Ireland will receive over €80 million from the Lifelong Learning Programme, which will allow some 18,500 Irish third-level students and lecturing staff to participate in Erasmus educational exchanges. This EU funding will also provide opportunities for some 2,500 Irish trainees to benefit from European work placements, for some 800 workers to up-skill during placements in European companies, for some 500 vocational education and training professionals to exchange best practice and around 550 schools and 150 adult education organisations to participate in various European partnerships. In addition to these, some 300 adult educators will participate in the Grundtvig Programme, and over 1,100 teachers and future teachers will be given the opportunity to participate in the Comenius programme. The total funding allocated to Ireland under the Programme in 2011 was nearly €12m.

During 2011, the International Section of this Department arranged, in accordance with EU requirements, for a mid-term review of the operation of the LLP to be carried out and submitted to

the European Commission. The expenditure on international educational initiatives is set out in the table below.

Expenditure on International Educational Initiatives in 2011	
Programme	**Expenditure in 2011**
Erasmus	€5,484,000
Comenius	€1,818,000
Leonardo	€3,497,000
Grundtvig	€551,000
Study Visits	€60,000
Operational Costs to the national agencies	€748,000

6.9.2 Departmental Participation in International Meetings and Initiatives

EU Education Ministers meet at the Education Council in Brussels three times each year to discuss and agree policies for cooperation. The preparation for the Education Council is carried out by the Education Committee, which is attended by staff from International Section in the Department. The Education Committee, which met 11 times in 2011, is the primary forum where Ireland can influence the drafting of agreed documents to reflect national priorities.

In 2011, Education Ministers continued with their efforts to contribute to the achievement of the *Europe 2020 Strategy* goals and targets. At Council in February, Education Ministers adopted Council Conclusions on the role of education and training in the implementation of the *Europe 2020 Strategy*. These Conclusions seek to ensure continued focus on education and training as central to the overall *Europe 2020* process and call for increased efforts towards achieving the *Europe 2020* headline targets in education. In May, Education Ministers reached Political Agreement on a Council Recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving. This Recommendation outlines a framework that Member States are recommended to use in formulating policies to reduce the share of early school leavers to less then 10% of all 18 to 24 year olds, in accordance with the *Europe 2020* headline target. Ireland's 2020 target is 8%.

In May 2011, Education Ministers also reached Political Agreement on a Council Recommendation promoting the learning mobility of young people entitled Youth on the Move. The Recommendation seeks to encourage Member States to promote the learning mobility of young people and, where possible, to remove obstacles which are impeding progress in this area. Early childhood education and care was also a focus during 2011, with a set of Conclusions on this topic adopted by Ministers.

In November, under the stewardship of the Polish Presidency, Education Ministers adopted a Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning. The renewed Agenda for Adult Learning, which initially focuses on the period 2012-2014, should be seen in the context of a longer term vision for adult learning. In the period up to 2020, this aims to raise the sector's profile in general and to enable adults, in particular the low-skilled and older workers, to improve their ability to adapt to changes in the labour market and society. Ministers also adopted Conclusions on language competences and a benchmark on learning mobility.

Also in November, Education Ministers adopted Council Conclusions on the modernisation of higher education. These Conclusions were in response to a Commission Communication on the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems, launched in September 2011. They endeavour to support member states in reaching the headline EU target of 40% of 30-34 year olds to have tertiary attainment by 2020. Ireland's 2020 target is 60%.

International Section personnel also attend meetings of the informal High Level Group on Education and Training, up to four times a year, in order to discuss and agree high level strategic policy direction in the field of education and training.

Statistics section personnel participate in International meetings on Indicators of Educational Systems at both the OECD and European levels. Approximately 7 to 8 meetings of this type are held a year.

6.10 Table 3 – Outputs achieved under Goal 3 in 2011

Objectives		Outputs in 2011
3.1	• **Develop a new policy and operational framework, including funding, for higher education.**	**2011 Output** • The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 was published • A group to oversee the implementation of the Strategy was established • An implementation plan with agreed timeframes was set out and published on the Department's website • A report on system re-structuring was commissioned and submitted to the HEA • The HEA completed the first phase of a sustainability study on the provision of higher education • Student grant reforms are underway • An Enterprise Engagement Forum chaired by the Secretary General was also established • Recurrent provision to the HEA designated institutions (universities, institutes of technology and other designated HEI's) amounted to €1.177 billion in 2011. • Recurrent provision to non HEA designated institutions funded directly by the Department amounted to some €50 million. • Recurrent funding to the third level sector includes grant in lieu of the cost of tuition fees which amounted to some €367 million in the 2011/12 academic year covering 125,034 full-time undergraduate students. • Recurrent expenditure under the SIF amounted to some €14 million.

