A Value for Money Assessment of Programmes managed by the Teacher Education Section.

Department of Education & Science, September 2007

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Glossary of Abbreviations

ATECI	**Association of Teacher Education Centres of Ireland**
ASTI	**Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland**
BSS	**Biology Support Service**
CPD	**Continuing Professional Development**
DEIS	**Delivering Equality of opportunity In Schools**
DES	**Department of Education and Science**
HEA	**Higher Education Authority**
HETAC	**Higher Education Training Awards Council**
HIST	**History In-Service Team**
ICDU	**In-Career Development Unit**
INTO	**Irish National Teachers Organisation**
JCSP	**Junior Certificate Schools Programme**
LCA	**Leaving Certificate Applied**
NBSS	**National Biology Support Service**
NCCA	**National Council for Curriculum and Assessment**
NCTE	**National Council for Technology in Education**
NDP	**National Development Plan**
NPPTI	**National Pilot Project on Teacher Induction**
NQT	**Newly Qualified Teacher**
OECD	**Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development**
PCSP	**Primary Curriculum Support Programme**
PLM	**Programme Logic Model**
RCSS	**Regional Curriculum Support Service**
RDO	**Regional Development Officer**
SESS	**Special Education Support Service**
SLSS	**Second Level Support Service**
SSTI	**Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation**
TES	**Teacher Education Section**
TCD	**Trinity College, Dublin**
TUI	**Teachers Union of Ireland**
UCD	**University College, Dublin**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This first chapter outlines the background to Value For Money Programme reviews. Originally entitled Expenditure Reviews, the aim of such reviews is to analyse in a systematic manner the returns achieved on Government expenditure, and thereby to provide a basis on which informed decisions can be taken in relation to priorities within and between expenditure programmes and measures in order to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of future expenditure on such programmes.

The Steering Committee for this VFM review consisted of members of the Teacher Education Section and the Central Policy Unit within the Department of Education and Science (DES), as well as representatives from outside agencies that have a role to play in the area of teacher education.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND TO TEACHER EDUCATION SECTION

The subject of this VFM Review is the programmes managed by the Teacher Education Section (TES) within the Department of Education and Science (DES). The TES was established in 2004 but its origins can be traced to the mid 1990s when the In-Career Development Unit (ICDU) was formed within the DES. The ICDU was responsible for supporting the development of a comprehensive national approach to the in-career professional development of teachers at first, second and further education levels, and to provide for the active involvement of the partners in education in the process. The TES incorporates the original brief of the ICDU but also encompasses other areas within the DES that have a remit for teacher education via the Colleges of Education and the education departments in the Universities and Colleges.

This review encompasses the programmes managed by the TES in three main policy areas: (i) initial teacher education; (ii) induction; and (iii) continuing professional development. Due to time and space constraints, the review does not encompass the entire range of programmes or activities supported by the TES. The review focuses on a limited number of the programmes supported by the TES and some areas of the work of the section had to be excluded. In particular, pre-service education for post primary teachers is not encompassed in the review. While it would have been instructive to compare the efficiency and effectiveness of primary and post primary teacher preparation, the post primary element was excluded from the analysis as the TES does not have a direct funding role in this area.

Furthermore, the review does not take account of the considerable work of the TES in relation to policy formulation. Efficiency and effectiveness are difficult concepts to apply to policy formulation and the decision was taken to focus solely on actual expenditure programmes as part of this value for money review. In other areas the focus of the analysis is on a particular service provider rather than embracing all such providers. This is particularly the case in relation to the summer and local courses, where the analysis is limited to the courses provided through the Education

Centre Network and does not encompass the work of other providers such as the NCTE, the INTO or private providers.

While the TES has overall responsibility for policy formulation, co-ordination, general direction and management, quality control and financial control in relation to initial teacher education; induction; and continuing professional development , it does not provide teacher education directly. In general, teacher education programmes are operated by agencies and organisations outside the TES, who act in accordance with criteria established by the TES, and provide management, financial and operational reports as required by the TES.

The TES budget in 2007 is approximately €64m. However, this does not reflect the true level of TES activity as it does not include the costs associated with seconding teaching personnel to work as part of the National Programmes of In-service training or the costs of providing substitution cover for teachers attending prescribed in-service training. When the cost of the secondments to National Programmes is included, expenditure by the DES on teacher education amounts to approximately €79m which represents 0.9% of total Departmental expenditure. This still does not take account of the substitution costs associated with in-service training, but relevant data are not available on these costs.

CHAPTER THREE: OBJECTIVES – IDENTIFICATION AND VALIDITY

The overall objective of the TES, and the individual objectives in relation to the three main areas of TES activity, are identified as follows:

Overall objective for the TES
To support the implementation of a coordinated range of quality Teacher Education and Development Programmes, spanning the continuum from initial through induction and in-service Teacher Education and Development, covering curricular change and specific areas relating to the improvement of teaching and learning for students attending schools and out-of school centres at primary, post-primary and further education levels of education.

Sub-objective in relation to Initial Teacher Training
To ensure the provision of a supply of appropriately qualified graduates from the Colleges of Education sufficient to meet the demand for newly qualified teachers within the education system.

Sub-objective in relation to Induction
To provide a programme of induction whereby newly qualified teachers are inducted into the profession of teaching; their developing pedagogical skills are consolidated, and their interpersonal and communication skills are further developed.

Sub-objective in relation to Continuing Professional Development
To support the implementation of an accessible and appropriate programme of quality continuing professional development that is aimed at meeting the identified and appropriately prioritised personal and professional needs of teachers, the organisational, administrative and curricular needs of school communities, and the policy needs of the education system generally, as identified by government in consultation with all the education partners.

These objectives are considered to be valid in the context of DES strategy and in the context of wider national policy, as outlined in strategy documents such as the *National Development Plan 2007 to 2013,* and the *Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation, 2006 to 2013*. The sub-objective relating to Continuing Professional Development features most prominently in national strategy documents. This has important implications for the rest of this review as it suggests that the in-service training/professional development element of the teaching continuum is the area where most attention has been focussed in recent years and is also the area where further progress is required.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

This review employs the Programme Logic Model (PLM) as a framework for evaluation. The PLM maps out the shape and logical linkages of a programme. It provides a systematic and visual way to present and share understanding of the cause-effect relationships between inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes (results and impacts).

The first step in developing a PLM is to determine the appropriate scope for the model. This involves deciding whether the logic model should focus on a specific component of a programme or an entire programme etc. The second stage involves identifying the model's components i.e. the inputs, outputs and outcomes associated with the intervention under review. The development of performance indicators for each component on the logic model is the third stage in the PLM. Indicators are measures used to determine if the components in the logic model have been achieved. When applied and interpreted together, they will help to determine whether the programme is operating as shown in the logic model. Following identification of the performance indicators, the final stage in the PLM process is to track the indicators – by collecting data/information through a variety of research methods. The methods adopted in this review include a literature review, a document analysis, surveys, unstructured interviews and use of existing data sources.

There were some difficulties experienced in attempting to identify the inputs and outputs in some areas of TES activity, and also in relation to measuring performance i.e. in measuring the extent to which the TES used the resources allocated to it efficiently. Even greater difficulties were encountered in relation to measuring the effectiveness of the TES.

Effectiveness involves an examination of the relationship between outputs and outcomes. The outcome of TES activity is improved student learning. However, this outcome (in common with the final outcome of other public services) is difficult to measure. The most common form of pupil assessment relates to summative examinations such as the Leaving Certificate or formative assessment such as literacy tests. However, there are doubts over the ability of such tests to reflect student learning in its broadest sense.

Even if one accepts examination performance as an accurate reflection of student learning it is extremely difficult to isolate and measure the impact of one factor – teacher professional development – from the myriad of other factors that influence

student learning (e.g. social background, parental influence, student ability, student commitment and teacher ability). There are also other inputs (apart from those provided by the TES) that contribute to pupil learning. Class sizes, teacher – pupil ratios, the quality of school buildings, and classroom resources will all contribute to effective teaching practice and ultimately towards pupil attainment. It is also the case that the impact of teacher professional development on pupil attainment may not be immediately apparent and may be more long-term in effect.

Due to the difficulties in measuring progress towards the final outcome of TES activity, it was decided to confine the analysis in this review to intermediate outcomes. Each of the three main policy areas in which the TES is involved has an intermediate outcome. The expectation is that these intermediate outcomes will contribute towards the achievement of the final outcome.

In one area of this review, an attempt was made to focus on the final outcome of TES activity. The work of the History In-Service Team (HIST) and the National Biology Support Service (NBSS) support teams is examined in chapter seven as part of an examination of the effectiveness of in-service training/CPD. This encompasses an analysis of the grades achieved in the Leaving Certificate by students before and after the introduction of the revised history and biology syllabi respectively. This is an attempt to ascertain the extent to which the introduction of revised curricula and the in-service training provided in those curricula have contributed to improved pupil learning.

CHAPTERS FIVE, SIX AND SEVEN: EFFECTIVENESS

Chapters five, six and seven assess the effectiveness of the three main areas of TES activity – initial teacher education, induction and in-service training/CPD respectively.

Initial Teacher Education

The evidence suggests that the TES has achieved its objective in relation to initial teacher education in an effective manner. Effectiveness was measured against (i) the extent to which the TES ensures an adequate supply of appropriately qualified NQTs to meet the demands of the primary education system, and (ii) the extent to which teacher education programmes adequately prepare NQTs for the classroom.

The analysis suggests that the TES has been forced to play catch-up to the level of demand for qualified primary teachers. The unprecedented number of new teaching posts arising from government commitments (namely the creation of 5,000 new teaching posts in the period 2002 to 2007) resulted in an increase in the number of unqualified and under-qualified teachers in the primary system. The delay between the TES approving an increase in student intake to the Colleges of Education and the corresponding increase in the number of graduates means that it is difficult to achieve perfect equilibrium between supply and demand for qualified teachers.

However, a number of measures have been introduced to increase the number of qualified teachers within the system. This includes the re-introduction of the Graduate Diploma – which produces qualified teachers in a shorter timeframe than

the traditional B.Ed programme. Such measures have increased the supply of qualified teachers and the evidence suggests that the number of unqualified and under-qualified teachers could be eliminated by the start of the 2008/2009 school year on the basis of the number of posts in the system at present.

In terms of the quality of the graduates produced from the Colleges of Education, the data suggest that – in general – the NQTs are performing effectively in the classroom. This is the intermediate outcome of the TES in the area of initial teacher education. The expectation is that effective teaching practice in the classroom (intermediate outcome) results in teachers being able to communicate knowledge effectively to students and to facilitate student learning, and this will contribute to more effective classroom learning for students (the final outcome).

However, the evidence suggests that there are areas where the performance of student teachers and NQTs could be strengthened. NQTs themselves – through a teacher survey – identified a number of areas in which they felt inadequately prepared as a result of their initial teacher education.

- There was a sizeable minority of NQT respondents (fourteen percent) that considered themselves inadequately prepared for the classroom.
- Eleven percent of NQTs were dissatisfied with the relevance of their initial teacher training.
- One in four NQTs considered the duration of their initial training to have been too short.

NQTs had concerns in relation to both curricular and non-curricular areas of school life. In relation to the curriculum, English was the area where respondents felt least well prepared, particularly the skills required to teach reading and writing to pupils, followed closely by Music, Visual Arts and Drama. NQTs were less positive about their level of preparedness in relation to the non-curricular aspects of school life. The area of greatest concern to respondents was dealing with parents. This was followed closely by catering for children with special needs, classroom management and discipline, and administration (including roll books, timetabling, and report writing).

The majority of NQTs were of the view that the quality and relevance of pre-service education could be improved. The most frequent recommendations were for a more practical focus to teacher education programmes, and for additional teaching practice and more opportunities for teacher observation.

Induction

The evidence collated as part of this review suggests that the TES has achieved its objective in relation to the induction of newly qualified teachers into the teaching profession in an effective manner. There is a high level of satisfaction among participants in the National Pilot Project on Teacher Induction (NPPTI) with the quality of support and training provided through the project. Participants viewed the support provided as being of very high quality, and very relevant to their needs. The vast majority of respondents were also of the view that the project had

contributed significantly to making them more competent and confident professionals.

The data indicate that the NPPTI is playing a vital role in (i) easing the transition from college to school life, thereby overcoming any feelings of isolation experienced by newly qualified teachers and encouraging them to remain within the teaching profession, and (ii) in refining and complementing the skills and knowledge acquired by newly qualified teachers during initial teacher education, thereby ensuring effective performance in the classroom.

The retention of qualified teachers within the education system is the intermediate outcome of TES activity in this area. The expectation is that by retaining qualified teachers within the system they will contribute towards pupil learning which is the final outcome of TES activity.

One area where the NPPTI could be strengthened is in relation to the coverage of the project. The proportion of NQTs targeted by the NPPTI is relatively low. Only 8% of primary NQTs and 7% of post primary NQTs have participated in the project since its inception. It is therefore recommended that the TES consider the further extension of the NPPTI on a phased basis – and within the context of available resources – until all newly qualified teachers are targeted.

In-service training/CPD

The main conclusion that emerges from the analysis in this review is that the TES is effective in achieving its objective in relation to CPD. Data collated as part of this review indicate that the vast majority of participants are satisfied with the quality and relevance of the training provided through support services such as the Primary Curriculum Support Programme, the History In-Service Team and the National Biology Support Service, and through the summer and local courses. Participants also viewed the training and support provided as equipping them with the skills and methodologies required to implement new curricula.

More importantly, the proportion of teachers who were fully implementing revised curricula or subjects and new teaching methodologies acquired during in-service training and support was also very high. This is the intermediate outcome of TES activity in this area. The expectation is that the implementation of the revised curricula and the new teaching methodologies will result in improved student learning – the final outcome of all TES activity.

An analysis of student performance in Leaving Certificate biology and history suggests that the introduction of revised curricula in those subjects has had mixed results. There was a general improvement in the grades achieved by students in Leaving Certificate history but the impact of the revised biology syllabus has not coincided with any significant change in student performance at higher level. However, at Ordinary level, there was a significant reduction in the proportion of biology students achieving a lower grade (E, F, NG) - a decline of 7.2 percentage points in four years.

The analysis also suggested that the TES has succeeded in recent years in redressing the balance between centrally identified in-service priorities and school and teacher needs. The programme of CPD supported by the TES appears to have been, until recent years, weighted in favour of centrally identified priorities at the expense of locally identified needs. However, a number of recent initiatives are impacting positively on addressing 'local' needs. The RCSS, the RDOs associated with the SLSS, and the BSS Associates are working with teachers on a regional and local basis and – with the assistance of the Education Centre Network – are identifying and addressing local teacher and school needs. However, further progress may be required before teachers and schools are willing to take responsibility for identifying and addressing their own CPD needs. This is suggested by the relatively low participation rates in the voluntary summer and local courses.

One reason for the relatively low level of participation in summer and local courses may be a perception among teachers that such courses do not reflect their actual needs. The evidence suggests that the efforts made by Education Centres to identify the needs of local teachers are not entirely successful. It may be the case that the existing methods of teacher consultation are not penetrating into the entire teaching community.

A related issue that needs to be addressed is the proportion of teachers that do not participate in the in-service training prescribed by the TES to support the implementation of revised subjects or curricula. Data from both the teacher survey and the attendance records collated by the HIST and NBSS indicate that there is a minority of teachers – approximately 10 to 15% - that have not attended such training. The fact that such teachers are missing training in how to implement revised syllabi/curricula could undermine teachers' ability to fully engage with and fully implement the required curricular changes in the classroom, thereby impinging on student learning which is the final outcome of TES activity in this area. The Teaching Council may have a role to play in improving attendance at both compulsory and voluntary in-service training.

While the evidence indicates that the TES has been effective in achieving its objective in relation to in-service training and CPD, there are areas where each of the programmes reviewed could be strengthened. It is also clear that data collection and evaluation could be improved. Recommendations are made to strengthen performance in these areas.

CHAPTER EIGHT: EFFICIENCY

Chapter eight examines the efficiency with which the Colleges of Education, the Education Support Centres and the National Support Programmes convert inputs into outputs.

It is more difficult to establish the efficiency with which the TES employs its resources than the effectiveness with which it achieves its objectives. The available evidence does not enable definitive conclusions to be drawn in relation to the efficiency with which the institutions supported by the TES (Colleges of Education,

Education Support Centres and the National Support Programmes) convert inputs into outputs. This is mainly attributable to the following factors: (i) a lack of data in certain key areas, particularly in relation to the National Programmes, (ii) the difficulty in comparing institutions and programmes that engage with teachers in substantially different ways, and (iii) the lack of any identifiable international benchmarks against which the performance by the TES can be compared.

Recommendations are made to improve the future monitoring of the efficiency with which the agencies and organisations supported by the TES convert inputs into outputs.

CHAPTER NINE: COMMUNICATION

The quality of communication between the TES and its stakeholders was explored through surveys of key stakeholder groups – the Presidents of the Colleges of Education, the Directors of the Education Support Centres, and the Coordinators of the National Programmes. The evidence indicates a widespread perception among all three stakeholder groups that they are not consulted on a regular basis by the TES in relation to policy formation. Overall, eighty-four percent of respondents were of the view that the level of consultation could be improved. The main recommendation to emerge from all three stakeholder groups related to the need for more regular meetings with the TES. This appears to reflect a perception among stakeholders that they are not sufficiently involved in the policy formation process. Recommendations are made to strengthen future performance in this area.

CHAPTER TEN: FUTURE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Chapter ten identifies the future performance indicators that could be used to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness with which the TES achieves its objectives. This chapter also identifies the data sources that will be required in order to track the performance indicators.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

This chapter opens with an acknowledgement of the limitations of the research methodology employed in this review. One issue for consideration is the reliance in this review on teacher surveys. Feedback from teachers and other stakeholders on the quality of training received and the quality of communication with the TES is the main source for the analysis in chapters five, six, seven and nine. There are a number of recognised weaknesses associated with postal surveys and with self reporting by respondents. While efforts have been made to supplement the data arising from the teacher/stakeholder surveys with other data sources and research methods, the reliance on stakeholder feedback as the main source of evidence for this review must be acknowledged.

The chapter then summarises the main conclusions and recommendations in relation to the efficiency and effectiveness with which the TES has achieved its objectives, and also on the quality of its communication with its three main stakeholder groups. The overall conclusion is that the TES is effective in meeting its objectives. It is more difficult to make definitive conclusions about efficiency

but recommendations are made to strengthen future monitoring of performance in this area. In consequence, the steering committee agree that funding should continue to be allocated to the TES for teacher education, provided that the recommendations proposed in this review are adopted. These recommendations include alternative policy and organisational approaches to achieving the objectives of the TES in a more efficient and effective manner.

One of the other main conclusions arising from this review is the need to reinforce the concept of the teacher education continuum. The ideal of the 'continuum' of teacher education, comprising initial teacher education, induction and in-service training/CPD, has been promoted since the early 1990s. According to this concept, there should a seamless provision of teacher education, with teachers supported by quality professional development opportunities from the time they enter the Colleges of Education to the time that they eventually retire from the profession. The important implication of this concept for the TES is that seamless provision should be matched by seamless policy.

One of the motivating factors behind the establishment of the ICDU – and later the TES – was the desire to make a reality of this continuum. The TES, established in 2004, incorporates the original brief of the ICDU but also encompasses other areas within the DES that have a remit for teacher education via the Colleges of Education and the education departments in the Universities and Colleges. In theory, therefore, the TES has provided a more strategic focus to the area of teacher education as it has responsibility for the three main areas that constitute it: (i) initial teacher education, (ii) induction, and (iii) in-service training/Continuing Professional Development. However, there is a lack of evidence to suggest that the continuum has become any more of a tangible reality in recent years. The evidence collected as part of this review indicates that before the concept of the teacher education continuum can be realised, further progress is required in two main areas: (i) greater data collection and data sharing about teachers' professional and personal development needs, and (ii) greater consultation and involvement by relevant stakeholders in the development of CPD policy.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background to the Review

In May 1997, the Department of Finance established the Expenditure Review Initiative (ERI) in order to analyse in a systematic manner the returns achieved on Government expenditure, and thereby to provide a basis on which informed decisions can be taken in relation to priorities within and between expenditure programmes and measures in order to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of future expenditure on such programmes. Reviews conducted under the ERI form part of the annual business plans of Government Departments, and each year up to fifty programme areas are selected for review across the various Departments and Offices. In 2006, the title Value For Money Policy Review replaced that of Expenditure Review and this new title is used throughout this report.

The individual Value For Money (VFM) Policy Reviews are undertaken under the aegis of steering groups representing the relevant Departments/Offices. The review process is overseen by the Central Steering Committee (CSC) on Programme Evaluation, which is chaired by the Secretary General, Department of Finance.

The subject of this VFM Review is the programmes managed by the Teacher Education Section (TES) within the Department of Education and Science.

1.2 Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the review of the TES were based on standard Terms of Reference which apply to all reviews across the Civil Service, with appropriate modifications specific to this review. The agreed Terms of Reference for this review are as follows:

1. To identify the objectives of the Teacher Education Section with regard to initial teacher training, induction, and continuing professional development.
2. To examine the current validity of these objectives and their compatibility with the overall strategy of the Department regarding the continuum of teacher training from initial teacher training, to induction and continuing professional development
3. To define the outputs associated with Teacher Education activity and identify the level and trend of those outputs.
4. To examine the extent that identified objectives have been achieved, and comment on the *effectiveness* with which they have been achieved.
5. To identify the level and trend of costs and staffing resources associated with the provision of teacher training through 1) the Colleges of Education, 2) the Education Support Centres and 3) the Support Services and thus comment on the *efficiency* with which it has achieved its objectives.
6. To examine the existing communication channels between the Teacher Education Section and 1) the Colleges of Education 2), the Education Centre Network, 3) the Support Services and to make recommendations thereon.

7. To evaluate the degree to which the objectives warrant the allocation of public funding on a current and ongoing basis and examine the scope for alternative policy or organisational approaches to achieving these objectives on a more efficient and/or effective basis.
8. Specify potential future performance indicators that might be used to better monitor the performance in the area of Teacher Education.

1.3 Scope of this Review

This review encompasses the programmes managed by the TES in three main policy areas: (i) initial teacher education; (ii) induction; and (iii) continuing professional development. Due to time and space constraints, the the review does not encompass the entire range of programmes or activities supported by the TES. The review focuses on a limited number of the programmes supported by the TES and some areas of the work of the section had to be excluded. In particular, pre-service education for post primary teachers is not encompassed in the review. While it would have been instructive to compare the efficiency and effectiveness of primary and post primary teacher preparation, the post primary element was excluded from the analysis as the TES does not have a direct funding role in this area.

Furthermore, the review does not take account of the considerable work of the TES in relation to policy formulation. Efficiency and effectiveness are difficult concepts to apply to policy formulation and the decision was taken to focus solely on actual expenditure programmes as part of this value for money assessment of the work of the TES. It is important to acknowledge, however, the broader policy making function of the TES which is beyond the scope of this particular review.

In other areas the focus of the analysis in this review is on a particular service provider rather than embracing all such providers. This is particularly the case in relation to the summer and local courses, where the analysis is limited to the courses provided through the Education Centre Network and does not encompass the work of other providers such as the NCTE, the INTO or private providers.

1.4 Contributing factors to selection of review topic

There are three main reasons for the selection of the TES for inclusion in the value for money policy review programme.

1. The TES was formed in 2004 and incorporated the existing In-Career Development Unit within the Department of Education and Science (DES) and also other areas within the DES that dealt with policy direction and funding for the continuum of teacher education from pre-service education, through induction and into in-service training/continuing professional development for teachers. The TES was formed to ensure greater cohesion and collaboration between these three areas of the teacher education and development continuum. It was considered appropriate to review the progress made by the TES in improving the level of policy coordination in relation to teacher education.

2. A number of recent reports have raised important issues in relation to teachers' professional development. These include reports produced at both national and OECD level[1]. The recommendations contained in these reports, and the establishment of the Teaching Council (under the Teaching Council Act, 2001), all have significant relevance for the future implementation of policy in this area.

3. The TES is responsible for allocating a considerable amount of public funds. The budget awarded to the TES in 2007 is approximately €64m. However, this does not take account of the cost of seconding teachers to work in the support services established by the TES. In 2006/2007 there were 321 teachers seconded to work with the National Support Programmes and the Education Centres. When account is taken of the cost of providing substitute cover for these teachers, the overall funding for TES activity is in excess of €79m.

In light of the above considerations it was considered appropriate to conduct a VFM assessment of the TES in order to assess the efficiency and effectiveness with which the section is achieving its objectives and as an aid to informing future policy at pre-service, induction, and in-service levels

1.5 Steering Committee

The Steering Committee for this VFM assessment consisted of members of the TES and the Central Policy Unit within the Department of Education and Science (DES), as well as representatives from outside agencies that have a role to play in the area of teacher education. The committee members are listed in appendix 1.

The Committee held its first meeting in May 2006. The Committee met on nine occasions in total. The penultimate draft report was submitted to an Independent Evaluation Expert, under the arrangements agreed by the Central Steering Committee, for external quality assessment on 25th May 2007. Following the Steering Committee's consideration of the recommendations made by the Independent Evaluation Expert, certain modifications were made to this report and the Steering Committee approved the report on 7th June 2007. The final report was subsequently approved by the Secretary General and Management Advisory Committee in September 2007.

[1] Reports include the following: DES (2001), *Report of the Advisory Group on Post Primary Teacher Education*. (Kellaghan report); DES (2002), *Report of the Working Group on Primary Pre-service Teacher Education* (Byrne report); DES (2005), *Beginning to Teach: Newly Qualified Teachers in Irish Primary Schools*; DES (2007), *Learning to Teach: Students on teaching practice in Irish primary schools*; Killeavy, Maureen and Murphy, Regina (2006), *The National Pilot Project on Teacher Induction: Final Report* (unpublished); C.Sugrue, M, Morgan, D. Devine, D. Raftery, (2001) *Policy and Practice of Professional Development for Primary and Post-primary Teachers in Ireland: a critical analysis* (unpublished); Centre for Management and Organisational Development (2002) *Review of Education Centre Network*, Dublin: CMOD. (unpublished); Gary Granville (2006), *Cultivating Professional Growth: An Emergent Approach to Teacher Development. Final Evaluation Report on the Experience and Impact of the Second Level Support Service (*unpublished); Damian Murchan, Andrew Loxley, Keith Johnston, Micheline Quinn, Helen Fitzgerald (2005), *.Evaluation of the Primary Curriculum Support Programme* (unpublished); J. Coolahan (2003), *Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers – Country Background Report for Ireland*).

1.6 Format of Review

This review commences with an outline of the work of the TES (chapter two). It then identifies the objectives of the TES in relation to initial teacher education, induction, and continuing professional development (CPD) and examines the current validity of those objectives in the context of overall strategy at DES and national level (chapter three). This addresses items 1 and 2 in the Terms of Reference for this review. Chapter four outlines the methodology adopted to progress the review, including a description of the Programme Logic Model (PLM) which is the central framework for this VFM review, and its application to the work of the TES.

Chapters five, six and seven focus on the extent to which the TES has achieved its objectives in relation to pre-service education, induction, and in-service training and professional development respectively. This addresses item 4 in the Terms of Reference. This is followed by an examination of the efficiency with which the TES has achieved its objectives (chapter eight), which fulfils items 3 and 5 of the Terms of Reference. Chapter nine explores the issue of communication between the TES and the Colleges of Education, the Education Support Centres and the National Support Programmes. This addresses item 6 in the Terms of Reference.

Chapter ten specifies potential future performance indicators that might be used to better monitor the performance in the area of teacher education, thereby fulfilling item 8 in the Terms of Reference. The final chapter, chapter eleven, summarises the main conclusions and recommendations arising from the report. These recommendations include alternative policy or organisational approaches to achieving the TES' objectives. Chapter eleven also considers the extent to which the objectives warrant the allocation of public funding on a current and ongoing basis. This fulfils item 7 in the Terms of Reference.

Chapter Two

Teacher Education Section – Background

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the background to the work of the Teacher Education Section (TES). It explains the rationale behind the establishment of the TES, identifies the three main policy areas in which the section is involved, and details the major areas in which expenditure is committed.

2.2 Background to establishment of the Teacher Education Section (TES)

The TES was established in 2004 but its origins can be traced to the mid 1990s when the In-Career Development Unit (ICDU) was formed within the DES.

Seminal to the establishment of the ICDU was the report on national education policy published by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1991. This report commented on the "grossly inadequate" nature of in-service education and training in Ireland. The OECD visiting team recommended the need for a "structured and farsighted framework of provision at national level". The OECD experts were critical also of "the Department's weakness in generating good data, which were *a sine qua non* of policy development and planning".[2]

The OECD report was followed by a number of key national policy documents that served to underline the fundamental importance to the education system of a well trained and flexible teaching force. The Green paper (1992), the report of the National Education Convention (1994) and the White paper (1995) all emphasized the necessity of ensuring that teachers were adequately trained and allowed sufficient opportunities to develop.[3]

It was against this background that the ICDU was established within the DES in 1994. The ICDU was responsible for supporting the development of a comprehensive national approach to the in-career professional development of teachers at first, second and further education levels, and to provide for the active involvement of the partners in education in the process.[4] The establishment of the ICDU coincided with the advent of considerable additional funding from the EU, under the 1994-1999 EU Community Support Framework (CSF), for the professional development of the teaching community. This allowed the government to commit to "an expenditure of almost £40 million for in-career development from 1994-1999".[5] The establishment of the ICDU, the government commitments to teacher

[2] OECD (1991) *Reviews of National Policies For Education: Ireland*, pp. 119, 129, 131. Quoted in C. Sugrue, M. Morgan, D. Devine, D. Raftery (2001) *Policy and Practice of Professional Development for Primary and Post primary Teachers in Ireland: a critical analysis* (unpublished), pp53-54

[3] Government of Ireland (1992), *Green Paper on Education: Education for a changing world*. Dublin, Government Publications**;** Government of Ireland (1995) *Charting Our Education Future; White Paper on Education* Dublin: Government Publications, p.140; J. Coolahan, (ed) (1994), *Report on the National Education Convention* Dublin: Stationary office, p.140.

[4] White paper, (1995), p.138

[5] Sugrue et al (2001), p.52; White paper (1995), p.138

education, and the level of funding made available, have been regarded as "a landmark in the historical development of continuing professional development".[6]

The TES was established in 2004. It incorporates the original brief of the ICDU but also encompasses other areas within the DES that have a remit for teacher education via the Colleges of Education and the education departments in the Universities and Colleges. The formation of the TES, therefore, has served to give a more strategic focus to the education and development of teachers across an interrelated continuum of initial pre-service, induction and in-service training and professional development. The TES is responsible for the three inter-related aspects of teacher education and development which together constitute a continuum of teacher education: (i) Initial Teacher Education, (ii) Induction, and (iii) In-service training/Continuing Professional Development.

While the TES has overall responsibility for policy formulation, co-ordination, general direction and management, quality control and financial control in relation to the three areas outlined above, it does not provide teacher education directly. In general, teacher education programmes and support services are operated by agencies and organisations outside the TES, who act in accordance with criteria established by the TES, and provide management, financial and operational reports as required by the TES. The work of the TES in relation to initial teacher education, induction, and in-service training and professional development is described below.

2.3 Initial teacher education

Initial teacher education, or pre-service education is conducted through the Colleges of Education (for primary level teachers) and education departments of Universities (for second level teachers).[7] As mentioned previously, the TES has a funding role in relation to the Colleges of Education only and this review is therefore confined to pre-service education for primary level teachers.

There are five colleges in Ireland that provide full-time initial primary teacher education courses leading to a qualification that is recognised by the DES for the purpose of employment as a primary teacher. The five Colleges of Education are:

- Mary Immaculate College, Limerick
- St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin
- Church of Ireland College of Education, Rathmines, Dublin
- Coláiste Mhuire, Marino, Dublin
- Froebel College of Education, Blackrock, Dublin

All of the colleges are affiliated to a university and provide three year long undergraduate courses leading to a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree.[8] In

[6] J. Coolahan (2003), *Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers – Country Background Report for Ireland*) Dublin: DES, p.43

[7] There are also some Colleges that train teachers in particular subjects at second level such as the Training Colleges for home economics teachers.

[8] The length of the B.Ed degree programme in all five Colleges of Education is three years. In Mary Immaculate and St. Patrick's College, a student may obtain an honours degree after three years, while in the CICE, Froebel and Colaiste Mhuire, the award after three years is a general B.Ed degree. This is because the

addition, four of the five colleges provide eighteen month long postgraduate courses leading to a higher diploma in primary teaching; the Church of Ireland College provides degree courses for undergraduates only.

Prior to 1993, all five Colleges of Education were funded through the ICDU. As a result of institutional linkages developed with the University of Limerick and Dublin City University, the two larger colleges (Mary Immaculate, Limerick, and St. Patrick's, Drumcondra) have been funded through the Higher Education Authority (HEA) since 1993 and 1994 respectively.

In August 2003, the DES agreed to recognise graduates of a new primary teacher training course for the purposes of primary teaching. The new course leads to a Graduate Diploma in Primary Education and is being delivered by Hibernia College, an on-line third level educational company. This is a privately-run course provided by a privately owned institution, which is accredited by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC).

Teacher education programmes consist of a mix of academic subjects and educational theory, combined with periods of teaching practice. The fundamental aim of such courses is to provide the professional and academic foundation for teachers' careers, by providing a third-level education which will impart the knowledge and pedagogical skills necessary to teach the primary school curriculum.[9] Programmes in all colleges are broadly similar in structure. However, there are some differences in relation to how the academic year is structured, in the mix of subjects offered, and in the length of time spent on teaching practice.

2.4 Induction

The second policy area in which the TES is involved relates to the induction of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) into the teaching profession.

The value of a period of induction support for NQTs is clear. Research suggests that almost all teachers experience the transition period into teaching as the most difficult aspect of their teaching life and career.[10] Evidence provided in the research literature points to the importance of positive induction for the prospects of the retention of new entrants to the profession.[11] It has been suggested that those teachers who experience no induction programme are twice as likely to leave the profession within their first three years of teaching. In the absence of elaborate induction programmes the attrition rate from teaching in the first five years after graduation has been shown to be as high as 50% both in England and in the US.[12] Those provided with comprehensive and systematic induction are, on the other hand, more committed to staying in the profession and more capable of moving beyond initial concerns with classroom management problems to dealing with

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University of Dublin, which grants the B.Ed degree to students in these three colleges, will grant an honours degree only after four years of study. Students in these colleges must complete a further year's study if they wish to obtain an honours degree (Kellaghan report, p.22)

[9] White paper (1995), p.127

[10] Fullan, (1993), p.115

[11] Byrne report (2002), p.81; Coolahan, (1994), p.77

[12] Sugrue, Morgan et al (2001), p.13

instructional and curricular issues. The introduction of a two year induction programme in California has been credited with helping to reduce beginning teacher attrition from 39% to 9%.[13] Induction contributes to a retention of qualified teachers within the system but also accelerates the ability of NQTs to cope with the demands of pupil learning:

The bulk of accumulated evidence shows that teacher induction of the traditional sink-or-swim type contributes to lower levels of teaching effectiveness and higher attrition rates from the profession. On the other hand, beginning teachers who are provided with continuous support by a skilled mentor are much less likely to leave the profession, are more likely to get beyond personal and class management concerns quickly and to focus on student learning sooner. [14]

Induction is not only important in retaining NQTs within the teaching profession. Evidence suggests that a teacher's experience during the first five years of his/her career will also influence his/her attitude towards CPD: 'The first five years of teaching are especially critical for laying the foundation for continuous learning (or stagnation)'.[15] It has also been argued that there is a strong relationship between how teachers pass through the transition period from college to school life and how likely they are to progress professionally to high levels of competence and endeavour.[16]

In recent years, the need for a well structured and systematic programme of induction for NQTs within the Irish education system has been universally acknowledged. The major policy documents of the 1990s all supported the need for a comprehensive induction policy. The Green Paper (1992), the report of the National Education Convention (1994), and the White Paper (1995), all advocated the introduction of such a programme.[17] The White Paper recognized the importance of the induction period to the teaching profession:

The quality of a teacher's experience during the early years of teaching is critical to developing and applying the knowledge and skills acquired during that initial training, and also to forming positive attitudes to teaching as a career. A good induction programme will provide teachers, in their first full year, with the opportunities to apply the knowledge and skills acquired during initial training and to master a broad range of new knowledge and skills, including a deeper understanding of the internal organisation of schools, the curriculum and its application to different ability groups, classroom management skills, and systems of assessment and reporting. The ability to evaluate their own performance and identify their strengths and weaknesses, as well as areas requiring further development, can also be acquired during this year.[18]

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[13] Maureen Killeavy and Regina Murphy (2006), *National Pilot Project on Teacher Induction (NPPTI): Final report*, pp.6-7
[14] Burke, 'The Devil's Bargain Revisited', p.28
[15] Fullan, (1993), p.120
[16] *ibid* p.115
[17] Green paper (1992), p.165; Coolahan, 1994, p. 87; White paper (1995), p.125.
[18] White paper (1995), p.131

Despite the White Paper's proposal for the introduction of "a well-developed and carefully managed induction programme, coinciding with the teacher's probationary year....for first- and second-level teachers[19], the provision of induction support in Irish primary and post-primary schools in the 1990s remained inconsistent and in many cases non-existent.

The National Pilot Project on Teacher Induction (NPPTI) was established by the DES in September 2002 in conjunction with the standing Committee of Teachers Unions (INTO, ASTI, TUI) and University Education Departments (represented by UCD and St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra. The general aim of the NPPTI was to develop proposals for an effective programme of induction for NQTs, which would be tailored to their particular professional needs and sensitive to the strengths, requirements and challenges within the Irish education system. The central thrust of the project is towards supporting the professional development of the NQT by way of appropriate systematic support in the probationary years and thus laying the foundation for subsequent professional growth and renewal. For the purpose of the project, NQTs were defined as primary or post-primary teachers in their first year of full-time teaching, either in a temporary or a permanent capacity. In certain cases at post-primary level, teachers changing their role and responsibilities within the profession were considered NQTs. [20]

The NPPTI is funded by the TES and operates under the guidance of a steering committee. The project comprises two distinct pillars, a primary pillar located in St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, and a post-primary pillar located in the School of Education and Lifelong Learning, UCD. A joint steering committee monitors the implementation of the project.

The NPPTI commenced in September 2002 and initially encompassed forty NQTs at primary and post primary levels. The project has since been expanded in five phases. In total, 549 primary teachers and 343 post primary teachers have participated in or are participating in the project. The project was originally confined to schools and NQTs in the greater Dublin region but as it evolved it has become more geographically representative. As the geographical basis of the project spread, closer links have been formed with the Education Centre Network.[21] The project has also been nuanced to include different types of schools such as small rural primary schools, schools located in disadvantaged areas and schools dealing with issues of special education and social inclusion.

The type of support provided through the project was developed following a review of international research, an examination of models of induction in operation internationally and a needs analysis of induction requirements. The needs of NQTs were analysed at the beginning of the project at both primary and post-primary levels, in order to establish the support required by those NQTs in their first year in the teaching profession.[22]

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[19] White paper (1995), p.131.
[20] Maureen Killeavy and Regina Murphy (2005) *National Pilot Project on Teacher Induction: Final Report* (unpublished), p.22. Hereafter cited as *NPPTI (2005)*.
[21] *NPPTI (2005)*, p.59
[22] *ibid*, pp.27-28

As the project was initially, and still remains, a pilot project, there was an element of flexibility in the project design and some modifications have been made to the project as it has evolved. It has also been adapted, particularly at post primary level, to suit the needs of particular school types. The core elements of the project include (i) Mentoring; (ii) Professional development workshops and seminars; and (iii) Teacher observation.

- *Mentoring:* NQTs are allocated a designated mentor, usually an experienced teacher within their school, and are offered support at the level of the school via the mentor. Mentors and NQTs work collaboratively to establish a timetable of support activities within the parameters provided by the arrangements of the NPPTI. This support generally assumes the form of ongoing consultative advisory meetings between mentors and NQTs and arrangements for classroom observation.[23]

- *Professional development:* Seminars and workshops are provided throughout the programme on a series of content areas to meet the expressed needs (identified through the needs analysis) of mentors and NQTs. The seminar programme presenters include practising teachers and other experts in the various fields identified by participants as requiring support provision. Generally seminar days are organised separately for mentors and NQTs. While the content of the topics and aspects of teaching covered is similar for both groups, the emphasis is different, with mentors receiving additional guidance on the helping and facilitation skills required to support NQTs. Both mentors and NQTs also benefit from workshop discussions with their peers.[24]

- *Teacher observation:* One of the key elements of the pilot project is the opportunity for beginning teachers to observe colleagues teaching and to be observed themselves. NQTs are allocated a number of days for observation in their own school or in another school of their choice. Observation days are arranged by mentors in consultation with the school principal and colleagues. The duration of observation varies depending upon factors such as the availability of time, the content of the lesson, the particular needs or problems identified by the NQT.[25]

Substitute cover is provided by the TES for NQTs, mentors and teaching principals involved in mentoring or attending professional development seminars. Appendix 2 identifies the time allocated for each component element of the NPPTI.

2.5 Continuing Professional Development/In-service training

The TES has responsibility for the planning, development, management and evaluation of a comprehensive programme of in-career development/support for teachers/tutors and management at primary, post primary and further education levels, and for parents involved at first and second levels. The programme of in-service training and development for teachers has a number of different purposes.

[23] *NPPTI (2005)* p.63
[24] *ibid*, p.59
[25] *ibid*, p.93

- Updating knowledge arising from curricular and system change.
- Upgrading pedagogic, assessment and management skills.
- Intervention programmes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with disabilities and special educational needs.
- Guidance and counselling.
- Information and communications technology.

As with initial teacher education and induction support, the TES does not provide in-service directly. The in-service programme is provided through National Support Programmes, the Education Support Centres, and other providers including the Colleges of Education, Universities, subject associations, the teacher unions, and the NCTE.

National Support Programmes.

Support services are generally established by the TES to support the introduction of revised curricula (such as the Primary Curriculum Support Programme and the National Biology Support Service) or to provide for training in non-subject specific areas such as whole school planning (the School Development Planning Service), leadership skills (the Leadership Development Service) or special educational needs (the Special Education Support Service).

National Support Services are established for a limited number of years. These are staffed by teachers on secondment and are generally administered through Education Centres. They operate under steering committees chaired and led by inspectors and others from the Department. There are currently twenty nine Support Services supported by the TES. For the purpose of this review, three of these services were selected for detailed analysis: the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP), the National History In-Service Team (HIST), and the National Biology Support Service (NBSS). Further details on each of these programmes are provided in chapter seven.

Education Support Centres

The first Education Support Centres in Ireland were established in Ireland in 1972 at a time when a new primary school curriculum had been introduced and an expansion of syllabus and in-service training at post-primary level had taken place. Centres developed largely due to local initiatives by groups of teachers and were not planned on a national basis. There are currently twenty one full-time and nine part-time centres.

There was no formal statutory recognition of Centres until the 1998 Education Act. The Act defined them as “a place in which services are provided for schools, teachers, parents, boards and other relevant persons which support them in carrying out their functions in respect of the provision of education which is recognised for that purpose by the Minister….”. The Act provides that the Minister may make regulations in relation to:

(a) procedures for the appointment of management committees;
(b) the appointment and remuneration of staff;
(c) the making of grants to education support centres;
(d) the provision of information to the Minister on any matter relating to the operation of education support centres;
(e) access to an education support centre and to the financial and other records of that education support centre by persons appointed by the Minister; and
(f) such other matters relating to the operation of such centres as the Minister considers appropriate.