	Objectives	Outputs in 2011
3.2	• **Work with the Higher Education Authority and the new Qualifications and Quality Assurance Agency in providing effective policy support, oversight and leadership for the higher education sector in meeting the needs of the learner.**	**2011 Output** • The Department worked closely with the HEA in relation to higher education and certain skills matters throughout 2011 • The National Strategy for Higher Education recommends the development of a more flexible system, improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and ensuring that higher education connects more effectively with wider social, economic and enterprise needs. • Work on the implementation of the recommendations in the Strategy has commenced • The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Bill 2011 was published
3.3	• **Support the implementation of the National Skills Strategy.**	**2011 Output** • In 2010/11 160,972 full-time students were enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate courses in HEA funded institutions. A further 32,215 students were enrolled on part-time programmes • The Springboard programme provided over 5,000 free part-time higher education places for unemployed people in areas of identified skills needs • The Department worked with Forfás, the HEA and ICT Ireland/American Chamber of Commerce to identify skills shortages and to develop proposals for a joint industry/Government Action Plan • The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs was supported • Responses to Skills Needs were developed (See also 2.1 of Table 2 - Goal 2)
3.4	• **Support the Strategy for Science Technology and Innovation ("SSTI") objectives of developing world class research in higher education institutions.**	**2011 Output** • A total of 234 new PhD awards and 95 Postdoctoral awards were made by the Research Councils in 2011. • Recurrent expenditure under Research & Development amounted to some €38.5 million in 2011. • A total of 1,222 PhDs were awarded across the higher education sector in 2010. (2011 data not available yet). • The Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences and the Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology was merged into a single entity – the Irish Research Council.

	Objectives	Outputs in 2011
3.5	• **Promote equity of access to higher education.**	**2011 Output** • There were over 71,000 beneficiaries of student grant schemes with overall expenditure of €355m in 2011 • There were over 14,000 beneficiaries of Third Level Access Schemes with overall expenditure of €16m • 278 Scholarships were awarded at a cost of €2.25m • In 2011 the standard rate of maintenance grant was €3,120. Students qualifying for the special rate of grant received a maximum of €6,100. • A total allocation of €13.7m was approved for support for students under the Fund for Students with Disabilities in 2010/2011. Over 6,000 students benefited from the Fund compared to 4,964 in 09/10. • A gross allocation of €9m was approved for the Student Assistance fund in 2011/12
3.6	• **Implement a new strategy to enhance the internationalisation of Irish education services and promote Ireland internationally as a centre of excellence in education and training.**	**2011 Output** • The new national brand and marketing initiative *Education in Ireland* was launched and rolled out • Inter-governmental engagement was promoted • Support was provided for the hosting of major international education conferences in Ireland • The number of international students has increased from 2010 to 2011
3.7	• **Implement a programme of legislative and administrative reform of student maintenance grants.**	**2011 Output** • The Student Support Act was signed into law and published in 2011 • A single unified grant scheme was established • The City of Dublin VEC (CDVEC) was designated as the single awarding authority subject to the agreement of an implementation plan with the Department • An Implementation Group was established to work with CDVEC on the development of the implementation plan. The Group met on a number of occasions in 2011 and significant progress has been made on agreeing the plan. • Office accommodation has been provided by the OPW to the Department for the single awarding authority • Approval was received from the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform for the overall proposal to establish a single agency within the CDVEC for the processing of applications for student grants in higher education • The Student Grant Appeals Board which is an independent appeals Board was established

Goal 4 - Plan and provide appropriate infrastructure for learning environments

The Department provides funding towards the delivery of appropriate infrastructure for all learning environments so that pupils and students can access modern learning and teaching environments with adequate and appropriate accommodation in place to satisfy their educational and training needs. Accordingly, whether it be new pupils starting school for the very first time, pupils starting out on second level education journeys or students pursuing post second level education or training including students attending higher education institutions either on a full time basis or part time basis or apprentices commencing training, the Department assists in providing the necessary facilities in schools and colleges to allow for the delivery of education and training at all levels.

Within a capital budget in 2011 of €556m, the delivery and provision of building projects contributed to economic activity, assisted in job creation and generally increased the capacity of the economy to respond to growth and productivity. The total expenditure on primary and post primary schools building projects in 2011 amounted to just over €455 million. The sum expended on higher education capital in 2011 was €77.334m and over €17m was expended on PPP projects.

7.1 Medium Term Infrastructure and Capital Investment

In November 2011, the Government committed over €2 billion in funding for school building projects as part of the Medium Term Infrastructure and Capital Investment to meet rising demographic demands. This investment for over the next five years will provide over 100,000 permanent school places of which over 80,000 will be additional – the remainder will be replacement of temporary or unsatisfactory accommodation. This substantial investment will result in over 11% of the overall school population benefiting from new permanent places. Planning commenced in 2011 for the provision of over 40 new primary and 40 new second level schools over the next six years. These new schools will generally be sixteen-classroom primary level schools and up to 1,000-student post-primary schools. The estimated capital costs of these new schools is expected to be in the region of €380m with delivery of some of these schools to be achieved under the Government's Public Private Partnership (PPP) Programme.