From 1972, in accordance with guidelines issued by the then Department of Education, the main functions of the Centres were:

1. To provide an opportunity and meeting place for primary and post-primary teachers to discuss issues related to their work;
2. To act as a resource centre for teachers (to enable teachers to prepare and construct equipment and materials for use in their own schools and, if necessary, for distribution among schools in the locality);
3. To arrange in-service courses.

Since 2002, the TES has been in discussion with the Association of Teacher Education Centres of Ireland (ATECI) with a view to revising and updating these guidelines to reflect recent changes in the role and functions of the Education Support Centres.

The work of each Centre is overseen by a voluntary Management Committee elected in the majority of cases from among the teachers in the region. Each Centre has a constitution, holds an AGM and produces an annual report that includes a set of audited accounts. The Director of the Education Centre is Committee Secretary.

The Management Committee has primary responsibility for the governance and direction of the Centres. Its responsibilities cover the areas of finance, staffing, planning and legal. Together with the Director, the Committee is responsible for planning and putting into effect a programme of activities for the Centre. While the Committee may delegate many of its responsibilities to the Director, it retains ultimate responsibility for the operation of the Centre.

Activities organized by the Education Centres fall under three broad categories of provision. These are (i) local initiatives, (ii) national initiatives, and (iii) post-graduate provision.[26]

(i) Local initiatives

Centres continue to address their original remit of meeting the needs of local teachers by providing evening/weekend ("local courses") and summer courses. The summer course programme provides training opportunities for primary school teachers during the months of July and August. The programme is funded by the

[26] Sugrue et al (2001), p.68

TES and administered by Drumcondra Education Centre.[27] The courses are organized by a range of local providers along with Education Centres, the INTO and the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE). Courses provided by the Education Centre Network and independent providers must be approved in advance by the TES. However, courses organized by the INTO and the NCTE do not require TES approval.[28]

Local courses are those courses organized by Education Centres for primary and post primary teachers during the school year and outside of school time. While summer courses are organized (for primary teachers) during July and August, local courses are generally organized in the spring and autumn of each year. They are usually held in the evening or at weekends. All courses are provided locally either on the Centres' premises or in local venues such as schools or hotels. The Centres make all the arrangements for these courses including hiring lecturers and carrying out evaluation of the courses.

(ii) National initiatives

The original local focus of the Education Centres has changed in recent years and the Centres are now the central element of the Department's CPD delivery infrastructure. The first National Programmes of in-service training were delivered through the Education Centres in 1995.[29] Most National Programmes are now 'hosted' by a full-time Education Centre.

(iii) Post-graduate provision

Some Education Centres have established links with the University sector in the provision of accredited Diploma courses and modules related to Masters Programmes. Typically courses provided include education management and administration, computers in education, Guidance and counselling and curriculum studies.[30]

Other providers

A range of other agencies offer CPD development programmes of various types largely funded by the TES. These include third level providers, post primary subject associations, teacher unions and school management/trustee bodies (such as the Joint Managerial Body and the Irish Vocational Education Association), National organisations of school principals (the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals and the Irish Primary Principals' Network), national agencies such as the NCTE and the National Centre for Guidance in Education.[31]

[27] Prior to 2005, the summer course programme was administered by Marino Institute of Education.
[28] DES (2003) *Evaluation of Summer Course Programme 2003 Summary Report*, p.1 (unpublished)
[29] Centre for Management and Organisational Development (2002) *Review of Education Centre Network*, Dublin: CMOD (unpublished), p.10
[30] Sugrue et al (2001), p.70
[31] Coolahan, (2003), p.45

When other providers such as teacher unions or subject associations depend on state funding, their CPD activities are monitored by the TES. When such agencies raise independent resources they are free to decide on their own CPD initiatives.[32]

Teaching Council

The Teaching Council will play a significant role in relation to teacher education in the years ahead. The establishment of the Council was provided for in the Teaching Council Act (2001). The Council was officially established on a statutory basis by the Minister for Education and Science on March 28th, 2006. The role of the Council is to promote and develop teaching as a profession at primary and post-primary levels. It provides an important and influential forum for presenting the views of the profession on all aspects of the teaching career from initial recruitment to in-career professional development.

The main functions of the Council are:

- To promote teaching as a profession
- To promote the continuing professional development of teachers
- To establish and maintain a register of teachers.
- To develop a code of professional conduct for teachers to include standards of teaching, knowledge, skills and competence
- To regulate the teaching profession.[33]

The work of the Council will have an influential bearing on the future development of policy and practice in the area of teacher education. As outlined above, part of the Council's remit is the creation and maintenance of a register of teachers. Only those teachers listed in the register will be eligible to teach in Irish schools. As the Council progresses its work it is expected to establish a set of criteria for continued inclusion in the register. It is likely that this will include a requirement for teachers to participate in a fixed number of professional development days within a set timeframe (either per annum or over a number of years). This will ensure that the teaching profession is continually updating its knowledge and skills. The introduction of such a requirement will have significant consequences for the future development of teacher education in Ireland, and for the TES in particular, as there will be increased demand for such CPD opportunities among the teaching profession.

2.6 TES Funding

The TES budget in 2007 is approximately €64m. This represents an increase of more than 900% on the budget of €6.35m (IR£5M) allocated to the ICDU in 1994. The level of funding allocated to the TES for each of the last six years is outlined below (figures for years up to and including 2004 relate to ICDU):

[32] Coolahan, (2003), p.44
[33] Teaching Council (2006), *An introduction to the Teaching Council* (information leaflet)

Table 2.1: TES budget allocation, 2001-2007*

Year	Funding
2001	€34.2m
2002	€36.1m
2003	€38.4m
2004	€40.1m
2005	€46.7m
2006	€51.2m
2007	€63.7m

* This table does not encompass the funding provided through the HEA for Mary Immaculate College and St. Patrick's College. For example, it is estimated in Chapter Eight that approximately €20m was allocated to Mary Immaculate and St. Patrick's Colleges for initial teacher education programmes in 2006.

The large increase in the TES budget in 2007 is mainly attributable to the creation of a new support service – the National Behaviour Support Service – which received an allocation of €8m in 2007.

In relation to the three main policy areas in which the TES is involved the largest area of expenditure is in-service training/CPD (including the Early Literacy Initiative and the National Behaviour Support Service), which received an allocation of some €46m in 2007. This comprises the National Programmes and the Education Support Centres. The second largest area of expenditure by the TES is pre-service Education. The three Colleges of Education supported by the TES received an allocation of approximately €11m in 2007. (In addition, the two HEA funded colleges – Mary Immaculate and St. Patrick's College – received approximately €20m in 2006). The area of induction received the lowest financial allocation – the primary and post primary pillars of the NPPTI received a combined allocation of approximately €0.3m in 2007.[34]

The budget allocation detailed above does not reflect the true level of TES activity as it does not include the costs associated with seconding teaching personnel to work as part of the National Programmes or the costs of providing substitution cover for teachers attending prescribed in-service training. When the cost of the secondments to National Programmes is included, expenditure by the DES on teacher education amounts to approximately €79m which represents 0.9% of total Departmental expenditure.

Table 2.2: TES budget as percentage of overall DES budget

TES budget (2007)	DES budget (2007)	TES budget as % of DES budget
Approx €79m	€8,385,331,000	0.9%

* This does not include the funding provided through the HEA for Mary Immaculate College and St. Patrick's College.

If expenditure on teacher education is expressed as a percentage of the total salary cost for first and second level teachers in 2007 (approximately €3.6 billion

[34] The other main areas of expenditure in 2007 are the Teaching Council, which received an allocation in excess of €3m, and the Home Economics Colleges, which received an allocation in excess of €2m.

including superannuation), the figure rises to 2.2%. This is still below the recommended target level for investment in CPD in the Civil Service – which is 4% of payroll[35] - and is also below the estimated 3% to 5% of annual budgets that is spent on professional development of employees in private sector firms.[36]

[35] Comptroller and Auditor General (2000), *C&AG Value for Money report no. 38: Training and Development in the Civil Service*), p. 2 (Dublin: D/Finance)
[36] Sugrue et al (2001), p.44

Chapter Three

Programme Objectives – Identification & Validity

3.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses two of the terms of reference, namely:

- To identify the objectives of the Teacher Education Section with regard to initial teacher training, induction and continuous professional development.

- To examine the current validity of these objectives and their compatibility with the overall strategy of the Department regarding the continuum of teacher training from initial teacher training, to induction and continuous professional development

3.2 Identification of Objectives

The TES was established in 2004. Due to the recent establishment of the section it was possible to identify the objectives of the TES from its annual business plan. The first business plan compiled for the TES (as opposed to its predecessor, the ICDU) related to 2005. The business plan states the high level objective for the section and disaggregates this into a number of sub-objectives. Following examination of the business plan and discussion with the steering committee, it was agreed that the overall TES objective and the sub-objectives relating to the three main areas of TES activity were as follows:

Table 3.1: Objectives of the TES

Overall objective for the TES To support the implementation of a coordinated range of quality Teacher Education and Development Programmes, spanning the continuum from initial through induction and in-service Teacher Education and Development, covering curricular change and specific areas relating to the improvement of teaching and learning for students attending schools and out-of school centres at primary, post-primary and further education levels of education. *Sub-objective in relation to Initial Teacher Training* To ensure the provision of a supply of appropriately qualified graduates from the Colleges of Education sufficient to meet the demand for newly qualified teachers within the education system. *Sub-objective in relation to Induction* To provide a programme of induction whereby newly qualified teachers are inducted into the profession of teaching; their developing pedagogical skills are consolidated, and their interpersonal and communication skills are further developed. *Sub-objective in relation to Continuing Professional Development* To support the implementation of an accessible and appropriate programme of quality continuing professional development that is aimed at meeting the identified and appropriately prioritised personal and professional needs of teachers, the organisational, administrative and curricular needs of school communities, and the policy needs of the education system generally, as identified by government in consultation with all the education partners.

It will be noted from the above that these objectives are not easily quantifiable:

- The overall objective of the TES is 'the improvement of teaching and learning for students'. However, as will be illustrated in chapter four, pupil learning is a very difficult concept to measure.
- There is also difficulty in assessing the extent to which a graduate from a College of Education is *appropriately qualified* for the classroom (sub-objective relating to initial teacher training) or how to measure the *accessibility* of a programme of continuing professional development (sub-objective relating to CPD).

The nature of these concepts suggest that any attempt to measure progress towards the TES objectives will rely heavily on the collection of qualitative data through feedback from participants in teacher education programmes supported by the TES, and also through the quality assurance role fulfilled by the DES Inspectorate. This has implications for the research methodology adopted in this review (as discussed in chapter four). The complexity of some of the concepts in the TES objectives also suggests that it will be difficult to establish definitively whether or not the objectives have been successfully achieved.

It is also worthy of note that the objectives of the TES contribute towards broader national social and economic objectives. For example, the overall TES objective of improving teaching and learning for students is a major contributory factor to the broader national objective of economic development. This reflects the fact that national education systems are increasingly being harnessed to economic agendas in the global economy.[37] Similarly, by providing teachers with the skills to cater for the needs of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and pupils with special needs, the TES contributes towards broader social objectives in the area of social inclusion.

3.3 Current Validity of Objectives

This section examines the validity of the TES objectives in the context of current Department of Education and Science (DES) strategy. The following section examines the validity of the objectives in relation to the wider context of national strategy.

1. Department of Education and Science strategy

The mission statement of the DES, as outlined in its current Strategy Statement 2005-2007, is to provide for high quality education which will:

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

[37] Sugrue et al (2001), p.32

In pursuit of its overall mission, the DES has five high level goals, as outlined below. These high level goals are subsequently divided into objectives.

1. To deliver an education that is relevant to individual's personal, social, cultural and economic needs.
2. To support, through education, a socially inclusive society with equal opportunity for all.
3. To contribute to Ireland's economic prosperity, development and international competitiveness.
4. To seek to improve the standard and quality of education and promote best practice in classrooms, schools, colleges and other centres for education.
5. To support the delivery of education by quality planning, policy formulation and customer service.[38]

The objectives of the TES are relevant to both aspects of the DES mission statement. The teaching profession has a key role to play in enabling individuals to achieve their full potential and to participate fully as members of society. The TES provides the resources and support to ensure that teachers are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to fulfil this role. If individuals are facilitated, through education, to achieve their full potential and become active participants in society, they will inevitably contribute to national social, cultural and economic development. Therefore the TES, through its support of the teaching profession, also contributes, albeit indirectly, to social, cultural and economic development at national level.

The TES contributes to the pursuit of each of the DES high level goals. However, its objectives are most relevant to high level goals two and four. The role of the TES in relation to each high level goal is outlined below.

High level goal one

In relation to high level goal one, one of the more specific DES objectives is as follows:

"We will enable schools at primary and second level to deliver a high quality education by providing a comprehensive range of provision, including financial, staffing and curricular supports". (Objective 1.2) [39]

The TES contributes towards the delivery of a high quality education by ensuring a sufficient supply of appropriately qualified teachers from the Colleges of Education, and by supporting the delivery of training and development programmes it ensures that these teachers have the appropriate skills and knowledge to provide a quality education for students. The overall TES objective and the sub-objectives relating to initial teacher education and CPD are relevant in the context of high level goal one of the DES Strategy Statement.

[38] DES (2005) *Strategy Statement, 2005-2007*, p.5 (Dublin: DES)
[39] *ibid*, p.16

High level goal two

The TES plays an important role in ensuring that the education system promotes a socially inclusive society. In particular, it ensures that the needs of pupils with special needs, those at risk of early school leaving, and those with poor literacy skills are addressed within the education system.

- In relation to pupils with special needs, the TES supports the work of the Special Education Support Service (SESS) which was established in September 2003 to deliver in-service training and support to schools on a nationwide basis.
- In relation to pupils at risk of early school leaving, the TES supports the provision of the Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP) and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) which are targeted at those students who encounter difficulties with the traditional Junior and Leaving Certificates respectively.
- For those pupils with poor literacy and numeracy skills, the TES supports the provision of a number of programmes focussed on this area including the Reading Recovery programme which provides intensive, individual help for children who have not responded to the standard instructional programme in reading and writing after one year in school, and the First Steps and Maths Recovery programmes.
- At second level, under the JCSP Literacy Strategy, the TES supports the National Library Demonstration Project. As part of this project, school libraries have been established in eleven participating JCSP schools nationally. The libraries are staffed by full-time qualified librarians. Reinforcing the concept of the whole-school approach, the 11 schools are asked to draw up and implement library based strategies to tackle the literacy difficulties experienced by many JCSP students.

Under the new *DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity In Schools)* strategy, there are plans to expand all of these initiatives, with the support of the TES. The *DEIS* strategy was introduced in 2005 and is focussed on addressing the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities, from pre-school through second-level education. In addition to an expansion of some of the programmes supported by the TES (JCSP, the JCSP Literacy Strategy, the Reading Recovery and Maths Recovery programmes), the strategy also provides for increased CPD opportunities for those teachers and principals working in schools in disadvantaged areas. This includes a commitment to extend the National Pilot Project on Teacher Induction to those NQTs working in schools in disadvantaged areas.[40]

The overall TES objective and the sub-objective specifically relating to CPD provision are relevant in this context, as they provide for the provision of an accessible and appropriate programme of in-service training and development designed to meet the identified needs of those pupils at risk of educational disadvantage and social exclusion.

[40] DES (2005), *Delivering Equality of Opportunity In Schools (DEIS)*, pp.61-62 (Dublin: DES)

High level goal three

The TES has an important contribution to make to Ireland's overall economic prosperity. Through its support of the teaching profession, the TES plays a crucial role in ensuring that Ireland has a high quality education system. The critical role that education plays in fostering economic prosperity and a dynamic cohesive society is widely acknowledged. The development of a knowledge economy, and an increase in Ireland's third and fourth level research capacity, two aims of the *Strategy for Science and Technology Innovation 2007-2013*, are firmly based on "the foundation of knowledge, skills and interests nurtured in students in the first and second levels of the system".[41]

To this end, new or revised curricula are being introduced to ensure that primary and second level education contributes to a successful third and fourth level sector. A key objective of the revised primary curriculum is to encourage children to be active agents in their own learning, to engage in collaborative active learning, to develop high order thinking skills, to be able to observe, collate and evaluate evidence, question, summarise, analyse and interpret, and to develop problem solving skills. At post primary level, important objectives are to strengthen the technical and vocational dimensions of curricula, to embed key skills such as learning to learn and ICT, to develop higher order thinking skills, to diversify and strengthen language learning, to modernise the technology subjects at senior cycle, and to increase the take up of the physical sciences at senior cycle.

As the new curricula are introduced or adapted to meet the demands of the knowledge society, it is the role of the TES to ensure that teachers have the skills and knowledge required to successfully implement these curricula. This involves investment in all areas of the teacher education continuum, from pre-service education to ongoing CPD. The overall TES objective, as well as the three sub-objectives, are therefore all relevant in the context of high level goal three.

High level goal four

Improving the standard and quality of education and promoting best practice in classrooms, schools and other educational centres is relevant to the objectives of the TES. The Inspectorate play an important role in relation to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in each of the three main policy areas in which the TES is involved.

- In relation to initial teacher education, the Inspectorate assess the quality of a cohort of graduates from the Colleges of Education during their final teaching practice session as well as during their initial probationary year. The issues raised by the Inspectorate are fed back to the providers of initial teacher education.
- The TES also monitors the quality of the in-service training and professional development it supports through the Education Centre Network and the National Support Programmes. This is routinely done through participant evaluation sheets at the conclusion of training, and also increasingly through

[41] Government of Ireland (2006), *National Development Plan 2007-2013*, p.198 (Dublin: Stationery office)

formal evaluations of the support services engaged in providing the training - for example, recent years have witnessed reviews of the NPPTI, the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP) and the Second Level Support Service (SLSS). The data from this review and evaluation process inform the future development of CPD opportunities.

- The TES also liaises with the recently established Teaching Council on issues relating to the continuum of teacher education.

The overall objective of the TES, and the three sub-objectives are therefore all relevant in the context of high level goal four of the DES Strategy Statement.

High level goal five.

In relation to high level goal five, the TES has a role to play in relation to both policy-making and planning. In relation to the former, the TES has overall policy responsibility for the continuum of teacher education. This encompasses those institutions and agencies directly funded by the TES (the three TES funded Colleges of Education, the Education Centres and the National Support Programmes) but also involves a broader policy making brief in relation to the other providers of teacher professional development (e.g. the HEA funded Colleges of Education, the Education Departments in Universities).

The TES is also involved in the detailed planning associated with supporting a comprehensive programme of professional development that spans from initial teacher education through to CPD. This involves issues such as identifying the number of NQTs required for the primary and post primary sectors, coordinating the provision of CPD for each academic year, and planning for the expansion of the NPPTI on a gradual basis. The overall objective of the TES, and the three sub-objectives are all relevant in the context of high level goal five.

2. Validity of TES objectives in the context of wider government strategy

The validity of the TES objectives was examined in the context of a number of recent policy documents or strategies. These included the latest social partnership agreement, *Towards 2016*, the *National Development Plan 2007-2013*, the *Strategy for Science and Technology Innovation, 2006-2013*, and the *Agreed Programme for Government*. Reference is also made to the EU wide Lisbon Agenda.

(a) *Towards 2016* social partnership agreement.

The objectives of the latest social partnership agreement, *Towards 2016*, are as follows:

- Nurturing the complementary relationship between social policy and economic prosperity;
- Developing a vibrant, knowledge-based economy and stimulating enterprise and productivity;
- Re-inventing and repositioning Ireland's social policies;
- Integrating an island-of-Ireland economy, and,

- Deepening capabilities, achieving higher social and economic participation rates and more successfully handling diversity, including immigration.[42]

The objectives of the TES are directly relevant to the *Towards 2016* objectives of (i) developing a vibrant, knowledge based economy and stimulating enterprise and productivity, as well as (ii) deepening capabilities, achieving higher social and economic participation rates and more successfully handling diversity, including immigration.

Towards 2016 views the development of a knowledge based economy as a means of enhancing Ireland's competitiveness. One of the means of doing this, as identified in the agreement, is improving investment in human capital and adapting education and training systems.[43] *Towards 2016* draws upon the Government's *Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation, 2006-2013* (discussed below), which provides for the continued development of a world-class research system and a doubling of the number of PhD graduates over its lifespan.[44]

As outlined earlier, the TES has a significant contribution to make towards developing the knowledge economy. Through the provision of an adequate supply of appropriately qualified NQTs from the Colleges of Education, by providing support to NQTs during their transition from college to school life, and by providing an appropriate and accessible programme of professional development opportunities, the TES contributes towards the provision of a high quality teaching force equipped with the necessary pedagogical skills and knowledge to implement new and revised curricula that are designed to improve higher order thinking skills among pupils. All of the TES objectives are therefore relevant in this context.

The partnership agreement also places a high priority on maximising access to education and training systems as a means of contributing to economic development but also as a means of promoting social inclusion. The role of the TES in supporting teachers to address the needs of children with special needs (through the SESS), those at risk of early school leaving (JCSP, LCA) and those with poor literacy and numeracy skills (Reading Recovery, Maths Recovery, First Steps) are all relevant in this context. These programmes are part of the wider strategy to maximise participation rates in education and training with a view to addressing issues of social exclusion. The overall TES objective and the sub-objective relating specifically to CPD are relevant here as the successful implementation of programmes targeted at educational disadvantage require that teachers receive appropriate professional development opportunities to support their work in this area.

Towards 2016 also contains a focus on the issue of teacher performance. The agreement emphasises the importance of professional development to the teaching profession and the potential contribution of CPD in relation to under-performing teachers. In this context, the agreement recommends that any future discussion about teacher performance must include consideration of the type of professional development opportunities made available to under-performing teachers. *Towards*

[42] Government of Ireland (2006), *Towards 2016*, p.10 (Dublin: Stationery office)
[43] *Towards 2016*, (2006), p.16
[44] *ibid*, p.17

2016 also highlights the disruption caused in schools by the delivery of in-service training during normal school hours, and provides for an exploration by the social partners of alternative approaches to this issue. The overall TES objective and the sub-objective relating to CPD are both relevant to any discussion of measures designed to improve teacher performance and the timing and mode of delivery of in-service training.

(b) NDP 2007-2013: Transforming Ireland

The *National Development Plan (NDP) 2007-2013* sets out the economic and social investment priorities needed to realise the vision of a better quality of life for all. This vision will be achieved by supporting the continued development of a dynamic and internationalised economy and society with a high commitment to international competitiveness, social justice and environmental sustainability. The *NDP* provides for a total investment over the period 2007-2013 of some €184 billion. This is broken down under the following Priority headings:

- Economic Infrastructure;
- Enterprise, Science and Innovation;
- Human Capital;
- Social Infrastructure; and
- Social Inclusion.[45]

The objectives of the TES are directly relevant to three of the above areas – (i) enterprise, science and innovation; (ii) human capital; and (iii) social inclusion.

(i) Enterprise, Science and Innovation Priority
The *NDP* recognises that the challenge of sustaining long-term productivity growth has intensified against the backdrop of an increasingly knowledge-intensive and interdependent global economy. In order to build on Ireland's recent success and to ensure better standards of living and quality of life, improved and sustainable competitiveness is vital. While overall economic performance remains strong, Ireland now faces a major challenge to increase the number of high-paid jobs and knowledge-intensive investment needed to sustain our performance into the future. A key aim of the *NDP* in this area is to achieve a transformational change in the quantity and quality of research and enhancing the contribution of research to economic and social development and increasing the numbers of people with advanced qualifications. [46]

(ii) Human Capital Priority
Investment in education, training and upskilling (broadly termed as investment in Human Capital) has played a very important role in Ireland's successful economic performance. It has provided a well skilled and flexible labour force and thereby helped make Ireland a major attraction for domestic and foreign enterprises. Further investment in human capital will support greater adaptability in the education and training systems.[47]

[45] *NDP*, p.31
[46] *ibid.* p.155
[47] *ibid.* p.40

The *NDP* specifically provides for investment in curricular reform and teacher professional development to ensure that the provision of first and second level education maintains high quality and relevance to emerging social and economic needs.[48] Particular areas highlighted for attention include, at primary level, school and classroom planning, assessment for learning, promoting active teaching and learning approaches, nurturing of higher order thinking skills, embedding ICT across the subjects, and supporting engagement with parents. Ensuring appropriate strategies for the inclusion of pupils with special needs, promoting inter-culturalism and anti-racism, addressing disadvantage and improving literacy and numeracy rates are also important priorities at primary level. The ongoing relevance of curricula to changing social and economic needs, allied with the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning, are key factors in ensuring that young people are equipped with the skills for participation in the knowledge society and for active citizenship. At post primary level, important objectives are to strengthen the technical and vocational dimensions of curricula, to embed key skills such as learning to learn and ICT, to develop higher order thinking skills, to diversify and strengthen language learning, to modernise the technology subjects at senior cycle, and to increase the take up of the physical sciences at senior cycle.[49]

The *NDP* also includes a commitment to explore the need for a reformed model of professional development for teachers, which will:

- Provide for regionalised access to a full spread of curriculum expertise for schools;
- Provide for more intensive training, school focused where possible, to enhance pedagogical skills, classroom management, assessment and the ability to become reflective practitioners;
- Provide a continuum from pre-service training through induction to continuing professional development, adapting and rebalancing training programmes as needed; and
- Provide enhanced opportunities for accreditation, the development of mentor programmes and school focused supports.[50]

(iii) Social Inclusion

The *NDP* makes commitments in relation to targeting additional supports at the disadvantaged, those with special needs, those at risk of early school leaving, and those with poor literacy or numeracy skills. The Plan contains the following key targets in relation to these areas:

- To reduce the proportion of pupils with serious literacy difficulties in primary schools serving disadvantaged communities. The target is to half the proportion from the current 27%-30% to less than 15% by 2016; and
- To work to ensure that the proportion of the population aged 20-24 completing upper second level education or equivalent will exceed 90% by 2014.[51]

[48] *NDP*, p.197
[49] *ibid* p.198
[50] *ibid.*, p.198
[51] *ibid.*, p.234

These targets build upon commitments previously made in the National Action Plan Against Poverty and Social Exclusion, 2003-2005.

The objectives of the TES are relevant to the Priority Areas of the *NDP* outlined above: *Enterprise, Science and Innovation*, *Human Capital*, and *Social Inclusion*. The overall TES objective and each of the three sub-objectives are relevant in the context of the *NDP* commitments in these areas. These include commitments to provide for curricular reform and teacher development in certain areas as well as a new model of CPD delivery (CPD sub-objective), the provision of a continuum of in-service training from initial teacher education through induction and into CPD (all three sub-objectives), as well as in-service training to support teachers in their work with pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds or with special needs (CPD sub-objective).

(c) Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation, 2006-2013

The *Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation, 2006-2013* has set the challenge that Ireland by 2013 will be internationally renowned for the excellence of its research, and will be to the forefront in generating and using new knowledge for economic and social progress, within an innovation driven culture. The strategy is designed to develop the country's capacity in relation to science, technology and innovation. Success will be marked by increased participation in the sciences, increased numbers of people with advanced qualifications, enhanced contribution by research to economic and social development, and transformational change in the quality and quantity of research.[52]

The strategy recognises that if we aspire to build a sustainable knowledge economy and become world leaders in STI we must build strong foundations in primary and second level education and our system needs to develop to make this happen. Interest in science must be stimulated at an early stage and fostered throughout the educational system. While the strategy welcomes the reintroduction of science into the primary curriculum, it recommends that the link between the primary and secondary cycles needs to be strengthened to provide more of a continuum. In addition, it also recommends that the DES should review the implementation of the primary science curriculum to ensure the new curriculum and teaching methodologies are stimulating interest in and awareness of science at a very young age; and that science and awareness of scientific issues to be a core area of study for student teachers in Colleges of Education.[53]

In order to encourage the uptake of science at second level, the strategy advocates a number of measures, including an investment in teacher professional development, and support for the development of teachers' networks which will focus on improving teaching and learning, including the Continuing Professional Development of teachers.[54]

[52] Government of Ireland (2006), *Strategy for Science Technology and Innovation (SSTI) 2006-2013*, p.8 (Dublin: Stationary office)
[53] *SSTI*, p.16
[54] *ibid.*, p.11

The overall objective of the TES and the sub-objective relating to CPD are relevant to the recommendations in the SSTI designed to strengthen the implementation of revised science syllabi at first and second level and the development of teacher networks. The TES sub-objective in relation to initial teacher education is also relevant here as the strategy also recommends an increased emphasis on scientific issues in the Colleges of Education.

(d) Agreed Programme for Government

The Agreed Programme for Government (2002) makes commitments in two areas of direct relevance to the objectives of the TES. In relation to *Employment and Enterprise*, the government committed itself to developing a world class research capability, and the promotion of the sciences and mathematics.

Specifically relating to the area of *Education*, the government made the following commitments:

- We will continue the expansion in teacher training, introduce reforms to teacher training courses as recommended by an expert review and ensure improved teacher supply.
- We will implement changes to retention and support policies which will assist schools in areas of significant disadvantage to recruit and retain teachers.
- We will establish a national expert advice, oversight and provision service for special needs education by end-2002.[55]

These commitments – relating to *Employment and Enterprise*, and *Education* are relevant to the three policy areas in which the TES is involved – the provision of an adequate supply of appropriately qualified teachers from the Colleges of Education, the induction of newly qualified teachers in order to retain NQTs in schools serving disadvantaged areas, and also the provision of an appropriate programme of CPD to underpin the development of a knowledge based economy which will equip teachers with the skills to implement fully revised curricula designed to contribute to the development of the knowledge economy. The overall objective of the TES and each of the three sub-objectives are therefore very relevant to the commitments in the Programme for Government.

(e) Lisbon Agenda

The European Councils in Lisbon and Feira in 2000 set the strategic goal of making the European Union by 2010, *"the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion"*. The Lisbon Agenda (2000) provides a framework for the European Union and Member States to work together in support of sustainable economic growth, more and better jobs, greater social cohesion and respect for the environment.

[55] *Agreed Programme for Government between Fianna Fáil and the Progressive Democrats* (2002), pp.23-24 (Dublin: D/Taoiseach)

The Lisbon Agenda was relaunched in 2005 with a renewed focus on growth and jobs. As part of the 2005 relaunch, the concept of National Reform Programmes (NRP), setting out the range of measures being taken by each Member State to realise the Lisbon Agenda, was introduced. The NRPs, which are three-year programmes with annual progress-reporting to the European Commission, will take into account priorities for action under the Lisbon Agenda.

The NRP, which was submitted to the European Commission in October 2005, brings together the broad range of policies and initiatives at the macro and micro economic level, the implementation of which aims to sustain Ireland's economic growth and employment performance as its overall contribution to the re-launched Lisbon Agenda over the period to 2008.[56]

In relation to education and training, the Irish government has identified the following national policy priority:

Focussing on education and training, including lifelong learning, to develop a high-skilled, innovative and adaptable workforce for the knowledge economy.[57]

As with the other commitments in other policy documents relating to the knowledge economy, all of the TES objectives have a role to play in laying the foundation for a high-skilled, innovative and adaptable workforce.

3.4 Conclusion

Three main themes relevant to teacher education emerge from an analysis of the DES Strategy Statement and the wider national policy documents consulted as part of this review:

1. The development of a knowledge economy to maintain national competitiveness.
2. The promotion of social inclusion through addressing educational disadvantage.
3. Teacher performance and the need for alternative models of CPD.

The overall TES objective and the three sub-objectives are all valid in the context of the main themes to emerge from DES and wider government strategy. However, it is noticeable that the area of TES activity that mostly appears is that of in-service training/CPD. The objective in this area is valid in relation to all of the key themes to emerge from national strategy documents.

- Key aims of the knowledge economy are an improvement in the research capability of the private and public sectors, an increase in the number of PhD graduates, and an increase in the uptake of science subjects at third level. The fulfilment of these aims is not possible without a high quality education system at primary and second level. The introduction of revised curricula is designed to encourage higher order thinking skills and learning to learn skills among pupils

[56] *Towards 2016*, p.36
[57] *NDP*, p.46

at both primary and second level. These strategies cannot be successful unless teachers receive adequate training in how to implement the curricula.

- Similarly, as outlined above, the programmes introduced to promote social inclusion cannot succeed unless teachers receive support in how best to identify and support pupils at risk of educational disadvantage.
- Finally, the search for alternative models of CPD involves a renewed focus on how best to deliver CPD, how best to integrate the work of the various CPD providers, and when to deliver CPD most effectively.

The fact that the sub-objective relating to CPD is valid in the context of each of the three themes identified in the DES *Strategy Statement* and the wider policy documents has important implications for the rest of this review. It suggests that the in-service training/professional development element of the teaching continuum is the area where most attention has been focussed in recent years and is also the area where further progress is required.

The greater focus on the sub-objective relating to CPD is reflected in the allocation of the TES budget between the three main policy areas in which the TES is involved. As outlined in chapter two, the amount of funding allocated to CPD programmes is more than four times the budget allocated to initial teacher education and induction combined.

Apart from the validity of the TES objectives, the other main issue for consideration in this chapter is the extent to which the objectives of the TES are quantifiable. The TES objectives are not easily quantified and any attempt to measure progress towards them will rely heavily on the collection of qualitative data through feedback from participants in teacher education programmes supported by the TES, and on the results of the quality assurance/monitoring role fulfilled by the DES Inspectorate. This has implications for the appropriate research methodology to be adopted in this review. It also suggests that it may be difficult to establish definitively whether or not the TES has achieved its objectives.

Chapter Four

Value for Money Assessment - Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology adopted to conduct this VFM assessment of the TES. This includes a discussion of the Programme Logic Model and the application of this model to the three policy areas in which the TES is involved. It also identifies the research methods employed as part of the review and highlights the performance indicators that will be used to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of the TES.

4.2 Programme Logic Model

As a starting point in conducting evaluations, it is necessary to have a clear framework for understanding how programmes work. The framework considered most useful for the VFM reviews is the Programme Logic Model (PLM). The PLM maps out the shape and logical linkages of a programme. It provides a systematic and visual way to present and share understanding of the cause-effect relationships between inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes (results and impacts).[58]

A PLM provides the basic framework for an evaluation. It is based on an approach to evaluation entitled theory based evaluation that attempts to identify the 'theory of change' underlying the programme under review, illustrating how the day to day activities of a programme or service connect to the outcomes or results that the programme is trying to achieve.[59]

The evaluation should surface the underlying theory behind the programme under review and lay it out in as fine detail as possible, identifying all the assumptions and sub-assumptions built into the programme. The evaluators then construct methods for data collection and analysis to track the unfolding of the assumptions. The aim is to examine the extent to which the programme theory holds: the evaluation should show which of the assumptions underlying the programme break down, where they break down, and whether the theory underlying the programme is supported by the evidence.[60]

Developing the logic model is one of the first steps in an evaluation. Once the model is completed, the evaluation can be designed to determine whether the programme is working as shown in the logic model. It allows for comparison of how the programme is intended to work with what is actually occurring.

Basing evaluations on a programme's 'theory of change' has a number of benefits:

- It concentrates evaluation efforts on key elements of the programme

[58] Dept of Finance (2007) *VFM Policy Review Guidance Manual*, p.28 (unpublished)
[59] Peter A. Easton, 1997, *Sharpening out tools: improving evaluation I adult and non-formal education,* UNESCO, p.70 Paris: UNESCO
[60] Carol Weiss (1995), *Nothing as practical as a good theory* (Aspen Institute), pp.1-2

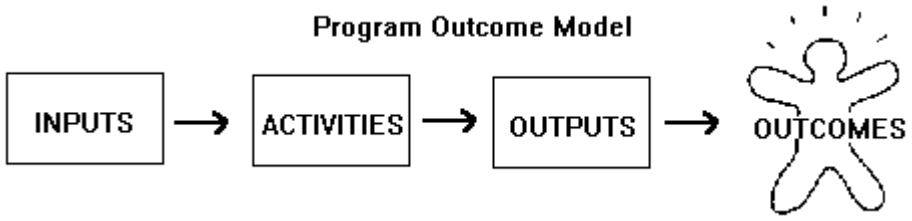
- It facilitates the development of knowledge about the theories and assumptions underlying the programme.
- It gives evaluation results a better chance of influencing programme delivery and policy.

The first step in developing a PLM is to determine the appropriate scope for the model. This involves deciding whether the logic model should focus on a specific component of a programme or an entire programme etc.

The second stage involves identifying the model's components i.e.

- *Inputs* – resources dedicated to or consumed by the programme
- *Activities* – These are also called processes and are the actions that transform inputs into outputs. Activities are collections of tasks and work-steps performed to produce the outputs of a programme.
- *Outputs* – the direct products of programme activities
- *Intermediate outcomes (results)* – the results are the effects of the outputs on the targeted beneficiaries in the immediate or short term. Results can be positive or negative.
- *Long-term outcomes (impacts)* – the ultimate impact of the programme. This should be measurable and as specific as possible. Impacts are the wider effects of the programme, from a sectoral or national perspective, in the medium to long term. They include the medium to long term effects on the targeted beneficiaries.

The diagram below illustrates the relationship between the various elements of the PLM.[61]



Under the Programme Logic Model, it is possible to measure the achievement at each stage in the chain by reference to agreed performance indicators. The development of performance indicators for each component on the logic model is the third stage in the PLM. Indicators are measures used to determine if the components in the logic model have been achieved. When applied and interpreted together, they will help to determine whether the programme is operating as shown in the logic model.[62] Existing performance indicators will generally be used in the conduct of an evaluation, although sometimes the evaluation team will specially construct new indicators. [63]

[61] Adapted from the European Commission model. European Comission (2004), *Evaluation of socio-economic development – the GUIDE* publication website, http://www.evalsed.info
[62] Peter A. Easton, 1997, *Sharpening our tools:* p.67
[63] Dept of Finance (2007) *VFM Policy Reviews Guidance Manual,* p.29

In developing new performance indicators, the following questions should be borne in mind:

- Are the indicators S.M.A.R.T.?
- Will data be available for the indicator? Are data collected in a consistent manner over time?
- Are data for the indicator currently being collected or can cost-effective instruments for data collection be developed?
- Is the indicator quantitative or qualitative?

Following identification of the performance indicators, the final stage in the PLM process is to track the indicators – by collecting data/information through a variety of methods such as document analysis, literature review, questionnaires, surveys, interviews, focus groups.

4.3 Application of the PLM to the Teacher Education Section

As outlined earlier, the first stage in a PLM is to determine the scope of the PLM itself. The PLM is normally applied to a specific programme or service but in this review it is applied to the work of an entire section. It was agreed that the model should encompass the three main policy areas in which the TES is involved – initial teacher education, induction, and in-service/continuing professional development. These three areas were specified in the terms of reference for the review.

The second stage of the PLM involves identifying the inputs, outputs and outcomes associated with the programme or service under analysis. It was therefore necessary to detail each of these components for each of the three policy areas in which the TES is involved.

In relation to outcomes, there is a widespread consensus in the research literature about the fundamental purpose of teacher education. Commentators are unanimous in suggesting that the ultimate aim of teacher education is improved pupil learning. The research literature is replete with references to improved pupil learning as the final outcome of teacher education and professional development:

"The ultimate goal of professional development for teachers and schools is improved practice so that teaching and learning experiences can become more fruitful and effective".[64]

"… the ultimate aim of CPD is to improve student learning".[65]

[Professional development can be defined] as all processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students. [66]

[64] SLSS (2002), *Second Level Support Service Discussion Document*, p.9 (unpublished)
[65] R. Bolam (2000), 'Emerging Policy Trends: some implications for continuing professional development', in *Journal of In-service Education*, Vol. 26, No. 2, p.278. Quoted in Sugrue et al, p.32
[66] T.R.Guskey (2000), *Evaluating Professional Development*, p. 16. Quoted in Damien Murchan et al (2005), *PCSP* , p.197

"While some researchers may indicate that lifelong learning is necessary for teacher morale, for career advancement and promotion, for a vibrant workforce, for improving skills, content knowledge or pedagogy, there is little doubt that the primary motivation for such effort and expenditure is improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms".[67]

Teacher quality has been identified as the most important variable that influences pupil learning.[68] By the mid 1990s there was general acceptance of the view that a high quality teaching force was a *sine qua non* of an effective education system. The key national policy documents of the 1990s all served to underline the fundamental importance to the education system of a well trained and flexible teaching force. The Green paper (1992), the report of the National Education Convention (1994) and the White paper (1995) all recognized the necessity of ensuring that teachers were adequately trained and allowed sufficient opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge.[69] The basic belief is that 'teachers who know more teach better'.[70] As Michael Fullan has suggested, 'there are no substitutes to having better teachers'.[71] The White Paper (1995) made a clear link between the quality of teaching and the quality of the education provided in schools: *"The knowledge and skills of the teacher, which include a deep understanding of the subject matter to be taught and of learning and pedagogical theories, critically determine the quality of education in schools".*[72]

However, the research literature indicates that the quality of teaching is not the only variable that influences pupil achievement. Other factors include social background, parental influence, student ability, student commitment, the quality of school infrastructure, class sizes and classroom resources.[73] It is also the case that the impact of teacher professional development on pupil attainment may not be immediately apparent and may be more long-term in effect. These are important considerations in the context of the current review as they highlight the difficulty in making a direct causal link between the work of the TES and the final outcome in this area – improved pupil learning.[74]

In addition, while improved learning for pupils is the desired outcome of teacher education programmes, this is in itself an intermediate outcome in the pursuit of broader economic and social objectives. In the context of globalisation and increasingly competitive markets, improvements in pupil learning have become a means to an end rather than an end in itself. The education system – and the provision of well educated pupils and graduates – is now viewed as a key driver of

[67] Sugrue et al (2001), p.30
[68] Andrew Burke, The Devil's Bargain Revisited: The B.Ed Degree under review', Oideas, 48, (pp.9-56). P.20; OECD (2005), *Teachers Matter*. Referred to in DES (2007) *Learning to Teach*, p.1
[69] Coolahan, (1994) p.87; White Paper (1995), p.140
[70] M.Cochran-Smith and S.Lytle (1999) 'Teacher Learning in Communities', in *Review of Research in Education*, vol. 24, p. 1. Quoted in Sugrue et al (2001) p.14
[71] Michael Fullan, (1993), *Change Forces: Probing the depths of educational reform*, p.104 London: Falmer Press.
[72] White paper (1995), p.127
[73] OECD (1995), *Schools under scrutiny*, p.33. Paris: OECD
[74] This issue is discussed further in chapter five.

future economic progress and also of social inclusion (as outlined in the previous chapter).

Identification of the inputs, outputs and outcomes associated with teacher education helped to surface the 'theory of change' underpinning the work of the TES. The rationale for the work of the section is that by providing inputs (financial resources, secondments) to the Colleges of Education, the Education Centres and the National Support Programmes, the education system will consist of a highly trained and motivated workforce that will contribute towards effective teaching practice in the classroom which will in turn lead to effective learning for pupils (the final outcome).

The diagram below applies the PLM to the work of the TES and identifies the inputs, outputs and outcomes (intermediate and final) associated with each area of TES activity - pre-service education, induction, and in-service training and professional development.