A New School Establishment Group was also established to advise on the patronage of new schools, building on the establishment by the Minister of the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector.

7.2 Increasing the Efficiency in the Delivery of Building Projects

In order to increase the efficiency in the delivery of building projects, new arrangements were put in place in 2011 with Vocational Education Committees (VECs), Local Authorities, the Office of

Public Works and the National Development Finance Agency (NDFA) to assist the Department in delivering new schools and extensions required over the next five years.

In 2011, the project management of 27 major school building projects was devolved to 13 individual VECs around the country and the delivery and management of a further major school project was also devolved to Louth County Council. Overall, these projects will deliver in excess of 21,000 places, including over 14,000 additional new school places.

Arrangements also commenced in 2011 for the Office of Public Works and the NDFA to assist the Department to deliver new schools projects and large extension projects as required.

Also in 2011 the Department undertook a major review of its procedures for the progression of capital projects through the design and construction stages with a view to streamlining the progression of projects through the system by adopting a delivery orientated methodology. The measures adopted to achieve this include reducing the interaction between the Planning and Building Unit and the Client/Design Team, increasing the autonomy and responsibility of the Design Team, commencing the development of an objective performance assessment system using the milestones of Quality of Service and Delivery Time and using the resulting performance assessment to assist in suitability assessment for future work. The outcome of the above review resulted in a substantial re-writing of the Department's Design Team Procedures. A consultation process took place with the 4 professional institutes, and a suite of 2012 Design Team Procedures (30+ documents) have been up-loaded to the Department's website. See: [http://www.education.ie/en/School-Design/Procedures%20and%20Cost%20Plans/Procedures-and-Cost-Plans.html]

7.3 Provision of School Places

Major building projects completed in 2011 included the following:

- 55 schools that provided permanent places for over 18,500 pupils. Within these completions 14 new schools were delivered under the 2011 Rapid Delivery Programme. These 14 schools provided 3,500 current pupils and school staff with modern energy efficient buildings and improved learning environments and provided over 1,000 additional places.
- In addition, over 300 projects were completed under the additional accommodation scheme and provided almost 8,500 permanent school places.
- 450 primary and second level schools benefited from €41 million in funding under the Summer Works Scheme.
- 370 primary and second level schools benefited from a €40m investment under the Jobs Initiative.
- €32 million was provided for an education campus in Co. Monaghan that will provide new accommodation for a 16 classroom primary school, a 400 pupil post primary school together with a 700 student institute of further education.

7.4 Public Private Partnership

In line with Government policy, the Department of Education and Skills uses Public Private Partnership arrangements for the provision of educational infrastructure. School projects undertaken by the Department are based on a 25 year design, build and maintain arrangements which are funded via annual unitary payments. The unitary payments comprise loan repayments (capital and interest) for the project financing which covers design, construction and equipment, building and equipment life cycle funds and facilities management of the schools. The latter item includes maintenance, cleaning, salaries and sundry expenses. Almost 11,000 pupil places have been provided to date through the PPP system: 3,475 in an initial pilot phase; 2,700 in a Bundle 1; and 4,700 in a Bundle 2 which came on stream during 2011. Full details of 6 schools involved in Bundle 2 are as follows:

2nd Bundle

The 6 schools in Bundle 2 are as follows:

- Bantry Community College, Co Cork
- Gaelscoil Bheanntrai, Co. Cork,
- Kildare Town Community School,
- Abbeyfeale Community College, Co Limerick
- Athboy Community School, Co Meath
- Wicklow Town Community College, Co Wicklow.

These were announced in September 2006. A contract was signed with Macquarie Partnership for Ireland (MPFI), in June 2010. Two of these six schools became operational in September 2011 with the remaining 4 schools handed over by the end of October 2011. The schools included in this bundle provide accommodation for over 4,700 pupils. All of the schools were handed over ahead of schedule. The unitary payments commenced in late July 2011 for one school, August and September 2011 respectively for two schools and in October 2011 for the remaining 3 schools.

Schools Bundle 3

Plans are afoot to provide a 3rd bundle of school projects as follows:

- Colaiste Ailigh, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal,
- Ballinamore C.S. Co. Leitrim,
- Doughiska Post Primary and Doughiska Primary School, Co. Galway,
- Post Primary School in Gorey, Co. Wexford,
- Tramore S.S. Co. Waterford,
- Doon Post Primary, Co. Limerick,
- Athlone Community College, Co. Westmeath.

This bundle was handed over to the National Development Finance Agency (NDFA) in July 2010 with a contract with the preferred bidder expected to be finalised shortly and the schools expected to be operational in 2014 providing accommodation for 5,700 pupils.