Table 4.1: Application of PLM to the Teacher Education Section

Input	Activities	Output	Theory – how and why	Expected intermediate outcome	Theory – how and why	Final outcome
(a) Initial Teacher Training						
• Financial resources allocated to Colleges of Education • Administrative and Inspectorate support. • TES staff time. *Input indicators* • *Level of grant allocated to each institution* • *No. of academic and administrative staff employed in each educational institution* • *Cost of TES staff time*	• Enrolment of students • Lectures • Group work • Teaching Practice • Assignments • Examinations • Monitoring • Evaluation	Adequate supply of appropriately qualified NQTs (newly qualified teachers) from Colleges of Education. *Output indicators* • *No of students in each College of Education* • *No of graduate teachers from each College of Education* • *No. of unqualified teachers in schools*	Student teachers receive training in pedagogy and broader educational skills in order to become effective educators.	Effective teaching practice in classroom *Intermediate outcome indicators* • *NQTs' perceptions of their ability to teach in the classroom, and ability to deal with associated demands such as classroom management, discipline, special needs, assessment, school planning,* • *Inspectorates' perceptions of NQTs' ability to teach in the classroom and associated demands.*	Teachers are able to communicate knowledge effectively to students and to facilitate student learning.	The overall desired outcome is more effective classroom teaching and learning for students. This is achieved through a combination of all three strands (initial teacher education, induction, and in-service) that make up the Programme Logic Model. It is not possible to identify the extent to which each individual strand contributes to the final outcome
(b) Induction						
• Financial resources allocated to NPPTI • Secondment/ substitution costs of NPPTI • No. of staff seconded to NPPTI • TES staff time *Input indicators*	• Mentoring • Teacher Observation • Professional Development • Planning time	Provision of Induction courses for NQTs *Output indicator:* • *Number of teachers participating in NPPTI*	Recognises that NQTs need support and encouragement in the acceptance of professional responsibilities and in the development of practical teaching proficiency upon entry to the	Greater numbers of NQTs remain within the teaching profession and become more effective educators. *Intermediate outcome indicators* • *No. of NPPTI participants as*	Greater number of qualified and effective teachers in schools facilitates more effective learning for students.	

• *Budget allocated to NPPTI* • *Substitution costs* • *Cost of TES staff time*			profession.	*percentage of total no. of NQTs* • *Level of satisfaction of teachers with NPPTI* • *No. of teachers who would have left the profession without support of the NPPTI*		
(c) In-Service/CPD						
• Financial resources allocated to Education Centres and National Support Programmes. • Cost of seconded teachers/trainers • TES staff time. *Input indicators* • *Budgets allocated to Education centres etc* • *Cost of teachers /trainers seconded.* • *No. of staff seconded to Education Centres/National Support Programmes.* • *Cost of TES staff time.*	• Seminars • School visits • Website • Materials produced and distributed	In-service training delivered in revised curricula/subjects or new teaching or management methodologies *Output indicators* • *No. of teachers participating in in-service training through National Programmes.* • *No. of teachers participating in local and summer courses.*	Recognises that there is a need to inform and train teachers in revised curricula/subjects and new teaching and management methodologies.	Revised curricula/subjects or teaching and management methodologies fully implemented in schools. *Intermediate outcome indicators* • *No. of teachers participating in in-service training as % of total population.* • *No. of teachers participating in local and summer courses as % of total population.* • *No. of teachers fully implementing revised curricula.* • *No. of teachers using new teaching methods.*	Improved curriculum and new teaching methodologies result in more effective teaching and learning.	

There were some difficulties experienced in attempting to identify the inputs and outputs in some areas of TES activity, and also in relation to measuring performance i.e. in measuring the extent to which the TES used the resources allocated to it efficiently and the effectiveness with which the TES achieved its desired outcomes. The main difficulties in relation to efficiency are described in chapter eight. The problems encountered in relation to effectiveness are outlined below.

Effectiveness involves an examination of the relationship between outputs and outcomes.[75] This concept can often be difficult to measure in the public sector due to a lack of available data on the outcomes associated with much public sector activity.[76]

The underlying theory behind the work of the TES is that by supporting a highly skilled and motivated teaching force, this will result in effective teaching practice and this will lead to improved student learning – the final outcome of TES activity. While it is almost universal agreement that improved pupil learning is the final outcome of teacher education, there are difficulties in measuring this outcome (in common with the final outcome of other public services). These difficulties often result in public sector outcomes being "omitted or measured inappropriately". [77] The OECD has commented on the broader question of trying to measure outcomes in the education sector as a whole:

A further complexity is that classic value-for-money analyses compare the input of a system (usually financial) with the output (usually product). But in education the equation is a good deal more complex, The input could be said to include not only financial resources of various kinds, but also children – and even if the hosts of variables associated with the human element were to be excluded, the notion of output is problematic too. It might be defined as school buildings, numbers of teachers trained, numbers of children put through the system – even numbers of well qualified school leavers. But none of this is significant without an element of judgement – which in effect translates 'output' into 'outcomes'. Can the new teachers teach effectively? Are the school leavers' qualifications meaningful and appropriate? Will society benefit from the output of a particular school, and if so, in what way? We may have ways of measuring certain kinds of output in relation to input – examination scores and test results remain the obvious indicators – but we are still very uncertain as to how we should assess the much more important outcomes. [78]

Improvements in pupil learning are usually measured through summative examinations such as the Leaving Certificate or formative assessment such as literacy tests. However, there are doubts over the ability of such tests to reflect student learning in its broadest sense. This relates to a wider debate over how to measure the performance of the education system as a whole or individual

[75] Mulreany, 'Evaluation and Value for Money,' p.10
[76] *ibid*, pp.11-12
[77] Tom Sefton (2003), 'Economic Evaluation in the Social Welfare Field', *Evaluation*, Vol 9(1), p80
[78] OECD (1995), *Schools under scrutiny*, 32 Paris: OECD

schools.[79] In spite of the inadequacy of examinations in summing up the real learning achievements of a student, or the performance of a school, they are currently the best performance indicator available.[80]

However, if one accepts examination performance as an accurate reflection of student learning it is extremely difficult to isolate and measure the impact of one factor – teacher professional development – from the myriad of other factors that influence student learning (e.g. social background, parental influence, student ability, student commitment and teacher ability). There are also other inputs (apart from those provided by the TES) that contribute to pupil learning. Class sizes, teacher – pupil ratios, the quality of school buildings, and classroom resources will all contribute to effective teaching practice and ultimately towards pupil attainment. As indicated earlier, the impact of teacher professional development on pupil attainment may not be immediately apparent and may be more long-term in effect.

On a broader issue, the final outcome of TES activity – pupil learning – is itself only an intermediate outcome in terms of the education sector as a whole. Key objectives of the education sector are the development of the national economy and the promotion of social inclusion. The final outcome of TES activity will contribute – along with other factors – towards the realisation of these objectives.

Due to the complexity involved in the attempt to measure progress towards the final outcome of TES activity, it was decided to focus instead on intermediate outcomes. Each of the three main policy areas in which the TES is involved has an intermediate outcome. The intermediate outcomes identified in Table 4.1 above are reproduced below.

Table 4.2: Intermediate outcomes associated with the Teacher Education Section

Output	**Theory – how and why**	**Expected intermediate outcome**
Initial teacher education: Adequate supply of appropriately qualified NQTs (newly qualified teachers) from Colleges of Education.	Student teachers receive training in pedagogy and broader educational skills in order to become effective educators.	Effective teaching practice in classroom
Induction: Provision of Induction courses for NQTs	Recognises that NQTs need support and encouragement in the acceptance of professional responsibilities and in the development of practical teaching proficiency upon entry to the profession.	Greater numbers of NQTs remain within the teaching profession and become more effective educators.
In-service training/CPD: In-service training delivered in revised curricula/subjects or new teaching or management methodologies	Recognises that there is a need to inform and train teachers in revised curricula/subjects and new teaching and management methodologies.	Revised curricula/subjects or teaching and management methodologies fully implemented in schools.

[79] OECD (1995), *Schools under scrutiny*, p.34
[80] *ibid*, p.30

The expectation is that these intermediate outcomes will contribute towards the achievement of the final outcome. This point has been made in relation to the induction process:

NQTs provided with initial induction support from skilled mentors and supportive colleagues within cohesive structures among the partners in education at system level have the potential to re-energise the teaching profession in innumerable and unique ways. Ultimately, this integrated support process will enhance the learning experiences of the children who are at the heart of the education system.[81]

In one area of this review, an attempt was made to focus on the final outcome of TES activity. The work of the History In-Service Team (HIST) and the National Biology Support Service (NBSS) support teams is examined in chapter seven as part of an examination of the effectiveness of in-service training/CPD. This encompasses an analysis of the grades achieved in the Leaving Certificate by students before and after the introduction of the revised history and biology syllabi respectively. This is an attempt to ascertain the extent to which the introduction of revised curricula and the in-service training provided in those curricula have contributed to improvements in pupil learning.

Performance indicators

The third stage of the PLM involves the development of indicators for each component of the logic model. The diagram on pages 51-52 above identified indicators for the main inputs, outputs and outcomes in respect of each area of TES activity. However, in order to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of the TES, it is necessary to establish performance indicators that link inputs to outputs (*efficiency* indicators) and outputs to outcomes (*effectiveness* indicators). The performance indicators identified for each area of TES activity are outlined below. These indicators represent a mix of quantitative and qualitative measures.

[81] *NPPTI (2005)*, p.113

Table 4.3: Performance indicators used to assess efficiency and effectiveness

Area of TES work	Efficiency	Effectiveness
Initial teacher education	⇒ The unit cost of initial teacher education per teacher training in each of the Colleges of Education for each year in the period 2001-2006. ⇒ The ratio of staff to students in each of the Colleges of Education for each year in the period 2001-2006 ⇒ The level of attrition within teacher education programmes within each College of Education for each year in the period 2001-2006.	⇒ The number of unqualified teachers within the primary system. ⇒ The extent to which NQTs perceive themselves to have been well prepared for the classroom as a result of their initial teacher training. ⇒ The extent to which the DES Inspectorate consider student teachers during their final teaching practice and NQTs during their probationary year to be performing effectively in the classroom.
Induction	⇒ The unit cost per teacher supported in the NPPTI for each year in the period 2003-2006.	⇒ The level of satisfaction among participants in the NPPTI with the training and support provided. ⇒ The extent to which NQTs become more competent and confident professionals as a result of their participation in the NPPTI. ⇒ The number of NQTs who would have left the teaching profession without the support of the NPPTI ⇒ The number of NQTs targeted through the NPPTI as a % of all NQTs for each year in the period 2002/03-2006/07
In-service training and professional development	⇒ The unit cost of in-service training and professional development per teacher trained for each year in the period 2004-2006 ⇒ The unit cost of in-service training and professional develop per pupil for each year in the period 2001-2006	⇒ The level of satisfaction among participants with the quality and relevance of the training provided. ⇒ The number of teachers implementing revised curricula/new teaching methodologies (in which training has been delivered) ⇒ The change in pupil learning outcomes following the introduction of revised curricula. ⇒ The proportion of teachers participating in in-service training and development through the National Programmes. ⇒ The proportion of teachers participating in summer and local courses through the Education Centre Network.

Following identification of the performance indicators, the final stage in the PLM process is to track the indicators – by collecting data/information through a variety of methods such as document analysis, literature review, questionnaires, surveys, interviews, focus groups. The methodology adopted to track the indicators is outlined below.

Each of the performance indicators identified for this review were addressed by means of one or more 'key questions'. For example, the table below identifies the key questions that will be addressed to track the performance indicators relating to the effectiveness of initial teacher education.

Table 4.4: Relationship between performance indicators and key questions

Performance indicator	Key question(s)
⇒ The number of unqualified teachers within the primary system. ⇒ The extent to which NQTs perceive themselves to have been well prepared for the classroom as a result of their initial teacher training. ⇒ The extent to which the DES Inspectorate consider student teachers during their final teaching practice and NQTs during their probationary year to be performing effectively in the classroom.	*Key question 1: Has the supply of newly qualified primary teachers met the level of demand within the education system?* *Key question 2: How appropriately qualified are the graduates from Colleges of Education i.e. how well prepared are newly qualified teachers (NQTs) for a career in the classroom?* *Key question 2(a): What is the quality of the in-service training and support provided by the Colleges of Education?* *Key question 2(b): Are newly qualified teachers performing competently and professionally in the classroom?*

4.4 Research Methodology

Five different but inter-related research methods were adopted in this review to address the terms of reference and to track the performance indicators identified through the PLM. The research methods adopted are listed below:

- *Literature review*
- *Document analysis*
- *Surveys*
- *Interviews*
- *Other data sources, including quality assurance role of DES Inspectorate and the participant evaluation sheets completed by participants in in-service training.*

Further detail on each of these methods is contained at appendix 3.

Chapter Five

Programme Objectives – Initial Teacher Education - Extent of Achievement

5.1 Introduction

Having established in chapter three the objectives of the TES and having put forward arguments as to the current and continuing validity of those objectives, an examination is now required of the extent to which the identified objectives have been achieved (fourth term of reference).

This chapter assesses the extent to which the TES achieved its objectives in relation to initial teacher education. Chapters six and seven assess the extent to which the TES achieved its objectives in relation to induction and in-service/CPD respectively.

As indicated earlier, the focus of the analysis of teacher education in this review is confined to primary teacher preparation only. While it would have been instructive to compare the cost and effectiveness of initial teacher education for primary and post primary teachers, the focus on pre-service education in this chapter and throughout this review is confined to primary teachers only.

5.2 Initial teacher education – key questions

The objective of the TES in relation to initial teacher education is:

"To ensure the provision of a supply of appropriately qualified graduates from the Colleges of Education sufficient to meet the demand for newly qualified teachers within the education system".

In order to assess the extent to which the TES is fulfilling its objective in this area two key questions must be addressed:

1. *Has the supply of newly qualified primary teachers met the level of demand within the education system?*

2. *How appropriately qualified are the graduates from Colleges of Education i.e. how well prepared are newly qualified teachers (NQTs) for a career in the classroom?*

This section will address each of these questions in turn, thereby establishing the effectiveness with which the TES has met its objectives in relation to initial teacher education.

5.3 Key question 1: Has the supply of newly qualified primary teachers met the level of demand within the education system?

This section first identifies the trend in overall teacher numbers at primary level, and then outlines how the level of demand for primary teachers is determined, before highlighting the number of unqualified teachers in the education system. The measures introduced by the TES to reduce the number of unqualified teachers are also described.

Trend in teacher numbers

In 2004/05, the latest year for which collated data are available, there were 26,262 teachers in primary schools, where the national average pupil teacher ratio was 17.1:1. Despite a serious decline in pupil numbers from 505,883 in 1993/94 to 449,508 in 2004/05[82], the number of full-time teachers actually increased by 5,486 during this period. What was termed 'the demographic dividend' was employed to improve pupil-teacher ratios and to facilitate the provision of specialist teacher services. Table 1 in appendix 6 details the number of primary school teachers for each year from 1993/1994 to 2004/2005.

How the level of demand for primary teachers is determined

Historically, the DES has endeavoured to manage the supply of trained primary teachers in an effort to achieve equilibrium between the supply of and the demand for trained teachers. Unlimited access to teacher training could potentially produce an over supply of trained teachers relative to demand. A high unemployment rate among teachers, who have been trained at considerable cost to the exchequer and who have limited alternative career options, is undesirable.

However, the attempt to match supply and demand is fraught with difficulties. Pupil enrolments constitute the primary driver of demand for teachers. Enrolments themselves must be forecast, and the DES produces extensive pupil projections based on a wide range of variables including CSO birth-rate projections, migration assumptions and age-specific retention rates.[83] There are a number of other factors that affect the demand for primary teachers. These include the following:

- The application of the agreed staffing schedule.
- The number of teachers opting to take career breaks and the number returning from career breaks.
- The number of secondments approved.
- The age at which teachers opt to retire on a voluntary basis.
- The creation of additional posts in a particular school year.

The DES' Primary Branch – in association with the DES' Statistics section - reviews the enrolment projections for schools and the factors affecting the demand for teaching posts on an annual basis with a view to ensuring, as far as possible and

[82] DES (2005), *Key Statistics, 1993/94-2003/04.* Data for 2004/2005 supplied by DES statistics section.
[83] Byrne report (2002), p.105

within resource constraints, that the supply of teachers meets the demand. The Primary Branch advises the TES on an annual basis of the required level of intake to teacher education programmes. On foot of this, the TES notifies each of the Colleges of Education of their approved intake quota for the coming academic year.

The existing system for forecasting the demand for primary school teachers has attracted criticism. The 2003 OECD background report on the Irish education system criticized the lack of data in this area as an impediment to effective planning. The report summarized the situation as follows:

"More precise data are needed on the qualifications of teachers, on the fit between their qualifications and their teaching duties, on the age range patterns, on the retention patterns in teaching, on the pool of former teachers, on the attitudes of student teachers, on the attitudes of former teachers, on male perspectives on the teaching profession, on the needs of teachers at different stages of the teaching career, on teacher attitudes to varying forms of teacher in-service education, on attitudes of teachers to engaging in formal teacher induction, on the views of teachers on qualification allowances, on the attitudes of teacher unions to incentives for teacher retention in difficult teaching contexts, on the views of school management groups regarding aspects of the deployment of teachers, on exploring ways to improve teacher deployment arrangements within a changing demographic scenario. The data arising from such studies and explorations would provide policy-makers with vitally important material for enlightened policy on the teaching profession in the era ahead, which may be less stable or favourable than in the past. A complacent view that future trends in the teaching career will follow the patterns of the past could be a grave mistake. Even if the traditional pattern does prevail, the policymakers need more comprehensive and sophisticated data on the teaching force for enlightened decision-making, in any case".[84]

The statutory Educational Disadvantage Committee also underlined the need for more comprehensive data on the level of demand for qualified teachers within the primary school sector. In their 2003 submission to the Minister, entitled *Teacher Supply and Staffing in Disadvantaged Settings*, the Committee made the following recommendation:

"We recommend the introduction of an effective, up-to-date and comprehensive database as part of a Management Information System (MIS) which will allow decisions to be taken in a context of the most complete information. This database needs to register data which allows for detailed analysis on intake and output from programmes of teacher education, on the system's anticipated need for new teachers…on internal movement from school to school, from area to area and from disadvantaged schools to others as well as within schools (such as when a teacher moves from classroom teaching to Special Needs or Learning Resource and vice versa), on attrition and its patterns, on retirement, career breaks, etc. In particular, such an MIS would allow for better forward planning, based on agreed and realisable staffing schedules".[85]

[84] Coolahan (2003), p.33
[85] Educational Disadvantage Committee (2003), *Teacher Supply and Staffing in Disadvantaged Settings*, p.11 (Dublin: DES)

However, the clearest indicator of the effectiveness of the DES projections of staffing requirements and its attempt to match the supply and demand of qualified primary teachers is the number of unqualified teachers within the education system.

Number of unqualified teachers in the system

Until the end of the 1990s, the teaching force in Irish primary schools was comprised almost entirely of fully-qualified primary teachers.[86] During the 1980s, the intake to the teacher education programme was actually reduced because of the perceived oversupply of trained teachers. However, in recent years, the supply of qualified primary teachers has not kept pace with demand. This is largely a result of the government's commitment, as evidenced in the Programme for Government and the social partnership agreements, to reduce the pupil teacher ratio (PTR) and increase the number of teaching posts dedicated to supporting pupils with special needs and from disadvantaged backgrounds.[87] In the period 2002-2007, over 5,000 additional teaching posts were created within the primary school sector.[88] While the intake to pre-service education was increased (see below) in response to the increase in demand for teachers, it was not possible to match supply and demand in the short term. Part of the difficulty arose from the time-lag between the approval of increased intake to the Colleges of Education and the corresponding increase in graduate numbers (at least three years in respect of the B.Ed. and eighteen months in relation to the Diploma). As more and more teaching posts were created in advance of students being produced by the Colleges, the number of unqualified or under-qualified teachers in the system increased until it peaked in June 2003.[89]

The table below details the number of unqualified and under-qualified primary teachers in the Primary Education system in the period since June 2001.

Table 5.1: Number of unqualified and under-qualified primary teachers

Year	No.of unqualified teachers	No. of under-qualified teachers
June 2001	754	n/a*
November 2002	910	n/a*
June 2003	918	669
May 2004	698	558
June 2005	300	427
June 2006	459	318
March 2007	361	208

* Data not available

Overall, in the period since June 2001, the number of unqualified primary teachers has been reduced from 754 to 361, a reduction of 52%. The number of unqualified teachers peaked in June 2003, when there were 918 such teachers. However, in each year since then, with the exception of 2006, there has been a reduction in the

[86] Educational Disadvantage Committee (2003), p.15
[87] Agreed Programme for Government, pp.23-24
[88] Data supplied by DES Primary Branch.
[89] Under-qualified refers to those teachers that are secondary trained teachers. Educational Disadvantage Committee (2003), p.15; Coolahan (2003), pp.33-34.

number of such teachers. This reduction has been achieved in the context of a continued rise in the number of new primary teaching posts created.

The number of under-qualified teachers has also been significantly reduced since June 2003. Between June 2003 and March 2007, there was a decrease of 69% in the number of under-qualified teachers within the system.

Responses by the TES to the change in level of demand for primary level teachers.

In response to demands for an increase in the supply of primary teachers the TES has introduced a number of initiatives, including the following:

- The reintroduction of the Graduate Diploma course in the Colleges of Education: This 18-month fulltime postgraduate course was first provided in the 1995/96 academic year as a temporary response to a shortage in the supply of trained primary teachers. It has been repeated on a number of occasions since then and the DES has recently sanctioned 280 places for the 2006/07 Programme. This Diploma is provided by four of the main Colleges of Education (the exception being the Church of Ireland College of Education). This "consecutive" approach to teacher education increases teacher supply to the primary school system in a shorter time period than the more traditional "concurrent" approach associated with the B.Ed programme: eighteen months compared to at least three years.
- Increasing the number of places available for B.Ed students in the Colleges of Education: From 1989 to 1992 inclusive the total approved annual intake to the five colleges was 275. Since 1993, the approved intake has increased each year due to revised projections, which indicated a need for additional teachers. The approved intake to the main Colleges of Education for 2005/2006 was 1,420 (1,133 B.Ed students and 287 Diploma students). Overall, there has been a 37% increase in student intake since 1998/99. Table 2 in appendix 6 outlines the trend in student intake to the B.Ed and Graduate Diploma programmes in the main Colleges of Education since 1998/1999.
- The recognition of B. Ed. graduates of St. Mary's College, Belfast, who have studied Irish to Honours level as an academic subject as part of their teaching qualifications, as fully qualified to teach in Irish primary schools.
- The recognition of Montessori trained teachers, who have successfully completed the full-time course of three years duration at St. Nicholas, Dun Laoghaire, which is recognised by HETAC, or the Montessori qualification which is awarded on completion of the three year course in the AMI College, as being fully qualified substitute teachers and to teach in certain categories of special schools, special classes and as resource teachers in primary schools.
- The recognition of the Graduate Diploma in Primary Education, delivered by Hibernia College, for the purposes of primary teaching. The first cohort of 392 qualified teachers graduated from Hibernia in 2005.

The measures adopted by the TES have resulted in an increase in the number of qualified primary teachers available to the education system. In the six years since 2001, the Colleges of Education have produced an overall total of 8,250 qualified primary teachers. There were 756 more graduates produced in 2006 compared to 2001, an increase of 77%. The overall number of graduates has increased in each of

the last five years, with the largest single increase occurring in 2003 when the number of graduates from teacher education programmes was 31% higher than in 2002. Table 3 in appendix 6 details the number of graduates from all of the Colleges of Education in the period 2001 to 2006.

In order to estimate the date by which the number of unqualified and under-qualified teachers in the primary education system will be eliminated, the trend in the number of retirements, secondments, and career breaks was analysed over a two year period (2004/2005 and 2005/2006) and the average number of teachers in each category in each year was calculated. To this figure was added the existing number of unqualified and under-qualified primary teachers in order to identify the total demand for qualified primary teachers. This was then compared to the future output from all of the Colleges of Education (including Hibernia) – this constitutes the future supply of NQTs. The table below outlines the result of this analysis.

Table 5.2: Projection of future numbers of unqualified and under-qualified teachers

2006/2007	2007/2008
No. of retirements: 664	No. of retirements: 664
No. of career breaks: 614	No. of career breaks: 614
No. of secondments: 302	No. of secondments: 302
No. of unqualifieds/under-qualified: 569	No. of unqualifieds/under-qualified: 317
Total demand: 2,149	Total demand: 1,897
Total supply in 2007: 1,832 (1054 B.Ed and 778 Diploma)	Total supply in 2008: 1,913 (1,133 B.Ed and 780 Diploma)
Deficit of 317	Surplus of 15.

The above analysis suggests that the supply of graduates from all of the Colleges of Education in 2008 will be sufficient to meet the level of demand for qualified primary teachers, with a marginal surplus of qualified teachers. However, this analysis is indicative only as it is built upon the following assumptions:

- That no new teaching posts will be created (to meet special needs, the needs of newcomer children etc)
- That there will be no change in pupil enrolments in 2007/2008.
- That the pattern of retirements, secondments and career breaks will be the same in 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 as it was in 2004/2005 and 2005/2006.
- That there will be no change in the number of teachers choosing to job-share.

These are obviously unrealistic assumptions in some instances but the analysis serves the purpose of suggesting that the number of unqualified/under-qualified teachers could be eliminated within a relatively short timeframe.

5.4 Key question 2: How appropriately qualified are the graduates from Colleges of Education?

The second area to be considered in assessing whether the TES has achieved its objective of ensuring an adequate supply of *appropriately qualified* teachers to meet the needs of the education system involves an examination of the extent to which initial teacher education programmes prepare NQTs for the classroom. The

extent to which NQTs are suitably prepared for the classroom will determine the effectiveness of their teaching practice, which is the intermediate outcome of TES activity in this area (as per the PLM outlined in chapter four). The expectation is that effective teaching practice (the intermediate outcome) will contribute to improved student learning in the classroom (the final outcome).

In order to assess the extent to which graduates from the Colleges of Education are appropriately qualified, the following key questions must be addressed:

Key question 2(a): What is the quality of the pre-service training and support provided by the Colleges of Education?

Key question 2(b): Are newly qualified teachers performing competently and professionally in the classroom?

These questions were addressed through analysis of two main data sources. The first was a survey of 250 recently qualified primary teachers (this was part of an evaluation of the effectiveness of the primary pillar of the NPPTI) undertaken for this review. Of the two hundred and fifty primary teachers selected, one hundred and sixteen questionnaires were returned, representing a response rate of 46%.

The teacher survey is supplemented by data published in two recent reports by the DES Inspectorate – *Beginning to Teach* (2005) and *Learning to Teach* (2007) – and the evaluation of the first phase of the NPPTI (2006).

The *Learning to Teach* report contains data from DES Inspectors' reports on the performance of B.Ed and Graduate Diploma students during their final period of teaching practice in 2003/2004. This report complements the *Beginning to Teach* report which contains data from Inspectors' reports on the performance of teachers during their initial probationary period in the classroom in the year 2003/2004. The data from the Inspectors' reports was also supplemented by a postal survey of NQTs which sought to assess the extent to which their initial teacher training prepared them for the curricular and non curricular aspects of school life.

The perceptions of NQTs collated as part of the *Beginning to Teach* study are complemented by data collated during the evaluation of the NPPTI which was completed in 2006. As part of this evaluation, a cohort of NQTs that had participated in the pilot project was asked to identify the areas in which they felt best and least prepared as a result of their initial teacher education.

5.4.1. Key question 2(a). What is the quality of the pre-service training and support provided by the Colleges of Education?

The sample of 250 teachers included in the teacher survey conducted for this review were asked a number of questions designed to elicit their views on the quality of the pre-service training they had received from the five main Colleges of Education. These questions focused on the extent to which respondents felt that their initial training had prepared them for the classroom, the relevance of their initial training, and any areas of pre-service education that could be improved. The data upon which this analysis is based are tabulated in Appendix 6**.** The views of

those respondents who were trained outside of the State were excluded from the analysis.

Level of preparedness following completion of initial teacher education

The vast majority (86%) of graduates from the Colleges of Education considered themselves to have been very well or well prepared for the classroom as a result of their initial teacher education. However, fourteen per cent of teachers considered themselves not well prepared (see Table 4, Appendix 6). There appears to be a divergence between the graduates from the B.Ed and the Graduate Diploma courses. While one hundred percent of graduates from a Diploma programme indicated that they were very well or well prepared, only seventy nine percent of those who graduated from a B.Ed course were of this view.

Relevance of initial teacher training

In relation to the relevance of pre-service education, eighty nine percent of respondents from the main Colleges of Education considered their initial training to have been relevant or very relevant. Only eleven percent felt that it had not been very relevant (see table 5, appendix 6). A distinction is again apparent between the attitude of B.Ed and Diploma graduates on this issue. While one hundred percent of Diploma graduates felt that their training had been relevant/very relevant, only eighty four percent of those with a B.Ed placed themselves in this category.

Appropriateness of length of initial teacher education

Among graduates from the five main Colleges, approximately three quarters of respondents (74%) considered the duration of their initial teacher training to have been of an appropriate length. However, twenty four percent felt that it was too short while two percent considered it to have been too long (see table 6, appendix 6).

Respondents' preparedness to implement the primary curriculum

Within the main Colleges of Education, ninety two percent of respondents felt that they had been very well or well prepared to implement the curriculum as a result of their training. Eight percent felt inadequately prepared (see table 7, appendix 6). There is a slight difference between the attitude of B.Ed and Diploma graduates on this issue. Ninety six percent of Diploma Graduates considered themselves very well/well prepared to implement the curriculum, compared to eighty nine percent of B.Ed graduates. The main areas in respect of which graduates felt inadequately prepared were English, Music, Visual Arts and Drama.

English was the area where respondents to the teacher survey conducted for this review felt least well prepared. In particular, some respondents felt that they had not received sufficient guidance in relation to how to teach reading and writing skills to children. Music was the second most frequently mentioned area. Very few respondents explained the reason for this. In relation to Visual Arts, respondents commented that the subject "was run more like an art class rather than how to teach children art". This was emphasized by a number of respondents who felt that the

subject was "more focused on you than on teaching it". In relation to drama, respondents felt that insufficient time had been devoted to this subject.

Music, Drama and Visual Arts were also identified as problem areas by respondents to teacher surveys conducted as part of the NPPTI evaluation and the *Beginning to Teach* report. However, the vast majority of respondents to these surveys felt adequately prepared to implement English in the classroom, which is contrary to the findings emerging from the survey undertaken for this review.[90]

Respondents' preparedness for non-curricular aspects of school life

Only fifty two percent of respondents considered themselves to be very well or well prepared for the non curricular aspects of school life. Thirty six percent considered themselves not very well prepared, while a further twelve percent considered themselves to be not at all prepared (see table 8, appendix 6). Distinguishing between respondents by the type of educational qualification they received, eighty four percent of B.Ed graduates considered themselves very well/well prepared compared to seventy seven percent of graduates of a Diploma programme.

The three areas in respect of which NQTs felt least adequately prepared were dealing with parents, catering for children with special needs, and classroom management/discipline. Other frequently mentioned areas were administration (completing roll books, timetabling, report writing etc) and planning. These issues were also identified by respondents to the teacher surveys conducted as part of the *Beginning to Teach* and NPPTI reports.[91]

Measures to improve pre-service education

Eighty six percent of respondents were of the view that measures could be adopted to improve the quality of existing pre-service education. The most frequent recommendation was for a more practical focus to initial teacher education. Some respondents felt that current provision was too theoretical in focus and not practical enough. They recommended *"less sociology, history and philosophy of education and more lectures and advice on practical issues such as classroom management, discipline and special needs" (Respondent 11 NPPTI primary survey).*

The second most frequent recommendation was for additional teaching practice and more opportunities for teacher observation. A number of respondents were of the opinion that *"teaching cannot be taught through books and lectures alone"* and that "*more teaching practice would be beneficial as we would learn more about the day to day dealings of a teacher" (Respondent 84 NPPTI primary survey).* It was also recommended that teaching practice should encompass a wider variety of schools and target a wider variety of age groups. Some respondents also recommended that teaching practice should be for longer periods at a time in order to get a more realistic picture of all aspects of school life: *"More teaching practice all day, therefore nearly all areas of day to day school life can be seen" (Respondent 37 NPPTI primary survey).* Linked to this issue, respondents also

[90] NPPTI (2005), p.34; *Beginning to Teach*, p.34
[91] *Beginning to Teach*, p.43; NPPTI *(2005)*, pp.30, 33

advocated additional opportunities to observe other experienced teachers, particularly those working with special needs children. They felt that more observation time should be allowed before teaching practice began in order to afford them the opportunity to pick up tips from experienced teachers.

Another area identified by a number of respondents was the need for greater input into initial teacher education programmes by experienced and practising teachers: *"Most teachers in the college were very familiar with the classroom setting but one or two were perhaps less useful because they were not as practical" (Respondent 72 NPPTI primary survey).* This relates to the earlier point about the need for a more practical focus to teacher education programmes.

Measures to improve relevance of pre-service education

Sixty two percent of respondents felt that measures could be adopted to improve the relevance of existing pre-service education. The recommendations in this area were almost identical to those proposed to improve the *quality* of pre-service education.

5.4.2. Key question 2(b): Are newly qualified teachers performing competently and professionally in the classroom?

The *Learning to Teach* report contains data on the Inspectorates' assessment of 143 students during their final teaching practice session in 2003/04. This represented a sample of 10% of the final cohort of students who were studying for the B.Ed or the Graduate Diploma in primary teaching in that year. The quality of teaching practice was evaluated by the Inspectorate in four areas identified as being fundamental attributes of an effective teacher: (i) Planning and preparation, (ii) Teaching (this competency was sub-divided into three areas – classroom management and organization, methodology and use of resources) (iii) Pupil learning, and (iv) Pupil assessment.

A seven point rating scale was used, as outlined in Table 5.3 below[92]:

Table 5.3: Rating used by DES Inspectorate to evaluate teaching practice

Rating	Corresponding category of performance
A	Excellent: optimal performance
B	Very good: competent performance, with significant strengths
C+	Good: effective performance
C	Fair: a range of strengths, with significant weaknesses
D	Satisfactory but experiencing some difficulty
F	Unsatisfactory: ineffective performance
NE	No evidence available for these criteria

From the table above, it can be seen that a rating of C+ or above indicates effective performance, whereas a rating of C or below indicates some weaknesses in performance or unsatisfactory performance. The ratings awarded by the Inspectorate in respect of each competency are summarized below.

[92] *Learning to Teach*, p.8

Table 5.4: Inspectorates' assessment of cohort of student teachers, 2003/2004

	C+ or above	C	D	F	NE
Planning and Preparation	76%	12%	9%	3%	-
Teaching - *Classroom management and organisation*	66%	22%	8%	4%	-
Teaching - *Methodology*	61%	23%	12%	4%	-
Teaching - *Use of resources*	70%	23%	2%	5%	1%
Pupil learning	65%	23%	7%	4%	1%
Pupil assessment	43%	26%	11%	3%	17%
Overall Rating	62%	27%	7%	5%	-

In relation to the four competencies (Planning and preparation, Teaching, Pupil Learning, and Assessment), approximately two thirds or more of student teachers were considered to be performing effectively in three of these areas. The exception was the area of pupil assessment where only 43% of the cohort was considered to be effective performers. More than a third (37%) were considered to be experiencing significant weaknesses or having some difficulty, and a few (3%) were considered to be ineffective. There were a high proportion of instances (17%) in which the inspectors reported that insufficient evidence was available to rate the quality of assessment practices in the classroom. Generally, neither a positive nor a negative interpretation is put on a NE rating. However, in the case of assessment there is a reasonable expectation that evidence of assessment practices would be available in the classroom. Therefore, the non-availability of this evidence suggests that assessment practices for 17% of students evaluated were at best somewhat deficient.[93]

Within the other three competencies assessed by the Inspectorate, there were areas in which student teachers were experiencing difficulty.

- One in five (21%) students was identified as having significant weaknesses or experiencing some difficulty in their approach to planning and preparation, while 3% were deemed to be ineffective.
- In relation to classroom management and organization, more than a fifth (22%) of the sample was considered to be displaying significant weaknesses in their performance while a further 12% were considered to be experiencing some difficulty or were ineffective.
- In the area of teaching methodology, more than a third (35%) of student teachers were considered fair or weak, and a few (4%) were judged to be unsatisfactory.
- In relation to use of teaching resources, a quarter of the cohort was considered to have some difficulty with this aspect of their work, while a further 5% were considered to be ineffective.
- In relation to the quality of pupil learning, 30% of student teachers were considered to have weaknesses in this regard, and a further 4% were considered to be unsatisfactory. [94]

[93] *Learning to Teach*, pp.30-31
[94] *ibid*, pp.13 - 27

Inspectors also provided an overall rating for each student teacher assessed. From Table 5.4 above, it can be seen that 62% of the cohort were considered to be effective in their general work in the classroom. However, more than a quarter (27%) displayed some significant weaknesses, a few (7%) were considered to be experiencing general difficulty in their teaching, and about one student in twenty was considered to be unsatisfactory. [95]

In contrast to the data produced in the *Learning to Teach* report, which involved an assessment of student teachers during their final teaching practice session, the data in the *Beginning to Teach* report is drawn from the Inspectorates' assessment of NQTs during their initial probationary year of teaching. The Inspectorate assessed the 354 NQTs under the following headings: (i) Planning, preparation, and recording of progress, (ii) Classroom management and organization, (iii) Quality of teaching throughout the curriculum, (iv) Quality of pupil learning. These headings are not directly comparable to those employed by the Inspectorate in their assessment of student teachers. The ratings awarded by the Inspectorate in each of the four competencies are outlined below.

Table 5.5: Inspectorates' assessment of NQTs[96]

	Optimal level of practice	Competent practice	Scope for development	Experiencing significant difficulty
Planning, preparation and recording of progress	9%	61%	29%	1%
Classroom management and organisation	7%	79%	13%	1%
Quality of teaching	3%	62%	34%	1%
Quality of learning	3%	75%	21%	1%

Overall, the vast majority of NQTs were deemed to be performing effectively in the classroom. The lowest rating awarded to the cohort of NQTs was in relation to *quality of teaching* but even here 65% were considered to be teaching competently. The highest rating was awarded in respect of *classroom management and organisation*, where 86% of the teachers displayed competent practice or better. There were also positive ratings awarded in the areas of *planning, preparation and recording of progress* and the *quality of learning*, where in 78 per cent of the NQTs' classrooms the pupils were learning and achieving appropriately.

The proportion of NQTs 'experiencing significant difficulty' in any of the four competencies was minimal – not rising above 1% in respect of any competency. However, there were some areas where NQTs had scope for development.

- More than a third of NQTs assessed (34 per cent) manifested scope for development in relation to the *quality of teaching*.
- In relation to *planning, preparation and recording of progress*, twenty nine per cent of teachers had scope for development in this area.
- Some thirteen percent of NQTs were evaluated as having scope for development in the area of *classroom management and organisation*.

[95] *Learning to Teach*, p.33
[96] The data in this table and the subsequent analysis are based upon the data in *Beginning to Teach*, pp.44-49, 53-58

- In relation to the *quality of pupil learning*, in twenty one per cent of NQTs' classrooms there was scope for development in this fundamental area.

Another indicator of the extent to which initial teacher education prepares NQTs for the classroom is the number of teachers who successfully complete their initial probationary period. Towards the end of the probationary period, following a full day general inspection of the teacher's performance, a general inspection report is issued in respect of each probationary teacher. The report provides detailed evaluative commentary on the teacher's performance in a number of areas and provides an overall rating of the teacher's work (*satisfactory or not satisfactory*). In the event of a general inspection resulting in a rating of *not satisfactory*, the teacher is required to undertake a further probationary period of not less than 183 school days (excluding school closings), with effect from the date of that general inspection.[97]

Data are only available on this issue in relation to the cohort of teachers who were fulfilling their probationary period in 2003/2004. In that year, eighty three teachers did not successfully complete their probationary period. Three of these teachers received a rating of "not satisfactory" in their general inspection report. The rating is given in instances where there are fundamental weaknesses in the quality of teaching. All three of the teachers who received a "not satisfactory" rating in 2003/2004 had been teaching for at least a year and their probation period had been extended from the previous year.[98]

Of the remaining eighty teachers who did not successfully complete their probationary period in 2003/04, nine teachers had their general inspection deferred for a variety of reasons unrelated to their teaching ability (e.g. the inspectors were unable to assess all the teachers allocated to them, the teacher's illness for an extended period). The remaining seventy-one NQTs did not complete their probation period successfully because the quality of their teaching did not reach an acceptable standard. The main reasons for the extension of the probationary period in 2003/2004 included difficulties in maintaining discipline in the classroom, poor engagement with pupils, insufficient planning and preparation, and difficulties related to pupils' learning in the classroom.[99]

In relation to the overall number of teachers on probation in 2003/2004, the 71 who had their probation extended due to lack of progress in developing teaching skills, represents 4.5% of the total cohort of 1,566 probationary teachers. The 3 teachers who received a "not satisfactory" rating represent 0.19% of the total cohort. While not a direct measure of the effectiveness of initial teacher education, these statistics indicate that the overwhelming majority of teachers who qualified from the Colleges of Education were considered to be effective teachers by the DES Inspectorate.

[97] *Beginning to Teach*, p.11
[98] *ibid*, p.64
[99] *ibid*, pp.62-63

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the extent to which the TES has achieved its objective in relation to initial teacher education. This involved the exploration of two separate issues: (i) the extent to which the TES ensures an adequate supply of appropriately qualified NQTs to meet the demands of the primary education system, and (ii) the extent to which teacher education programmes adequately prepare NQTs for the classroom.

The analysis in this chapter has suggested that the TES has been forced to play catch-up to the level of demand for qualified primary teachers. The unprecedented number of new teaching posts arising from government commitments (namely the creation of 5,000 new teaching posts in the period 2002 to 2007) resulted in an increase in the number of unqualified and under-qualified teachers in the primary system. The delay between the TES approving an increase in student intake to the Colleges of Education and the corresponding increase in the number of graduates means that it is difficult to achieve perfect equilibrium between supply and demand for qualified teachers.

However, the TES has introduced a number of measures designed to increase the number of qualified teachers within the system. This includes the re-introduction of the Graduate Diploma – which produces qualified teachers in a shorter timeframe than the traditional B.Ed programme. The measures adopted by the TES have resulted in an increase of 77% of graduates from the Colleges of Education in the period 2001-2006 and have contributed to a significant decline in the number of unqualified and under-qualified teachers in the system. Analysis in this chapter suggests that the number of such teachers could be eliminated by the start of the 2008/2009 school year on the basis of the number of posts in the system at present.

In terms of the quality of the graduates produced by the Colleges of Education, this chapter has suggested that – in general – the NQTs are performing effectively in the classroom. The Inspectorate considered that 62% of student teachers in 2003/04 were effective in their general work in the classroom. Among NQTs on probation in the same year, only 0.19% were considered to be 'not satisfactory' while another 4.5% had their probationary period extended. This represents a very small proportion of the overall number of teachers on probation.

However, there are areas where the performance of student teachers and NQTs could be strengthened. This is reflected in the fact that out of the student teachers assessed by the Inspectorate in 2003/04, more than a quarter (27%) displayed some significant weaknesses, a few (7%) were considered to be experiencing general difficulty in their teaching, and about one student in twenty was considered to be unsatisfactory. In respect of each of the four competencies assessed by the Inspectorate (planning and preparation, classroom management and organization, quality of teaching, and quality of pupil learning) there were a significant number of teachers who were experiencing difficulties. The greatest difficulties were encountered in relation to pupil assessment. Only 43% of the cohort was considered to be effective performers in this area. More than a third (37%) were considered to be experiencing significant weaknesses or having some difficulty, and a few (3%) were considered to be ineffective. However, within each of the other competencies

assessed, there were some areas where a number of student teachers were displaying weaknesses.

Similarly, while the number of probationary NQTs assessed by the Inspectorate in 2003/04 who were performing ineffectively in the classroom is minimal, there were areas in relation to each of the competencies assessed (Planning, preparation, and recording of progress; Classroom management and organization; Quality of teaching throughout the curriculum; and Quality of pupil learning) in respect of which a number of NQTs were experiencing difficulties.

NQTs themselves – through the teacher survey – identified a number of areas in which they felt inadequately prepared as a result of their initial teacher education. Overall, the feedback from NQTs about the quality of the pre-service education they had received was broadly positive. Among graduates of the five main Colleges of Education, eighty six percent considered themselves well prepared for the classroom following the completion of their initial teacher education, eighty nine percent considered their pre-service education to have been relevant or very relevant, and seventy four percent considered the duration of their initial teacher training to have been of an appropriate length.

However, there are some areas where respondents were less positive about the quality of their pre-service education:

- There was a sizeable minority of NQT respondents (fourteen percent) that considered themselves inadequately prepared for the classroom. There are also signs that Diploma graduates consider themselves better prepared than graduates from the B.Ed programme. While one hundred percent of the former indicated that they were well prepared, only seventy nine percent of B.Ed graduates were of this view.
- Eleven percent of NQTs were dissatisfied with the relevance of their initial teacher training. There was also a divergence of opinion on this issue between graduates from consecutive and concurrent teacher education. One hundred percent of Diploma graduates felt that their training had been relevant/very relevant, compared to eighty four percent of those with a B.Ed.
- While almost three quarters of NQTs considered the duration of their initial training to have been appropriate, one in four felt that it was too short.

NQTs had concerns in relation to both curricular and non-curricular areas of school life. In relation to the curriculum, English was the area where respondents felt least well prepared, particularly the skills required to teach reading and writing to pupils, followed closely by Music, Visual Arts and Drama. NQTs were less positive about their level of preparedness in relation to the non-curricular aspects of school life. The area of greatest concern to respondents was dealing with parents. This was followed closely by catering for children with special needs, classroom management and discipline, and administration (including roll books, timetabling, and report writing).

The majority of NQTs were of the view that the quality and relevance of pre-service education could be improved. The most frequent recommendations were for a more practical focus to teacher education programmes, and for additional teaching practice and more opportunities for teacher observation.

The analysis in this chapter suggests the need to view initial teacher education as part of a continuum consisting also of an induction period for NQTs and also by a comprehensive programme of CPD opportunities aimed at addressing the needs of NQTs as well as more established professionals.

It should also be noted that the data collected as part of the *Beginning to Learn* and *Beginning to Teach* reports were based on the perceptions of a limited number of teachers (student and probationary) at a very early stage in their professional development. It is only to be expected that there are areas where such individuals require further support, particularly in the case of student teachers who have not yet completed their pre-service education.

Overall, therefore, the TES is broadly effective in meeting its objective in relation to initial teacher education. While the demand for qualified teachers has outstripped supply from the Colleges of Education, the TES/DES has introduced a number of measures which are addressing this issue. In addition, on the basis of the data produced by the Inspectorate, the Colleges of Education are producing candidates capable of performing effectively in the classroom. This is the intermediate outcome of the TES in the area of initial teacher education. As outlined in chapter four, the expectation is that effective teaching practice in the classroom (intermediate outcome) results in teachers being able to communicate knowledge effectively to students and to facilitate student learning, and this will contribute to more effective classroom learning for students (the final outcome).

Recommendations designed to strengthen the effectiveness of pre-service education are outlined below.

5.6 Recommendations.

Composition of teacher education programmes.

- The views of NQTs regarding their desire for more experience in non-curricular areas (such as dealing with parents, classroom management and discipline, catering for pupils with special needs, and administrative issues associated with primary teaching) should be conveyed to the Colleges of Education to inform future developments in relation to pre-service education.
- Colleges of Education should ensure that opportunities for teaching practice and teacher observation are provided in as wide a variety of school and class settings as possible.

Data collection

- Colleges of Education should conduct ‘exit’ surveys of graduates from the B.Ed and Diploma programmes to ensure that their views on the quality and relevance of pre-service education are used to inform the design of pre-service programmes.
- The DES Inspectorate should compile on a more regular basis an analysis of the results of the monitoring process associated with student teachers during their final teaching practice and also of NQTs during their probationary period.

Chapter Six

Programme Objectives – Induction - Extent of Achievement

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the extent to which the TES has achieved its objectives in relation to the induction of newly qualified teachers (NQTs). The main focus of analysis in this chapter is the NPPTI (as described in chapter two) as this is the main focus of TES activity in this area.

6.2 Induction – key questions

The objective of the TES in relation to induction is:

"To provide a programme of induction whereby newly qualified teachers are inducted into the profession of teaching; their developing pedagogical skills are consolidated, and their interpersonal and communication skills are further developed".

In order to assess the effectiveness with which the TES has achieved this objective the following key questions must be addressed:

1. *What is the quality of the in-service training and support provided by the NPPTI?*

2. *How relevant is the project to teachers' needs?*

3. *Has the induction project allowed participants to become competent professionals more quickly?*

4. *Has the induction project contributed to retaining teachers within the educational system?*

5. *What proportion of NQTs has participated in the NPPTI?*

These key questions will be addressed in turn below, thereby contributing to an assessment of the effectiveness with which the TES has achieved its objectives in relation to the induction of NQTs.

6.3 Data Sources

The main data source for the analysis in this chapter was a survey of teachers who have participated in the NPPTI. This survey is described in Appendix 3. An overall (primary and post primary) response rate of 41% was achieved. Of the primary teachers selected, one hundred and sixteen questionnaires were returned,

representing a response rate of forty six percent. At post primary level, forty nine questionnaires were returned, representing a response rate of thirty three percent.

The teacher survey was supplemented by data from the evaluation of the first and second phase of the NPPTI. This evaluation report was completed in 2006 and incorporates data from a survey of NQTs, as well as interviews with their mentors and principals.

6.4 Key question 1: What is the quality of the in-service training and support provided by the NPPTI?

The quality of the training provided through the NPPTI was assessed by means of the feedback provided by participants through the teacher survey. The random sample of teachers were first asked to rate the quality of the support provided through the NPPTI in overall terms, and then to assess the quality of individual elements of the project, namely teacher observation, professional development, and mentoring.

Quality of support provided

Respondents' views of the quality of support provided through the NPPTI are outlined in tables 6.1 to 6.3 below.

Table 6.1: Respondents' views of the overall quality of NPPTI support (n=164)

	Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor
Primary (n=116)	70%	28%	2%	0
Post primary (n=48)	52%	42%	4%	2%
Total	65%	32%	2%	1%

Table 6.2: Respondents' views of the quality of support provided through elements of the NPPTI (primary)

	Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor
Teacher observation *(i.e. observation of or by colleagues in the classroom)* n=114	54%	37%	8%	1%
Mentoring n=114	68%	30%	2%	-
Professional development *(i.e. conducted through seminars/workshops) n=115*	56%	41%	3%	0

Table 6.3: Respondents' views of the quality of support provided through elements of the NPPTI (post primary)

	Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor
Teacher observation *(i.e. observation of or by colleagues in the classroom)* (n =42)	29%	38%	26%	7%
Mentoring (n = 46)	50%	43%	7%	-
Professional development *(i.e. conducted through seminars/workshops) (n = 48)*	35%	56%	3%	6%

The overall assessment of the pilot project is very positive. Some 97% of respondents rated the quality of support provided as either very good or good. The

results were almost equally positive for both the primary and post primary sectors: ninety eight per cent of primary respondents and ninety four percent of post primary respondents were satisfied with the project.

The assessment by primary and post primary participants of the individual elements of the project is also very positive. Primary NQTs were very satisfied with all three elements of the NPPTI. The most positive rating was awarded in respect of mentoring: 97% of respondents considered this element of the project to have been very good/good. The least positive rating was given in respect of teacher observation but the satisfaction level in this regard was still 91%.

In general, the rating awarded by post primary NQTs was also positive. Ninety one percent or more of respondents rated mentoring and professional development to have been very good or good. However, the rating awarded in respect of teacher observation was less positive. Only sixty seven per cent of the cohort rated this element of the project as good or very good.

Least and most helpful elements of the NPPTI

The sample chosen for the teacher survey were also asked to identify the least and most helpful element of the NPPTI. An indication of the level of satisfaction among participants in the pilot project is the fact that while nearly every respondent identified the most helpful element, some 71 out of 164 respondents indicated that they could not identify any element of the project as being 'least helpful' and that all elements were helpful to some extent.

The element of the project most highly regarded by primary level participants was the mentoring system. Respondents valued the opportunity of having someone to share problems with or someone with whom they felt comfortable enough to ask questions or seek advice: "*Having a mentor who you knew, who you could go to, to discuss any query or concern. As a new teacher you can be reluctant to ask lots of questions, so as not to be a burden. Having a mentor meant this was not an issue" (primary respondent # 12).*

The second most helpful element of the project identified by primary NQTs was teacher observation. Respondents felt that the opportunity to observe experienced teachers at work in the classroom benefited them greatly in identifying teaching strategies they could implement in their own classroom: "*Observation was much more beneficial than Teaching Practice observation because this time what you were looking for was more specific and you could relate different styles to your children" (primary respondent # 31).* It was also of added benefit if the teacher being observed and the NQT shared the same class level. Others mentioned that being observed by their mentor was of significant benefit to them, either in highlighting areas of their practice that required attention or in providing positive feedback that they were doing a good job.

A significant number of primary respondents identified the professional development days as the most beneficial element of the project: "*Workshops and seminars…provided a chance to discuss issues you came across and get advice in a supportive and understanding atmosphere" (primary respondent # 113)* In

particular, the seminars on classroom management, special needs and differentiation were regarded as being of great value to a number of respondents. A significant cohort of respondents also mentioned the benefits they received from meeting with other NQTs and from the planning time provided as part of the project.

Post primary respondents identified the opportunity of meeting with other NQTs as the most helpful element of the project, as this provided reassurance that they were not alone in experiencing difficulties and it also afforded an opportunity for sharing advice and encouragement. The professional development element of the project was also praised by a number of post primary NQTs. In particular they commended the seminars given by guest speakers and also the seminars on practical issues such as stress management, discipline, administration, and catering for children with special needs. The mentoring and teacher observation elements of the NPPTI were praised by smaller numbers of respondents, for similar reasons to those given by primary level respondents.

The two elements of the project that were most frequently identified by primary level respondents as being 'least helpful' were the professional development days and teacher observation. Some NQTs felt it would be more efficient if the seminars were more specific to their needs. In this context, they recommended that the seminars should be more relevant to the type of classes taught by participants in the NPPTI. They also suggested arranging seminars aimed at specific class levels rather than attempting to cater for all class levels simultaneously. Some felt that the seminars were too lecture like and that more time should have been allocated for discussion. Others felt the seminars were not practical enough. A number of respondents felt that some of the seminars "were just rehashing in lecture format exactly what we had done in college" (*primary respondent 48*).

In relation to teacher observation, the main issue was the unease among primary respondents at the prospect of being observed or observing a fellow teacher, particularly if it was someone with whom they had established a relationship. *"When the mentor is observing, the participant feels as though she is on teaching practice again as does the colleague being observed" (primary respondent # 61).* For this reason, some felt that participation in the observation should be optional.

At post primary level, the overwhelming majority of respondents identified the same element of the project – professional development. The comments made were very similar to those made by primary respondents:

- that the seminar days were quite repetitive of material covered in college,
- that some of the seminars were not relevant to teachers needs,
- that a number of seminars were delivered by non-teachers,
- that some of the guest lecturers were not that relevant, and
- that there was an overemphasis on educational theory rather than practical issues such as classroom management and discipline.

It may appear at first sight incongruous that post primary respondents identified professional development as the element of the pilot project that was least and most helpful. However, the comments provided by respondents are entirely consistent. They criticised those aspects of the professional development element that were not

relevant, repetitive of material covered in college, too focused on theory and not practical enough, while praising those elements of the professional development days that were relevant to their needs, focussed on practical issues, and did not repeat material covered in college.

Measures to improve the quality of the NPPTI

The overall positive assessment of the NPPTI by participants at both primary and post primary level is also reflected in the small proportion of respondents who felt that measures could be adopted to improve its impact: only 39% of primary and 47% of post primary respondents felt that improvements could be made.

Among primary level respondents, the three areas in respect of which recommendations were made were teacher observation, mentoring and professional development. In relation to teacher observation, rather than specifying measures to improve this element of the NPPTI, the vast majority of respondents requested that the time allocated to peer observation be increased. However, others did express some concerns. As indicated earlier, while most respondents felt that observing a colleague in the classroom was beneficial, they were less comfortable about being observed by another teacher. Others had suggestions to make teacher observation more practical, such as ensuring that NQTs observed a similar class level to the one that they were actually teaching as well as a variety of other class levels. Other respondents highlighted a reluctance on the part of experienced colleagues to be observed by NQTs.

In relation to mentoring, some primary respondents recommended that it should be made clear that mentoring was designed as a support for NQTs rather than an assessment of their competency. Other recommendations to improve the system of mentoring included greater training and guidance for mentors, the provision of a dedicated mentor for each NQT rather than NQTs having to share a mentor, and that the mentor and NQT should be from the same school.

In relation to professional development, the majority of respondents recommended more time allocated to this element of the project. There were also specific recommendations on how the delivery of the workshops and seminars could be improved. The recommendations were consistent with the earlier comments from respondents about professional development. This included less reliance on a lecture style delivery, more guest speakers that were practising teachers and a greater focus on practical issues.

Among post primary respondents, the two main areas identified were professional development and teacher observation. In relation to professional development, post primary respondents made similar recommendations to their primary colleagues: less repetition of material covered during initial teacher training, more guest speakers, particularly practising teachers, less of an emphasis on theory and a greater practical focus. It was also recommended that a needs analysis of teachers' needs be conducted at the start of each year of the project to tailor the programme of professional development to teachers' specific needs.

In relation to teacher observation, post primary respondents recommended more opportunity to observe other teachers, and more guidance on what to focus on while observing another teacher. They also considered it important that the teacher being observed should be teaching the same subjects as the NQT. In relation to mentoring, respondents recommended more time during school hours to meet with the mentor, and also advocated that the mentor and the NQT should share the same subjects.

Duration of the NPPTI support

In total, out of 160 respondents, ninety one percent considered the support provided by the NPPTI to have been of an appropriate length. Only six percent of respondents considered it to have been too short while a further three percent considered it to have been too long.

Additional comments

Another indication of the overall level of satisfaction with the NPPTI is the fact that among the sixty three respondents who provided additional qualitative comments about their experiences of the NPPTI, the overwhelming theme to emerge was praise for the project.

"It has helped to show I can do this job and also that I enjoy this job and it is the right profession for me" (primary respondent # 22).

"If it wasn't for the project coordinators answering some of my very important questions I honestly don't think I would have stayed in teaching" (primary respondent # 53).

"Project is very beneficial to NQTs as the first year of teaching can be a very difficult one. The classroom can be an isolated place and it can be difficult getting no feedback on how you are getting on" (post primary respondent # 71).

6.5 Key question 2: How relevant is the NPPTI to teachers needs?

As outlined below, respondents at both primary and post primary levels rated the relevance of the project very positively. Overall, ninety four percent of all respondents rated the NPPTI as having been either very relevant or relevant to their needs. The rating by primary teachers was slightly higher than that given by post primary teachers. Ninety seven percent of the former and ninety percent of the latter considered the project to have been very relevant or relevant.

Table 6.4: Participants' rating of relevance of NPPTI (n =164)

	Very relevant	Relevant	Not very relevant	Not at all relevant
Primary (n=116)	71%	26%	2%	1%
Post Primary (n=48)	42%	48%	6%	4%
Total	62%	32%	4%	2%

Ratings of individual elements of the project were also very positive, as indicated below.

Table 6.5: Participants' rating of relevance of elements of NPPTI (Primary)

	Very relevant	Relevant	Not very relevant	Not at all relevant
Teacher observation (n=115)	61%	28%	7%	4%
Mentoring (n=116)	68%	28%	3%	1%
Professional development (n=116)	65%	32%	2%	1%

Table 6.6: Participants' rating of relevance of elements of NPPTI (Post primary)

	Very relevant	Relevant	Not very relevant	Not at all relevant
Teacher observation (n=45)	40%	42%	13%	5%
Mentoring (n=47)	55%	38%	4%	3%
Professional development (n=48)	46%	44%	6%	4%

The ratings awarded by primary NQTs are slightly more positive than those awarded by their post primary counterparts. Between 89% and 97% of primary respondents regarded all three elements of the project to have been relevant/very relevant while between 82% and 93% per cent of post primary respondents gave the same rating. Both cohorts rated teacher observation to be the least relevant element of the project. However, the overall level of satisfaction with this element was still very high - some 89% of primary teachers and 82% of post primary teachers rated this element as either relevant or very relevant.

The positive rating of the relevance of the NPPTI to teachers' needs is reflected in the fact that only thirty five percent of the sample were of the view that measures could be adopted to make the project more relevant.

At primary level, teacher observation was the area that most respondents felt could be made more relevant. Most expressed a desire for more time for observation of experienced colleagues at work and for observation of a greater variety of classrooms. A number of primary respondents also made recommendations in relation to the professional development element of the NPPTI. These were very similar to those made earlier in relation to improving the quality of the project:

- Less repetition of material covered during pre-service education.
- A needs analysis of NQTs to be conducted at the start of each year of the project in order to identify NQTs' priorities.
- Groups should be divided according to the class level being taught during seminar days in order to ensure that the discussions were relevant.
- Seminar days should have a greater focus on practical issues, such as discipline and classroom management, and less of a theoretical emphasis.

Other respondents made recommendations in relation to mentoring. These recommendations were very similar to those made earlier in relation to improving the quality of the NPPTI:

- The mentor should have experience teaching the class level being taught by the NQT.

- Additional training should be provided for mentors.
- It should be made clear that the mentor's role was as a support rather than an evaluator.

At post primary level, the most frequently mentioned area for improvement related to professional development. Respondents recommended that there should be more involvement by practising teachers as guest speakers, more seminars with a practical focus on issues such as classroom management/discipline, less repetition of material covered during pre-service education, and less emphasis on educational theory. It was also suggested that the seminars should allow more time for discussion rather than being delivered in a lecture style format.

Post primary respondents also made recommendations in relation to mentoring and teacher observation. In relation to the former, some respondents felt that the time allocated for mentoring should be more rigidly adhered to. Others stipulated that the mentor should be close in age to the NQT and should be teaching the same subject. Post primary respondents considered that teacher observation could be made more relevant to their needs if there was a greater opportunity to observe in a wider variety of classrooms. It was recommended that NQTs should have the opportunity to "observe different teachers other than just one to see how other teachers work in the classroom" *(post primary respondent # 74)*.

6.6 Key question 3: Has the induction project allowed participants to become competent professionals more quickly?

Respondents to the teacher survey were asked if their participation in the NPPTI had made them both a more competent and confident professional. The feedback from NPPTI participants is outlined below.

Table 6.7: Respondents' views on whether the NPPTI had made them a more confident and competent teacher

	Confident (n=162)*		Competent (n=162)**	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Primary	89%	11%	89%	11%
Post Primary	87%	13%	83%	17%
Total	88%	12%	87%	13%

* Primary n = 115, Post primary n=47 ** Primary n = 110, post primary n = 43

Overall, eighty eight percent of respondents indicated that their participation in the NPPTI had made them a more confident teacher. The pattern among primary and post primary was almost identical: eighty nine percent of primary and eighty seven percent of post primary respondents were of this view.

Primary and post primary respondents offered almost identical examples of the means by which they had gained confidence through the NPPTI. A number made general comments about the benefits they had received.

"To get a day away from the class to speak to others and reflect on my own teaching has led me to become a more confident teacher. Going to other classes has given me ideas and tips but most importantly it gave me a renewed confidence

that my own practices in my teaching were correct and in fact I was doing a good job" (post primary respondent # 81).

"[The project] made me feel it was okay to ask questions, to make mistakes and be open to new strategies for improving my teaching. It has also helped in mixing with staff" (primary respondent # 111).

Others referred to specific aspects of the project that led to increased confidence. A significant number highlighted the benefits they had received from the mentoring process. The interaction with mentors was described as "hugely beneficial" and "excellent", and was seen as crucial in "helping to build up my confidence". The feedback from the mentor provided support and reassurance which helped to boost NQTs' confidence. One respondent commented that the mentor *"emphasized what I was doing right and made suggestions on changes needed - seemed like helpful friendly advice rather than criticism" (post primary respondent # 7).* The mentors also provided practical advice on teaching methodologies. Having access to an experienced colleague also provided "*a direct outlet to air concerns, ask questions etc."* without any embarrassment.

Respondents rated the opportunity to meet and share ideas and experiences with other NQTs as another useful means of gaining confidence. This was a particularly common theme among post primary respondents. NQTs had been reassured to find that the problems they were facing were not unique: "*Being able to discuss what I was doing with other new teachers helped me to realise that we were all on the same footing. This gave me confidence that I was doing the right thing" (post primary respondent # 57).* Respondents realised that other teachers were struggling with the same issues and the opportunity to share advice was highly regarded. This helped participants to overcome the feeling of isolation and that their problems were not unique: "*I became aware that I am not alone, that there were other teachers that felt the same way I felt" (primary respondent # 34).* The opportunity provided through the project to meet with and discuss common problems and solutions with other NQTs was valuable in boosting confidence among respondents: "*to share experience and tips with other teachers gave me the belief that I needed in myself" (post primary respondent # 28).*

A significant number of respondents also referred to the benefits of peer observation. The opportunity to observe other experienced teachers at work served three purposes. In the first instance it encouraged NQTs by indicating that even experienced colleagues faced the same type of problems they were encountering. Secondly, it provided reassurance – that the NQTs were actually doing a good job: "*Seeing other teachers teach in the classroom reinforces your own confidence that you are doing things properly" (primary respondent # 17).* Finally, peer observation afforded NQTs an opportunity to gain tips and advice on how to overcome some of the obstacles they had encountered in the classroom. One respondent summarized many of the benefits of peer observation: "*By observing and being observed I was able to focus my attention on what I needed to do in order to deal with the class I taught last year. The feeling of success in dealing with this class certainly helped to increase my self confidence as a teacher" (primary respondent # 27).*

Other teachers highlighted specific areas of school life in which they had become more confident as a result of their participation in the project. These included pupil assessment, catering for special needs, classroom management, discipline, planning, and teaching.

Eighty seven percent of teachers indicated that their participation in the pilot project had enabled them to become a more competent professional. The proportion of primary and post primary respondents who shared this view was very high: eighty nine percent of primary and eighty three percent of post primary respondents.

There was a degree of overlap between the responses given to this question and that relating to increased confidence and a number of respondents felt that increased confidence ultimately led to increased competence: *"Every extra support and encouragement that you get gives you confidence and in turn makes you a more competent teacher" (post primary respondent # 17).*

Respondents highlighted specific areas of school life in which the NPPTI had enabled them to become a more competent professional – such as classroom management, timetabling, classroom planning, dealing with children with special needs, and dealing with parents. Some provided more general comments:

"I think, reflect and observe my work a lot more. I am more willing to use others ideas or change ideas if they are not working" (post primary respondent # 51).

"A competent teacher is one who is open to change and constantly looking at ways to deliver the curriculum in interesting and child-friendly ways. The project started me on that journey" (primary respondent # 32).

Other respondents indicated the way in which individual elements of the project had contributed to increasing their competence. Respondents highlighted the benefits of meeting other NQTs, the professional development days, and the mentoring process. The specific examples given were almost identical to those given in relation earlier in relation to increased confidence.

Respondents were also asked if their participation in the project had helped to smooth the transition from college to school life.

Table 6.8: Participants' views on whether the NPPTI had helped them with transition to teaching profession (n = 161)

Level	Yes	No
Primary (n=112)	76%	24%
Post Primary (n=49)	61%	39%
Total	71%	29%

In total, seventy one percent of respondents felt that the project had helped them in this regard. Of the twenty nine percent who indicated that it did not, a significant number had been teaching for more than a year before participating in the project and they felt that they had already adapted to school life.

The views of primary respondents are more positive on this issue than their post primary counterparts. Seventy six percent of the former and sixty one percent of the latter considered that the NPPTI had facilitated their transition to school life.

Of those primary and post primary respondents who felt it did ease the transition process, a number of themes emerged. Some provided general comments:

"It has supported making the transition between theory and practice. It has also helped in developing a supportive and sharing of ideas among colleagues" (primary respondent # 16).

"It provided a stepping stone where I felt that although I didn't have the support of college tutors to advise and guide me I wasn't thrown in at the deep end either. I still had a strong support network that I could check in with every now and again" (post primary respondent # 37).

The project was praised for dealing with "practical, everyday tasks" and for offering "advice on practical matters such as dealing with parents" or dealing with the roll book, classroom management, catering for children with special needs. Respondents indicated that these were areas that often received little attention during initial teacher education: *"In university very little of the practical part of the job was explained and so the lectures we had from experienced teachers were of great benefit" (post primary respondent # 52).* Through its focus on the practical element of school life the NPPTI *"bridged the gap between college and school life"*. In this manner the pilot project *"polished off unfinished teacher training realities" (primary respondent # 82).*

Another major theme was that the project helped to combat the feelings of isolation experienced by the NQT. Respondents explained that "it was a big step to be alone in the classroom" but as a result of the project, teachers "didn't feel isolated and unsure" *(post primary respondent # 43)*. One respondent described the experience of leaving the college environment and entering the classroom as "overwhelming" but the pilot project had "provided a good support to make that less daunting". Through meeting with other NQTs "it was clear that we all had the same worries and concerns after leaving college" *(primary respondent # 72).*

Having access to a mentor was another key element that helped NQTs with the transition to school life. It was very comforting "to know you have your mentor there to ask questions at the beginning when unsure" *(primary respondent # 61)*. It was reassuring to be able to discuss with the mentor any issues or problems that NQTs were experiencing difficulty with. It also persuaded respondents that it was acceptable to "to discuss and seek help/ideas for issues that I was finding challenging in my first year" *(primary respondent # 57).*

The project was also praised for making the transition to school life easier through the provision of dedicated time for planning issues. This helped to "reduce the overall stress of the year" and was particularly helpful "in relation to the probationary year and in helping to be prepared in terms of plans, discipline etc." *(primary respondent # 79).*

Respondents were also asked if there were any other areas in which they felt they required further support. Overall, forty one per cent of respondents indicated that further support was necessary. Thirty eight percent of primary and forty seven percent of post primary respondents were in this category.

Table 6.9: Participants' views on whether they require further in-service (n = 153)

	Yes	No
Primary (n=106)	38%	62%
Post Primary (n=47)	47%	53%
Total	41%	59%

Among the areas identified by respondents some key priorities emerged. The main priority for both primary and post primary NQTs was classroom management and discipline, followed by dealing with children with special needs. A number of other issues were also mentioned, although not as frequently. These included dealing with parents, disadvantage, differentiation, record keeping, time management, pupil assessment, dealing with newcomer children, and dealing with multi-classes.

6.7 Key question 4: Has the induction project contributed to retaining teachers within the educational system?

One of the issues that emerged from the literature review conducted for this review was the potential value of a period of induction support in preventing attrition from the teaching profession (see chapter two). The retention of teachers within the education system is the intermediate outcome of TES activity in the area of induction, as outlined in the PLM (see chapter four). The expectation is that NQTs will remain within the education system and contribute towards pupil learning which is the final outcome of TES activity. The NPPTI has a vital role to play in (i) easing the transition from college to school in order to overcome any feelings of isolation experienced by NQTs, thereby encouraging them to remain within the teaching profession, and (ii) in refining and complementing the skills and knowledge acquired by NQTs during initial teacher education, thereby ensuring effective performance in the classroom.

There are no data to indicate the number of NQTs who leave the teaching profession in Ireland within the first few years of graduation. It was therefore decided to provide an estimate of the extent to which the provision of support through the NPPTI had influenced NQTs to remain within the teaching profession by asking teachers directly through the teacher survey.

Table 6.10: Respondents' views on whether NPPTI contributed to their decision to remain within the teaching profession (n=159)

	Yes	No
Primary (n=111)	77%	23%
Post primary (n=48)	63%	37%
Total	73%	27%

Overall, almost three quarters (seventy three percent) of respondents felt that the pilot project had contributed to their decision to remain within the profession. The proportion of primary teachers in this category was higher than at post primary

level, seventy seven percent compared to sixty three percent. Of those who felt that the NPPTI was not a contributory factor to their continuation in the teaching profession, a number had been teaching for more than a year before participating in the project.

Those who felt that their participation had influenced their decision to remain within the teaching profession were asked to specify the extent. As indicated below, thirty four percent of respondents indicated that the project had contributed 'to a large extent', forty nine percent felt it had contributed 'to some extent' while another sixteen percent felt that it had contributed 'to a small extent'.

Table 6.11: Extent to which NPPTI contributed to NQTs decision to remain within the teaching profession (n=116)

	To a large extent	To some extent	To small extent
Primary (n=86)	33%	50%	17%
Post primary (n=30)	40%	47%	13%
Total	34%	49%	16%

The pattern among primary and post primary respondents is very similar. About a third of each cohort considered that the project had contributed to a large extent in influencing their decision to remain within the education system, approximately a half considered that it had contributed to some extent, while between 13-17% considered that it had contributed to a small extent.

6.8 Key question 5: What proportion of NQTs has participated in the NPPTI?

The NPPTI has been implemented in five phases (phase 5 commenced in September 2006). To date, there have been 549 primary and 343 post primary participants. The table below expresses the number of participants in the NPPTI as a percentage of the number of graduates from the relevant educational institutions in each year since the project began in September 2002.

Table 6.12: Proportion of NQTs targeted by the NPPTI

Year	No. of primary participants as % of overall no. of graduates	No of post primary participants as % of overall no. of graduates
2002/2003	3.5%	3%
2003/2004	3%	3%
2004/2005	3%	4%
2005/2006	8%	8.5%
2006/2007	17%	17%
Overall	8%	7%

The number of teachers targeted by the NPPTI is relatively small. In the five year period from 2002 to 2006 there have been 7,272 graduates from all of the Colleges of Education. In the same period there have been 549 NQTs targeted by the NPPTI. This represents 8% of the overall population of graduates. However, the position has improved in recent years. There have been increases in the number of teachers targeted by the NPPTI in 2005/2006 and 2006/2007. In the 5th phase of the project

– in 2006/2007 – approximately one fifth of the total population of primary NQTs was targeted by the NPPTI.

The proportion of post primary teachers targeted by the NPPTI is very similar to the pattern among primary teachers. There have been 4,915 graduates with a Higher Diploma in the period from 2002 to 2006, while the number of teachers targeted by the NPPTI amounted to 343. This represents 7% of the overall number of post primary NQTs from the Higher Diploma programme[100]. However, as with the NPPTI primary pillar, the number of teachers targeted has increased in recent years. Almost one fifth of NQTs (from a Higher Diploma programme) were targeted in the current phase of the NPPTI post primary pillar.

6.9 Conclusion

This chapter has assessed the extent to which the TES has achieved its objective in relation to the induction of NQTs into the teaching profession. The preceding analysis has suggested that there is a high level of satisfaction among NPPTI participants with the quality of support and training provided through the project. Participants viewed the support provided as being of very high quality, and very relevant to their needs. The vast majority of respondents were also of the view that the project had contributed significantly to making them more competent and confident professionals.

Almost three quarters (71%) of respondents to the teacher survey were of the opinion that their participation in the project had helped to smooth the transition from college to school life. Of the remaining twenty nine percent, a significant number had already been teaching for more than a year before participating in the project and they felt that they had already adapted to school life.

Data from the teacher survey indicate that participants in the NPPTI also consider the support they received to have played an important role in their decision to remain within the teaching profession. Overall, almost three quarters (seventy three percent) of respondents felt that the pilot project had contributed to their decision to remain within the profession. Of those who felt that it had contributed, thirty four percent indicated that the project had contributed 'to a large extent' to their decision. Nearly half (49%) felt it had contributed 'to some extent' while another sixteen percent felt that it had contributed 'to a small extent'. The evidence suggests that the NPPTI is playing a vital role in (i) easing the transition from college to school life, thereby overcoming any feelings of isolation experienced by NQTs and encouraging them to remain within the teaching profession, and (ii) in refining and complementing the skills and knowledge acquired by NQTs during initial teacher education, thereby ensuring effective performance in the classroom.

The retention of qualified teachers within the education system is the intermediate outcome of TES activity in this area. The evidence in this chapter suggests that the NPPTI is contributing towards this intermediate outcome. The rationale behind the

[100] This excludes the number of post primary teachers qualifying in specific disciplines such as Home Economics.

work of the TES is that by retaining qualified teachers within the system they will contribute towards pupil learning which is the final outcome of all TES activity.

The analysis of the views of NQTs on the quality and relevance of the NPPTI does not take into account the wider benefits to the school community of participation in the pilot project. An evaluation of the first phase of the NPPTI indicated that mentors, principal teachers and a majority of DES inspectors all reported positively on the benefits of the project.[101] Both mentors and principals concurred with the view that taking part in the NPPTI had made a very positive impact on the school as a whole. Mentors commented that participation in the project had created a platform for discussion within their school on issues related to teaching and learning. It also encouraged post-holders and those in middle management to take a leadership role in the school, provided an opportunity for all teachers to ask for help if needed, and gave the message that asking for help is acceptable.[102]

A high proportion of respondents (41%) to the teacher survey were of the view that they required further support and professional development in a number of areas. The main priorities for both primary and post primary NQTs were classroom management and discipline, and dealing with children with special needs. A number of other issues were also mentioned, although not as frequently. This indicates the need to view teacher education as a continuum, as suggested in the previous chapter.

There are some aspects of each of the three main elements of the NPPTI - teacher observation, mentoring and professional development - where some participants feel that the quality and/or relevance of the support provided could be strengthened. In relation to teacher observation, participants in the NPPTI expressed some uneasiness at the prospect of being observed by or having to observe their mentor or other teachers, particularly if it was someone with whom they had established a relationship. Others were of the view that teacher observation could be made more practical if NQTs observed a similar class level to the one that they were actually teaching as well as observing teachers at work in a variety of class levels. Respondents also recommended more guidance on what to focus on while observing another teacher.

In the area of professional development, a number of respondents suggested measures that could be adopted to improve the quality of the workshops and seminars. This included a desire to make the professional development days as relevant as possible to participants' needs and also to strengthen the practical element of the support provided. Respondents to the NPPTI teacher survey also proposed that seminars and workshops should not be delivered in a lecture style format and should not repeat material that was previously covered during initial teacher education.

In relation to mentoring, some respondents recommended that it should be made clear that mentoring was designed as a support for NQTs rather than an assessment of their competency. Other proposals to improve the system of mentoring included

[101] NPPTI (2005), p.83
[102] *ibid*, p.71

the provision of additional training and guidance for mentors and the provision of a dedicated mentor for each NQT rather than NQTs having to share a mentor. Some respondents felt that this element of the project could be made more relevant if the mentor had experience teaching the class level (at primary) or subject (post primary level) being taught by the NQT. However, it should be noted that the NPPTI is a project that has evolved considerably since its first iteration in 2002/2003 and many of the recommendations were made by teachers who had participated in the early phases of the project. Some of these changes have already been adopted by the NPPTI project team.

One area where the NPPTI could be strengthened is in relation to the coverage of the project. The proportion of NQTs targeted by the NPPTI is relatively low. Only 8% of primary NQTs and 7% of post primary NQTs have participated in the project since its inception. However, the proportion of participants has increased in recent years. The current phase of the NPPTI (phase 5) has targeted approximately 17% of all primary and post primary NQTs. While the further expansion of the project is desirable, this must be considered in the context of available resources and in the context of the constraints within the education system – for example in relation to the number of established teachers willing to act as mentors.

Recommendations designed to strengthen the future implementation of the NPPTI are outlined below.

6.10 Recommendations

- The views of NQTs on the areas where the existing implementation of the NPPTI could be strengthened should be conveyed through the TES to the NPPTI project team.
- In light of the success of the NPPTI in assisting NQTs with the transition from college to school life, and in contributing towards the retention of NQTs within the teaching profession, it is recommended that the TES consider the further extension of the NPPTI on a phased basis – and within the context of available resources – until all NQTs are targeted.

Chapter Seven

Programme Objectives – Continuing Professional Development/In-service training - Extent of Achievement

7.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the extent to which the TES has achieved its objectives in relation to the provision of CPD/in-service training.

7.2 In-service training and professional development – key questions

The objective of the TES in relation to in-service training and professional development is:

"To support the implementation of an accessible and appropriate programme of quality continuing professional development that is aimed at meeting the identified and appropriately prioritised personal and professional needs of teachers, the organisational, administrative and curricular needs of school communities, and the policy needs of the education system generally, as identified by government in consultation with all the education partners."

In order to assess the effectiveness with which the TES has achieved this objective, it will be necessary to address the following key questions.

1. *What is the quality of the in-service training and support provided by the TES?*

2. *Does the in-service training supported by the TES equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement new curricula or teaching methodologies?*

3. *Are teachers implementing revised curricula and/or new teaching methodologies?*

4. *Does the implementation of revised curricula result in any improvement in learning outcomes for students?*

5. *What proportion of teachers participate in in-service training and professional development?*

6. *To what extent does the programme of in-service training and professional development supported by the TES balance system needs, school needs and individual teacher needs?*

As indicated in chapter two, the menu of in-service and professional development provision supported by the TES encompasses some twenty nine National Support Programmes as well the provision of summer and local courses through the

Education Centre Network. With the agreement of the steering committee for this review, it was decided to focus analysis on a select number of programmes. The programmes selected for evaluation were:

- Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP)
- Summer Courses
- Local Courses
- National Biology Support Service (NBSS)
- History In-Service Team (HIST)

These programmes represent a mix of in-service provision: the PCSP and the summer courses are targeted at primary teachers, the local courses cater for primary and post primary teachers, while the HIST and NBSS are directed at second level teachers. The section below provides background information on each of these programmes.

Primary Curriculum Support Programme

The revised Primary School Curriculum was launched and circulated to primary teachers in September 1999. The introduction of the curriculum was the culmination of an extensive process of collaborative curriculum planning and design by the education partners, under the auspices of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). The curriculum is presented in six areas of learning, some of which are further subdivided into subjects, as outlined below:

Table 7.1: Structure of Primary School Curriculum (1999)

Language		
Gaeilge	English	
Mathematics		
Social, environmental and scientific education		
History	Geography	Science
Arts Education		
Visual arts	Music	Drama
Physical Education		
Social, Personal and Health Education		
Religious Education		

In 1998, prior to the launch of the revised curriculum, the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP) was established. The aim of the PCSP is to mediate the curriculum *vis-à-vis* schools and teachers in order to enable them to implement the curriculum.[103] The PCSP is funded by the TES and is managed by the Dublin West Education Centre.

The organisational structure of the PCSP reflects that of other national educational initiatives. A national co-ordinator has overall responsibility for the PCSP and is supported by a deputy national co-ordinator. In addition a team of six assistant

[103] Damien Murchan et al (2005), *PCSP*, p.15

national co-ordinators are responsible for the day to day running of the programme of professional development in their designated subject.[104]

The support provided by the PCSP comprises two interconnected strands: (i) in-service training seminars, and (ii) the Regional Curriculum Support Service (Cuiditheoirí). Both of these elements are described briefly below.

(i) In-service seminars

The PCSP seminars represent the key mediating device between the primary curriculum and practitioners. The seminars conducted with groups of teachers (either from a single school or from clusters of schools) are designed to inform participants of the content and methodology of the different subjects. The seminars take place in the year prior to when a given subject is due to be implemented in schools.[105] The Education Centres facilitate the running of PCSP seminars throughout the country.

The Primary School Curriculum has been rolled out on a phased basis since 1999. At the time of writing, teachers had received the full programme of in-service support in eight of the eleven subject areas of the Primary School Curriculum (1999). In-service training had commenced in the final three subjects – Drama, History and Geography – but was not yet completed.

(ii) Regional Curriculum Support Service (RCSS)

The second strand of the programme is the RCSS, or Cuiditheoirí service, which was established in 2001 to support teachers in their own schools. The role of the Cuiditheoir, or RCSS advisor, is to support teachers in their implementation of the Primary School Curriculum. RCSS advisors are invited by school principals to visit schools to advise on the implementation of particular areas of the curriculum, provide support for school or classroom planning in a particular area, establish teacher support networks, organise seminars and/or workshops in conjunction with the Education Centres to meet the needs of local teachers, and provide inputs on specific aspects of a curricular area. Normally, provision of this form of support follows the subject seminars and occurs during that subject's implementation in school. [106]

Summer course programme

The summer course programme provides training opportunities for primary school teachers during the months of July and August. The programme is funded by the TES and administered by Drumcondra Education Centre.[107] The courses are organized by a range of local providers along with Education Centres, the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) and the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE). Courses provided by the Education Centre Network and independent providers must be approved in advance by the TES. However, courses

[104] *ibid*, p.16
[105] Damien Murchan et al (2005), *PCSP*, p.87
[106] *ibid*, p.126
[107] Prior to 2005, the summer course programme was administered by Marino Institute of Education.

organized by the INTO and the NCTE do not require TES approval.[108]

The principal objective of the summer course programme is "the advancement of teachers' pedagogic and management skills, in the context of the work of the primary school".[109] The subject matter of the summer courses falls broadly into two categories: (1) those that focus on an area of the curriculum and (2) those with a more general focus such as learning support or school planning. Course applications are assessed by reference to the following criteria:

- Relevance to improving the quality and learning in the primary school.
- Application to the successful implementation of the Primary School Curriculum (1999).
- Potential for improving teachers' understanding of school processes, including planning, methodologies, assessment, content, strand/strand unit, and delivery of the curriculum. [110]

In accordance with Rule 58 of the Rules for National Schools, teachers attending approved summer courses are entitled to claim Extra Personal Vacation (EPV) Leave in the following school year. The required number of course days attended and the corresponding number of EPV days awarded are outlined below:

Table 7.2: EPV days awarded for attendance at approved summer courses[111]

Attendance	EPV AWARDED
1-3 Days	0
4 Days	2
5-8 Days	3
9-14 Days	4
15 Days or more	5

In 2006 there were 446 summer courses organised by all of the providers (Education Centres, INTO, NCTE etc), with 13,764 participants.

Local courses

Local courses are those courses organized by Education Centres for primary and post primary teachers during the school year and outside of school time. While summer courses are organized (for primary teachers) during July and August, local courses are generally organized in the spring and autumn of each year. They are usually held in the evening or at weekends. All courses are provided locally either on the Centres' premises or in local venues such as schools or hotels. The Centres make all the arrangements for these courses including hiring lecturers and carrying out evaluation of the courses.

Local courses are supported and administered through the TES. There has been no devolution of responsibility for management of the local courses to one Education

[108] DES (2003) *Evaluation of Summer Course Programme 2003 Summary Report*, 1
[109] DES (2006) *Criteria for approval of summer courses, 2006*
[110] *ibid*
[111] DES Circular 37/97

Centre, as is the case with the summer course programme. Unlike the summer course programme, teachers do not receive any additional Extra Personal Vacation Leave for participation in a local course.

In 2006 there were 1,237 local courses organised through the Education Centre Network, with a total of 22,537 participants. Approximately two thirds of participants were primary level teachers and one third were post primary level teachers.

History In-Service Team (HIST)

A revised syllabus for history at Leaving Certificate level was introduced in September 2004, and first examined in June 2006. The History In-Service Team (HIST) was established in September 2003, with the aim of providing teachers with the knowledge and competence to teach students the programme of the revised Leaving Certificate History syllabus.

The HIST is funded by the TES and is administered by Monaghan Education Centre which has responsibility for contractual, advisory and overall managerial functions for the programme.

The HIST team has organized in-service training for all Leaving Certificate History teachers. Since February 2004, five phases of in-service have been conducted by the History in-service team[112]. The work focused on introducing the syllabus, exemplifying suitable approaches, clarifying anxieties, and supplying appropriate resources.

While the HIST was scheduled to complete the intensive phase of in-service training in 2005/2006, it was decided to maintain the Support Service for 2006/07, albeit on a slightly reduced scale – the number of Regional Development Officers (RDOs) was reduced from four to three. Over 2006/07 it is envisaged that the support services will be involved in work related to further enhancement of the new curriculum.