7.5 Developments at Third Level

A range of projects that provide modern, fit for purpose facilities for third level education were delivered in 2011. Major achievements in 2011 included the completion of the library at Sligo

Institute of Technology, the conclusion of a number of health and safety works at a number of institutes of technology and smaller colleges and the progression to site of the UCD Science Centre. Further information on developments at third level are set out at 4.3 of Table 4 below.

7.6 Post-Primary School Design Competition

A Post-Primary School Design Competition, organised by the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland on behalf of the Department, was also launched in 2011. The competition was designed to promote innovative design in new second-level schools. The prize for the successful Design Team was to design a new school and manage its construction.

7.7 Table 4 – Outputs achieved under Goal 4 in 2011

Objectives		Outputs in 2011
4.1

Objectives		Outputs in 2011
		universities and institutes of technology had a total cost of €20m in 2011. This allowed for minor works projects relating to the upkeep of facilities. • Financial and other supports were provided to Grangegorman Development Agency • The total spend in 2011 was a little in excess of €77,300,000 • Third level capital projects are devolved to higher education institutions for delivery permitting speedier delivery
4.4	• **Develop enhanced financial management, appraisal, audit and asset management systems used for infrastructure projects to ensure value for money and effectiveness in capital expenditure**	**2011 Output** • The Primary and Post-Primary capital subheads were merged. • New and improved IT systems have been introduced which allow better data management and better reporting while eliminating the duplication of data entry • The Online Inventory of School Accommodation (IOS) is being compiled by schools using the Esinet Portal as part of the overhaul of the central database of school accommodation • 77% of schools completed the inventory data • The Report of the Commission on School Accommodation was published in 2011 • Arrangements are in place to diversify the delivery of projects. • A range of Frameworks for consultancy appointments have been set up for larger, complex and urgent projects • One of the conditions of the sanction for capital expenditure conveyed under the multi-annual capital framework involves undertaking annual spot checks and reporting the findings to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. In this context, spot checks were carried out on six projects in 2011
4.5	• **Improve communication and coordination with external stakeholders**	**2011 Output** • Arrangements are in place to diversify the delivery of projects including arrangements with VECs and a County Council • The Online inventory of School Accommodation will improve coordination and communication • In 2011 the Department continued to work closely with the County and City Managers' Association and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and reached agreement on a Memorandum of Understanding to foster increased levels of cooperation with Local Authorities in relation to the identification and acquisition of sites for schools. • A major review of the DES procedures for the progression of capital projects through the design and construction stages with a view to streamlining the progression of projects through the system by adopting a delivery orientated methodology was undertaken in 2011. • Lists of projects approved for delivery are published on the Department's website on a monthly basis. In the case of major projects, updates are provided on the progress through the various stages of delivery and in the case of smaller devolved projects the type of project and dates of approval are provided.

Objectives		Outputs in 2011
4.6	• **Negotiate the transfer of school infrastructure currently owned by 18 religious orders cited in the Ryan Report, at no extra cost, to the State**	**2011 Output** • The Department continues to pursue the realisation of contributions pursuant to the Government's view that the cost of the response to residential institutional abuse should be shared on a 50:50 basis, between the State and those who were responsible for the management of institutions, including the possibility of the transfer of school ownership to the State at no extra cost.

Part 3 – Improving our Efficiency and Effectiveness

The Department is committed to providing a high quality and efficient service to all of our customers and stakeholders. In 2011, we continued to endeavour to ensure that we delivered value to the taxpayer through the delivery of effective and efficient services. This section of the Report outlines the improvements which the Department implemented in 2011 to increase its efficiency and effectiveness with reference to the actions and performance indicators set out in Part 4 of the Department's Statement of Strategy 2011-2014.

8.1 Organisational Review Programme

The Department welcomed the findings of the Report of the Organisational Review Programme (ORP) Review Team which recognised the high calibre and dedication of the staff working in the Department. In order to address the challenges facing the Department, which were identified in the Report, and as part of the Department's commitment to improving our services to achieve our strategic goals more successfully and efficiently, we commenced the development of our ORP Action Plan in May 2011. Workshops open to all staff, which were held in June and July 2011, lead to the development of a comprehensive Action Plan which identified 39 priority actions to address a range of issues raised in the ORP Report. The actions in the plan centre around strategic direction and leadership, improving internal and external communication, structures and governance, evaluation, human resource management and deployment and internal business processes and structures. The Plan is a composite of new actions and existing actions which have commenced since the ORP Report was written, including, the development of a new website for the Department, along with work on establishing SOLAS and the Education and Training Boards. Our long term objective is to nurture a culture of continuous improvement and innovation in the way we all approach our work and to improve service delivery across the education system. An official at Assistant Secretary or Principal Officer level has been assigned responsibility to deliver and report on the individual actions in the Action Plan. The Plan was submitted to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in December 2011 and was published as part of the Third Report of the ORP process in January 2012. The full report, which includes reviews of three other Departments, is available to download from www.orp.ie.