National Biology Support Service (NBSS)

In September 2001 the DES introduced a new syllabus for Leaving Certificate Biology. This revised syllabus was examined for the first time in June 2004.

The National Biology Support Service (NBSS) was established in January 2001 with the aim of providing teachers with the knowledge and competence to implement the new syllabus. The NBSS was funded by the TES and administered by Tralee Education Centre, which was responsible for the contractual, advisory and overall managerial functions for the programme.

The NBSS consisted of a National Co-ordinator (NCO) and eleven RDOs. The work of the RDOs was supplemented when required from a panel of part-time trainers.[113]

[112] One final phase of in-service training was scheduled for the period October-December 2006
[113] Tralee Education Centre (2004) *Final Report on the NBSS*, pp.16-21

As part of its brief to facilitate teachers in implementing the new syllabus, the NBSS organized six phases of in-service training. Each phase of in-service training focused on a different aspect of the revised syllabus.[114] One-day cluster meetings, two and a half day laboratory workshops and one day ecology field studies, were organised for all biology teachers nominated by their schools.

Initially the programme of in-service was to be completed within two years, but it extended into a third year because of industrial relations problems between the Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland (ASTI) and the DES from mid 2001 until November 2002. This impacted on the delivery of the in-service programme and meant that some of the in-service training had to be repeated following the resolution of the industrial dispute.[115]

7.3 Data Sources

A number of data sources were used to assess the effectiveness with which the TES has achieved its objectives. The main sources were (i) participant evaluation sheets, (ii) teacher surveys, and (iii) the quality assurance process undertaken by the DES Inspectorate. These data sources are described in Appendix 3. (Appendix 7 contains supplementary tables supporting the analysis in this chapter).

7.4 Key question 1: What is the quality of the in-service training and support provided by the TES?

This section assesses the quality of the in-service training and development supported by the TES by examining the level of satisfaction among participants in training programmes provided through the PCSP, the summer and local course programmes, and the History and Biology support services. Data from the participant evaluation sheets and the relevant teacher surveys are supplemented by data from other sources where possible.

1. Primary Curriculum Support Programme

The PCSP consists of two elements: in-service seminars and the Regional Curriculum Support Service. This section explores the level of teacher satisfaction with the seminars; the next section focuses on the RCSS.

Seminars

Respondents to the teacher survey were asked for their views on the quality, relevance and the duration of the in-service training received in each subject area. The tables below summarise respondents' views on these issues.

[114] Tralee Education Centre (2004) *Final Report on the NBSS*, p.29
[115] *ibid.*, pp.23-26, 29

Table 7.3: Participants' assessment of the quality of PCSP in-service seminars

	Very good	Good	Poor	Very Poor
English (n=146)	36%	53%	8%	3%
Mathematics (n=145)	41%	54%	4%	1%
Visual Arts (n=139)	50%	47%	2%	1%
Gaeilge (n=146)	35%	54%	9%	2%
SPHE (n=142)	30%	61%	8%	1%
Science (n=149)	42%	54%	3%	1%
Geography (n=152)	41%	51%	7%	1%
History (n= 153)	42%	50%	7%	1%
Music (n=153)	51%	46%	2%	1%
Physical Ed. (n=165)	66%	31%	2%	1%
Mean	44%	50%	5%	1%

Table 7.4: Participants' view of the relevance of the PCSP in-service training

	Very relevant	Relevant	Not very relevant	Not at all relevant
English (n=146)	36%	55%	9%	1%
Mathematics (n=145)	42%	50%	8%	0
Visual Arts (n=139)	36%	58%	6%	0
Gaeilge (n=145)	32%	56%	10%	2%
SPHE (n=139)	32%	60%	8%	0
Science (n=144)	33%	57%	10%	0
Geography (n= 151)	30%	58%	12%	0
History (n=148)	32%	54%	14%	0
Music (n=151)	38%	56%	6%	0
Physical Ed. (n=165)	41%	54%	5%	0
Mean	35%	56%	9%	0

Table 7.5: Participants' assessment of the length of time allocated for in-service training

	Too short	Appropriate	Too long
English (n=149)	40%	55%	5%
Mathematics (n=149)	28%	68%	4%
Visual Arts (n=140)	16%	81%	3%
Gaeilge (n=147)	25%	73%	2%
SPHE (n=141)	14%	79%	7%
Science (n=148)	24%	74%	2%
Geography (n=152)	16%	81%	3%
History (n=156)	17%	80%	3%
Music (n=155)	22%	74%	4%
Physical Ed. (n=164)	15%	82%	3%
Mean	22%	75%	3%

The level of satisfaction among participants with the quality of the PCSP seminars is consistently very high. On average, ninety four percent of participants rated the quality of the seminars as either very good or good. The lowest ratings were awarded in respect of the languages – English and Gaeilge, but even here eighty nine percent of participants were satisfied. The most positive ratings were awarded in respect of Visual Arts, Music and Physical Education, where ninety seven percent of participants awarded a rating of very good/good.

Participants' views of the relevance of the training provided through the PCSP seminars are also consistently positive. Overall, ninety one percent of participants rated the seminars to have been very relevant/relevant, while nine percent considered them to have been not very relevant. The most positive rating was awarded to Physical Education, where ninety five percent of participants rated the seminars to have been very relevant/relevant. The lowest rating was awarded to History, but even here eighty six percent of respondents were satisfied with the relevance of the training provided.

Three quarters of respondents considered the length of time allocated for in-service training to have been appropriate. One in five (22%) considered it to have been too short, while only three percent considered it to have been too long. In terms of individual subjects, approximately three quarters or more of respondents considered the length of the training to have been appropriate in each subject with the exception of English, Mathematics and Gaeilge. One quarter or more considered the training received in these subjects to have been too short. Approximately forty percent of respondents were of this view in relation to English. The highest proportion of respondents who considered training in any particular subject to have been too long occurred in relation to SPHE, where seven percent of the cohort was in this category.

Respondents were also asked for their views on the quality of the PCSP website. Of one hundred and thirty two respondents who had accessed the PCSP website at some stage, ninety seven percent considered it to be very good/good. Only three percent of respondents considered the quality of the website to be poor (see table 1, appendix 7).

The positive feedback emerging from the teacher survey is supported by data from two other sources: (i) a teacher survey conducted as part of a recent TCD evaluation of the PCSP[116] and (ii) the participant evaluation sheets completed by participants at the in-service seminar training. Typically, between 80-90% of participants who completed an evaluation sheet following completion of a PCSP seminar expressed satisfaction with the quality of the training provided. The level of satisfaction among participants was also very positive in respect of the quality of the facilitation and presentation of the seminars (see tables 2 and 3, appendix 7 for tabulation of participant evaluation sheets).

However, despite the high level of satisfaction to emerge from the teacher survey conducted for this review, some sixty four percent of respondents indicated that improvements could be made to the PCSP seminars. The most frequent

[116] Damien Murchan et al (2005), *PCSP*, p.112

recommendation was the need to make the seminars more specific to individual school contexts. Respondents felt that trainers should be able to adapt their presentation and delivery to the specific situation of the school – whether it was a Gaelscoileanna, junior school, or disadvantaged. It was deemed particularly important that the trainers take account of multi-class teaching – it was felt that much of the PCSP in-service had been aimed toward single class teaching. It was also suggested that in-service should be confined to groups of teachers teaching the same class level. Otherwise the training was considered to be "too broad if dealing with the entire curriculum for all levels". It was also recommended that, where possible, the specific priorities of individual schools should be identified in advance of the in-service training. This reflected similar findings from the data collated as part of the TCD evaluation of the PCSP. A consensus emerged from both principal and teacher focus groups conducted by the TCD research team that seminars were not differentiated to suit the particular contexts of different types of schools or teachers, leading to a diffuse, rather than differentiated presentation of the material.[117]

The second most frequent recommendation was for specific changes to be made to aspects of the training seminars. Some respondents felt that the trainers should allow more time for participation and exchange of views among trainees, and in particular to draw on the views of more experienced teachers. They also recommended that the training should be more practical and less theoretical with more hands on activities and less 'passive listening'. Some felt that some of the presenters/facilitators were not sufficiently well informed to answer queries, particularly in relation to current DES guidelines and circulars. They considered it crucial to recruit facilitators with significant teaching experience and "with a particular expertise in the subject in which they are providing in-service" *(PCSP respondent 201*). Others considered the in-service days to have been quite rushed due to the amount of content the facilitator had to cover: *"The result is that the day becomes a blur and may not be beneficial. So maybe less might become more" (PCSP respondent 174)*.

Regional Curriculum Support Service (Cuiditheoirí)

Respondents to the teacher survey were asked to rate the quality and relevance of the advice/support provided by the Cuiditheoirí, and the quality of the handouts and resources provided (see tables 4-6 in appendix 7 for tabulated data).

The response by teachers to these questions was very positive. Ninety six percent of respondents indicated that the quality of the advice provided by the RCSS was very good or good. Only three percent indicated that it was poor and one percent considered it to be very poor.

There was a slightly lower satisfaction level with the relevance of the advice provided by the RCSS, but the overall rating was still very positive, with eighty nine percent of the sample considering the advice provided to be relevant to their needs. The remaining eleven percent of respondents was mainly of the view that the advice provided was not specific enough. This included not being specific to

[117] Damien Murchan et al (2005), *PCSP*, pp.117-118

certain class situations, especially multi-class, or to non mainstream teachers such as learning support and resource teachers. Other teachers felt that the Cuiditheoirí did not take the specific school context into account: "*The Cuiditheoirí seem to come to the schools with a set piece of information. If this is not what is required by the teacher this is not changed" (PCSP respondent # 17).* Some respondents were also of the view that Cuiditheoirí did not provide practical enough advice.

The level of satisfaction among teachers with the materials and handouts provided by Cuiditheoirí is also very positive. Ninety two percent of the cohort considered the handouts to be either very good or good. Only eight percent considered them to be poor/very poor. The overall level of satisfaction with the support provided by the RCSS also emerged from the data collated as part of the TCD evaluation of the PCSP.[118]

As a final question, respondents were asked if there were any measures that could be adopted to improve the support provided by the RCSS. Approximately half of the cohort indicated that improvements could be made. However, the most frequent recommendation related to greater access to the RCSS. This encompassed more frequent visits by the Cuiditheoirí, longer time with the Cuidihteoirí during each visit, more in class visits by Cuiditheoirí to individual teachers, and more email support from Cuiditheoirí. Respondents were of the view that more Cuiditheoirí should be recruited: "If there were more Cuiditheoirí we might be able to access them more often" *(PCSP respondent # 139).*

An issue raised by a significant number of respondents was the need to maximize the time spent with the Cuiditheoirí during a school visit. This involved allowing teachers to spend time with the Cuiditheoir uninterrupted by school duties. It was recommended that the DES should "*provide substitution cover or a day off for children"* during a visit by the Cuiditheoir or provide "*an after school service where all the staff could attend together" (PCSP respondent # 81).* It was felt that the provision of substitute cover would enable teachers to "*concentrate on support being given without distraction" (PCSP respondent # 65).* Teachers explained the pressures faced when making arrangements to meet with a Cuiditheoir: "*The visits are generally for a short period while your class is being supervised. You need to prepare work for your class and correct it afterwards so you are under pressure for the time you are away" (PCSP respondent # 41).* Respondents indicated that the arrangements for meeting with the Cuiditheoirí generally involved "working lunches or doubled up classes" and that this was "very pushed and frustrating" *(PCSP respondent # 154).*

Data from the TCD evaluation of the PCSP indicate that Cuiditheoirí most typically met with small groups of teachers while their classes were supervised by other staff members. The second most common arrangement was to meet with the whole staff while the school was closed to students. When questioned about their preferred option for organising school visits by Cuiditheoirí, respondents to the TCD teacher questionnaire expressed a clear preference for arranging meetings while the school was closed to students, for either a full or part-day. The second most popular option was for a Cuiditheoir to meet with teachers individually or in sub groups while the

[118] Damien Murchan et al (2005), *PCSP*, pp.142-148

pupils were supervised by paid substitutes or other staff. The third most popular option was for a Cuiditheoir to meet staff individually or collectively after school hours.[119]

The fact that the main recommendation made by respondents to improve the RCSS was a need for greater access to the service indicates a very high level of satisfaction with the quality of the service, when accessed.

The second main recommendation to improve the RCSS was a desire for more practical advice. Respondents requested "clear simple ideas that can be implemented rather than just aims and objectives to be done" *(PCSP respondent # 44)*. They also wanted the advice to be "as practical as possible and not geared for ideal situations" *(PCSP respondent # 97)*. It was felt that the support provided had to be practical within the particular school context. One method of making the support provided more practical was for the provision of more sample policies and templates that could be tailored to suit the needs of individual schools.

Other recommendations included a desire for more concrete handouts and resources to help implement the ideas associated with the revised curriculum, more meetings with specific groups of teachers e.g. dealing with all senior infants teachers rather than a mix of teachers from each class group, more time devoted to planning issues during a Cuiditheoir visit, more specific guidance for multi class teachers, and more demonstrations of model lessons.

2. The summer course programme

One weakness in the standard participant evaluation sheet employed by Education Centres to monitor summer course provision is the absence of any direct question relating to the quality of the training provided. A number of questions focus on administrative aspects of the summer courses, including participants' satisfaction with the catering arrangements, facilities and venue. These issues primarily relate to the organisation of the course rather than the quality of the training provided. While participants are asked to identify the aspect(s) of the course that they found most and least useful, they are not asked for an assessment of the overall quality of the course itself. Participants are asked instead for their views on the 'Helpfulness' of their course. While far from ideal, this is the closest approximate to a question about the quality of the training provided. This is a fixed alternative question, with respondents asked to rate the course against a Likert type scale consisting of 'Very helpful', 'Helpful', and 'Not very helpful'. (The presence of two positive categories and one negative category may result in a bias towards a positive assessment by participants). While there is no guarantee, it is probable that a course rated as 'Very helpful' is likely to have been judged by participants as being of high quality, a course rated as 'Helpful' is likely to have been of good quality, and a course rated as 'Not very helpful' is likely to have been of poor quality.

As outlined in Table 7.6 below, the proportion of participants who rated their course as being 'Very Helpful' (or an equivalent response on one of the non-standard evaluation sheets) is consistently high across all of the Education Centres

[119] *ibid*. pp.149-150

and in each of the years reviewed. The overall proportion of participants who considered their summer course to be very helpful or helpful was 99% in each of the three years reviewed. The proportion of respondents who considered it to have been not very helpful was insignificant – not rising above 1% in any year. The level of satisfaction among participants in each Education Centre was also very high.

Table 7.6: Participants' assessment of the 'Helpfulness' of their summer course (%)

	2004			2005			2006		
	Very helpful	*Helpful*	*Not very helpful*	*Very helpful*	*Helpful*	*Not very helpful*	*Very helpful*	*Helpful*	*Not very helpful*
Drumcondra	82%	17%	1%	76%	23%	1%	83%	16%	1%
Navan	92%	8%	0	78%	20%	2%	93%	7%	0
Tralee**	96%	4%	0	99%	1%	0	95%	5%	0
Dublin West ***	88%	12%	0	88%	11%	1%	97%	3%	0
Sligo****	100%	0	0	94%	6%	0	82%	18%	0
Blackrock	95%	5%	0	97%	3%	0	92%	8%	0
Kildare	89%	11%	0	85%	15%	0	86%	14%	0
Mean	91%	7.4%	0.6%	88%	11%	1%	91%	8%	1%

** Tralee EC does not use the standard sheet and there is no equivalent question on their modified evaluation form. The responses to the question "Please comment on the Course Content and materials" have been analysed. This is an open-ended question but the responses can be categorized as Excellent/Very Good (for comparison purposes this is equivalent to 'Very helpful'), Good/ Fair (='Helpful'), and Poor (='Not very helpful').

*** In 2005, Dublin West EC asked participants to rank the course on a scale of 1 to 10. For comparison purposes, rankings of 1-3 are categorised as 'Very Helpful', 4-6 as 'Helpful', and 7-10 as 'Not very helpful'. In 2006 Dublin West EC used the following categories: excellent, very good, good, fair and poor. For comparison purposes, Excellent/Very good is categorised as 'Very helpful', Good/fair as 'Helpful', and Poor as 'Not very helpful'.

**** Categories in evaluation sheet used by Sligo EC in 2004 are Excellent/Very good, Good, Fair. In order to compare them to the responses given on the standard evaluation sheet, Excellent/very good = Very Helpful, Good/Fair = Helpful, and there is no category equivalent to Not very helpful. Sligo EC categories in 2005 and 2006 are Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor. For comparison purposes, Excellent = very helpful, good/fair = helpful, and poor = not very helpful.

In order to supplement the data from the participant evaluation sheets, the teacher survey asked respondents to assess the quality of the training received through the summer course in which they participated in 2006. The overall level of satisfaction among respondents was very high. In total, ninety nine per cent of respondents rated the quality of their summer course as good or very good. Only one percent (four respondents) considered their summer course to be of poor or very poor quality (see table 7, appendix 7).

The positive views of summer course participants are reinforced by the results of the DES Inspectorate monitoring process. From 2003 onwards, inspectors were required to assess the summer courses under a number of headings including Organisation, Presentation, and Participation. 'Organisation' refers to administrative issues such as the suitability of the venue, the adherence to the timetable and accurate record keeping. 'Presentation' comprises preparation, variety in presentation, balance in presentation, and the use of a variety of resources. 'Participation' relates to the extent to which participants responded to the course and involved themselves in class activities.

A four point rating scale is used by the Inspectorate. Ratings from 1 to 4 were awarded representing 'Very good', 'Good', 'Fair' and 'Poor' practice respectively.

(The fact that inspectors have to choose from four options, three of which are positive may lead to a bias in favour of a positive rating). The results of the Inspectorates' assessment of the sample of summer courses selected in 2003, 2005 and 2006 were analysed as part of this review (see tabulated data in table 8, appendix 7). In each year selected for analysis, more than ninety percent of the courses monitored were considered to be either good or very good in terms of organisation, presentation and participation. The results of the monitoring process were particularly positive in 2006, with all one hundred percent of the courses monitored being rated as very good or good in each of the three areas assessed.

A further indication of the quality of the summer courses is the very high proportion of courses that are recommended by the Inspectorate for future approval. In respect of each course monitored, inspectors are obliged to indicate whether it should be recommended for future approval without amendment, whether it should be approved only on condition that amendments are made, or whether it should not be considered for future approval. Out of a total of one hundred and ninety five courses monitored in five separate years, ninety per cent were recommended for future approval by the Inspectorate without amendment. Another nine per cent were recommended for approval provided that amendments were made to the course content or structure. Only in one per cent of cases did a member of the Inspectorate recommend that a course should not be considered for future approval (see table 9, appendix 7).

Respondents to the teacher survey were afforded an opportunity to provide additional comments on any aspect of the summer course programme. It is significant that out of the one hundred and six respondents who provided additional comments, the most frequently identified issue was praise for the summer course programme organized through the Education Centre Network. A typical comment was that summer courses "help revise the curriculum content and refresh ideas and teaching methods" *(summer course respondent # 123)*. Others commented on the fact that it was possible to learn from other teachers on the course, and that teachers had often been made aware of useful resources to assist them in the classroom.

However, the second most frequent theme was criticism of the summer course programme. A number of respondents advocated the need for a greater variety of summer courses. They highlighted specific areas that they would like to see targeted by future summer course provision. This included curricular areas such as Art, Gaeilge, and English, but also non-curricular areas such as school planning, and ICT, as well as courses targeted at specific post holders such as principals, resource teachers and returning teachers.

Respondents' views on the lack of variety in summer course provision appear to be supported by an analysis of the type of courses organized by the Education Centre Network. The subject matter of summer courses falls broadly into two categories: (1) those that focus on an area of the curriculum and (2) those with a more general focus. Approximately three quarters of courses delivered by all providers each year are curricular related while one quarter are non curricular. The non-curricular courses relate to issues such as ICT, school planning, school management, special needs etc. An analysis of the curricular courses organised through the Education

Centres in the period 2001-2004[120] indicates that there is remarkable consistency in the curricular courses offered during this period (see table 10, appendix 7). Visual Arts and Physical Education are the two subject areas in which one third of summer courses are organised in each year. SPHE and Science are also among the most popular subjects in which courses are organised. In contrast, there are relatively few courses organised in the areas of the English, Gaeilge and Mathematics curricula. This suggests an imbalance in the variety of courses organised by the Education Centre Network. No more than six percent of summer courses each year are organised in the key areas of literacy and numeracy.

Another issue raised by respondents was the limited number of places available on summer courses. Teachers also complained that the delay in circulating the summer course booklet (which advertises the entire menu of courses available) to rural schools meant that the places in many summer courses were filled before some teachers had an opportunity to apply.

3. Local course programme

As with the summer course evaluation sheet employed by Education Centres, the evaluation sheet for local courses does not contain any direct question relating to the quality of the training provided. As with the evaluation of the summer course programme, it was decided to equate a rating of 'Very helpful' with a course of high quality, a rating of 'Helpful' with a course of good quality, and a rating of 'Not very helpful' with a course of poor quality. Participants' responses to this question, aggregated by Education Centre, are outlined below.

Table 7.7: Participants' rating of the 'Helpfulness' of local courses, 2005/2006 (n=1566)

Education Centre	No of respondents who rated the course as:		
	Very Helpful	Helpful	Not very helpful
Drumcondra	76%	24%	-
Navan	79%	20%	1%
Dublin West	90%	10%	-
Sligo*	79%	21%	-
Blackrock	90%	10%	-
Kildare	86%	14%	-
Mean	82%	17%	1%

* Sligo Education Centre has amended the standard evaluation sheet. The options on the Sligo Evaluation sheet are excellent, good, fair and poor. In order to compare the responses to these questions to those on the standard evaluation sheet, excellent is equated to very helpful, good/fair is equated to helpful, and fair is equated to not very helpful.

The proportion of participants who rated their course as being 'Very Helpful' (or an equivalent response on one of the non-standard evaluation sheets) is consistently high across all of the Education Centres included in the sample. Overall, ninety nine per cent of respondents considered their local course to have been either helpful or very helpful. The level of satisfaction among participants in each of the Education Centres is also consistently high. Out of 1,566 respondents, only one per cent rated their course as being not very helpful.

[120] Data was not available from Drumcondra Education Centre for 2005 and 2006.

In order to supplement the data from the participant evaluation sheets, respondents to the local course teacher survey were asked to assess the quality of the course in which they had participated. Ninety eight per cent of respondents considered the quality of the training they had received to be either very good or good. Only two per cent of respondents considered the quality of the training received to have been poor or very poor. The breakdown among primary and post primary respondents was very similar. Ninety eight percent of both categories of respondents considered the quality of their course to be satisfactory (see table 11, appendix 7).

4. History In-Service Team (HIST)

The evaluation sheets for each phase of HIST in-service training ask participants to rate the extent to which the aims of the in-service day were achieved. Typically, each in-service day consists of four or five sessions, with each session having a separate aim. Participants are also asked to assess the 'effectiveness' of the presentations made during the in-service day. The evaluation sheets employ a Likert type scale consisting of the following options: Excellent, Very good, Good, Fairly Good, and Fair. The fact that participants are not afforded the opportunity to award a negative rating is a weakness in the evaluation process and may lead to a positive bias in the data. The table below presents the aggregate assessment by participants of the latest phase of in-service training organized by the HIST (one further phase was scheduled after the time of writing).

Table 7.8 Participants' rating of Phase 5 (2006) in-service training

Aim of in-service	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fairly good	Fair
To introduce the HIST 2006 CD (N=1422)	66%	22%	4%	0	8%
To introduce teachers to the RTE/NCTE syllabus initiative (N=1202)	60%	30%	8%	1%	1%
To allow teachers to reflect/exchange views on the research study report (N=1203)	63%	30%	6%	1%	0
To review documents-based question exemplars (N = 1,204)	71%	25%	4%	0	0
To consider the SEC marking indicators and their application to sample answers (N=1,191)	69%	26%	4%	1%	0
To provide opportunities throughout the day for relevant discussion. (1,195)	64%	28%	7%	1%	0
How effective were the presentations?	69%	26%	4%	1%	0

The aggregate data for each phase of training were analysed as part of this review and the data are contained in tables 12 to 16 in appendix 7. The aggregate data reveal that the level of satisfaction among participants is consistently high. More than ninety per cent of respondents considered the aims of *each* session of *each* phase of training had been fulfilled to an excellent, very good or good extent. The number of participants who awarded the lowest rating – that of fair – was consistently low. In relation to one session in Phase 5 (above) some eight per cent of respondents considered that the aims were achieved to a fair extent. In relation to all other sessions in each phase of in-service, however, the proportion of respondents awarding a rating of fair did not rise above two per cent.

The level of satisfaction among respondents at the quality of the presentations made during each in-service phase is also consistently high. Between eighty nine and ninety five per cent of respondents rated the presentations as excellent or very good. The lowest rating – that of fair – was awarded by no more than one per cent of participants in respect of any one phase of in-service training (table 16, appendix 7).

The positive feedback from the participant evaluation sheets is complemented by the data from the teacher survey. The sample population selected for the survey were asked to rate the quality of support provided by the HIST, as well as the quality of the materials produced and distributed and the quality of the HIST website.

Table 7.9: Respondents' assessment of the quality of HIST support

	Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor
Quality of HIST support (n=179)	50%	42%	7%	1%
Quality of materials (n = 179)	60%	32%	7%	1%
Quality of website (n=156)	44%	50%	6%	-

In total, ninety two per cent of respondents rated the quality of the support and the materials provided by the HIST as either very good or good. Only eight per cent of respondents rated the support or the materials as of poor quality, while one per cent considered it to be very poor.

Of those one hundred and fifty six respondents who had accessed the HIST website at some stage, ninety four per cent rated it to be of very good or good quality. Only six per cent of respondents were not satisfied.

The quality of the in-service training and support provided by the HIST team was also a key theme to emerge from the additional qualitative comments provided by teachers at the end of the teacher survey.

5. National Biology Support Service (NBSS)

The survey of Leaving Certificate biology teachers asked respondents to assess the quality of the support they had received from the NBSS, the quality of the materials produced by the NBSS, and the quality of the NBSS website (a filter question preceded this question, asking if respondents had ever accessed the website).

Table 7.10: Respondents' ratings of the quality of aspects of NBSS support

	Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor
Support (n=175)	61%	36%	3%	-
Materials (n=175)	54%	39%	6%	1%
Website (n=155)	35%	58%	7%	-

The level of support provided to biology teachers by the NBSS was rated very positively by the sample. Some ninety seven per cent of respondents rated the support provided as either good or very good. Only three per cent considered it to be poor. The materials provided by the NBSS were also rated very positively, with

ninety three per cent of respondents considering the materials to be of good or very good quality. Only seven percent of respondents rated the materials as poor or very poor.

Respondents' ratings in relation to the NBSS website were equally positive. A high proportion of the sample (eighty eight per cent) had accessed the website. Of this cohort, ninety three percent considered the website to be good or very good. Only seven per cent rated the quality of the website to be poor.

The level of satisfaction among the sample cohort is also reflected in the additional comments provided at the end of the teacher survey by a number of respondents. The main theme to emerge from these comments was praise for the training and support provided by the NBSS team. One comment typical of many others was the following: *"In-service training overall was extremely good. Totally focussed on the syllabus. Through the training I gained confidence, competence and enthusiasm for the syllabus" (NBSS respondent # 56).*

The positive assessment of the work of the NBSS that emerges from the teacher survey is complemented by the level of satisfaction expressed by participants at each stage of in-service training organized by the NBSS. The evaluation sheets completed for each stage of in-service training indicate a high level of satisfaction with the training provided. For example, year 1 phase 1 training consisted of four sessions and participants were asked to assess the degree to which the objectives of each session were met. The table below indicates the level of satisfaction among participants with the extent to which the aims of each session of phase 1 were achieved.

Table 7.11: Participants views of extent to which NBSS Phase 1 aims were achieved

Session	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
Session 1	66%	28%	5%	1%	-
Session 2	52%	34%	10%	3%	1%
Session 3	63%	26%	9%	1%	1%
Session 4	63%	29%	7%	1%	-

More than ninety six percent of participants considered that the aims of each session of had been achieved to an excellent/very good or good extent. The proportion of participants who awarded the lowest rating, that of poor, was insignificant, rising to no more than one percent of participants.

There was a similarly positive assessment among participants in year 1, phase 2 training. This phase of training consisted of six sessions, and respondents were asked to rate each session in terms of Content, Methodology and Relevance. The data collated from the RDO summary evaluation sheets is outlined in Table 7.12

Table 7.12: Participants' evaluation of year 1, phase 2 NBSS training

	Content			Methodology			Relevance		
	Excellent	*Good*	*Fair*	*Excellent*	*Good*	*Fair*	*Excellent*	*Good*	*Fair*
Session 1 (DNA structure)	72%	26%	2%	76%	23%	1%	63%	32%	5%
Session 2 (DNA Replication)	75%	24%	1%	78%	20%	2%	64%	30%	6%
Session 3 (DNA Profiling)	80%	18%	2%	76%	23%	1%	73%	24%	3%
Session 5 (Genetic screening)	55%	40%	5%	57%	32%	11%	46%	32%	22%
Session 6 (Biosensors genomics)	65%	33%	2%	64%	35%	1%	61%	33%	6%

Respondents rated each of the sessions very positively. In relation to 'Content', ninety five percent or more rated all five sessions as excellent or good. In terms of 'Methodology', all of the sessions were rated as excellent/ good by ninety eighty or more of participants, with the sole exception of 'Genetic Screening'. The satisfaction level was slightly lower in this area, although still positive, with eighty nine percent of respondents rating this session as excellent/good. A similar pattern emerged in relation to 'Relevance'. 'Genetic Screening' was again the least positively rated, with seventy eight percent of participants rating it as excellent/good. Each of the other four sessions was rated as excellent/good by ninety four percent or more of participants. (Data for the other phases of NBSS in-service training are aggregated in tables 17-22 in appendix 7)

7.5 Key question 2: Does the in-service training supported by the TES equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement new curricula?

This section explores the extent to which the in-service training supported by the TES prepares teachers to implement new curricula at primary and post primary levels. The specific focus is on the Primary Curriculum Support Programme at primary level and the HIST and NBSS at Leaving Certificate level.

1. PCSP

Respondents to the teacher survey were asked to indicate the extent to which they felt prepared to implement each subject in the primary curriculum following PCSP in-service training. The results are outlined below.

Table 7.13: Extent to which PCSP seminars prepared teachers to implement the Primary School Curriculum (1999)

	Very well prepared	Well prepared	Poorly prepared	Very poorly prepared
English (n=140)	13%	65%	16%	6%
Mathematics (n=141)	19%	68%	13%	-
Visual Arts (n=133)	26%	65%	8%	1%
Gaeilge (n=139)	13%	67%	18%	2%
SPHE (n=135)	15%	69%	15%	1%
Science (n=142)	17%	69%	13%	1%
Geography (n=148)	17%	74%	8%	1%
History (n=145)	18%	74%	8%	-
Music (n=150)	23%	63%	13%	1%
Physical Ed. (n=161)	27%	67%	6%	-
Mean	19%	68%	12%	1%

The overall level of satisfaction among participants is high: as outlined in Table 7.13 above, eighty seven percent considered themselves to be very well/well prepared to implement the curriculum after their PCSP training. However, there is some variation between individual subjects. Respondents felt most confident in relation to Visual Arts, Physical Education, History and Geography. In each of these areas, ninety percent or more of the cohort considered themselves to be either very well or well prepared. The feedback was less positive in relation to English and Gaeilge, where at least one in five respondents considered themselves either poorly or very poorly prepared.

Respondents were also asked to identify any particular areas in respect of which they felt inadequately prepared. English was the area most frequently identified. However, a significant proportion of respondents also identified P.E., Music and Gaeilge as problem areas. One significant issue, raised in respect of nearly each subject area, was that respondents experienced difficulties relating to multi class teaching.

In relation to English, most respondents did not specify a particular strand or strand unit, but indicated instead that they felt inadequately prepared in relation to the entire syllabus. Some respondents were unclear about the structure of the syllabus – particularly the division into strands and strand units. Others felt that the curriculum was too broad to be manageable. It should be noted that this appears to be a criticism of the curriculum rather than the training provided by the PCSP team. Among those respondents who did highlight specific areas of the curriculum, the main problem appeared to be with the strand units rather than the strands. In particular, the strand units *The process of writing* and *Oral language* were mentioned most frequently.

The findings from the teacher survey replicate earlier findings by the NCCA and the DES Inspectorate. Both had previously concluded that the structure of the English curriculum was presenting difficulties for teachers and, in particular, teachers found the strands difficult to comprehend. The NCCA found that greatest difficulties were experienced by teachers in relation to the *Writing* strand unit, while the Inspectorate highlighted concerns over both the *Writing* and *Oral language* strand units[121].

Respondents were also asked to rate the value of the Cuiditheoirí in supporting them to implement each subject in the primary curriculum.

Table 7.14: Respondents' views on usefulness of RCSS support

	Very useful	Useful	Not very useful	Not at all useful	Never received support from a Cuiditheoir
English (n=144)	36%	35%	7%	1%	21%
Mathematics (n=142)	37%	32%	4%	2%	25%
Visual Arts (n=138)	30%	30%	3%	2%	35%
Gaeilge (n=136)	27%	34%	9%	1%	29%
SPHE (n=135)	21%	30%	7%	2%	40%
Science (n=138)	31%	30%	4%	1%	34%
Geography (n=129)	16%	20%	2%	1%	61%
History (n=128)	20%	17%	3%	1%	59%
Music (n=137)	33%	23%	2%	3%	39%
Physical Ed (n=131)	27%	16%	-	1%	56%
Mean	28%	27%	4%	1%	40%

The satisfaction levels among teachers with the RCSS are very positive. On average, fifty five percent of respondents considered the advice and support of the RCSS to be very useful or useful in assisting them to implement the curriculum. Only five percent of the cohort indicated that the advice and support was not useful. Another forty percent had never received support from the RCSS. This reflects the timetable for the roll out of the revised primary curriculum. The RCSS does not provide assistance in a subject until the intensive (seminars) phase of in-service has been completed. At the time of writing, some subjects had only recently been completed or were completing their intensive phase of in-service training.

There is a variation between satisfaction levels in respect of different subjects. The most positive rating was in respect of English – seventy one percent of the cohort considered the RCSS advice to have been useful/very useful while the lowest level of satisfaction arose in respect of Gaeilge, where one in ten respondents did not consider the advice and support of the Cuiditheoirí to be useful.

One issue that emerged from the TCD evaluation of the PCSP was the potential overlap between the work of the RCSS and the facilitators employed as part of the School Development Planning Initiative (SDPI).[122] The SDPI was established in September 1999 and is funded by the TES and managed by Drumcondra Education

[121] NCCA (2005) , *Primary Curriculum Review: Phase 1,* pp.245-246; DES (2005), *An Evaluation of Curriculum Implementation in Primary Schools,* p.49
[122] Damien Murchan et al (2005), *PCSP*, pp.167-169

Centre. The aims of the Initiative are (i) to support schools in furthering the process of School Development Planning in order to promote school improvement and effectiveness; (ii) to promote collaborative School Development Planning as a means of identifying pupils' needs and responding appropriately to them, and (iii) to build the capacity of schools to implement development planning as a means of quality enhancement.[123]

At primary level the SDPI comprises a National Coordinator, four Regional Coordinators, and a panel of 28 full-time SDP facilitators. The facilitators are a crucial element of the SDPI. Their role is to assist schools with school planning days. The full SDPI facilitation process involves pre-planning meetings with representatives of the school community, facilitated planning days with whole school staff, and post-planning follow-up with school staff to assist the continuation of planning initiatives begun on planning days and to provide additional assistance and advice as required.[124]

Interviews with 'system planners' within the DES undertaken as part of the TCD evaluation of the PCSP indicated a perception that both the PCSP and the SDPI have the same overall objective – to improve teaching and learning in schools. The difference between the two groups, according to the system planners, is that the SDPI provides assistance on generic planning skills, while the PCSP focuses on specific curriculum areas, including planning for subject areas. The data collected as part of the TCD evaluation indicated that teachers and schools at ground level do not distinguish clearly between the respective role of the PCSP Cuiditheoir and that of the SDPI facilitator.[125]

In order to explore these issue further, respondents to the teacher survey were asked how clear they were about the distinction between the RCSS and the SDPI facilitators. In total, only forty one percent of the cohort was very clear or clear about the distinction. Forty five percent were not very clear, while another fourteen percent were not at all clear (see table 23, appendix 7). This confirms the trend that emerged from the data collated as part of the TCD evaluation and supports the suggestion by system planners interviewed as part of that study that the issue of integrating the work of the SDPI and PCSP into one service for teachers should be explored.[126]

2. HIST support service

The survey of Leaving Certificate History teachers included a number of questions designed to explore teachers' views on how well the in-service training they had received from the HIST had prepared them to implement the revised syllabus. Respondents were first asked the extent to which the in-service training had prepared them to teach their chosen Field of Study (each teacher has to choose whether to teach the early modern or later modern field). The views of respondents are outlined below:

[123] DES (2003), *SDPI National Progress Report 2002*, p.7
[124] *ibid*, p. 44
[125] Damien Murchan et al (2005), *PCSP*, pp.167-168
[126] *ibid* , p.171

Table 7.15: Respondents' preparedness in their chosen Field of Study

	Very well prepared	Well prepared	Not well prepared	Not at all prepared
Early Modern Ireland, 1492-1815*	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Early Modern Europe and the wider world*	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Later Modern Ireland (n=169)	37%	57%	6%	-
Later Modern Europe (n=167)	32%	56%	11%	1%

* Only one respondent was teaching the Early Modern Field of Study and chose not to answer this question.

Respondents considered themselves to have been well prepared to implement their Field of Study as a consequence of the in-service training provided by the HIST. Some ninety four per cent of respondents considered themselves to be either very well or well prepared to teach the Later Modern Ireland module. Only six per cent of respondents were not satisfied with their level of preparation in this area.

A slightly higher proportion of teachers felt themselves inadequately prepared to teach the Later Modern Europe field of study but the feedback from respondents was still very positive. Eighty eight per cent of teachers who answered this question felt themselves either very well or well prepared to teach Later Modern European history. Eleven per cent of respondents felt that they were not well prepared, while a further one per cent felt not at all prepared: the relatively high proportion of teachers who identified themselves in this category is further discussed below.

Respondents were also asked if there were any areas of their chosen Field of Study that they felt inadequately prepared to implement in the classroom. In response, thirty nine percent of the sample indicated that they were not satisfied with their level of preparation in some area. Although this appears a relatively large proportion of the sample, the vast majority of respondents in this category identified Later Modern Europe Topic 6 (*America and the wider world, 1945-1989*) as the area in which they were having difficulty. The frequency with which this topic (and the Later Modern Europe field in general) was highlighted by respondents is explained by two factors. In the first instance, teachers had not yet completed in-service in this area at the time of the teacher survey – further training was scheduled for October-December 2006. Secondly, it has been selected as the subject for the Document based study for the Leaving Certificate examination in 2008 and 2009 and was therefore likely to be of added concern to teachers for that reason.

The remaining respondents identified a variety of different areas – Later Modern Europe topics 1, 4 and 5 and Later Modern Ireland topics 1, 4 and 6 were all identified - but the numbers were not significant in any one area.

Respondents were also asked to indicate how well prepared they were, after their in-service training, to teach the Research Study element of the revised syllabus. The Research study consists of three discrete elements: (i) an outline plan for the subject of study; (ii) an evaluation of the sources consulted, and (iii) an extended

essay, including a review of the process undertaken and how useful that process was in achieving the aims laid down in the outline plan.[127]

The vast majority of respondents considered themselves satisfied with their ability to teach this element of the revised syllabus following their in-service training. Ninety one per cent considered themselves to have been either well or very well prepared.

Teachers were also asked if there was any particular aspect of the Research Study that they felt inadequately prepared to teach. While three quarters (seventy four per cent) of respondents considered themselves sufficiently prepared to teach all aspects of the Research Study, twenty six percent (forty four teachers) indicated that there were aspects of this area of the syllabus in respect of which they were not adequately prepared.

Of those teachers who expressed concerns in relation to this area, the main difficulty was encountered in respect of the Outline Plan. Some teachers expressed general difficulties. Others had specific difficulties such as identifying an appropriate topic and timeframe for the Research Study. Some respondents were unclear about the aims of the Outline Plan and how to identify sources for the study itself. Others expressed a desire for specific examples to illustrate how an Outline Plan should be completed.

The second most frequently identified aspect of the Research Study was the marking scheme. As with the Outline Plan, some respondents requested model answers that could be used as a template. They suggested that it would be "*useful to see some marked sample scripts to get an idea of the standard required" (HIST respondent # 67).*

Another area of concern to a significant proportion of respondents was the evaluation of sources - the second stage in the Research Study. The final stage of the research study – the extended essay itself – was also highlighted. Some respondents were unclear on how to determine the length of the essay and others were uncertain about how to structure the 'review' element of the essay. Other respondents made general comments about the Research Study without specifying a particular element in respect of which they felt unprepared. This included concerns over a lack of access to the internet in the classroom and a desire for clearer guidelines for each step of the study. Some respondents felt that monitoring the research study was very time consuming, that it should be made optional for weaker students, while others criticized the fact that students repeating the Leaving Certificate had to research a new topic.

Respondents were also asked for their overall assessment of how well the in-service training they received had prepared them for implementing the revised syllabus. The percentage of the sample who considered themselves to be either well prepared or very well prepared to implement all aspects of the revised syllabus was very high: ninety three percent. Only seven per cent of respondents considered themselves to be poorly prepared.

[127] DES (2003) *History syllabus*, p.9

Respondents were also asked whether the time allocated for in-service training in the revised syllabus had been appropriate. The vast majority of respondents (sixty three per cent) considered the duration of the in-service appropriate. However, a sizeable minority (thirty six per cent) felt that it was too short. Of relevance here could be the fact that further in-service training was scheduled for October-December 2006 (after the completion of the teacher survey).

3. NBSS

Respondents to the survey of Leaving Certificate biology teachers were asked to assess how well the in-service training they received from the NBSS had prepared them to implement the revised Biology syllabus. The revised syllabus consists of three Units (each consisting of five or six sub-units), as well as Laboratory and Fieldwork activities. The aggregate assessment by respondents in respect of each aspect of the syllabus is outlined below.

Table 7.16: Respondents' preparedness to implement Unit One

Unit One – Sub Units	Very well Prepared	Well prepared	Not well prepared	Not at all prepared
The Scientific Method (n=152)	27%	58%	12%	3%
The characteristics of Life (n=144)	33%	52%	12%	3%
Nutrition (n=144)	36%	53%	9%	2%
General principles of ecology (n= 159)	50%	45%	4%	1%
Study of an ecosystem (n=164)	57%	38%	4%	1%

Table 7.17: Respondents' preparedness to implement Unit Two

Unit Two – Sub Units	Very well Prepared	Well prepared	Not well prepared	Not at all prepared
Cell structure (n=147)	43%	48%	7%	2%
Cell metabolism (n=147)	38%	48%	12%	2%
Cell continuity (n=146)	36%	51%	11%	2%
Cell diversity (n=145)	37%	50%	11%	2%
Genetics (n=159)	40%	44%	13%	3%

Table 7.18: Respondents' preparedness to implement Unit Three

Unit Three – Sub units	Very well Prepared	Well prepared	Not well prepared	Not at all prepared
Diversity of organisms (n=146)	35%	56%	6%	3%
Organisation and the vascular structures (n=144)	37%	48%	13%	2%
Transport and nutrition (n=144)	39%	51%	8%	2%
Breathing system and excretion (n=144)	36%	53%	9%	2%
Responses to stimuli (n=146)	36%	53%	10%	1%

Table 7.19: Respondents' preparedness to implement the Laboratory and Ecology Fieldwork activities (n=166)

Very well	Well	Not well	Not at all
51%	45%	3%	1%

Overall, the data indicate that the vast majority of respondents were satisfied with their level of preparation for all three units. However, there some sub-units within each unit in respect of which a minority of teachers expressed concerns:

- In relation to Unit One, more than one in ten respondents considered themselves to be inadequately prepared to implement the sub-units '*The scientific method'*, '*The characteristics of life'* and '*Nutrition*'.
- In relation to Unit Two, sixteen percent of respondents felt inadequately prepared to implement the '*Genetics'* sub-unit.
- In relation to Unit Three, fifteen percent of respondents considered themselves inadequately prepared to the '*Organisation and the vascular structures'* sub-unit.

Respondents were also asked if there were any particular areas of Units One, Two or Three in respect of which they felt inadequately prepared.

Table 7.20: Respondents' views on whether there were aspects of each Unit that they were inadequately prepared to implement*

Unit	Yes	No
Unit One (n=156)	10%	90%
Unit Two (n=157)	15%	85%
Unit Three (n=150)	9%	91%

* The data above excludes those respondents who did not complete the full programme of in-service

At least one in ten respondents considered themselves inadequately prepared to implement some aspect of either Unit One, Two or Three. The least positive rating was given in relation to Unit Two. Approximately fifteen percent of the cohort considered themselves inadequately prepared for aspects of this Unit.

In relation to Unit One, the main area identified by respondents was *The Scientific Method*. One respondent expressed a desire for 'innovative ways of teaching it and examples from other scientists/case studies would help' *(NBSS respondent # 47)*. Another felt that there was 'not enough teaching materials to develop skills of the scientific method which should underpin the course" *(NBSS respondent # 68)*. Other sub-units identified by smaller numbers of respondents were the '*Ecology'* and '*Study of an ecosystem'* sub-units.

In relation to Unit Two, the overwhelming majority of respondents highlighted the *Genetics* sub-unit as the area in which they were experiencing difficulty. Respondents expressed concern in relation to the experiment on extraction of DNA, protein synthesis, incorporating ICT into teaching genetics, genetic crosses and genetic engineering.

In relation to Unit Three, the main area where teachers identified difficulties was the sub-unit '*Responses to stimuli'*. Respondents identified the human defence

system as an area of particular concern and requested more videos and overheads as class illustrations.

In relation to the Laboratory and Fieldwork activities associated with the revised syllabus, respondents in general considered themselves to be adequately prepared in this area. Ninety six per cent of the cohort indicated that they were either well or very well prepared. Only four per cent of respondents (8 teachers) considered themselves to be inadequately prepared.

Respondents were also asked to assess, in overall terms, how well the in-service training they received from the NBSS had prepared them to implement the revised syllabus. The overall level of satisfaction among respondents is very high. Ninety five per cent of respondents indicated that they were well or very well prepared as a result of the training they had received. Only five per cent of respondents (9 teachers) considered themselves to be inadequately prepared.

More than two thirds of the cohort (seventy per cent) considered the duration of the in-service training to have been appropriate. However, almost one in three (twenty nine per cent) considered it to have been too short, while only one respondent considered it to be have been too long. In this context, it is significant that requests for additional in-service are frequent among the additional comments provided by respondents at the end of the teacher survey.

7.6 Key question 3: Are teachers implementing the revised curricula and/or new teaching methodologies?

This section explores the extent to which teachers are implementing the revised curricula introduced in recent years and in respect of which the TES has supported in-service training. It focuses specifically on the extent to which the Primary School Curriculum (1999), and the revised History and Biology syllabi at Leaving Certificate level are being implemented. It also investigates the extent to which teachers are implementing the new skills and knowledge they have acquired as a result of their participation in a summer or local course.

1. Primary School Curriculum (1999)

In order to assess the extent to which teachers are implementing the Primary School Curriculum (1999), a number of the key elements of the curriculum were identified and teachers were asked to specify the extent to which they employed these elements. The elements chosen were as follows:

- The development of a school plan
- Links between the curriculum strands and classroom planning
- Integration between subjects
- Use of various assessment tools
- Use of ICT in the classroom.

School Plan

The number of respondents who indicated that their school had developed a school plan was very high (98%). Only two percent of respondents indicated that their school did not have a school plan. However, thirty four percent of respondents indicated that their school plan was incomplete. While this number appears quite large, it must be noted those subjects most frequently identified by respondents as being absent from the school plan are those in which in-service training was not completed (or had recently been completed) at the time of writing this report – namely, Drama, Geography and History. This suggests that schools had not yet had the opportunity to complete the school plan in these subjects.

Respondents were asked if they linked their classroom planning with the content of the school plan. Ninety two percent indicated that they did. The small proportion of respondents (8%) who did not link their classroom planning to the school plan gave a variety of explanations: that the school plan was too broad and 'airy fairy', that it was inaccessible to the teacher, or that teachers relied primarily on the curriculum and/or textbooks.

Classroom Planning

Respondents were asked if they used the individual strands of the curriculum as the starting point for their classroom planning in each subject.

Table 7.21: Extent to which respondents used curriculum strands as starting point for classroom planning (in descending order)

Subject	Yes	No
Science (n=157)	94%	6%
Visual Arts (n=158)	92%	8%
Mathematics (n=159)	92%	8%
Geography (n=157)	90%	10%
History (n=156)	90%	10%
SPHE (n=157)	89%	11%
Physical Ed. (n=157)	89%	11%
Music (n=156)	86%	14%
Gaeilge (n=156)	84%	16%
English (n=160)	83%	17%
Mean	89%	11%

Overall, approximately eighty nine percent of respondents indicated that they use the curriculum strands as the starting point of their classroom planning. However, there is some variation between individual subjects. The level of use of the curriculum documents ranged from ninety four percent in Science to eighty three percent in English. Respondents considered the curriculum documents in English to be "*too complicated and impractical to use for planning - you end up stating the same thing 3 different ways" (PCSP respondent # 24).* It was also argued that the strand units "are too extensive and confusing" while the strands themselves "need to become more user-friendly" *(PCSP respondent # 37).* This reinforces the earlier finding in relation to the confusion among primary teachers at the structure of the English syllabus (see pp.109-110).

Other explanations offered by significant numbers of respondents for not using the curriculum documents for planning purposes were that teachers preferred to use their own format or used text books. Data from both the TCD and DES Inspectorate evaluations of the PCSP also indicate that textbooks are still being widely used in classroom planning by teachers. This is contrary to one of the guiding principles of the new curriculum.[128]

Integration between subjects

The frequency with which respondents to the teacher survey integrated subject areas is outlined below.

Table 7.22: Frequency with which teachers integrate subject areas

	Very often	Often	Not very often	Not at all
English *and other subjects (n=165)*	68%	31%	1%	-
Mathematics *and other subjects (n=162)*	22%	47%	30%	1%
Visual Arts *and other subjects (n=163)*	50%	45%	5%	-
Gaeilge *and other subjects (n=157)*	20%	44%	34%	2%
SPHE *and other subjects (n=163)*	39%	49%	11%	1%
Science *and other subjects (n=160)*	24%	48%	27%	1%
Geography *and other subjects (n=159)*	27%	53%	19%	1%
History *and other subjects (n=159)*	28%	55%	16%	1%
Music *and other subjects (n=159)*	30%	37%	31%	2%
Physical Ed. *and other subjects (n=162)*	12%	20%	59%	9%

There is considerable variation in the responses to this question. Ninety five percent or more of teachers report integrating English and the Visual Arts with other subjects very often or often. However, more than one in ten teachers did not integrate any of the remaining eight subjects with other subjects on a regular basis. Only thirty two percent of teachers indicated that they integrated Physical Education with other subjects.

Assessment tools

The frequency with which teachers employ a variety of different assessment tools, as advocated in the Primary School Curriculum, is outlined in Table 7.23:

[128] Damien Murchan et al (2005), *PCSP*, p.179; DES (2005), *An Evaluation of Curriculum Implementation in Primary Schools*, p.16

Table 7.23: Frequency with which teachers employ assessment tools

	Very often	Often	Not very often	Not at all
Teacher observation (n=169)	93%	6%	1%	-
Teacher designed tasks and tests (n=169)	59%	35%	6%	-
Work sample (n=165)	49%	39%	11%	1%
Portfolios (n=163)	16%	25%	48%	11%
Projects (n=166)	16%	39%	34%	11%
Curriculum profiles (n=156)	6%	19%	52%	23%
Standardised tests (n=164)	20%	46%	29%	5%
Diagnostic tests (n=166)	13%	36%	42%	9%

The most frequently employed assessment tools are teacher observation, teacher designed tasks and tests, and work samples. The least frequently employed assessment tools are curriculum profiles, portfolios, and diagnostic tests. Only twenty five percent of respondents indicated that they employed curriculum profiles very often or often. It is perhaps to be expected that the 'traditional' assessment strategies such as teacher observation and teacher designed tests are most frequently employed by teachers while the new assessment tools most closely associated with the Primary School Curriculum (1999) are less frequently employed. Diagnostic and standardised tests were reported as being the least used assessment tools. This is not surprising given their particular function in supporting the teaching and learning process. The data from the teacher survey replicates the data collated in an earlier study by the NCCA.[129]

The vast majority (96%) of the sample indicated that they use assessment results to inform their classroom planning for pupils. Only four percent indicated that they did not. Those teachers in this category claimed a lack of time, that their planning was driven by textbooks, and that the results from standardized tests could be misleading and lead to lower expectations.

Information Communication Technology (ICTs)

The table below identifies the frequency with which respondents to the teacher survey integrated ICTs into the classroom.

[129] NCCA (2005), pp.56, 65, 103-104

Table 7.24: Frequency with which teachers integrate ICT into the classroom

	Very often	Often	Not very often	Not at all
English (n=162)	31%	40%	27%	2%
Mathematics (n=158)	17%	34%	41%	3%
Visual Arts (n=156)	6%	20%	52%	22%
Gaeilge (n=154)	3%	7%	56%	34%
SPHE (n=154)	6%	12%	49%	33%
Science (n=157)	12%	28%	45%	15%
Geography (n= 154)	14%	29%	43%	14%
History (n=153)	12%	28%	45%	15%
Music (n=153)	7%	14%	45%	24%
Physical Education (n=155)	1%	4%	32%	63%
Mean	11%	22%	44%	23%

The level of ICT integration among primary teachers appears to be relatively low. On average, only a third of respondents integrate ICTs into their classroom on a regular basis. Forty four percent do not integrate ICTs into the classroom very often while a further twenty three percent do not use ICTs at all. There is considerable variation on this issue between subjects. The most frequent integration occurs in relation to English, where seventy one percent of teachers reported frequent use of ICTs. The least frequent integration occurs in relation to Physical Education, where five percent of teachers employ ICT as an aid to pupil learning. It is likely that such factors as a lack of suitable and available resources (software packages etc), time constraints, a lack of computers in the classroom, and teacher confidence and skills account for the low level of integration in some instances. These were the constraints that emerged from data collated as part of an earlier NCCA evaluation.[130]

Overall assessment of implementation of Primary School Curriculum (1999)

Teachers were also asked if they were implementing all aspects of the Primary School Curriculum (1999). The vast majority (81%) of respondents indicated that they were implementing the entire curriculum. While almost one in twenty (19%) indicated that they were not implementing some aspect of the curriculum, the data indicate that this is attributable to the fact that in-service training had not yet been completed or had only been recently completed in some subjects. The subjects most frequently identified by respondents were Drama and Physical Education. In-service training in these subjects had only recently concluded or was still in progress at the time of the teacher survey. Another reason given by respondents to explain the lack of full implementation of the P.E. curriculum was lack of facilities – either access to a swimming pool or a P.E. hall. The other areas identified included Gaeilge, Music, Maths, English, SPHE, Science and the Visual Arts but the number involved in each area was insignificant. In addition, some of the teachers who identified these areas were working as learning support or resource teachers and were therefore not expected to implement the full curriculum.

These findings are more positive than those that emerged from the TCD evaluation of the PCSP. The data from that evaluation indicated that on average (across the six

[130] NCCA (2005), pp.53-55, 102-103, 162-163

subjects reviewed as well as Learning Support), approximately half the teachers surveyed indicated relatively little concrete implementation of the curriculum to date.[131] These data were collected in 2004 and 2005, and it may be that the additional passage of time has allowed the new curriculum to grow deeper roots.

2. Revised History syllabus

Through the teacher survey respondents were asked if they were implementing all aspects of the revised history syllabus, and if not, to identify the reason why. In response, ninety four per cent of the sample indicated that they were fully implementing the revised syllabus. Only six per cent of respondents were not. These respondents identified a number of areas (including 'Use of Sources', and individual Topics such as Later Modern Europe 3 and 4, and Later Modern Ireland 2 and 4) but the number of respondents involved in each case was relatively insignificant.

The main reason given for omitting parts of the syllabus was time constraint. A significant proportion of respondents were of the opinion that it was not possible to complete the entire syllabus in the prescribed time. Respondents felt that "*the course is too long [and consequently it is] impossible to teach all aspects properly" (HIST respondent # 58).* Another respondent commented: "*I am leaving out certain topics to maintain a higher level of learning in some areas. The students and myself do not want a thin veneer on each topic" (HIST respondent # 74).*

The length of the history syllabus was the issue most frequently mentioned by respondents in the additional qualitative comments provided at the end of the teacher survey. These respondents were almost unanimous in their view that the course was "excessively long" and could not be covered adequately in the time available. Respondents felt that the "time pressure" created by the length of the course undermined one of the objectives of the syllabus by leaving "*less time to explore extra resources/documents which is what the course aims at" (HIST respondent # 32).* A number of teachers also expressed concerns that the length of the course relative to other subjects might deter students from selecting history as a Leaving Certificate subject. Some pointed to a decrease in the number of fifth year students selecting history as evidence of the reduced appeal of history as an examination subject.

3. Revised Biology syllabus

Through the teacher survey respondents were asked if there were any areas of the revised Biology syllabus they were not implementing, and if so, to provide an explanation for this.

The vast majority of respondents – ninety six per cent - indicated that they were implementing all aspects of the revised syllabus. Among the four per cent that were omitting certain aspects of the syllabus, two main areas were identified: the mandatory experiments, and the *Genetics* sub-unit of Unit Two.

[131] Damien Murchan et al (2005), *PCSP*, p.188

The main reason given by respondents for omission of these areas was time constraint. One respondent explained: *"In the past 2 years I have ran out of time and have left out the last 2 chapters. [It] may be the same situation with current 6th year pupils" (NBSS respondent # 114).* Others highlighted factors that prevented them from performing all of the prescribed experiments. This included timetabling constraints surrounding access to laboratories, a lack of laboratory technicians, and a lack of resources to conduct the experiments.

4. Summer and local courses.

The local and summer course teacher surveys both included two questions designed to establish the extent to which teachers felt they had learnt new skills/teaching strategies as a result of their participation in a summer/local course, and secondly, whether they had applied any of these new teaching skills/strategies since returning to the classroom.

Eighty five percent of summer course participants and eighty six percent of local course participants indicated that they had learnt new teaching skills/strategies as a result of participation in their particular course. It is perhaps not altogether surprising that fourteen percent of the local course cohort did not learn any new skills or strategies from participation in a local course. Some of the courses are very short (anything upwards of two hours) and may only consist of a one off address by a guest speaker. However, it is of some concern that fifteen percent of respondents indicated that they had not learnt any new skills or strategies from a five day summer course.

Of those teachers who indicated that they had learnt new teaching skills/strategies, the vast majority gave specific examples:

"How to develop some of the more problematic areas of PE curriculum e.g. dance, athletics." (Participant, Physical Education summer course, Dublin West Education Centre)

"New approaches to SESE enabling me to make science exciting and interesting". (Participant, Science in the classroom summer course, Laois Education Centre).

"I learned how to do specific activities in each of the six strands in visual arts and how to organise and structure my art class to suit different ranges of ability." (Participant, Visual Arts summer course, Tralee Education Centre)

Of equal significance to the number of teachers who acquired new teaching skills/strategies is the extent to which these new skills were applied in the classroom. This is a measure of the extent to which the in-service training provided through the summer courses actually impacts on teaching practice and/or teacher behaviour. Of the teachers who had learnt new skills, seventy one percent of summer course participants and eighty one percent of local course participants indicated that they had applied their new skills in the classroom since returning to school. The vast majority provided specific examples:

*"Station teaching was promoted as a tool for teaching science – I have found it brilliant since returning to school". (*Participant, Science is Fun summer course, Dublin West Education Centre)

"Drawing up an Individual Education Plan. Identifying strengths/needs. Interpreting psychological assessments. Profiling, differentiation techniques". (Participant, Individual Education Plans local course, Donegal Education Centre)

"Learning experience charts; strategies to foster independent learning; strategies to keep 'early finishers' occupied". (Participant, Multi-grade teaching and learning local course, Athlone Education Centre)

Although twenty nine percent of teachers who learnt new skills on a summer course, and nineteen percent of teachers on local courses, stated that they had not applied them in their work with pupils, the vast majority of these teachers indicated that they had not yet had the opportunity (the school year had only commenced a month before the survey was circulated) but intended to do so later in the school year. The other teachers had not used their new skills and knowledge due to a variety of reasons, including the lack of appropriate space/resources within the school, illness, or a change in job responsibilities since the summer.

The data from the teacher surveys can be supplemented by data from the evaluation sheets completed by participants in both summer and local courses. Both evaluation sheets are very similar and include a question asking teachers if they have learned any new skills, as a result of their participation in their particular course, that they will apply in the classroom. This is actually two questions in one (Have participants learnt new skills?; If they have learned new skills, will they be putting those new skills into practice in school?) but responses to this question give some indication of the extent to which participants feel that they have acquired new skills that they can potentially apply in the classroom. While there is no guarantee that participants' intentions will result in modified behaviour, it is an indicator of the extent to which new skills were acquired that *could* be introduced into the classroom.

The response by participants on summer courses in 2004, 2005 and 2006, and participants in local courses in 2005/2006, is consistently positive. Ninety nine percent of participants in both summer and local courses in the years reviewed indicated that they had acquired new teaching skills or knowledge.

Data from the Inspectorates' monitoring reports on the summer course programme are also relevant here. Since 2003 inspectors involved in monitoring summer courses have assessed the extent to which summer courses have been successful in facilitating teachers' professional development in four areas: (i) Providing new content knowledge, (ii) Providing knowledge of new methodologies, (iii) Providing the motivation to try new approaches, and (iv) Providing the motivation to disseminate new knowledge to colleagues. Each summer course was assessed under these headings on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 representing 'To a great extent' and 4 representing 'Not at all'. The Inspectorates' reports from 2005 and 2006 were analysed as part of this review. The data collated by the Inspectorate indicate that the summer courses monitored in 2005 and 2006 contributed significantly to the

professional development of participants. Between ninety six and one hundred percent of all courses monitored were deemed to promote teachers' professional development in each of the four areas assessed (see table 24, appendix 7).

7.7 Key question 4: Does the implementation of revised curricula result in any improvement in learning outcomes for students?

This section attempts to identify whether the implementation of revised curricula result in any improvement in learning outcomes for students (the final outcome of all TES activity, as per the PLM). Chapter four highlighted the many difficulties surrounding the use of examination performance as a measure of pupil learning. However, in the absence of any more appropriate data, this is generally accepted as the most reliable indicator in this area. This section examines the trend in student performance in Leaving Certificate biology and history to assess whether there has been any change in student achievement since the introduction of revised curricula in both subjects.

Leaving Certificate History

The tables below compare the grades achieved in the Leaving Certificate history examination at Higher and Ordinary levels over a four year period. This encompasses the three years prior to the examination of the revised syllabus and the first year in which the revised syllabus was examined in 2006. In order to facilitate analysis, the data are confined to students achieving grades at the top and bottom end of the scale.[132]

Table 7.25: Grades achieved in Leaving Certificate History, 2003-2006 (Higher Level)

Year	Total no. of candidates	A*	B*	Fail*
2003	7,334	15.4	27.9	7.7
2004	6,678	15.9	27.6	7.2
2005	6,377	13.1	25.6	8
2006	6,975	12.2	30	4.6

A = A1 and A1; B = B1, B2 and B3; Fail = E, F, NG.

Table 7.26: Grades achieved in Leaving Certificate History, 2003-2006 (Ordinary Level)

Year	Total no. of candidates	A*	B*	Fail*
2003	4,508	24.6	21.3	17.3
2004	4,448	26.2	20.9	17.1
2005	3,926	30.5	20.6	14.1
2006	3,702	19.3	29.8	3.8

A = A1 and A1; B = B1, B2 and B3; Fail = E, F, NG.

At Higher level, the proportion of students achieving an A grade dropped slightly from 13.1% in the 2005 examination to 12.2% in 2006. However, this was a

[132] Data presented in Tables 7.25 to 7.28 is based upon data extracted from the State Examinations Commission (www.sec.ie)

continuation of a longer term decline in the proportion of A grades achieved. The numbers achieving a B grade rose from 25.6% to 30%. This was the first increase in the proportion of students achieving a B grade in the period under review. The number of students achieving an A or B grade, therefore, improved by 3.5 percentage points between 2005 and 2006.

At the other end of the scale, the number of students failing the History examination (grades of E, F and NG) dropped significantly, from 8% in 2005 to 4.6% in 2006, a decrease of 3.4 percentage points. It appears, therefore, that at Higher level, the number of students achieving the highest grades (A and B grades combined) improved by 3.5 percentage points between 2005 and 2006 while the number of students failing the examination decreased by 3.4 percentage points over the same period. The introduction of the revised syllabus, therefore, coincided with a general improvement in student performance.

The position is fairly similar at Ordinary level. The proportion of students achieving an A or B grade dropped slightly, from 51.1% to 49.1% between 2005 and 2006. However, there was a considerable reduction in the proportion of students failing the history examination at Ordinary level, from 14.1% in 2005 to 3.8% in 2006.

Leaving Certificate Biology

The tables below compare the grades achieved in the Leaving Certificate Biology examination at Higher and Ordinary levels over a four year period. This encompasses the period immediately before and after the first examination of the revised syllabus in 2004. In order to facilitate analysis, only the proportion of students achieving grades at the top and bottom end of the scale is included.

Table 7.27: Grades achieved in Leaving Certificate Biology, 2003-2006 (Higher Level)

Year	Total no. of candidates	A*	B*	Fail*
2003	13,783	19.0	27.2	7.9
2004	16,011	15.6	27.7	7.4
2005	17,482	12.0	27.9	6.1
2006	17,048	16.5	27.2	7.2

A = A1 and A1; B = B1, B2 and B3; Fail = E, F, NG.

Table 7.28: Grades achieved in Leaving Certificate Biology, 2003-2006 (Ordinary Level)

Year	Total no. of candidates	A*	B*	Fail*
2003	8,888	7.2	23.4	20.4
2004	8,012	2.2	17.0	20.6
2005	7,878	3.2	22.8	17.4
2006	7,837	3.9	26.6	13.2

A = A1 and A1; B = B1, B2 and B3; Fail = E, F, NG.

At Higher level, the proportion of students achieving an A grade dropped slightly from 19% in the 2003 examination to 15.6% in 2004 and 12% in 2005, before rising again to 16.5% in 2006. In the same period, the numbers achieving a B grade

has remained relatively consistent, with 27.2% of students achieving such a grade in 2003 and 2006. At the other end of the scale, the number of students failing the biology examination (grades of E, F and NG) dropped from 7.9% in 2003 to 7.4% in 2004, to 6.1% in 2005 before rising again to 7.2% in 2006. The introduction of the revised syllabus in 2004, therefore, does not appear to have coincided with any significant change in student performance at the highest levels.

Among Ordinary level students, the proportion of students achieving an A or B grade dropped from a high of 30.6% in 2003 to a low of 20.2% in 2004 before rising again to 23% in 2005 and 30.5% of students in 2006. The proportion of students failing the examination (E, F, NG) has dropped significantly from 20.4% in 2003 to 13.2% in 2006, a decline of 7.2 percentage points in four years.

7.8 Key question 5: What proportion of teachers participate in in-service training and professional development?

In order to assess the level of participation by teachers in in-service training, the participation rate of in-service training organised by the PCSP, the HIST, the NBSS, and the local and summer courses were examined. The tables below indicate the proportion of the targeted teaching population that attended the prescribed in-service training organised by the three support services.

Table 7.29: Participation rates in PCSP seminars

Subject	% of teachers participating
English	85%
Maths	84%
Visual Arts	80%
Gaeilge	84%
SPHE	79%
Science	85%
Geography	86%
History	85%
Music	90%
Physical Education	97%
Mean	85%

Table 7.30: Attendance levels at HIST in-service training

Phase	No. attending as % of total population
Phase 1	89%
Phase 2	88%
Phase 3	85%
Phase 4	88%
Phase 5	84%

Table 7.31: Attendance levels at NBSS in-service training

Phase	Attendance as % of total
Year 1 Phase 1	60%
Year 1 Phase 2	83%

Year 2 Phase 1	87%
Year 2 Phase 1	84%
Year 3 Phase 1	87%
Year 3 Phase 2	82%

The data above indicate that the vast majority of primary teachers and Leaving Certificate history and biology teachers have attended each phase of in-service training scheduled by the respective support services. However, there is a minority of teachers who have not attended in-service training.

- On average, approximately 85% of respondents to the PCSP teacher survey had attended in-service seminars in each subject. While a number of respondents had only qualified in recent years and may therefore have missed some of the earlier PCSP seminars, the participation rate for one of the earliest seminars – English – was the same as that for one of the latest – History. This suggests that there are approximately 15% of primary teachers who have not participated in in-service training with the PCSP.
- In relation to the in-service training organised by the HIST, the proportion of teachers who did not attend ranges from eleven per cent in respect of phase one to sixteen per cent in respect of phase five. These figures are supported by the data from the teacher survey which indicate that approximately fourteen per cent of respondents did not attend the full programme of in-service training. While some four percent of teachers missed some element of training due to only having recently qualified, there is still a cohort of approximately ten percent who have missed some or all of the full programme of in-service training.
- The proportion of biology teachers who did not attend the in-service training organised by the NBSS ranges from thirteen per cent in respect of year three phase one to forty per cent in respect of year one, phase one. The low attendance level in year 1, phase 1 is an anomaly due to the industrial dispute between the ASTI and the DES. Overall, the pattern of attendance levels (apart from year 1, phase 1) seems to support the finding from the teacher survey which indicated that approximately fifteen percent of teachers had missed some or all of the in-service programme. When account is taken of those teachers who only recently qualified, it remains the case that about ten per cent of teachers have missed some or all of the in-service training

Summer courses

The table below outlines the number of participants in summer courses in each year since 2000[133] and expresses this number as a percentage of the total primary teaching population (summer courses are for primary teachers only).

[133] Data for 2005 are not available.

Table 7.32: Proportion of teaching population participating in summer courses

Year	No. of courses	No. of participants	% of teaching population
2000	891	12,890	59%
2001	714	14,448	63%
2002	714	15,093	63%
2003	676	15,086	60%
2004	680	15,522	60%
2006	446	13,764	55%

The proportion of the teaching population who participated in summer courses ranged between fifty five to sixty three percent in the period 2000 to 2006. However, this does not take account of those teachers who attend multiple summer courses in any one year. In order to establish the number of teachers in this category, the teacher survey (which was circulated to a sample of teachers known to have participated in summer courses in 2006) asked respondents to specify the number of summer courses they had attended in the three years since 2004.

The data from the teacher survey indicate that the number of teachers participating in more than one summer course per year is quite low - approximately three percent. This suggests that the proportion of the overall teaching population who participate in summer courses ranges from between fifty two to sixty per cent of the teaching population. This indicates that there is a substantial body of primary teachers (approx. 40-48%) that are not participating in the summer course programme each year.

Local courses

The table below expresses the proportion of participants in local courses as a proportion of the entire teaching force in the period 2003 to 2006.

Table 7.33: Local course participants as proportion of teaching population

Year	Number of local course participants	% of entire teaching population
2003	17,054	33%
2004	23,780	47%
2005	24,683	48%
2006	22,537	44%

The number of participants on local courses has increased significantly in recent years. Between 2003 and 2006 the number of teachers participating in local courses increased by 5,483. The number of local course participants as a proportion of the overall teaching population has also increased. Between 2003 and 2006 the proportion of the teaching population participating in local courses increased by eleven percentage points.

However, data from the teacher survey suggest that this figure includes a significant number of teachers who participate in multiple courses each year. In order to estimate this figure, respondents to the local course teacher survey were asked to specify the number of local courses they had participated in in each of the

previous two academic years. Results from the teacher survey indicate that almost half of teachers who participate in local courses only participate in one course per year. However, approximately one third of teachers participate in two local courses per annum while a further twenty percent participate in three or more courses. This suggests that the actual number of teachers participating in local courses is only about twenty five percent of the teaching population.

In order to examine whether there is any difference between participation rates by primary and post primary teachers, the table below details the number of participants on local courses by sector (primary and post primary) in the period from 2003/2004 to 2005/2006 and expresses this number as a proportion of the overall teaching population at primary and post primary level.

Table 7.34: Number of participants on local courses, 2003/2004 to 2005/2006

Year	No. of primary level participants	No. of primary level participants as % of total population	No. of post primary level participants	No. of post primary level participants as % of total pop
2003/04	12,842	49%	4,679	19%
2004/05	15,933	61%	7,957	32%
2005/06	16,470	63%	8,393	34%

There is a much higher participation rate in local courses by primary teachers. Almost two thirds of primary teachers participated in local courses in 2005/2006 compared to one third of post primary teachers. This suggests that Education Centres need to make greater efforts to communicate with and identify the professional needs of post primary teachers.

In order to further explore this issue, the table below identifies the participation rates for primary and post primary teachers for one year, 2005/2006, in each full-time Education Centre.

Table 7.35: Breakdown of local course participants by Education Centre, 2005/2006[134]

	Primary	Post Primary
Athlone	61%	39%
Blackrock	63%	37%
Carrick on Shannon	51%	49%
Clare	59%	41%
Cork	63%	37%
Donegal	66%	34%
Drumcondra	67%	33%
Dublin West	82%	18%
Galway	78%	22%
Kildare	68%	32%
Kilkenny	68%	32%
Laois	54%	46%
Limerick	38%	62%
Mayo	61%	39%
Monaghan	57%	43%
Navan	77%	23%
Sligo	82%	18%
Tralee	50%	50%
Waterford	51%	49%
Wexford	79%	21%
West Cork	86%	14%
Mean	67%	33%

There is considerable variation between Education Centres on this issue. The proportion of primary level teachers ranges from 38% in Limerick Education Centre to eighty six percent in West Cork. The case of Limerick is not typical – there are no other Education Centres with such a low proportion of primary teachers. The corresponding range of post primary participants ranges from a low of 14% in West Cork to 62% in Limerick.

On average, the data indicate that the proportion of teachers participating in local courses is two thirds primary and one third post primary, whereas the actual teaching population is almost evenly constituted of primary and post primary teachers. This suggests that the number of post primary teachers participating in local courses is much lower than among their primary level colleagues.

7.9 Key question 6: To what extent does the programme of in-service training and professional development supported by the TES balance between system needs, school needs, and individual needs.

The literature review undertaken as part of this VFM assessment indicated that the need for any comprehensive programme of in-service training and professional development to have a balance between system needs, school needs and teacher needs has long been recognised. The Report on the National Education Convention in 1994 and the White Paper in 1995 both acknowledged the need for a strategic framework of teacher education that would balance national and local needs.[135]

[134] Data supplied by the TES. This does not include those teachers who participated in more than one course.
[135] Coolahan (1994), p.87; White paper, (1995) p.134; Sugrue et al (2001), pp.122-123

The TES (and its predecessor the ICDU) were established to develop a national framework of in-service training and professional development that was responsive to both "system needs and to locally identified needs"[136] However, there are signs that the programme of CPD activities supported by the TES (and the ICDU) was, until recently, targeted predominantly at 'system' needs (i.e. the needs of the education system as identified by the TES or DES) as opposed to 'local' needs (the needs of schools and individual teachers). The programmes supported by the TES are mainly targeted at supporting teachers to implement new curricula or revised subjects (e.g. the PCSP, HIST, NBSS) or to address new national priorities such as catering for children with special needs (Special Education Support Service), the needs of pupils at risk of early school leaving (Junior Certificate Support Programme, Leaving Certificate Applied) or pupils with poor literacy or numeracy skills (Reading Recovery, Maths Recovery, First Steps). To a large extent, the vast majority of CPD supported by the TES is 'provider driven', as was recognized by the White Paper in 1995.[137]

There are a number of concerns associated with CPD that is 'provider driven'[138]

- The prescription of CPD priorities by central authorities (such as the TES, DES, NCCA) may perpetuate a culture of dependency among teachers to the extent that their professional needs are determined by others and then 'ministered' to by 'facilitators' whom they cannot select. [139]
- In-service training rolled out uniformly to all schools and all teachers may prove less effective in meeting the needs of particular schools or particular teachers. In the Irish context, there has been a tendency to rely heavily on the 'one size fits all' mode of professional development without attention to school context or career stage.[140] Professional development processes that work well in one school may not work so well in another due to alternative contexts of place, size, time, people etc, which generate different school learning needs. For example, the dynamics, organisation and culture of a small, rural, one- or two-teacher school may have alternative learning needs to a large, multi-teacher urban school. The earlier findings in this review in relation to the PCSP seminars – that teachers prefer seminars that are as specific as possible to school and teacher context – are relevant here.
- There is also a need for greater awareness of the continuing professional development needs of teachers at different stages of their career cycle.[141] The literature on teachers' learning needs suggests that the career stage of the teacher is a significant factor in teacher learning. Teachers' needs vary considerably in relation to their experience and their stage of engagement in their profession.[142] This has implications for professional development programmes which are uniformly aimed at teachers across the career spectrum: "*A mismatch between perceived learning needs, as identified by a central authority, and real learning*

[136] Sugrue et al (2001), p.55
[137] White paper, (1995) p.134
[138] *ibid* p.134
[139] Sugrue et al (2001), pp.44-45; Damien Murchan et al (2005), *PCSP*, p.225
[140] Sugrue et al (2001), p.42
[141] Coolahan, (2003), p.64; Sugrue et al (2001), p.47
[142] Granville (2006), p. 63

needs, as understood and experienced by individual teachers will adversely impact upon a teacher's belief in the change process".[143]

Clear evidence for the push-pull tension between national and local priorities emerged from the CMOD review of the Education Centre Network. One of the findings of the review was that in the competition between national and local priorities at Education Centre level, national priorities were emerging triumphant due to the level of funding attached to them, and that the level of National Programme activity was undermining the ability of Directors to address local school and teacher needs.[144]

The imbalance between system and local needs is evident in the fact that the vast majority of expenditure by the TES on CPD relates to content up-dating and skill development relating to changes in school programmes. There is a clear mismatch in the provision by the TES for National Support Programmes and local and summer courses which are the traditional means of addressing teachers' identified needs. Approximately seventy percent of the TES budget in 2007 was allocated to National Support Programmes compared to approximately two percent for summer and local courses.

In order to explore this issue further and build upon the material emerging from the literature review, it was decided to examine the extent to which the summer and local courses organized by the Education Centres are responsive to the needs of local teachers. To this end, the local and summer course teacher surveys contained a number of questions that explored the extent to which Education Centre courses reflected teacher priorities and the extent to which teachers were consulted by Education Centres about their professional and personal needs.

Among participants in summer courses (which are solely targeted at primary teachers), eighty two percent considered that the programme of courses offered by their local Education Centre adequately reflected their professional needs while eighteen percent felt that it did not. The overall level of satisfaction was slightly lower among local course participants. As outlined below, seventy eight percent of the cohort indicated that the local courses offered by their local Education Centre adequately reflected their professional needs. However, twenty two percent of teachers were of a contrary view.

Table 7.36: Respondents' views on whether the programme of local courses reflects their professional needs (n=174)

	Yes	No
Primary	82%	18%
Post Primary	70%	30%
Total	78%	22%

Among local course participants, there is a difference in the views expressed by primary and post primary teachers. Eighty two percent of the former and seventy percent of the latter were satisfied with the variety of local courses organized by their local Education Centre. There is therefore a higher level of satisfaction among

[143] Damien Murchan et al (2005), *PCSP*, p.201
[144] CMOD (2002), pp.17-18

primary level teachers. This may account in part for the disproportionate representation by primary teachers in relation to local course attendance.

Respondents to both the summer and local course surveys identified the same reasons for their dissatisfaction with the programme of courses on offer locally. The main reason was a lack of courses targeting specific areas of school life. Some respondents advocated an increase in the number of courses targeting specific areas of the curriculum, whether at primary or post-primary level, but most respondents wanted a greater number of courses in non-curricular areas such as team building and leadership, addressing special needs, teaching in a multi-class situation, teaching weaker students, classroom management, bullying, school planning, integrating international students, and ICT in the classroom. Other respondents recommended an increase in the number of courses offered by part-time Education Centres.

Respondents to both teacher surveys were also asked whether their local Education Centre had ever contacted them to establish their professional needs. Among summer course participants, only thirty two percent had ever been consulted in this manner. Opinion among participants in local courses was fairly evenly divided. As outlined below, slightly more than half (fifty four percent) had been consulted by their local Education Centre. The extent of consultation was greater among primary teachers. At primary level, sixty three percent of teachers had been consulted in relation to local courses compared to thirty seven percent of post primary teachers.

Table 7.37: Extent of teacher consultation in relation to local courses (n=171)

	Yes	No
Primary	63%	37%
Post Primary	37%	63%
Total	54%	46%

The most frequent methods of consultation adopted by Education Centres included a question on a participant evaluation sheet, direct contact with schools (this assumed a variety of forms – letter, questionnaire, email, telephone call, or circular), and approaches to teachers while they were attending a course in their local Education Centre.

Education Centre Directors were also asked for their views on this issue (as part of a questionnaire on communication issues, discussed in chapter nine). The views of Directors are at variance with those of respondents to the teacher surveys. All twenty four Directors who responded to the survey indicated that both the summer and local courses organized by their Centre were based upon an analysis of the in-service and professional development needs of teachers in their local catchment area. The majority of Directors indicated that they consulted with local teachers on an ongoing basis or at least on an annual basis.

The most popular consultation strategies, according to Directors, are teacher surveys, followed closely by school visits and posters in schools. Other common methods included an approach to those teachers attending in-service/training sessions in the Education Centre, consultation with personnel associated with the national support programmes (e.g. Cuiditheoirí) or members of the Inspectorate,

and the evaluation sheets completed by participants on in-service/training courses in the Education Centres. Surprisingly, only just over half of the respondents indicated that they had ever used their website to canvass teachers about their professional priorities.

Directors were also asked if they had a database which could identify the teachers in their catchment area and the courses that they had attended. This was recommended in an Internal Audit report on the Education Centres in 1999.[145] Eighteen of the twenty four Directors indicated that their Centre had such a database. Of the eighteen, two qualified their response – by indicating that they had paper records but not an electronic database. Six Directors indicated that they did not have a database of any kind.

A number of Directors expressed a desire for a standard database to be created by the TES that could be used in all Education Centres. Other Directors indicated that this was in respect of which they had made progress or intended to do so in the future.

While the preceding analysis has suggested that TES in-service/CPD activity is heavily focused on meeting nationally identified priorities at the expense of identifying and addressing local needs (i.e. school and teacher needs), there are positive signs that in recent years the TES (and the ICDU in its later years) is making greater efforts to balance national reform agendas with local needs. Some of the more recent positive developments in this area, supported by the TES, include the Cuiditheoirí service associated with the PCSP, the Regional Development Officers employed through the Second Level Support Service (SLSS), and the Associates employed through the Biology Support Service (BSS). These developments share a common theme. Personnel are employed by regionally based support services and work – in conjunction with the Education Centre Network – to identify and address the needs of local teachers.

Cuiditheoirí

As outlined earlier, the support provided by the PCSP comprises two interconnected strands: In-service training seminars and the Regional Curriculum Support Service (Cuiditheoirí). While the seminars are designed to inform participants of the content and methodology of the different subjects, the Cuiditheoirí support teachers in their own schools. RCSS advisors are invited by school principals to visit schools to advise on the implementation of particular areas of the curriculum, provide support for school or classroom planning in a particular area, establish teacher support networks, organise seminars and/or workshops in conjunction with the Education Centres to meet the needs of local teachers, and provide inputs on specific aspects of a curricular area.

Principals are consulted by Education Centre Directors at the start of each school year with a Needs Identification Survey to establish their level of demand for access to the RCSS. The survey asks them to identify, in consultation with staff, the curricular areas in which they may require assistance during the coming school

[145] DES (1999 unpublished), *Audit of ICDU: Its role in monitoring Education Centres,* p.17

year. Each Director and allocated Cuiditheoir(í) sort and prioritise the applications according to nationally agreed criteria. Selected schools are then allocated to Cuiditheoirí who contact them to further clarify their precise needs and to make practical arrangements for in-school visits.

Cuiditheoirí are regionally located and serve the needs of teachers in the catchment area of one or more Education Centres. They report to the Directors of the Education Centres being served and also to the PCSP Co-ordinator(s) for their subject(s). A programme of work for the RCSS Cuiditheoirí is agreed between the PCSP and the Education Centre Directors in a region. Within this programme there is a large degree of flexibility, whereby Directors and Cuiditheoirí within a region can respond to local needs where these are consistent with the aims of the PCSP.

Second Level Support Service (SLSS)

The SLSS was established in 2001 as a vehicle for co-ordination of and collaboration between previously established curriculum support services, mainly for senior cycle initiatives. The SLSS encompasses programmes such as the Leaving Certificate Applied and the Junior Certificate School Programme as well as subject areas such as Leaving Certificate English, Leaving Certificate Chemistry and Leaving Certificate Physics. In recent years, as senior cycle subjects have been revised, the support services established to facilitate the implementation of the revised subject come under the umbrella of the SLSS once the intensive phase of the in-service training is complete.

The SLSS comprises a two-dimensional approach to the provision of professional development. The programme combines a national identity and a regional presence, the former offering coherent and strategic planning at national level and the latter offering ownership at local level of processes designed to meet local needs.[146] The SLSS continues to support syllabus and curriculum support when required but has also moved in recent years to a focus on 'generic' teaching and learning issues such as classroom management, mixed-ability teaching and group-work. The recent orientation of SLSS support programmes has been to engage with whole school staffs, to support networks of teachers, to facilitate principals, deputy principals and staffs in needs analysis and to provide ongoing developmental support over time. In short, the SLSS has continued to serve its former role of ongoing support for curriculum programmes and newly established syllabi where required but has also encouraged a movement to more school-oriented responsiveness.[147]

From being a service solely concerned with the implementation of national curriculum programmes, therefore, the SLSS has evolved to take on additional concerns of a more generic teaching and learning nature. The SLSS specifically provides support for teachers' own professional needs, as well as the system's needs.[148]

[146] SLSS (2002), *Discussion Document*, p. 7
[147] Granville (2006), p.25
[148] *ibid* pp.58-59

Biology Support Service

The Biology Support Service (BSS) was established in September 2004, following the completion of the intensive phase of in-service training by the National Biology Support Service. Part of the remit of the BSS is to develop a culture of reflective practice among biology teachers, and to create a dynamic which facilitates establishing, developing and supporting professional communities of teaching and learning. In pursuit of these aims, the BSS has established a Curriculum Implementation and Professional Development Pilot Project. Six Associate teachers were appointed on block release to the project. They have conducted a needs analysis – based on a questionnaire sent to each biology teacher - in association with each of the 21 Education Centres and local branches of the Irish Science Teachers Association. The Associates have also conducted a number of school visits. These visits are designed to advise biology teachers of courses available to support them locally in their local Education Centre, by their local ISTA branch and the Biology Support Service, direct them towards the resources available from the BSS website and address any queries or difficulties they might have in relation to the revised Biology Syllabus. School visits are also used to augment the needs analysis.