8.2 General Education Sector Reform

Progress which the Department made in 2011 in relation to the proposed structural reform of the education sector includes the publication of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Bill, 2011, the launch of SOLAS and the reconfiguration of the VECs.

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Bill, 2011 provides for the amalgamation of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) and the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC), which are the bodies responsible for qualifications and quality assurance in education and training, to form the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Authority of Ireland (QQAAI). The

new organisation will also take responsibility for the external quality assurance review of the universities, a function which is currently performed by the Irish Universities Quality Board. This means that the QQAAI's quality assurance role will span all areas of further and higher education and training. The Qualifications' Bill also provides for a Code of Practice for the provision of educational services to international students. This will enable education and training providers to apply for an international education mark based on their compliance with the Code of Practice.

The new further education and training authority, SOLAS, was launched in July 2011 with the mandate to ensure the provision of up-to-date high-quality further education and training programmes to jobseekers and other learners. The programmes will be integrated, flexible, value-for-money and responsive to the needs of learners and the requirements of our economic environment. SOLAS will place a greater emphasis on generic, transferable skills including people-related skills, problem-solving skills and digital literacy skills. SOLAS is underpinned by strong quality assurance, occupational standards, international benchmarks and course content reviews. It fulfils a role for the further education and training sector similar to that exercised by the Higher Education Authority for higher education institutions. Its work will include identifying skills gaps in conjunction with the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, examining and improving existing provision and linking courses more closely to both the needs of the individual and the labour market.

In June 2011, the Minister for Education and Skills announced the approved revised reconfiguration of the Vocational Education Committees (VECs). Education and Training Boards will take over the work of the VECs and will have an expanded role in the delivery of further education and training across the country**.** In October 2011 the General Scheme of an Education and Training Boards Bill was referred to the Oireachtas Committee on Jobs, Social Protection and Education. The Bill provides for the reconfiguration of the VECs reducing the number from 33 to 16. The Bill will repeal all existing VEC Acts, update functions and powers and modernise the regulatory framework for the sector.

In November, 2011, the Minister for Public Expenditure & Reform, Mr Brendan Howlin, T.D., announced a number of important initiatives for the reform of the public service including a Public Service Reform Plan and an accompanying Government Statement. This sets the basis for change across all sectors of the public service for the coming years. Central to the reform agenda is a focus on five major commitments to change including prioritising customer service, maximising new and innovative service delivery channels, radically reducing our costs to drive better value for money, leading, organising and working in new ways and placing a strong focus on implementation and delivery.

In response to the requirements of the Government's Public Service Reform programme, in late 2011, the Department commenced the development of an Integrated Reform Delivery Plan for the Education Sector to set out the major sectoral reform projects which are being undertaken by the

Department, along with a number of cross-cutting reform projects, including shared services, procurement and e-Government. All Departments are required to develop Integrated Reform Delivery Plans to align actions under the Government's Public Service Reform Plan, the Public Service Agreement 2010-2014 (Croke Park Agreement), the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure, where relevant, and organisational/sector specific reform initiatives.

8.3 Improving our Department's Performance and Efficiency

8.3.1 Payroll and Finance

As part of the initiative to move key elements of corporate services provision to a shared services platform in accordance with the public sector reform agenda, during 2011, the Department engaged in the preparatory process of moving its payroll to a shared services platform. This involved both direct feasibility discussions with the Department of Finance shared payroll facility in Tullamore and engagement with the Public Sector Reform Office in the development of baseline performance information concerning the payroll function. During 2011 the Department also entered into discussions with the Public Service Reform Office on early feasibility analysis in relation to shared banking services.

In September 2011, the Department submitted its Comprehensive Review of Expenditure (CRE) Report to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The Department's CRE report fed into the overall Public Service CRE which contained the main elements of Budget 2012 and also set out Departmental expenditure ceilings for 2013 and 2014. The Report was published by the Government in December 2011.

Performance Budgeting has also been introduced as one of the key elements of an important structural reform of the budgetary process. The new approach involves Departments publishing their estimates of planned expenditure on the basis of strategic programmes, as set out in their Statements of Strategy, rather than on the old accounting subhead basis. This Department's Estimate for 2012 included an illustrative appendix based on the new performance budgeting format, while the Estimates for 2013 will be fully based on this new format. The move to the new format is being accompanied by a restructuring of the Department's Vote to reflect the new strategic programme approach. The move from the Estimates process to the new performance budgeting format will see a greater focus on the outputs and outcomes achieved with public funds, rather than the traditional narrower focus on financial inputs. This will allow a more effective analysis of the effectiveness of education programmes, ultimately resulting in improved levels of service for customers of the system.

The Finance Unit liaised with subhead managers during 2011 to ensure that expenditure remained within the overall allocation for the year. At the end of the year there was a net overall saving on expenditure on the Vote of €31 million, equal to 0.4% of the original allocation.

8.3.2 Supporting and Improving our Policies and Analyses

The Department continued to support research, evaluation and planning to ensure an effective policy framework. Research projects which were on-going or completed in 2011 are referred to at 5.7 of Table 5 below. During 2011, the Department undertook a number of evaluations of key spending areas through the Value for Money Policy Review (VFMPR) programme. The VFMPRs which were completed or on-going in 2011 are outlined at 5.14 of Table 5 below.

8.3.3 Monitoring our Internal Systems and Processes

The Internal Audit Unit at the Department is responsible for providing assurance to the Accounting Officer on the adequacy, efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's risk management, internal control systems and governance processes. The European Social Fund (ESF) Financial Control Unit ensures that Ireland complies with the regulatory requirements of the European Union in relation to the audit of ESF, promotes best practice in the management, control and audit of ESF in Ireland and ensures that audits are performed in accordance with international auditing standards in order to provide high quality, fair and balanced reports. Annual audit programmes are prepared under the auspices of the Audit Committee and both the Internal Audit Unit and the ESF Audit Authority report to the Committee on the conduct of these programmes and the finalisation of audit reports. Details of audits carried out in 2011 are at 5.13 of Table 5 below.

8.3.4 Human Resources and Staff Training

The staffing reductions which were required by the end of 2011 in terms of the Department's Employment Control Framework (ECF) numbers were met. A more flexible Human Resources (HR) environment was operated whereby staff were redeployed on a temporary basis to correspond with particular peaks and troughs identified in the workload of sections across the Department.

In addition, during the year the Personnel Unit met with senior line managers to review staffing resources and to identify any areas of activity which could be reviewed/ amalgamated and/or discontinued to produce staff savings and to help ensure a continuation of existing levels of service with reduced resources to the greatest degree possible.

At the end of 2011, the Department began the process of engagement with Phase 1 (the analysis phase) of the then proposed Human Resources Shared Services Centre (HRSSC) project to help ascertain the value associated with the implementation of a shared service arrangement for certain HR processes.

8.3.4a Staff Training and Development

During 2011, the Department's Staff Training and Development Unit engaged with staff and management in order to identify training needs leading to the organisation and support of a wide range of training and development programmes for staff. In excess of 2,800 training days were provided in 2011. The training was targeted at the Department's priority business needs and was

mainly delivered in-house in line with reducing the overall training costs. Training was provided in areas including Financial Management, Irish language, Freedom of Information, Child Protection, Human Rights, grade specific development courses (CO, EO and HEO) and IT (end-user). The Department also continued to prioritise management training to enhance its capacity to adequately meet new and evolving challenges through the provision of training programmes for middle and senior managers.

In addition to training and development for administrative grades, tailored training support was provided for the Inspectorate, the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), the Planning and Building Unit (PBU) and the IT Unit to meet their specific professional and technical training requirements.

Separate to the organised training and development outlined above, the Department continued to foster a learning culture by providing support for staff to attend further education courses, which are relevant to the work of the Department and the broader civil and public service, in their own time.

In response to a commitment under the Croke Park Agreement and the findings of the Organisational Review Programme (ORP) process, in 2011, the Staff Training and Development Unit along with IT Unit in the Department commenced work on the development of a questionnaire for circulation to all staff with a view to establishing the skills capacity of the Department . The aim of this work was to a design a questionnaire which would enable the creation of a skills database, identify skills gaps and organisational training and development needs and to support the better deployment of staff throughout the Department.

8.3.5 Internal ICT Improvements

During 2011, the Department's IT Unit continued to exploit the capabilities of ICT for the benefit of the Department's business units and customers. Capital expenditure of €1.67m was incurred by the IT Unit in 2011, while current expenditure of €2.32m was incurred.

8.3.5a Development of our New Website

During 2011, the Department engaged in an extensive consultation process with its staff, customers and stakeholders in order to develop a new customer focused website for the Department. The results of the consultations were analysed and a programme for development was agreed. In October 2011, the Department published a request for tenders for the design of the new website and a contract was put in place. The new website will have improved search facilities aided by well organised content presented in a logical and intuitive manner. It is expected that the new website will go live in the third quarter of 2012.

8.3.6 Business Planning and Improvements at Section Level

The Department's annual business planning process is central to the timely and successful achievement of our goals. Each year, sections are requested to identify their critical tasks for the coming year with reference to documents such as our Statement of Strategy and to plan for their implementation via the business planning process. In addition to identifying critical tasks, the business planning process also provides an opportunity for staff to consider business process improvement which leads to greater efficiency and cost-effectiveness and improved customer services, all of which are key elements of the Government's Public Service Reform Plan. All sections of the Department participated in the business planning process for 2011. Our ORP Action Plan commits to further enhancing our business planning process to ensure that it is even more effective.

As a result of this process and the evaluation by sections of their procedures, various changes at section level were made which resulted in greater efficiency, the standardisation of procedures and a reduction in expenditure due to the implementation of cost saving measures.