The Associates have also established 'Teacher Design Teams'. This involves up to nine biology teachers in each Education Centre Region volunteering to become members of a TDT. Each team supported by the Associate is developing a resource for biology teachers that will be disseminated by the team locally or regionally but will also be available to all biology teachers through the BSS.

The trend evident in the work of the PCSP Cuiditheoirí, the Regional Development Officers of the SLSS, and the Associates of the BSS is very positive. In general, it involves ensuring a greater balance between supporting the implementation of revised syllabi where required but also identifying local needs through needs analysis and organising courses or resources on a local or regional basis to meet the identified needs. The local and regional work of the Cuiditheoirí, the RDOs employed through the SLSS and the BSS Associates is facilitated through the assistance of the Education Centre Network.

7.10 Conclusion

The main conclusion that emerges from the analysis in this chapter is that the TES is effective in achieving its objective in relation to CPD. The evidence indicates that the vast majority of participants are satisfied with the quality and relevance of the training provided through support services such as the PCSP, the HIST and the NBSS and through the summer and local courses. Participants also viewed the training and support provided as equipping them with the skills and methodologies required to implement new curricula. The overwhelming majority of respondents to the teacher surveys considered themselves to have been well or very well prepared to implement the revised Primary School Curriculum (1999), and the revised History and Biology curricula at Leaving Certificate level.

More importantly, the proportion of teachers who were fully implementing revised curricula or subjects and new teaching methodologies acquired during in-service

training and support was also very high. This is the intermediate outcome of TES activity in this area. The expectation is that the implementation of the revised curricula and the new teaching methodologies will result in improved student learning – the final outcome of all TES activity.

An analysis of student performance in Leaving Certificate biology and history suggests that the introduction of revised curricula in those subjects has had mixed results. There was a general improvement in the grades achieved by students in Leaving Certificate history but the impact of the revised biology syllabus has not coincided with any significant change in student performance at higher level. However, at Ordinary level, there was a significant reduction in the proportion of biology students achieving a lower grade (E, F, NG) - a decline of 7.2 percentage points in four years.

The extent to which student examination performance can be used as a measure of the effectiveness of the teacher education programmes supported by the TES is questionable. There is a clear need for the development of an appropriate indicator or indicators in this area that would facilitate a more balanced assessment of the impact of such activity on student learning and development. This issue could be explored by the TES in conjunction with the DES Inspectorate.

The analysis in this chapter has also suggested that the TES has succeeded in recent years in redressing the balance between centrally identified in-service priorities and school and teacher needs. The programme of CPD supported by the TES appears to have been, until recent years, weighted in favour of centrally identified priorities at the expense of locally identified needs. This is evident from the imbalance in expenditure on National Programmes compared to the summer and local courses (the traditional avenues through which local needs are addressed).

However, a number of recent initiatives are impacting positively on addressing 'local' needs. The RCSS, the RDOs associated with the SLSS, and the BSS Associates are working with teachers on a regional and local basis and – with the assistance of the Education Centre Network – are identifying and addressing local teacher and school needs. The next stage in this process will be to encourage schools and teachers to take responsibility for identifying their own needs and to provide a variety of CPD opportunities that will address these needs at local level.[149] However, further progress may be required before teachers and schools are willing to take responsibility for identifying and addressing their own CPD needs. This is suggested by the relatively low participation rates in the voluntary summer and local courses. Data from the summer course teacher survey indicate that the proportion of the overall teaching population who participate in summer courses ranges from between fifty two to sixty per cent of the teaching population. In relation to local courses, the evidence suggests that participation rates are as low as twenty five percent of the overall teaching population.

One reason for the relatively low level of participation in summer and local courses may be a perception among teachers that such courses do not reflect their actual needs. A number of respondents to the teacher surveys advocated an increase in the

[149] Damien Murchan et al (2005), *PCSP* , p.238

number of courses targeting specific areas of school life, including both curricular and non-curricular areas. Only one in three respondents to the summer course teacher survey and approximately half of the respondents to the local course survey indicated that they had ever been consulted by their local Education Centre as part of a needs analysis. In contrast to the findings from the teacher surveys, Education Centre Directors indicated – through a separate survey – that they had been active in this area. All twenty four respondents indicated that both the summer and local courses organized by their Centres were based upon an analysis of the in-service and professional development needs of local teachers in their catchment area.

The discrepancy between the findings from the teacher and Director surveys on the issue of consultation suggest that the existing methods of communication are not penetrating into the entire teaching community. The existing methods adopted by Education Centres are varied – direct contact with schools, approaches to teachers while participating in training courses in Education Centres, suggestion boxes etc – but very little use is made of the website as a potential tool in eliciting teachers' priorities. If teachers are made more aware of the website of their local Education Centre this could be a cost effective means of identifying local priorities. This could supplement the existing means of eliciting course preferences.

A related issue that needs to be addressed is the proportion of teachers (approximately 10-15%) that do not participate in the in-service training prescribed by the TES to support the implementation of revised subjects or curricula. Data from both the teacher survey and the attendance records collated by the HIST and NBSS indicate that the vast majority of the teaching population have attended the national in-service training. However, it appears that there is a minority of teachers – approximately 10 to 15% - that have not attended such training. The fact that these teachers are missing training in how to implement revised syllabi/curricula could undermine their ability to fully engage with and fully implement the required curricular changes in the classroom, thereby impinging on student learning which is the final outcome of TES activity in this area. The Teaching Council may have a role to play in improving attendance at both compulsory and voluntary in-service training.

A consistent theme to emerge from the analysis in this review is the need to strengthen the existing methods of data collection that will facilitate future monitoring of the performance of the TES. Particular attention should be paid to the local courses and the National Support Programmes. The collection of data by Education Centres in relation to the local courses is much less rigorous than in relation to the summer courses. Education Centres should ensure that data is collected from each participant in a local course through a participant evaluation sheet. In relation to National Support Programmes, the feedback from participants at each in-service training session should be aggregated electronically and submitted to the TES for monitoring purposes.

The process of data collection and evaluation would be made more efficient by the use of appropriate participant evaluation sheets. There is an inconsistency among Education Centres in the type of participant evaluation sheets employed to monitor the quality of training provided through local and summer courses. Centres differ in the extent to which they employ fixed and open-ended questions and also in the

length of the evaluation sheet. There is a similar degree of variety in the participant evaluation sheets employed by the National Support Programmes.

One other issue that emerged from the analysis of the effectiveness of in-service training/CPD is the need for balance in the evaluation sheets employed by Education Centres and National Support Programmes. In a number of evaluation sheets employed at present, there is an imbalance in the options presented to those participants who are asked to rate the quality of the support and training provided. Some of the fixed choice questions employed by Education Centres and National Support Programmes are biased in favour of a positive response as they do not afford participants the opportunity to award a negative rating.

One issue that has not been considered in the analysis in this chapter is the scheduling of in-service training. This is an issue that emerges from a number of recent reports relating to CPD in Ireland.[150] Creating time for continuing professional development has been characterised as 'one of the greatest challenges for educational policymakers' in the area of teacher education.[151]

Compulsory in-service training provided by National Support Programmes (i.e. training designed to support the introduction of revised curricula or syllabi) is invariably held during school time. This incurs the cost of employing paid substitutes to replace teachers attending in-service training, or necessitates school closures (particularly at primary level in the event of whole staff training). In contrast, voluntary in-service training – largely though summer and local courses – is held outside of school time i.e. during the summer months or after school hours.

The scheduling of prescribed in-service training exclusively during school time – with the consequent cost of substitute teachers or the necessity for school closures – has been criticized by some commentators on the basis of the disruption caused to schoolwork and also the disruption caused to parents who have to make alternative arrangements in the event of school closures.[152] This issue is mentioned specifically in the latest social partnership agreement, *Towards 2016*.[153] A recent report on the SLSS described the current situation in the following terms:

"School Principals express strong support for the practice of teacher support, of professional development and of in-service. However, there is a recurring frustration among Principals and Deputy Principals in relation to release of teachers, to problems of substitution and to disruption of pupil progress, as also noted in other research. Many teachers also express frustration with the conflicting demands of professional development and teaching practice. There is a general feeling that a critical point has been reached and that there is need for a decisive policy initiative to break the log-jam between CPD demands and the integrity of the school teaching year".[154]

[150] Damien Murchan et al (2005), *PCSP*, p.210**;** Sugrue et al, (2001) pp. 43-44; Granville, (2005), pp.69-70
[151] Damien Murchan et al (2005), *PCSP*, 219
[152] Coolahan (2003), p.51
[153] *Towards 2016*, p.126
[154] Granville (2006), p.69

It has been suggested that the inherited, traditional teacher contractual arrangements are no longer satisfactory for the evolving circumstances of contemporary schooling.[155] Collinson and Cook (2001) suggest that a possible option for overcoming shortages of time is the re-conceptualisation of teachers' employment year. This involves teachers looking upon their working year in terms of a 12-month year, as opposed to a 9-month year.[156] Other reports have suggested that the possibility of engaging in in-service training outside of existing school hours is a necessary option that needs to be considered. Recent evaluations have recommended that the DES should negotiate with teachers' representatives to ensure that a proportion of any future national in-service training programmes are conducted outside of school hours.[157]

Despite the frequency with which this issue is mentioned, there are no firm recommendations on how best to balance the need for prescribed in-service training with the need to avoid excessive loss of school time. The Teaching Council may provide the most appropriate forum for discussing this issue and arriving at an agreed solution to the scheduling of in-service training.[158] *Towards 2016* provides for an exploration by the social partners of alternative approaches to this issue.[159]

While, this chapter has concluded that the TES has been effective in achieving its objective in relation to in-service training and CPD, there are areas where each of the programmes reviewed could be strengthened. The main issues raised by respondents to the teacher surveys are summarised below.

Primary Curriculum Support Programme

- Primary teachers expressed a desire to make the PCSP seminars and the advice provided by the Cuiditheoirí as specific to their needs as possible.
- Respondents to the teacher survey expressed an anxiety for greater access to the Cuiditheoirí service. This encompassed a desire for more frequent visits by the Cuiditheoirí, longer time with the Cuiditheoirí during each visit, more in class visits to individual teachers, and more email support from Cuiditheoirí. A number of respondents felt that in order to maximise the time spent with members of the RCSS teachers should have 'pupil free time'.
- There appears to be some concern among primary teachers at the extent to which the PCSP seminars prepared them to implement the English curriculum. Approximately forty percent of respondents to the teacher survey considered the training allocated for this subject to have been too short. While English was most frequently identified as the area in which teachers were having most difficulty, a significant proportion of respondents also identified P.E., Music and Gaeilge as problem areas. One significant issue, raised in respect of nearly

[155] Coolahan (2003), p.51
[156] Collinson, V. and Cook, T.F. (2001). '"I Don't Have Enough Time": Teachers' Interpretations of Time as a Key to Learning and School Change.' Journal of Educational Administration, 39/3, 266-281. Referred to in Damien Murchan et al (2005), *PCSP*, p.213
[157] Damien Murchan et al (2005), *PCSP*, p.252; CMOD (2002), p.23
[158] Granville (2006), p.69
[159] *Towards 2016*, p.126

each subject area, was that respondents experienced difficulties relating to multi class teaching.

- It appears that there is a cohort of teachers that are not implementing some key features of the revised primary curriculum. The area of greatest concern is in relation to the level of ICT integration in the classroom. On average, only a third of respondents integrate ICTs into their classroom on a regular basis. There is considerable variation on this issue between subjects. The least frequent integration occurs in relation to Physical Education.
- There is also a small cohort of respondents who do not link their classroom planning to the school plan, who do not use the curriculum strands as the starting point for classroom planning, who do not integrate the individual subjects in the primary curriculum, and who do not employ a variety of assessment tools.
- Building on the evidence that emerged from the TCD evaluation of the PCSP, the teacher survey conducted for this review indicated that primary teachers do not distinguish between the work of the RCSS and the facilitators employed as part of the School Development Planning Initiative (SDPI). Among respondents to the PCSP teacher survey, only forty one percent were very clear or clear about the distinction between the role of the RCSS and the SDPI facilitators. This confirms the trends that emerged from the data collated as part of the TCD evaluation and lends support to the suggestion by system planners interviewed as part of that study that the issue of integrating the work of the SDPI and the PCSP into one service for teachers should be explored.

HIST support service

- The overall level of satisfaction among history teachers with the support and training provided by the HIST is very positive. However, some teachers expressed concerns about their level of preparation in relation to the Research Study element of the revised syllabus. A small minority of history teachers were experiencing difficulties in this area. The main concern was the Outline Plan but there was also anxiety in relation to the marking scheme, the evaluation of sources and the extended essay itself.
- A relatively small cohort of teachers also expressed concerns over the length of the revised syllabus. Such teachers were of the view that it is not possible to complete the entire syllabus in the prescribed time, particularly if each topicwas to be treated in sufficient depth.

NBSS

- As with the HIST, the quality of the support provided by the NBSS was highly regarded by the target population. However, a number of teachers did highlight some areas of the revised syllabus in respect of which they felt inadequately prepared. More than ten percent of the cohort considered themselves inadequately prepared to implement eleven of the fourteen sub-units of the revised syllabus. The *Genetics* sub-unit, in particular, appeared to be a cause of concern for approximately fifteen percent of respondents.
- One theme to emerge from the teacher survey was an anxiety among respondents for additional, and even continuous, in-service training in the revised syllabus. This appears to account for the fact that, while a majority of

respondents considered the length of the in-service training to have been appropriate, almost one in three (twenty nine per cent) considered it to have been too short.

- As with the history syllabus, a small number of teachers expressed concerns over the length of the revised biology syllabus. Such teachers were of the view that it was not possible to implement the entire biology syllabus in the time available.

Summer and local courses

- The area of greatest concern in relation to summer and local course provision through the Education Centre Network is the relatively high proportion of teachers that are not learning new skills or teaching methodologies as a result of their participation in such courses. Data from teacher surveys indicate that fifteen per cent of summer course participants and fourteen percent of participants in a local course did not learn new teaching skills/strategies as a result of participation in their course. At the very least, this finding suggests that teachers are either unaware of the intended outcome of the courses in which they participate or that such courses lack identifiable outcomes such as new skills or new knowledge in a particular subject area.
- Respondents to the teacher surveys expressed some concerns over the lack of variety of the summer and local courses offered by Education Centres. This included a desire for more curriculum related courses in areas such as Gaeilge, English and Art, as well as non-curricular related courses in areas such as school planning and ICT. There were also requests for more courses targeted at specific post holders such as principals, resource teachers and returning teachers.
- A breakdown of the curricular related summer courses organised by the Education Centre Network in the period 2001 – 2004 suggests an imbalance in the variety of courses organised by the Education Centre Network. There is a disproportionate emphasis on summer courses in Visual Arts and P.E. and relatively little course provision in the key curricular areas of literacy and numeracy.
- One other issue raised by summer course participants was the limited number of places available on such courses. This was an issue for teachers in rural schools who complained that there was a delay in receiving the summer course booklet that advertises all available courses.

The section below makes recommendations in relation to each of the CPD programmes reviewed, with some overall recommendations relating to the area of in-service training and CPD as a whole.

7.11 Recommendations

Data collection and evaluation

- The TES should work with the DES Inspectorate to develop an indicator or indicators that would facilitate a more balanced assessment of the impact of the

teacher education programmes supported by the TES on student learning and development.

- In order to facilitate evaluation of the local and summer course provision, each Education Centre should employ a standard evaluation sheet (to be agreed by the TES) for local and summer course provision. This evaluation sheet should be no longer than a single page and should contain a mix of quantitative and qualitative type questions. In deciding on the type of question mix, the TES should balance the need for evaluative comments with the need to be able to act upon the data collected. The new evaluation sheet should include questions directly asking respondents for their views on the quality and relevance of the training provided. The evaluation sheet should afford participants an equal opportunity to award a positive and negative rating.
- The TES should ensure that it has an input into the design of a standard evaluation sheet for all National Programmes. Any variation from this standard evaluation sheet should be approved by the TES. As in the case of the summer and local courses, the TES should balance the need for evaluative comments with the need to be able to act upon the data collected. The new evaluation sheet should include questions directly asking respondents for their views on the quality and relevance of the training provided. The evaluation sheet should afford participants an equal opportunity to award a positive and negative rating.
- Education Centres should ensure that data is collected from each participant in a local course through a participant evaluation sheet.
- In relation to National Support Programmes, the feedback from participants at each in-service training session organised through the National Support Programmes should be aggregated electronically and submitted to the TES for monitoring purposes.

Scheduling of in-service delivery

- As outlined in *Towards 2016*, the issue of the future scheduling of in-service training should be explored by the TES in consultation with the relevant education partners and the Teaching Council. Such discussions should encompass the issue of the future viability of EPV days for summer courses and the possibility of opening summer courses to post primary participants.

Needs analysis

- Education Centres should conduct regular needs analyses of local teachers in order to identify the personal and professional needs of teachers. This data should be used to inform local and summer course provision. This data should also be transmitted to the TES.

Attendance at in-service training

- The TES should monitor the attendance levels at compulsory in-service training. Those teachers who do not attend prescribed in-service should be contacted for an explanation. Any factors that are preventing teachers from attendance should be identified by the National Support Programmes and

addressed by the TES.

Primary Curriculum Support Programme

- The PCSP seminars (and with wider application, in-service training seminars in general) should be tailored as specifically as possible to individual school and teacher contexts. Trainers should also be adequately prepared in advance to adapt their seminar delivery to the needs of the teachers in attendance.
- Attention should be given to how to maximize the time spent by Cuiditheoirí during school visits. Maximum use of the internet and the PCSP website should be made to ensure that routine queries – relating to accessing resources etc – can be dealt with outside of the time devoted to school visits.
- The concerns expressed by teachers over the complexity of the curriculum should be communicated to the NCCA.
- The issue of reducing any potential overlap or duplication between the work of the SDPI facilitator and the PCSP Cuiditheoirí should be examined. The potential for integrating these support services at primary level should be considered.
- The reason for the lack of integration of ICTs in the classroom needs to be examined. This should be complemented by an increased promotion of ICTs as a teaching and learning tool for pupils and teachers alike by the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE).
- The findings relating to the extent to which primary teachers are (i) linking classroom planning to the school plan, and (ii) using the curriculum strands (rather than textbooks) as the starting point for classroom planning, (iii) making linkages between different subject areas, and (iv) employing a variety of assessment tools, should be conveyed to the relevant support services (PCSP, SDPI) and the DES Inspectorate to inform their future work with primary teachers.

Summer and local courses

- In order to ensure that teachers across the country have equal access to summer courses, the summer course booklet should be posted on the website of each Education Centre as well as on the DES and Drumcondra Education Centre website.
- Each summer and local course should have a clearly identifiable outcome (such as improved teacher understanding of specific aspects of a subject area, understanding of specific teaching methodologies etc) which can be measured through feedback on a participant evaluation sheet. This will facilitate the future monitoring and evaluation of course provision.
- The TES should ensure that summer and local courses organised by providers other than Education Centres should also be subject to appropriate monitoring and evaluation procedures.

HIST support service

- *Length of syllabus:* the concerns raised by a cohort of history teachers about the length of the history syllabus and its implications for the future take up of the

subject should be communicated to the NCCA.

NBSS

- *Length of syllabus:* the concerns raised by a cohort of Biology teachers about the length of the Biology syllabus should be communicated to the NCCA.

Chapter Eight

Teacher Education Section Objectives – Cost and Efficiency of Achievement

8.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to identify the level and trend of costs and staffing resources associated with the provision of teacher training through 1) the Colleges of Education 2) the Education Support Centres and 3) the National Support Services and thus comment on the *efficiency* with which the TES has achieved its objectives (fifth term of reference).

An assessment of efficiency involves an examination of the relationship between inputs and outputs. The inputs and outputs, and the efficiency indicators used to measure the relationship between them, of the three main policy areas in which the TES is involved, were identified in chapter four as part of the Programme Logic Model (PLM). The table below reproduces the inputs, outputs and efficiency indicators from the PLM. It will be noted that the terms of reference focus on an examination of efficiency in the Colleges of Education, the Education Support Centres, and the National Support Programmes. This equates to two of the three main areas of TES activity – initial teacher education, and in-service training/professional development. The terms of reference do not require an exploration of the area of induction. However, for the purpose of this analysis, the National Pilot Project on Teacher Induction is considered to be a National Support Programme and is analysed under that heading.

Table 8.1: Inputs, outputs and efficiency indicators associated with TES activity

Initial Teacher Education		
Inputs	Outputs	Efficiency indicators
• The financial resources provided by the TES/HEA to the Colleges of Education for initial teacher education. • The staffing level supported by the TES (or HEA) for initial teacher education in each College of Education • The cost of staff time devoted to supporting the Colleges within the TES.	• An adequate supply of appropriately qualified teachers.	⇒ The unit cost of initial teacher education per student teacher in the Colleges of Education in each year in the period 2001/02 to 2006/07. ⇒ The ratio of students on initial teacher education programmes to staff in the Colleges of Education in each year in the period 2003 to 2006. ⇒ The level of attrition within the teacher education programmes within the Colleges of Education in each year in the period 2001/02 to 2005/06.
CPD – Education Support Centres		
Inputs	Outputs	Efficiency indicators
• The financial resources provided by the TES to the Education Centres • The level of staffing resources associated with the Education Centres. • The cost of staff time devoted to supporting the Education Centres within the TES.	• The delivery of programmes of in-service training and professional development to teachers.	⇒ The unit cost per local course participant in each year in the period 2001-2006.
CPD – National Support Programmes (including NPPTI)		
Inputs	Outputs	Efficiency Indicators
• The financial resources provided by the TES to the National Support Programmes • The level of staffing resources/substitution costs associated with the National Programmes. • The cost of TES staff time devoted to supporting the National Programmes.	• The delivery of programmes of in-service training and professional development to teachers.	⇒ The unit cost of in-service training and professional development per teacher trained in each year in the period 2004 to 2006.

A series of key questions, designed to track the efficiency indicators identified in Table 8.1, will be addressed below in relation to the Colleges of Education, the Education Centres, and the National Support Programmes respectively.

8.2 Colleges of Education

8.2.1 Funding of Colleges of Education

As outlined in chapter two, there are five main Colleges of Education in Ireland that provide full-time initial teacher education courses leading to a qualification that is recognised by the DES for the purpose of employment as a primary teacher. The five Colleges of Education are:

- Mary Immaculate College, Limerick
- St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin
- Church of Ireland College of Education, Rathmines, Dublin
- Coláiste Mhuire, Marino, Dublin
- Froebel College of Education, Blackrock, Dublin

The five Colleges of Education operate under the terms of Rule 153 of the Rules for National Schools, which gives authority to the Minister for Education and Science to pay grants to such colleges for the purpose of obtaining a sufficient supply of trained teachers for service in national schools. Prior to 1993, all five Colleges of Education were funded through the DES. As a result of institutional linkages developed with the University of Limerick and Dublin City University, the two larger colleges (Mary Immaculate, Limerick, and St. Patrick's, Drumcondra) have been funded through the Higher Education Authority (HEA) since 1993 and 1994 respectively. The remaining three colleges (Church of Ireland, Froebel and Colaiste Mhuire) are funded by the TES in different ways: the Church of Ireland College is funded on a budget-based system, and the other two by means of capitation grants.

The Church of Ireland College of Education (CICE) is funded on a budget basis. The grant goes towards the general running expenses (pay and non-pay) of the College. The grant paid represents the full cost of the approved staffing and the excess of expenditure over income in regard to maintenance and running costs. An annual budget is approved for the College, taking into account expected expenditure and income, and the grant is paid in instalments. Before the final instalment is paid, a review of the budget is undertaken to allow for any necessary adjustments in respect of, for example, additional income or lower than anticipated expenditure.

Froebel College and Coláiste Mhuire are funded on a capitation grant basis. The current rate of capitation is €8,123 per eligible student. The capitation grant is paid at the start of each academic year, based on the total enrolment of eligible students (no grant is paid in respect of students repeating a year).

The Colleges of Education are also paid a grant in lieu of tuition fees, based on student enrolments, which dates from the introduction of fee remission (free fees) for eligible full-time undergraduate students in 1996. The Colleges also receive

income from registration/student services charges and charges for meals and accommodation (where these are provided). The charges for meals and for accommodation are a matter for the relevant College authorities.

8.2.2 Trend in student intake to, and graduates from, the Colleges of Education

The five main Colleges of Education offer a three-year course for school-leavers and mature students, leading to the University degree of Bachelor of Education.[160] In addition, a special 18-month teacher training Diploma course for holders of university degrees was provided by four of the Colleges of Education (the course is not offered by the CICE) in 1995/96, and each year from 1997/1998 to 2006/2007.

Student intake

The trend in student intake to the five main Colleges of Education in the period since 1998/1999 is outlined below.

Table 8.2 - Student intake to the B.Ed and Diploma programme, 1998/99-2005/06

Year	B.Ed.	Diploma*	Total intake	Percentage Change
1998/99	750	283	1033	-
1999/00	976	283	1259	22%
2000/01	999	302	1301	3.3%
2001/02	1025	460	1485	14%
2002/03	1038	464	1502	1%
2003/04	1046	294	1340	(11%)
2004/05	1054	278	1332	(1%)
2005/06	1133	287	1420	7%

* Graduate Diploma commenced Nov 1998 in the Dublin Colleges and Feb 1999 in Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. In 2000 and subsequent years, the Graduate Diploma commenced in February in all Colleges.

The number of students entering teacher education programmes in the main Colleges of Education has increased significantly since 1998/99. In absolute terms, there were 387 more enrolments in 2005/2006 than in 1998/99, representing an increase of 37%.

The overall student intake to teacher education programmes peaked in 2002/03. The number of new entrants to the main Colleges decreased slightly in the following two years – 2003/04 and 2004/05 - before increasing again in 2005/2006. The decline in overall student enrolments is attributable to a decline in the number of enrolments in the Diploma programme. While there have been consistent increases in the B.Ed intake each year since 1998/99, the trend in student intake to the Diploma programme has been more inconsistent. Overall, in the period 1998-99

[160] The length of the B.Ed degree programme in all five Colleges of Education is three years. In Mary Immaculate and St. Patrick's College, a student may obtain an honours degree after three years, while in the CICE, Froebel and Colaiste Mhuire, the award after three years is a general B.Ed degree. This is because the University of Dublin, which grants the B.Ed degree to students in these three colleges, will grant an honours degree only after four years of study. Students in these colleges must complete a further year's study if they wish to obtain an honours degree (Kellaghan report, p.22)

to 2005/06, student intake to the B.Ed programme increased by 51% while the number of Diploma enrolments increased by 1.4%.

However, the decline in the number of Diploma enrolments is related to the recognition awarded by the DES in August 2003 to graduates from Hibernia College. Students began enrolling in the eighteen month Diploma programme organised by Hibernia in October 2003. In the 2003/2004 academic year there were 408 enrolments to the Diploma programme, with another 500 enrolments in 2004/2005 and 2005/2006. If the number of students enrolling in the Hibernia Diploma programme is taken into account, the overall increase in students enrolling in Graduate Diploma programmes in the period 1998-99 to 2005/2006 is 178%, which is far greater than the 51% increase in B.Ed enrolments. This means that the overall increase in new entrants to teacher education programmes (both B.Ed and Diploma) in the Colleges of Education (including Hibernia) has increased by 86% since 1998/99.

The table below disaggregates the student intake by the state supported Colleges of Education.

Table 8.3. : Student intake to the B. Ed degree and Postgraduate Diploma programmes disaggregated by College of Education, 1998/99 – 2005/2006[161]

	1998/99		1999/00		2000/01		2001/02		2002/03		2003/04		2004/05		2005/06	
	B. Ed	Diploma	B.Ed	Diploma	B.Ed	Diploma	B.Ed	Diploma	B.Ed	Diploma	B.Ed	Diploma	B.Ed	Diploma	B.Ed	Diploma
Froebel	51	30	56	30	64	30	61	60	68	61	54	30	61	30	94	36
Colaiste Mhuire	61	50	105	50	102	50	106	101	114	99	117	50	106	49	104	50
Mary I	309	100	402	100	409	120	409	120	411	123	431	110	467	99	491	97
St. Pats	295	103	382	103	395	102	418	179	411	181	413	104	393	100	413	104
CICE	34	n/a	31	n/a	29	n/a	31	n/a	34	n/a	31	n/a	27	n/a	31	n/a
Total	750	283	976	283	999	302	1025	460	1038	464	1046	294	1054	278	1133	287

[161] Data supplied by Colleges of Education

Trend in graduate numbers

The tables below outline the number of graduates from the B.Ed and Diploma programmes in the main Colleges of Education in the period from 2001 to 2006. Table 8.4 outlines the overall trend in graduate numbers while Table 8.5 disaggregates the total by individual college.

Table 8.4: Overall trend in graduate numbers from main Colleges of Education

Year	B.Ed.	P.Grads	Total	Percentage Change
2001	706	272	978	-
2002	793	269	1,062	9%
2003	959	430	1,389	31%
2004	974	453	1,427	3%
2005	965	303	1,268	(11%)
2006	986	282	1,268	-

Table 8.5: Trend in graduate numbers disaggregated by College of Education, 2001-06[162]

	2001		2002		2003		2004		2005		2006	
	B.Ed	Dip	B.Ed	Dip	B.Ed	Dip	B.Ed	Dip	B.Ed	Dip	B.Ed	Dip
Froebel	49	30	49	25	65	59	57	60	63	30	55	30
Coláiste Mhuire	97	50	94	51	94	101	106	99	102	49	113	48
Mary Immaculate	236	98	278	95	394	100	392	118	375	122	382	104
St. Patrick's	291	94	345	98	383	170	392	176	398	102	403	100
CICE	33	-	27	-	23	-	27	-	27	-	33	-
Total	706	272	793	269	959	430	974	453	965	303	986	282

In the period 2001-06 there was an increase of 30% in the number of graduates produced by the main Colleges of Education. The pattern of graduate numbers reflects the pattern of student intake. There were small increases in graduate numbers in 2002 and 2004 reflecting increases in the number of B.Ed enrolments in 1999/2000 and 2001/2002. The significant increase in graduate numbers in 2003 is mainly attributable to the sizeable increase in enrolments to the Diploma programme in February 2001 and February 2002. The slowdown in graduate numbers since 2004 is a factor of a slowdown in student intake to both the B.Ed (in 2002/03 and 2003/04) and Diploma (in 2003 and 2004) programmes.

There is a difference in the pattern of graduate numbers in the B.Ed and Diploma programmes. The number of B.Ed graduates increased by 40% in the period 2001 to 2006 compared to an increase of 4% in Diploma graduates. The number of B.Ed graduates has increased consistently in each year since 2001, with the exception of 2005 when there was a minor decline in graduate numbers. In contrast, there is

[162] Data supplied by Colleges of Education

greater inconsistency in the number of Diploma graduates, with increases in 2003 and 2004 but decreases in 2001, 2005 and 2006. However, this does not take account of the numbers graduating from Hibernia College since 2005. If the graduates from Hibernia College are taken into consideration (392 in 2005 and 466 in 2006) there was actually a 175% increase in the number of graduates from the Diploma programme in the period 2001 to 2006.

8.3 Efficiency of Colleges of Education – key questions

The evaluation of the efficiency of the Colleges of Education involved a number of key questions, as outlined below:

1. *What is the level and trend of funding allocated to the Colleges of Education for teacher education programmes?*

2. *What is the level and trend of student numbers enrolled in teacher education programmes in the Colleges of Education?*

3. *What is the unit cost per student in teacher education programmes in the Colleges of Education?*

4. *How does the unit cost compare between the Colleges of Education?*

5. *What is the level and trend of staffing resources associated with the Colleges of Education?*

6. *What is the ratio of students in teacher education programmes to staff members in the Colleges of Education?*

7. *What is the attrition rate on the B.Ed and Diploma programmes?*

Each of these key questions will be addressed in turn, thereby contributing to an assessment of the efficiency of the Colleges of Education.

It should be noted that the focus in this chapter in relation to the Colleges of Education is on their role in teacher preparation. While this is a central role of such Colleges it does not take into account the other activities in which the Colleges are involved. These other activities include research relating to teacher preparation and professional development, involvement in CPD provision, and links with other institutions such as the Education Centres and the NPPTI.

8.4 Key question 1: What is the level and trend of funding allocated to the Colleges of Education for teacher education programmes?

The following table shows the total allocation provided by the TES/HEA to the five main Colleges of Education in the period 2001 to 2006. It also indicates the annual percentage change in the level of funding provided.

Table 8.6 - Total funding* allocated to Colleges of Education per financial year[163]

Year	Amount	% Increase
2001	€28,528,369	-
2002	€34,461,703	21%
2003	€36,591,264	6%
2004	€36,458,890	0.4%
2005	€39,309,955	8%
2006	€45,280,062	15%

* This includes funding for all academic programmes operated by the Colleges of Education but excludes student registration charges, charges for meals/accommodation and fees payable by postgraduate students.

The level of funding provided to the five main Colleges of Education has increased by approximately €17 million in the period from 2001 to 2006. This represents an increase of 59% over the six year period.

However, the funding outlined in the table above supports a variety of academic programmes and activities as well as the B.Ed and Graduate Diploma. While Froebel College and Colaiste Mhuire are devoted exclusively to teacher education, the remaining three Colleges (St. Patrick's, Mary Immaculate and the CICE) offer other programmes apart from the B.Ed and the Graduate Diploma. In the case of the two HEA funded Colleges, the proportion of participants in non teacher education programmes is very significant. It was therefore necessary to identify the proportion of funding devoted exclusively to pre-service education. However, this information is not readily available as the Colleges do not disaggregate expenditure on an individual programme basis.

The procedure adopted to estimate the proportion of funding allocated by the TES/HEA for initial teacher education programmes was unsophisticated but in the absence of any alternative and in the short timeframe available, it was considered to be the only feasible option. The procedure involved the following steps:

1. Identify the proportion of students in each College of Education in each particular year that was participating in the B.Ed and Graduate Diploma programmes.
2. Estimate the proportion of the funding allocated to each College by the TES/HEA for the B.Ed and Diploma programmes by dividing the overall allocation by the proportion of students participating in each programme. For example, if 60% of the student body in a particular college were participating in a B.Ed/Diploma programme, then it was estimated that 60% of the funding was apportioned for teacher education programmes.

There a number of difficulties associated with this procedure which highlight the need for caution in interpreting the resulting data:

[163] Data supplied by the TES/HEA.

- The TES and the HEA allocate funding by calendar year, whereas the Colleges operate and collect statistics (number of students enrolled etc) by academic year.
- The Graduate Diploma students are enrolled for parts of two consecutive academic years. They enrol in the Diploma programme in February and complete their eighteen month course in September of the following year. This complicates the allocation of costs.
- The Colleges are funded in different ways: Mary Immaculate and St. Patrick's Colleges are funded by the HEA, while Froebel, Colaiste Mhuire and the CICE are funded by the TES. Even among the Colleges supported by the TES, different funding mechanisms apply: Froebel and Colaiste Mhuire are funded mainly on a capitation rate basis, while the CICE is funded through a budget based system.
- The CICE does not offer the Graduate Diploma programme. This means that the Colleges are not being compared on a strictly equitable basis.

In addition, the method adopted to calculate the level of funding specifically devoted to initial teacher education programmes does not consider the different costs associated with different academic programmes. This is something that the HEA have attempted to take into account in their new model of allocating funding to the institutions under their responsibility. The HEA introduced a new Recurrent Grant Model (RGAM) with effect from 2006 for the Universities and intend to extend the model to the HEA funded Colleges of Education with effect from 2007. Under the new funding model, the core grant to the Colleges of Education will be allocated using a formulaic approach – i.e. funding will be linked to student numbers and types. The Colleges will continue to receive separately a free fees grant in respect of certified student numbers eligible for free fees. In general, the new RGAM allocates funding based on a standard per capita amount (depending on the total funding available) in respect of weighted EU numbers in four broad subject price groups, namely: Laboratory-based subjects (weighting of 1.7), subjects with a studio, laboratory or fieldwork element (weighting of 1.3), clinical stages of medicine/dentistry (weighting of 2.3 or 4) and non-laboratory or all other subjects (weighting of 1). The student numbers in the Colleges of Education under the HEA will mainly fall into two groupings i.e. Education falls into the category of subjects with a studio, laboratory or fieldwork element (weighting of 1.3) and Arts/humanities generally fall to be funded in the non-laboratory grouping (weighting of 1).

The points outlined above highlight the difficulty of establishing with any definitive accuracy the level of funding devoted exclusively to initial teacher education. This, in turn, indicates the need for caution in interpreting the results of the following analysis which is based on estimated data.

The two step procedure described above resulted in the following estimate of spending on initial teacher education programmes in the five main Colleges of Education (Table 8.7 below):

Table 8.7: Estimated funding allocated to initial teacher education programmes*

College	2001 €	2002 €	2003 €	2004 €	2005 €	2006 €
Mary Immaculate	€6,850,449	€7,546,349	€8,113,381	€7,497,928	€8,956,906	€9,856,952
St. Patrick's	€7,911,671	€9,228,898	€9,946,948	€8,640,392	€9,840,965	€9,821,491
Colaiste Mhuire	€2,825,979	€4,488,339	€3,999,096	€3,919,604	€3,865,640	€4,148,408
Froebel	€1,734,872	€2,698,027	€2,357,985	€2,288,131	€2,500,958	€2,862,988
CICE	€759,729	€802,692	€681,256	€788,051	€814,020	€937,025
Total	€20,082,700	€24,764,305	€25,098,666	€23,134,106	€25,978,489	€27,626,864

* This does not include student registration charges, charges for meals/accommodation and fees payable by postgraduate students.

Table 8.8: Number of B.Ed and Graduate Diploma students enrolled in Colleges of Education

	2001/02		2002/03		2003/04		2004/05		2005/06		2006/07	
	B.Ed	Diploma	B.Ed	Diploma	B.Ed	Diploma	B.Ed	Diploma	B.Ed	Diploma	B.Ed	Diploma
Mary Immaculate	1163	120	1170	117	1209	105	1221	187	1273	201	1292	97
St. Patrick’s	1146	284	1207	359	1223	284	1210	206	1215	203	1200	196
Coláiste Mhuire	316	148	312	200	329	148	320	101	325	97	318	100
Froebel	179	63	193	91	191	90	188	59	211	67	226	37
CICE	91	-	94	-	96	-	92	-	89	-	91	-
Total	2895	615	2976	767	3048	627	3031	553	3113	568	3127	430

The estimated level of funding allocated to initial teacher education programmes has increased by more than €7.5m in the five years since 2001. This represents an overall increase of 38%. The overall level of funding increased each year, with the exception of 2004, when the allocation was 8% less than in 2003. The funding allocated to initial teacher education broadly reflects the trend in student numbers enrolled in the B.Ed and Graduate Diploma programmes (as discussed below).

Mary Immaculate College and St. Patrick's College both receive the highest level of state support. This is not surprising given the fact that these Colleges together cater for approximately three quarters of the total population of B.Ed/Graduate Diploma students. This is reflected in the level of funding allocated to these colleges. For example, in 2006, Mary Immaculate and St. Patrick's College together accounted for seventy one percent of the total funding awarded to the five main Colleges of Education for initial teacher education programmes.

8.5 Key question 2: What is the level and trend of student numbers enrolled in teacher education programmes in the Colleges of Education?

Table 8.8 on the previous page identifies the level and trend of student numbers enrolled in the B.Ed and Graduate Diploma programmes in each of the state supported Colleges of Education in the period 2001/02 to 2006/07.

The overall number of B.Ed students has increased by 8% since 2001/2002. The number of students increased in each year – with the exception of 2004/2005 when there was a marginal decline of 1%. The largest increases occurred in 2002/2003 and 2005/2006 with increases of 3%.

In terms of absolute numbers, Mary Immaculate College experienced the largest increase in B.Ed students between 2001/2002 and 2006/2007. There were 129 more students enrolled on the B.Ed programme in 2006/2007 compared to 2001/2002. However, in relative terms, Froebel College witnessed the largest percentage increase – an increase of 26% during this period. The lowest increase occurred in relation to the B.Ed in the CICE – student numbers were the same in this College in 2006/2007 as in 2001/2002. The number of B.Ed students in Colaiste Mhuire increased by 0.6%, in St. Patrick's College by 4.7% and in Mary Immaculate by 11%.

In relation to the Diploma programme, there was a 30% decrease in student numbers in the state supported Colleges between 2001/02 and 2006/07. There was an inconsistent pattern to the change in student numbers during this period, with an increase of 25% in 2002/03, a decrease of 18% in 2003/04, a decrease of 12% in 2004/05, followed by an increase of 3% in 2005/06 and a decrease of 24% in 2006/2007. The general reduction in student numbers enrolled in the Diploma programme from 2003/2004 is related to the recognition awarded to Hibernia College in August 2003.

Each College had less Diploma students in 2006/07 than in 2001/2002. Froebel had the largest reduction (41%), followed by Colaiste Mhuire (32%). The number of Diploma students declined by 31% in St. Patrick's College and by 19% in Mary Immaculate.

The overall number of students enrolled in teacher education programmes in 2006/2007 is very similar to the numbers enrolled in 2001/2002. There was a small increase of 1.3% in the student numbers enrolled in 2006/2007 compared to 2001/02. Student numbers peaked in 2002/03, when there were 3,743 B.Ed and Diploma students enrolled. The number declined marginally each year since then – with the exception of 2005/06 when there was a 2.7% increase – to 3,557 in 2006/07. The slight reduction in student numbers in the period from 2003/2004 has to be viewed in the context of the enrolments in Hibernia College since that time.

While caution must be exercised in drawing conclusions on the basis of an estimate of the funding allocated to initial teacher education, the evidence suggests that the number of students enrolled in teacher education programmes in the main Colleges of Education broadly reflects the trend in the funding allocated by the TES/HEA. The increase in student numbers in 2002/2003 is reflected in a significant increase in 2002 funding. Student numbers experienced a small decline in 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 before increasing again in 2005/2006. This trend is mirrored in the funding allocated to the Colleges of Education – there is a slight decrease in funding in 2004 but small increases in 2005 and 2006.

8.6 Key question 3: What is the unit cost per student in the Colleges of Education?

At present, no data are collected on unit costs in relation to the Colleges of Education. However, in order to fulfil the terms of reference, it was necessary to estimate the unit cost associated with the B.Ed and Diploma programmes. It was agreed that the following two step procedure would be adopted:

- The first step was to identify the level of funding allocated to each College by the TES/HEA for the B.Ed and Diploma programmes respectively by dividing the overall allocation for initial teacher education by the proportion of students participating in each programme. For example, if 60% of the student body in a particular college were participating in a B.Ed programme and 10% in a Graduate Diploma programme, then it was estimated that 60% of the funding for initial teacher education was apportioned to the B.Ed programme and 10% to the Diploma programme. The fee paid by students participating in the Diploma was excluded from this analysis as the same fee applies to all colleges. It should be noted that this first step in the two step procedure is based on the assumption that it is possible to identify the specific allocation for initial teacher education. However, as previously indicated, it was only possible to estimate the level of funding involved.
- The second step involved dividing the proportion of funding allocated for the B.Ed and Diploma programmes in each college in each year by the number of students participating in each programme.

In interpreting the data arising from this analysis, one must be aware of its inherent limitations. In the first instance, the data represent an estimate of the cost of supporting a student in a B.Ed or Graduate Diploma programme in an academic year. This unit cost is based upon an estimate of the funding specifically devoted to initial teacher education, and in the absence of definitive data on the cost of pre-service education programmes, it is not possible to establish definitive unit costs.