8.4 Table 5 – Implementing Reform and Improving our Services in 2011

Objectives		Outputs in 2011
5.1	**Support the Public Service Reform initiative across the Education sector.**	**2011 Output** • Work commenced on developing the Department's Integrated Reform Plan for the Education Sector • The Department's ORP Action Plan was produced • A shared procurement project for the schools sector was initiated • Agreement was reached between this Department and the Revenue Commissioners that the printing and packaging of teacher payslips will be transferred to the Revenue's printing facility. • Consultation took place with the Department of Finance and Public Service Reform Office in relation to a shared payroll facility and shared banking services • Phase 1 of the Human Resources Shared Services Centre project commenced • Progress has been made in relation to the Department's implementation of the Croke Park Agreement Action Plan
5.2	**Strengthen our role as sector leaders and ensure shared understanding of issues and work programmes; agreeing Service Level Agreements with our agencies and education providers where appropriate.**	**2011 Output** • Work commenced on developing the Department's Integrated Reform Plan for the Education Sector • Relevant actions included in the ORP Action Plan.
5.3	**In accordance with Children First, support the education system in providing a safe environment for all children.**	**2011 Output** • Updated Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post- Primary Schools were published by this Department in 2011 on foot of extensive consultation with the education partners. • Procedures are in place for department staff on

Objectives		Outputs in 2011
		reporting child welfare and protection concerns brought to their attention. • The Social Personal and Health Education support service continued to offer training on the Department's Child Protection Guidelines. Training in the new Child Protection Procedures introduced in 2011 will be rolled out by Designated Liaison Persons (DLPs) and Boards of Management • 382 DLPs and Deputy DLPs attended training in Child Protection Guidelines
5.4	**Commence work on establishing 16 Education and Training Boards in line with the Programme for Government commitment.**	**2011 Output** • Work commenced on establishing 16 Education and Training Boards to replace the 33 existing VECs in line with the commitment in the Programme for Government. • Legislation is at an advanced stage. • The headquarters of the new Boards have been announced. • The Department concluded an agreement with SIPTU on a scheme which will provide for the appointment of the CEO designate of the 16 new Education and Training Boards prior to their establishment under legislation. The agreement also provides for the redeployment of any surplus permanent CEO post holders.
5.5	**Implement the Organisational Review Programme Action Plan**	**2011 Output** • The ORP Action Plan was finalised in late 2011. The plan is a composite of new and existing actions which had commenced since the ORP report was written. Work was already underway on a number of actions including the redevelopment of the Department's website, rationalisation of the VEC sector and work to establish the Education and Training Boards as well as implementation of the Higher Education Strategy to 2030. • Staff workshops were held to develop the Department's ORP Action Plan
5.6	**Support our staff in performing to the best of their ability by improving internal communication, ensuring efficient deployment of staff resources, providing quality training opportunities including on-the-job training**.	**2011 Output** • Targeted training was identified through consultation with staff and managers and the PMDS process, and provided as required • Over 2,800 training days were provided in 2011 • The Personnel Unit commenced the process of increasing our efficiency in the deployment of staff resources as part of the implementation of the Croke Park Action Plan • The Training Unit commenced the process of developing a questionnaire to carry out a skills audit. • HR management met with senior management to review staffing resources with a view to producing a report on the improvement of the Department's business functions
5.7	**Continue to improve the quality of our information, analysis and evaluation capacity and expertise to**	**2011 Output** • Nearly €160,000 was spent on projects funded by the Department's Research and Development Committee in 2011

Objectives		Outputs in 2011
	inform the development of policy and service delivery options; improving our ability to identify and manage emerging issues.	• The research project Valuing Visibility: An Exploration of How Sexual Orientation Issues are Addressed in Post Primary Schools was completed in 2011 • A research project relating to the development of a multi-belief religious education programme for delivery in Community National Schools was on-going in 2011 • Targeted training was provided where identified • IT processes and systems were enhanced as required (see 5.11 and 5.13)
5.8	**Provide high quality services to the Government, Minister, Ministers of State and wider political system.**	**2011 Output** • Tracking systems and prescriptive procedures are in place to allow for the provision of high quality and timely services • 3,103 Parliamentary Questions were responded to in 2011 • 147 Memoranda for Government were received for observations in 2011 • The Offices of the Minister and Ministers of State received in the region of 13,000 representations in 2011 • 60 Topical Issues were replied to in the Dáil and 32 Adjournments were replied to in the Seanad
5.9	**Implement a formal change management work programme to ensure a planned and disciplined approach to identifying and exploiting organisational efficiencies.**	**2011 Output** • HR management met with senior management to review staffing resources with a view to producing a report on the improvement of the Department's business functions
5.10	**Ensure that programmes are delivered in the most efficient manner and that programme implementation is managed well and aligned with other work.**	**2011 Output** • The Business Planning Process requires the annual review of the implementation of business plans. All sections of the Department develop annual business plans • Line sections are examining their procedures, processes and resources with a view to increased efficiency, with the support of the Personnel Unit • An Expenditure Planner for the Planning and Building Unit went live in September 2011 • Enhancements were made to the FMS including an interface to bulk load suppliers and invoices to the system • The Public Service Pension Reduction (PSPR) was implemented into Pensions Administration and Payroll systems • The Post-Primary Allocation Schedule for 2011/12 was amended to incorporate the LCVP calculation with the Ordinary Enrolment calculation on staffing schedules • Preparation for the transfer of printing and packing of payslips for school employees and pensioners, to the Revenue Print Centre, was on-going
5.11	**Support and implement the measures decided by Government arising from the Comprehensive Expenditure Review. In this**	**2011 Output** • The Department's Comprehensive Expenditure Review (CER) Report was submitted in September 2011 • The Department's Estimate for 2012 included an

Objectives		Outputs in 2011
	context we will manage our budget effectively and prioritise activities for maximum impact and efficiency, including through the implementation of the Performance Budgeting approach.	illustrative appendix based on the new performance budgeting format • Work commenced on re-structuring the Department's Vote to reflect the new strategic programme approach • The Finance Unit liaised with subhead managers during 2011 to ensure that expenditure remained within the overall allocation for the year • There was a net overall saving on expenditure on the Education Vote of €31 million, equal to 0.4% of the original allocation
5.12	**Enhance our use of ICT to improve the way we do our work; to facilitate the use of shared services, to deliver on-line services and information to the public and the wider education and training system, including a new customer focused website**.	**2011 Output** • The Department's ICT Strategy for 2011-2013 was published • Planning commenced to replace the Department's 25 year old phone system with a VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) telephone system. A contract was put in place in late 2011 with April 2012 scheduled for live implementation • Planning also commenced to integrate the VoIP telephone system into an overall unified communications platform • Planning commenced for the development of P-POD (Post-primary Online Data) • Enhancements were made to the on-line claims system and interface with HR/payroll • The Supervision and Substitution (S&S) HR/Payroll systems were enhanced to process S&S hours keyed via the Online Claims System (OLCS). • The end of year payroll software was implemented on time • HR and Payroll systems were developed for the payment of lower salary rates and allowances to new entrants, teaching and non-teaching appointments and retired teachers returning to work. • Phase II of Business Intelligence using post-primary data was commenced • Planning commenced for the upgrade of all Oracle databases, along with a move from the current AIX platform to Windows • Diverse bandwidth was installed in the Department's three main offices • The installation of improved bandwidth for the Department's network of 31 local offices commenced • Planning commenced for the introduction of Performance Budgeting on the Financial Management System (FMS) • Pension Related Reduction (PRD) cumulative software was tested and implemented in payrolls. • The Disaster Recovery payroll site was fully tested during 2011
5.13	**Monitor the effectiveness of our risk management, control and governance processes through the work of our Internal Audit Unit**	**2011 Output** • During 2011, a total of seven audit reports were finalised and issued.

Objectives		Outputs in 2011
5.14	**Undertake regular evaluations of key spending areas through the Value for Money and Policy Review programme**	**2011 Output** • The Value for Money Policy Review (VFMPR) of the School Transport Scheme was published in 2011 • The VFMPR of Expenditure on the Education of Migrant Students at Primary and Post-Primary Level who do not speak English as a First Language was published in 2011 • The VFMPR of Expenditure on the Special Needs Assistant (SNA) Scheme was published in 2011 • VFMPRs which were on-going in 2011 were: • Review of the Summer Works Scheme • Review of Insurance Arrangements for Schools • Review of Small Primary School Provision
5.15	**Provide education and training related data to the public and organisations such as Eurostat, the OECD, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.**	• Further improvements were made to the Annual National School Census form which have made it easier for schools to complete and return their information • The Education Statistics pamphlet was published • Education statistics were made available on the Department's website and as required as appropriate

Appendix A: Bodies under the Aegis of the Department in 2011

An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta	(COGG)
The Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse	(CICA)
The Education Finance Board	(EFB)
Foras Áiseanna Saothair	(FÁS)
The Further Education & Training Awards Council	(FETAC)
The Grangegorman Development Agency	(GGDA)
The Higher Education and Training Awards Council	(HETAC)
The Higher Education Authority	(HEA)
Léargas - The Exchange Bureau	
The National Centre for Guidance in Education	(NCGE)
The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment	(NCCA)
The National Council for Special Education	(NCSE)
The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland	(NQAI)
The Residential Institutions Redress Board	(RIRB)
The Residential Institutions Review Committee	(RIRC)
Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences	(IRCHSS)
Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology	(IRCSET)
Skillnets Ltd	
The State Examinations Commission	(SEC)
[5]The Teaching Council	

[5] The Teaching Council has been self-financing since March 2008