Secondly, the unit cost calculated does not take account of other funding received or generated by the Colleges of Education. The fees paid by post graduate students and income generated through the Colleges' own activities are excluded from the analysis. The term 'unit cost' in the rest of this section therefore should be understood as the estimated cost of educating a B.Ed and Graduate Diploma student based on the funding allocated to the Colleges of Education by the TES and the HEA rather than total funding received by the Colleges. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the question of whether the colleges are being compared on an equitable basis cannot be ignored. The value of the analysis in making comparisons between institutions is therefore limited. However, in the absence of any other data it does provide an estimate, albeit a crude one, of the costs associated with the Diploma and the B.Ed. programmes. It also facilitates analysis of the trend in unit cost within institutions over a number of years.

Based on the above method of calculating unit cost, Table 8.9 outlines the estimated average unit cost per student on the B.Ed and Diploma programmes in the period 2001/02 to 2006/07.

Table 8.9: Average unit cost per B.Ed and Graduate Diploma students

	B.Ed	% Increase	Diploma*	% Increase
2001/2002	€5,693	-	€5,854	-
2002/2003	€6,529	15%	€6,953	19%
2003/2004	€6,732	3%	€7,305	5%
2004/2005	€6,794	0.9%	€4,597	(37%)
2005/2006	€7,018	3.3%	€7,274	58%
2006/2007	€7,705	9.8%	€8,217	13%

* This does not include the fees payable by postgraduate students.

Overall, the evidence suggests that the average unit cost per student on the B.Ed programme increased by 35% over the five year period from 2001/02 to 2006/07. There was a significant increase of 15% in the unit cost in 2002/03 and another relatively large increase of 9.8% in 2006/2007. The unit cost remained relatively stable in the period between 2003/04 and 2005/06.

The percentage change in the unit cost of the B.Ed is attributable to two factors: (i) the change in student numbers, and (ii) the change in the level of funding allocated by the TES/HEA. The number of students enrolled in the B.Ed programme has remained relatively stable during this period. The percentage change in unit cost, therefore, is mainly attributable to the change in the level of funding allocated. For example, in the years when the unit cost rises, the increase in the level of funding is considerably higher than any corresponding increase in student numbers. In 2002/2003 the number of B.Ed students increased by 3% while funding increased by 28%. Similarly, in 2006/2007 the rise in unit cost is explained by an increase of 10% in funding compared to an increase of 0.45% in B.Ed student numbers.

In the three year period when the unit cost remained relatively stable (2003/2004 to 2005/2006) the change in the level of funding provided was more closely related to the change in student numbers. For example, in 2003/2004, the funding for the B.Ed programme increased by 5.6% while student numbers increased by 2.4%.

The unit cost per Graduate Diploma student increased by 40% in the period 2001/02 to 2006/2007, broadly in line with rise in the B.Ed unit cost. However, the change in the unit cost of the Diploma has been more inconsistent during this period. There were rises in unit cost in each year with the exception of 2004/2005 when there was a sharp reduction of 37%.

As in the case of the B.Ed programme, the fluctuation in the unit cost is related to the change in student numbers and the change in the level of funding provided. For example, the rise of 19% in unit cost in 2002/2003 can be explained by a 48% increase in funding and a smaller increase of 25% in the number of Diploma students. Similarly, the very significant rise of 58% in unit cost in 2005/2006 can be attributed to a 63% increase in funding and a smaller increase of 3% in student numbers. The large decrease in unit cost in 2004/2005 – a decrease of 37% - is explained by a 44% reduction in funding and a smaller decrease of 12% in the number of students on the Diploma programme.

Overall, the unit cost of the B.Ed and Diploma programmes appear very similar. However, this does not take account of the fees payable by Diploma students. The cost of twelve months of the Diploma programme, commencing in February 2006, amounted to €4,264, while the full eighteen month course amounted to €6,396.

8.7 Key question 4: How does the unit cost compare between the Colleges of Education?

As outlined previously, it was not possible to establish definitive unit costs for the B.Ed and Graduate Diploma programmes. While the previous sections provide estimates of average unit costs, it was the view of the steering committee that such estimates should not be used to make comparisons between individual colleges as this could lead to erroneous conclusions about the relative efficiency of different institutions. In light of these considerations, the analysis was confined to identifying the range of unit cost values (highest and lowest) around the mean unit cost rather than ranking individual colleges in terms of unit cost.

Table 8.10: Estimated Unit cost* per B.Ed student

Year	Mean	Range of values
2001/02	€5,693	€5,301- €8,349
2002/03	€6,529	€5,903- €9,506
2003/04	€6,732	€6,122- €8,413
2004/05	€6,794	€5,686- €9,868
2005/06	€7,018	€6,031- €9,187
2006/07	€7,705	€7,007 - €10,847

* As outlined above, the term ‘unit cost’ should be understood as the estimated cost of educating a B.Ed and Graduate Diploma student based on the funding allocated to the Colleges of Education by the TES and the HEA for initial teacher education (including the ‘free fees’ element) rather than total funding received by the Colleges.

Table 8.11: Estimated Unit cost* per Graduate Diploma student

Year	Mean	Range of values
2001/02	€5,854	€5,493 -€7,275
2002/03	€6,953	€5,466- €9,488
2003/04	€7,305	€6,599-€8,384
2004/05	€4,597	€2,970 -€7,663
2005/06	€7,274	€6,366- €9,094
2006/07	€8,217	€6,692- €11,134

* As outlined above, the term 'unit cost' should be understood as the estimated cost of educating a B.Ed and Graduate Diploma student based on the funding allocated to the Colleges of Education by the TES and the HEA (including the 'free fees' element) rather than total funding received by the Colleges.

The data suggest that there is a wide variation in the unit cost associated with the B.Ed and Graduate Diploma programmes in different institutions. For example, in 2006/2007, the average cost of a B.Ed student was €7,705, but in some Colleges the unit cost was €7,007 while in others it was €10,847. There is an even wider variation in relation to the unit cost of Diploma students. In 2006/2007, the average unit cost per Diploma student ranged from a low of €6,692 to a high of €11,134.

This suggests that some Colleges are more efficient in converting inputs (financial resources from the TES/HEA) into outputs (qualified teachers). However, due to the fact that this analysis is based on estimates of (i) the level of funding allocated to initial teacher education, and (ii) the unit cost associated with the B.Ed and Diploma programmes, it is not possible to make definitive judgements on the relative efficiency of different institutions.

8.8 Key question 5: What are the level and trend of staffing resources associated with the Colleges of Education?

An important input in the provision of initial teacher education is the number of staff employed in the Colleges of Education. As three of the Colleges (St. Patrick's, Mary Immaculate, and CICE) cater for students other than those participating in teacher education programmes, it was necessary to estimate the number of staff – both academic and administrative - in these Colleges that cater exclusively for students on the B.Ed and Diploma programmes.

Data on staffing numbers in the Colleges of Education have only been collected by the TES since December 2003, when Colleges were first asked to submit quarterly staffing returns. Based on these returns, the table below identifies the total number of Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) staff in each state supported College of Education.

Table 8.12: Number of staff employed in Colleges of Education (WTEs)[164]

	Dec 03	Dec 04	Dec 05	Dec 06
Mary Immaculate	259.06	262.45	249.49	269.19
St. Patrick's College	271.00	269.90	271.80	276.80
Froebel	27.00	22.67	24.00	25.00
CICE	30.00	32.00	30.00	30.00
Colaiste Mhuire	35.5	32.7	33.00	37.00
Total	622.56	619.72	607.29	636.99

[164] This data is based on staffing returns made by the Colleges of Education to the TES/HEA.

As indicated above, in the case of the two HEA funded Colleges and the CICE it was necessary to estimate the WTEs catering solely for initial teacher education. This was calculated by dividing the total number of WTE staff employed in these three Colleges in a particular year by the proportion of the student body participating in teacher education programmes in each College. For example, if 60% of the student population were participating in teacher education programmes, then 60% of the total staff cohort was estimated to be catering for these students.

As in the case of calculating unit cost, the resulting figures are estimates and may not accurately reflect the reality of the situation in individual Colleges. In particular, the calculation does not take account of the fact that some academic programmes may require more staff time than others. This emphasises the need for caution in interpreting the resulting data.

Based on this analysis, the table below identifies the estimated number of WTE staff dealing exclusively with initial teacher education programmes in the state supported Colleges of Education.

Table 8.13: Estimated WTE staff numbers in Colleges of Education dealing with initial teacher education*

	Dec 03	Dec 04	Dec 05	Dec 06
Mary Immaculate	148	150	139	139
St. Patrick's College	192	178	177	158
Froebel	27	23	24	25
CICE	13	15	14	14
Colaiste Mhuire	36	33	33	37
Total	416	399	387	373

* Figures are rounded to nearest whole number.

In absolute terms, the number of staff catering for students in initial teacher education programmes appears to have declined significantly since December 2003. There were forty three less WTE staff working in this area in December 2006 compared to December 2003. This represents a decrease of more than 10%. The number of WTEs has actually declined in each year since 2003. There were decreases of 4% in 2004, 3% in 2005 and 4% in 2006. This suggests that there were increased efficiencies in this area within the Colleges of Education.

Within individual Colleges of Education, St. Patrick's College experienced the largest reduction in WTE staff. Between December 2003 and December 2006 the number of WTEs dealing with initial teacher education fell by 18%. Froebel College and Mary Immaculate College also experienced overall reductions in this period – 7% and 6% respectively. There were slight increases in the number of WTE staff dealing exclusively with pre-service education in Colaiste Mhuire and the CICE – 3% and 8% respectively. However, in terms of absolute numbers the increase was minimal – both Colleges employed one additional WTE staff member in 2006 compared to 2003.

8.9 Key question 6: What is the ratio of students to staff members in the Colleges of Education?

One indicator of efficiency in the area of initial teacher education is the relationship between the number of WTE staff members catering for B.Ed and Diploma students and the number of students in such programmes. A ratio was calculated by dividing the total number of students enrolled in teacher education programmes in each College by the number of WTE staff estimated to be dealing with initial teacher education.

As the ratio is based on an estimate of the number of WTE staff, the steering committee were of the view that it was not possible to make comparisons between the Colleges of Education on an equitable basis. In consequence, the analysis below is confined to identifying the mean ratio for all of the Colleges of Education as well as the range of values arising.

Table 8.14: Ratio of B.Ed/Diploma students to staff members in Colleges of Education

Date	Mean	Range
Dec 03	8.4	7.3 – 11.9
Dec 04	8.3	6.1 -11.2
Dec 05	8.8	6.4 - 10.04
Dec 06	9.2	6.5 – 10.5

The average ratio has remained relatively stable in the period between December 2003 and December 2006. There was a marginal decrease in the ratio in 2003 but this was followed by small increases in each subsequent year. On average there were 9.2 students per WTE staff member in December 2006 compared to 8.4 students per WTE staff member in December 2003. This suggests that the Colleges of Education have become more efficient in their use of staff resources in the period since 2003.

The largest single increase in efficiency appears to have occurred between December 2004 and December 2005. This increase is attributable to the fact that although the number of students enrolled in teacher education programmes actually decreased (by 2.5%), there was a slightly larger decrease in WTE staff numbers (3%).

The table above also indicates that there is a considerable variation in the ratio of B.Ed/Graduate Diploma students per WTE staff member between different Colleges of Education. For example, in December 2006, one College had a ratio of 6.5 while another had a ratio of 10.5 and therefore appeared to be more efficient in its use of resources. However, the fact that the number of WTE staff is an estimated figure highlights the need for caution in drawing definitive conclusions about the relative efficiency of different institutions.

8.10 Key question 7: What is the attrition rate on the B.Ed and Diploma programme?

This question takes a broader interpretation of efficiency – as opposed to solely relating inputs to outputs – and examines the attrition rate on teacher education programmes. It was considered that a high attrition rate would indicate poor value

for money while a high completion rate among teacher education students would equate to an efficient use of public funds. The approach taken was to identify the number of students that withdrew from the B.Ed and Diploma programmes in each year since the 2001/2002 academic year. The tables below illustrate the overall trend in the five state supported Colleges of Education.

Table 8.15: No. of students who drop out of B.Ed programme in state supported Colleges of Education

	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
No. of B.Ed withdrawals	11	15	30	41	35
% of total B.Ed pop	0.38%	0.5%	0.98%	1.35%	1.12%

Table 8.16: No. of students who drop out of Graduate Diploma Programme in state supported Colleges of Education

	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
No. of Diploma withdrawals	5	4	4	6	3
% of total Diploma pop	0.8%	0.52%	0.64%	1.08%	0.53%

In terms of absolute numbers, there has been an increase in the number of withdrawals from the B.Ed programme in recent years. The number of withdrawals increased from eleven in 2001/2002 and fifteen in 2002/2003 to more than thirty in each of the three years since 2003/2004. The highest number of withdrawals occurred in 2004/2005 when forty one students withdrew from the B.Ed programme.

However, the absolute number of withdrawals must be interpreted against the trend in the number of students enrolled in the B.Ed programme. When the number of withdrawals is considered in the context of overall student numbers, the percentages involved are minimal. The number of withdrawals as a percentage of total participants on the B.Ed programme does not rise above 1.5% in any of the five years under review. The highest percentage occurs in 2004/2005 when 1.35% of the B.Ed population did not complete their studies.

In relation to the Graduate Diploma, the number of withdrawals is also minimal. The highest number of withdrawals occurs in the 2004/2005 academic year – as was the case with the B.Ed programme – but the actual number involved was very small – only six students. As a percentage of the overall population participating in the Diploma programme, the proportion is insignificant. The highest percentage occurs in 2004/2005 when 1.08% of the 553 participants on the Diploma programme did not complete the academic year.

The proportion of withdrawals from the B.Ed and Diploma programmes are very similar. The proportion of students withdrawing from the Diploma programme was actually higher than the proportion of withdrawals from the B.Ed programme in 2001/02 and 2002/03. However, in each subsequent year, the proportion of B.Ed withdrawals has been slightly higher. The similarity in withdrawal rates is surprising given the fact that as postgraduate students, participants in the Diploma programme are not entitled to ‘free fees’.

There is no recent published data from the University or Institute of Technology (IoT) sectors against which to compare the completion rates in teacher education

courses. The last published data in relation to the University and IoT sectors was published in 2001 and relates to the 1996/1997 academic year. The data indicate a non-completion rate of 16.8% in the university sector and 42.61% in the Institutes of Technology sector.[165] The value of comparing these data to those for teacher education programmes is limited due to the considerable difference in the time period involved. The Universities and IoTs have introduced a number of initiatives designed to improve student retention levels since the late 1990s and it is very likely that completion rates have improved significantly since 1996/1997.[166]

Overall, the low number of withdrawals from initial teacher education programmes suggests that the Colleges of Education are successful in supporting students to complete their studies. This indicates, therefore, that the public funds allocated to the Colleges for the purpose of preparing student teachers are being used efficiently.

8. 11 Education Support Centre Network

As outlined in chapter two, the twenty one full-time and nine part-time Education Centres continue to address their original remit of meeting the needs of local teachers by providing evening/weekend ("local courses") and summer courses. However, the original local focus of the Education Centres has changed in recent years and the Centres are now the central element of the DES' CPD infrastructure. The first National Support Programmes were delivered through the Education Centres in 1995 and each National Programme introduced since that time has been 'hosted' by an Education Centre. Since 1999, Centres have also been heavily involved in the provision of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) training and a full-time ICT advisor has been appointed to each full-time Centre. Many Centres have also established links with third level institutions to provide modules for third level or further education courses for teachers in their areas. Most of these courses are accredited by the third level institutions and provide local access for teachers who wish to pursue further educational qualifications.

While Education Centres are involved in a number of activities, this section is focussed on local and summer course provision. This review does not have the scope to examine the efficiency of all of the Education Centres' activities, and the conclusions drawn in relation to the efficiency with which the Education Centres convert inputs (financial and staffing resources) into outputs (defined here in terms of local and summer course participants) should be interpreted in this context.

8.12 Funding of Education Centres

Centres' activities are funded to a large extent by grant from the TES. A small element is received from the NCTE and many Centres generate income of their own from the provision of services to teachers e.g. fees for courses, laminating and photocopying charges etc. Education Centres receive funding under the following

[165] Morgan, M., Flanagan, R., & Kellaghan, T. (2001). *A study of non-completion in undergraduate university courses.* Dublin: Higher Education Authority.
[166] Flanagan, R., & Morgan, M. (2003). *Evaluation of programmes targeting retention in universities: A preliminary report of projects funded by the Higher Education Authority. Report to the Higher Education Authority.* Dublin: Educational Research Centre).

headings:

(a) Salary of Director/ICT Advisor

Each full-time centre operates with a Director on secondment from a teaching post and currently paid an allowance equivalent to the 10th category of the Principals' allowance scale of €25,304. The nine part-time Centres have a part-time Director who is also a full-time teacher. The Director directs the activities of the Education Centre outside of school hours and is paid an annual honorarium of €2,539 and six weeks paid substitution.

In 2006 the total salary cost of the full-time Directors amounted to more than €1.7m. The average Directors' salary in 2006, including allowances for educational qualifications, was €97,250 with a range between €83,132 and €104,276.

The National Council for Technology in Education pays the salary of the ICT Advisor assigned to all full-time Centres. Each full-time Education Centre also receives an allowance from the NCTE towards the cost of secretarial support to the Centre for the ICT Advisor.

(b) Core Funding

Prior to 2007 and the introduction of a budget based funding system (see below), the TES provided core funding to the Education Centres in the form of three separate grants: (i) a general allocation, (ii) an allocation towards administrative costs, and (iii) a maintenance grant.

General allocation

The TES provided an annual grant towards the operating costs of each Education Centre. This covered items such as rent, heat, and light. This allocation was based on the number of teachers in the catchment area of each Education Centre. The minimum allocation per full-time Education Centre was €50,000, payable to Centres with catchment areas of 2000 teachers or less. Allocations increased on a sliding scale according to the size of the catchment area, up to a maximum of €91,000.

The number of teachers served by each full-time Education Centre is outlined in the table below. (The part-time Centres do not have a defined school catchment area but are intended instead as a support to their nearest full-time Education Centre).

Table 8.17: Number of teachers served by each full-time Education Support Centre (in descending order).

Education Centre	No of teachers
Blackrock	5503
Drumcondra	5257
Cork	4806
Dublin West	4496
Limerick	3003
Navan	2754
Galway	2407
Wexford	2361
Kildare	2352
Waterford	2136
Athlone	1970
Donegal	1954
Kilkenny	1702
Mayo	1676
Tralee	1612
Carrick-on-Shannon	1470
Monaghan	1467
Laois	1450
West Cork	1290
Clare	1116
Sligo	896
Total	51,678

The number of teachers served by each full-time Education Centre varies considerably. The average number of teachers served is 2,461. However, the larger Centres (Blackrock and Drumcondra) cater for more than 5,000 teachers while the majority of Centres service the needs of between 1,000-3,000 teachers. Sligo Education Centre caters for the smallest number of teachers (896 teachers). However, account must be taken of the geographical distribution of teachers in a catchment area. In the case of some of the Centres dealing with a relatively small number of teachers, the teachers may be dispersed around a large number of schools, and the work of the Centre in dealing with the individual teachers is thereby increased.[167] For example, in order to identify teachers' professional needs through a process of consultation and school visits, Directors will have to spend considerably more time visiting a widely scattered teaching population outside of urban areas.

Since 2005, the funding for part-time Centres has been channeled through the nearest full-time Education Centre. This decision was taken by the TES following the introduction of revised financial procedures in 2005. The rationale for this move was that the part-time Centres, in the absence of any administrative support for the Director, may not have the capacity to comply with the more rigorous accountability mechanisms introduced under the new procedures. Prior to 2005, each part-time Centre received a separate general allocation, up to maximum of €12,000 per annum.

[167] CMOD (2002), p.6

Allocation towards Administrative Costs

Prior to 2007, each full-time Centre received a separate annual allocation from the TES towards the cost of staffing the Centre. Centres with a catchment area of less than 3,000 teachers received a staffing allocation of €45,000. Centres with a catchment area in excess of 3,000 teachers received an allocation of €65,000. Part-time Centres received no funding for administrative services.

Maintenance grant/Additional Operating Costs allocation

Each Centre occupying a purpose built facility received a 'maintenance grant' of €35,000 per annum towards the cost of maintaining the premises. The few Centres occupying rented premises received funding to meet the rental costs.

Introduction of budget based system

In response to criticism in the CMOD review (2002) of the procedures governing the allocation of funding to the Education Centre network[168], the TES introduced new financial procedures for Education Centres in 2005. These procedures include a move to a budget-based funding system. Under the new procedures, each Education Centre is required to submit an annual estimate of the following year's expenditure by November 30th. On the basis of this estimate, the TES allocates an annual budget to each Centre within the overall context of available resources. This budget is designed to contribute towards both the pay and non-pay costs incurred by each Education Centre. In contrast to the previous system of specific grants to Centres for specific purposes, there is now greater flexibility in how Centres use these resources, within the financial guidelines issued by the TES. This devolution of responsibility to local level is in accordance with best practice under the public sector modernization programme and is more likely to result in greater efficiency than the old system of centralized control. The first annual estimates – relating to 2007 - were submitted by Education Centres in late 2006 and were under examination by the TES at the time of writing this report.

(c) Summer and local courses

Prior to 2004, each Education Centre received a separate allocation for local and summer courses. In relation to summer courses, funding was payable by the TES to Education Centres up to a maximum of €10,500 for a full-time centre and up to €2,100 for a part-time centre for approved courses, although these allocations were sometimes increased on foot of appeals from Education Centres. Education Centres received a separate allocation for local courses. This was based on a submission by each Education Centre at the end of each year identifying the number and cost of the local courses it proposed to organize in the following year.

However, from 2004, the TES combined the funding for the local and summer courses into one 'local' course allocation[169], and also introduced an activity based

[168] CMOD (2002), pp.45-48

[169] For the remainder of this chapter, the term 'local' courses will be used to describe both local and summer courses unless explicitly stated otherwise.

budget. The level of funding provided for local courses is now related to (i) the number of relevant local courses organized, (ii) the percentage of local teachers who have participated in such courses, and (iii) the number of hours dedicated to eligible course provision. Since 2004, the TES has also channeled the funding for 'local' courses in part-time Centres through the nearest full-time Centre.

(d) National Programmes

The TES provides separate funding for National Programmes. The 'host' Centre for each National Programme receives an overall budget for the programme. The host Centre pays the national support team's expenses and any other costs that arise in the course of the programme. They also recoup the costs of the individual Education Centres that incur expenses in rolling out the in-service training locally.

8.13 Efficiency of Education Support Centres – key questions

The evaluation of the efficient delivery of in-service training and professional development for teachers through the Education Centres involved a number of key questions, as outlined below:

1. *What is the level and trend of costs associated with the provision of in-service training through the Education Centres?*

2. *What is the level and trend of participants on local courses organised by the Education Centres?*

3. *What is the unit cost per participant on local courses?*

4. *How does unit cost compare between Education Centres?*

5. *What is the level and trend of staffing resources associated with the Education Centres?*

6. *What is the ratio of staff to the number of local course participants in each Education Centre?*

Each of these questions will be answered in turn below, thereby contributing to an evaluation of the efficiency of the Education Centre Network.

8.14 Key question 1: What is the level and trend of costs associated with the provision of in-service training through the Education Centres?

The table below outlines the trend in overall core funding of the Education Centres (full and part-time) in the period 2001-2006. This funding refers to the operational costs of the network only (general allocation, secretarial allowance and maintenance grant) and excludes funding allocated for the delivery of local and summer courses (this is discussed separately below) and also funding for the administration of national programmes. It also excludes the cost of the Directors' salary as these data are not readily available on an annual basis.

Table 8.18: TES funding of Education Centres, 2001-2006[170].

Year	Funding	% Increase/(decrease)
2001	€ 2,236,854	-
2002	€1,808,318	(19%)
2003	€2,257,128	25%
2004	€3,141,312	39%
2005	€3,209,888	2%
2006	€3,327,512	4%

Core funding from the TES for the Education Centres has increased significantly during this period. Between 2001 and 2006, the level of core funding increased by €1,090,658 (49%). However, the level of funding has not increased in a consistent manner. In 2002, the level of funding decreased by 19% (€428,536). There is no clear explanation on record for this downturn in funding but it is not related to a downturn in the overall level of funding for the ICDU (predecessor to the TES).[171] The largest single increase in funding during this period arose in 2004, when there was an increase of 39%. This is attributable to a decision taken by the TES to increase the level of support provided to the Education Centre Network. This included an increase in the general allocation, the administrative allowance and the 'maintenance grant'. The increases in core funding to the Education Centres have been more moderate in 2005 (increase of 2%) and 2006 (increase of 4%).

Table 8.19 disaggregates the level of core funding allocated by the TES to each full-time Education Centre over the period, 2001-2006.

[170] Data supplied by the TES
[171] As outlined in chapter two, the ICDU budget increased by approx €2m in 2002.

Table 8.19: Level of funding to full-time Education Centres, 2001-2006[172].

Education Centre	2001 (€)	2002 (€)	2003 (€)	2004 (€)	2005 (€)	2006 (€)
Athlone	112,904	99,155	100,492	193,000	130,210	130,387
Blackrock	143,511	113,331	117,545	130,000	191,000	214,718
Carrick	103,484	75,716	102.305	130,000	130,000	130,000
Clare	78,801	77,380	98,495	130,000	130,000	130,000
Cork	141,241	179,628	169,872	179,678	185,000	185,000
Donegal	85,121	82,502	78,969	171,892	183,071	168,787
Drumcondra	101,114	83,833	111,082	171,000	171,000	229,149**
Dublin W	89,517	136,013	113,725	185,000	185,000	185,000
Galway	93,531	82,795	104,845	140,000	140,000	140,000
Kildare	99,674	72,859	98,495	138,000	138,000	138,000
Kilkenny	140,842	77,212	98,495	130,000	130,000	140,000
Laois	103,484	79,795	187,360	130,000	130,000	130,000
Limerick	113,383	98,144	82,000	254,167	279,556	228,778
Mayo	208,141	81,713	104,331	139,075	130,000	130,000
Monaghan	74,280	84,615	98,495	130,000	138,540	135,876
Navan	99,674	75,062	98,495	146,000	146,000	161,499
Sligo	99,674	76,535	98,495	130,000	130,000	138,828
Tralee	132,893	72,859	99,834	130,000	130,000	130,000
Waterford	111,204	86,312	104,845	134,000	134,000	134,000
West Cork*	-	-	90,458	111,500	135,750	109,000
Wexford	104,381	72,859	98,495	138,000	142,760	138,489
Total	2,236,854	1,808,318	2,257,128	3,141,312	3,209,888	3,227,512

* West Cork was upgraded from a part-time to a Full-time Centre in 2002.
** This includes a once off provision for structural improvements to the Centre in 2006.

In 2006, the average allocation to a full-time Education Centre was €153,691, with a range between €109,000 (West Cork) and €229,149 (Drumcondra). A clear pattern emerges from the above table. In general, Education Centres in large urban areas receive a higher level of funding than Centres located outside of urban areas. The full time Centres that consistently receive the highest level of core funding are Cork, Blackrock, Dublin West, Limerick and Drumcondra. In contrast, Centres located outside urban areas such as West Cork (this was upgraded from a part-time to a full-time Education Centre in 2002), Clare and Carrick-on-Shannon, receive a lower level of funding.

This trend is to be expected in light of the fact that during this period Education Centres were funded primarily on the basis of the size of their catchment areas i.e. how many teachers they served. Those Centres with the highest level of funding generally have the largest catchment areas. However, there are some exceptions to this overall pattern. For example, Mayo and Laois received the highest level of funding in 2001 and 2003 respectively despite having relatively small catchment areas. Donegal Education Centre, which has an average sized catchment area in comparison to other Centres, has moved from being one of the Centres receiving the least level of funding in 2001 and 2003 to being one of the highest funded Centres in 2004-2006.

[172] Data supplied by the TES

The table below disaggregates the level of funding to each part-time Education Centre over the period 2001-2006.

Table 8.20: Level of funding to part-time Education Centres, 2001-2006.

Education Centre	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Carlow	€12,697	€9,524	€12,698	€12,698	€12,698	€12,698
Cavan	€12,697	€15,855	€14,648	€12,698	€12,698	€12,698
Cona. & Aran	€8,888	€6,667	€8,889	€8,889	€8,889	€8,889
Dingle	€8,888	€7,547	€8,889	€8,889	€8,889	€8,889
Dundalk	€10,793	€8,095	€10,793	€10,793	€10,793	€10,793
Gortahork	€8,888	€6,670	€8,889	€8,889	€8,889	€8,889
Tarbert	€10,158	€7,619	€10,158	€10,158	€10,158	€10,158
Thurles	€14,456	€8,571	€11,428	€15,728	€11,428	€11,428
Tuam	€12,697	€18,419	€19,248	€12,698	€19,298	€15,338
Total	€100,163	€88,966	€105,640	€101,440	€103,740	€99,780

Relatively speaking, the allocations to part-time Centres are quite small compared to the funding allocated to their full-time counterparts. In 2006, the average allocation to a part-time Centre was €11,087, with a range between €8,889 (Conamara and Aran, Dingle, and Gortahork) and €15,338 (Tuam). The level of funding of part-time Centres has remained fairly stable since 2001. In fact, the overall level of funding allocated in 2006 was actually €383 less than in 2001.

The three part-time Centres serving Gaeltacht areas (Dingle, Gortahork, Conamara and Aran) consistently receive the least level of funding. The part-time Education Centres that consistently receive the highest level of funding are Thurles, Tuam, Cavan and Carlow. As in the case of the full-time Centres, it appears that the Centres closest to urban centres (and thereby serving a larger teaching population) receive a higher level of funding than those serving non urban areas.

Funding for local courses

Addressing the needs of local teachers was the original primary function of the Education Centre Network. One central element of this brief is the provision of local courses (including both local and summer courses). The table overleaf details the level of funding provided to each full-time Education Centre for local courses (including summer courses) in the period 2001-2006. This funding includes provision for travel and subsistence payments to teachers attending such courses. (The part-time centres are not included in this analysis due to the limited amount of funding involved).

Table 8.21: Funding provided by the TES for local courses, 2001-2006

Centre	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Athlone	€ 22,688	€ 16,238	€19,800	€37,000	€45,500	€29,860
Blackrock	€ 160,081	€ 14,466	€40,500	€75,000	€70,728	€67,215
Carrick	€ 27,299	€ 20,094	€26,000	€42,000	€39,667	€40,923
Clare	€ 48,320	€ 15,055	€38,500	€50,000	€46,100	€42,987
Cork	€ 27,998	€ 14,209	€29,435	€70,000	€69,066	€86,700
Donegal	€ 43,489	€ 39,758	€43,000	€44,000	€52,342	€72,999
Drumcondra	€ 48,785	€ 14,998	€35,500	€55,500	€59,291	€29,199
Dublin W	€ 31,081	€ 23,337	€40,500	€58,000	€54,596	€35,700
Galway	€ 62,441	€ 30,502	€36,078	€36,544	€59,700	€55,470
Kildare	€ 28,472	€ 25,500	€35,500	€48,000	€50,200	€47,220
Kilkenny	€ 43,472	€ 17,343	€15,500	€50,000	€29,247	€31,825
Laois	€ 16,174	€ 8,739	€24,897	€31,000	€28,498	€42,500
Limerick	€ 47,607	€ 37,254	€70,750	€65,000	€68,935	€73,200
Mayo	€ 59,081	€ 30,177	€68,187	€50,000	€44,718	€60,800
Monaghan	€ 40,021	€ 25,500	€35,500	€50,000	€37,590	€44,677
Navan	€ 10,158	€ 27,937	€25,303	€58,000	€54,440	€57,200
Sligo	€ 31,961	€ 17,189	€59,219	€50,000	€44,181	€35,622
Tralee	€ 43,489	€ 26,066	€15,000	€50,000	€41,128	€33,360
Waterford	€ 41,311	€ 19,425	€53,250	€33,000	€50,016	€33,560
West Cork*	-	-	€15,542	€50,000	€27,236	€51,513
Wexford	€ 21,192	€29,747	€34,537	€43,000	€41,723	€39,812
Total	€ 855,109	€453,537	€ 762,499	€ 1,046,044	€ 1,014,901	€1,012,343

* West Cork was upgraded from a part-time to a Full-time Centre in 2002.

The level of funding awarded to Education Centres increased significantly between 2001 and 2006, amounting to an increase of 18% over the six year period. However this disguises a sharp decrease in funding in 2002 which coincided with a reduction in the core funding allocated by the TES to the Education Centres. The level of funding in 2002 was 47% less than in 2001. As indicated on p.169, there is no apparent explanation for this reduction. This was balanced by sharp increases in funding in 2003 and 2004 – increases of 68% and 37% respectively. The increase in funding in 2004 is attributable to the introduction of a new system of funding for local courses. As outlined earlier, from 2004, the local courses were funded on an activity based system, with funding linked to the number of courses organized and the percentage of the catchment population that participated in local courses. The overall level of funding allocated to the Education Centre Network for local courses has remained relatively stable since 2004, suggesting that the new method of funding has achieved greater stability in funding levels. The level of funding has actually decreased slightly since 2004 although the decreases were marginal in both 2005 (3%) and 2006 (0.25%).

The average allocation to a full-time Education Centre in 2006, the latest year for which data are available, was €48,207, with a range between €29,199 (Drumcondra) and €86,700 (Cork).

Overall funding allocated to Education Centres

The table below details the level of funding allocated to the full-time Education Centres in the period 2001-2006 including 'core funding' and local course funding.

Table 8.22: Level of funding to full-time Education Centres, 2001-2006.

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Athlone	€135,592	€115,393	€120,292	€230,000	€175,710	€160,247
Blackrock	€303,592	€127,797	€158,045	€205,000	€261,728	€281,933
Carrick on Shannon	€130,783	€95,810	€128,305	€172,000	€169,667	€170,923
Clare	€127,121	€92,435	€136,995	€180,000	€176,100	€172,987
Cork	€169,239	€193,837	€199,307	€249,678	€254,066	€271,700
Donegal	€128,610	€122,260	€121,969	€215,892	€235,413	€241,786
Drumcondra	€149,899	€98,831	€146,582	€226,500	€230,291	€258,348
Dublin W	€120,598	€159,350	€154,225	€243,000	€239,596	€220,700
Galway	€155,972	€113,297	€140,923	€176,544	€199,700	€195,470
Kildare	€128,146	€98,359	€133,995	€186,000	€188,200	€185,220
Kilkenny	€184,314	€94,555	€113,995	€180,000	€159,247	€171,825
Laois	€119,658	€88,534	€212,257	€161,000	€158,498	€172,500
Limerick	€160,990	€135,398	€152,750	€319,167	€348,491	€301,978
Mayo	€267,222	€111,890	€172,518	€189,075	€174,718	€190,800
Monaghan	€114,301	€110,115	€133,995	€180,000	€176,130	€180,553
Navan	€109,832	€102,999	€123,798	€204,000	€200,440	€218,699
Sligo	€131,635	€93,724	€157,714	€180,000	€174,181	€174,450
Tralee	€176,382	€98,925	€114,834	€180,000	€171,128	€163,360
Waterford	€152,515	€105,737	€158,095	€167,000	€184,016	€167,560
West Cork*	-		€106,000	€161,500	€162,986	€160,513
Wexford	€125,573	€102,606	€133,032	€181,000	€184,483	€178,301
Total	€3,091,963	€2,261,852	€3,019,626	€4,187,356	€4,224,789	€4,239,855

* West Cork was upgraded from a part-time to a full-time Centre in 2002.

The level of funding has increased by 37% in the period since 2001. However, the rate of increase was not consistent from year to year. There was a significant decrease in the funding allocated to the Education Centres in 2002. This is not related to any downturn in the overall ICDU budget in 2002 and there is no explanation on record for this variation. There were significant increases in 2003 and 2004 (33% and 39% respectively), but there has been much greater consistency since 2004: there was a marginal rate of increase of 1% in 2005 and 0.36% in 2006. The greater stability in the level of funding since 2004 appears to be attributable to two factors: (i) the increase in the core funding allocated to Education Centres in 2004 which has been maintained since, and (ii) the introduction of the new funding system for the local courses.

The Centres that consistently receive the highest level of funding are Limerick, Blackrock, Cork, Dublin West, Donegal and Drumcondra. The Centres that receive the lowest level of funding are West Cork, Kilkenny and Laois, followed by Carrick on Shannon and Tralee. As outlined earlier, this trend reflects the fact that core funding during this period was generally related to the number of teachers in a catchment area. The urban Centres generally have a larger number of teachers in

their catchment area, in comparison to the non-urban Centres, and therefore received a higher level of funding.

8.15 Key question 2: What is the level and trend of participants on local courses organised by the Education Centres?

The table below details the number of local courses organised in full-time Education Centres in the period 2001-2006. The data in this table is based upon the returns made by Education Centres to the TES as part of the monitoring procedures in place under the NDP. This table is likely to under represent the number of local courses provided by Education Centres. While some Centres organise one off workshops or lectures as local courses, other Centres organise local courses that are run over several evenings. However, for the purposes of data collection by the Education Centres both types of course provision are recorded as constituting a single local course. This has the added consequence of under-representing the number of local course participants. For example, a course that is run over six evenings and which is attended by fifteen teachers on each occasion is quantified in the data collection process as constituting fifteen participants rather than ninety participants. This highlights the difficulty of making comparisons between local course provision in different Education Centres.

Table 8.23: Number of local courses organised by full-time Education Centres[173]

Centre	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Athlone	32	30	50	60	75	56
Blackrock	23	34	33	59	40	46
Carrick on Shannon	26	31	31	31	33	42
Clare	28	33	50	53	51	51
Cork	24	20	80	153	169	114
Donegal	35	54	37	65	115	128
Drumcondra	29	25	21	43	44	37
Dublin W	29	45	64	64	66	72
Galway	56	125	180	146	176	122
Kildare	38	46	42	49	50	57
Kilkenny	21	24	24	58	39	50
Laois	11	20	11	18	37	30
Limerick	50	39	60	108	119	89
Mayo	46	57	50	63	72	84
Monaghan	56	27	62	51	48	64
Navan	27	40	55	61	68	72
Sligo	23	29	45	52	38	24
Tralee	16	15	33	24	34	36
Waterford	43	47	72	67	60	95
West Cork*	-	-	22	61	59	62
Wexford	29	41	42	55	106	146
Total	642	782	1064	1341	1499	1477

* West Cork was upgraded from a part-time to a full-time Centre in 2002.

[173] Data supplied by Education Centres to the TES

Overall, there has been a significant increase in the number of courses organised since 2001. In 2006, there were 835 more courses organised than in 2001, an increase of 130%. The number of courses increased steadily each year, with the single greatest increase occurring in 2003, when there were 36% more courses organised through the Education Centres than in the previous year.

In absolute terms, there are considerable differences between Centres in the number of courses organised For example, in 2006, the average number of courses organised in a Centre was seventy. However, some Centres organised thirty courses while others organised one hundred and forty six. This variation is attributable to the type of courses organised in different Centres i.e. the difference between once off workshops and training sessions organised over several evenings. Another important factor is the proximity of Centres to one another or to another CPD provider (such as a College of Education) as the location of two providers in close proximity limits the number of courses that each Centre can provide.

The increase in the number of local courses resulted in a corresponding increase in the number of local course participants. The table below identifies the number of local course participants in each Centre in the period 2001 to 2006. For reasons outlined earlier, this is likely to under-represent the actual number of local course participants, as those participants that attend a six week course are only recorded once in the NDP returns made by Education Centres to the TES.

Table 8.24: No. of participants in local courses, 2001 to 2006[174]

Centre	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Athlone	622	591	1237	1159	1138	758
Blackrock	922	1012	1129	1724	1923	1673
Ck on Shannon	517	711	655	740	657	741
Clare	509	610	969	1182	838	856
Cork	871	575	2165	2925	3354	2179
Donegal	962	1215	1221	1380	1879	1552
Drumcondra	533	404	264	934	1063	1,799
Dublin W	496	1406	1284	1243	1388	1770
Galway	950	2396	1257	1840	2462	1951
Kildare	1017	1337	1309	1228	1256	1420
Kilkenny	445	611	460	1199	657	485
Laois	336	504	344	386	711	541
Limerick	1116	968	1216	2384	1962	1579
Mayo	943	1336	1025	1592	1500	1540
Monaghan	751	319	716	447	603	1037
Navan	490	1337	1281	1086	1721	2124
Sligo	373	699	869	1341	871	566
Tralee	395	591	1004	1076	1047	780
Waterford	1218	1328	1314	1339	1460	1298
West Cork*	-	-	400	796	1411	965
Wexford	1036	1383	844	1846	1527	2509
Total	14502	19333	20963	27847	29428	28123

* West Cork was upgraded to a full-time Education Centre in 2002.

[174] The data in this table is based upon the returns made by Education Centres to the TES as part of the monitoring procedures in place under the NDP.

In the five years since 2001 there was a significant increase in the number of participants in local courses organised by the full-time Education Centres. There were almost 14,000 more participants in local courses in 2006 compared to 2001, an increase of 94%. There was an increase in the number of participants in each year, with the exception of 2006. The biggest increases occurred in 2002 and 2004. There were smaller increases in 2003 and 2005.

There is considerable variation between individual Centres in the number of local course participants. For example, in 2006, the average number was 1,339 participants but there were 485 local course participants in some Centres compared to 2,509 in others. However, as explained earlier, this may be attributable to differences in the nature of the local courses provided in different Centres (one off sessions vs courses organised over a number of evenings) and the proximity of individual Centres to other CPD providers.

The table below illustrates the relationship between the overall level of funding allocated to the full-time Education Centres and the number of participants in local courses. The table indicates that the Education Centre Network appears to have employed the resources allocated to it in an efficient manner. In the period 2001 to 2006, the level of overall funding increased by 37% while the number of participants increased by 94%. However, a year on year analysis suggests that there is not always a clear relationship between the level of funding and the number of participants. While an increase (or decrease) in overall funding resulted in a corresponding or greater increase in local course participants in 2002 and 2005, this was the exception rather than the rule. In 2003, 2004 and 2006, an increase in the overall level of funding resulted in a much smaller increase (a decrease in 2006) in the number of participants in local courses.

Table 8.25: Comparison of overall funding and number of local course participants

Year	Percentage change in overall funding	Percentage change in number of participants
2001	-	-
2002	(27%)	33%
2003	34%	8.4%
2004	39%	33%
2005	0.9%	6%
2006	0.36%	(4.4%)
Overall	37%	94%

While local courses are only one element of the work of the Education Centres, they are a core element of their work, and one would therefore expect to see a strong relationship between the trend in overall funding and the number of local course participants. The overall funding referred to in the preceding analysis excludes funding allocated for National Programmes. This means that if a large portion of Education Centres' core funding is being targeted at supporting National Programmes, there may be an imbalance in the priority accorded to national as opposed to local CPD priorities. However, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions in this area due to the fact that Education Centres engage with local teachers in a number of different ways apart from local courses.

8.16 Key question 3: What is the unit cost per local course participant?

A key indicator of efficiency is the unit cost per local course participant. This was calculated by dividing the overall funding from the TES (i.e. core funding and local course funding) by the total number of participants in local courses organised by full-time Education Centres. The table below details the trend in unit cost per participant on local courses in the period since 2001.

Table 8.26: Unit cost per participant on local courses in full-time Education Centres

Year	Funding	No of participants	Unit cost per participant	Percentage change
2001	€3,091,963	14502	€214	-
2002	€2,261,852	19333	€117	(45%)
2003	€3,019,626	20963	€144	23%
2004	€4,187,356	27847	€150	4%
2005	€4,224,789	29428	€144	(4%)
2006	€4,239,855	28,123	€151	5%

Overall, the unit cost per participant has declined by €63 since 2001, representing a decrease of 29%. The unit cost declined in 2002 and 2005 but increased in 2003, 2004 and 2006. The overall decline in unit cost suggests an efficient use of resources by the Education Centre Network.

The decrease in unit cost in 2002 and 2005 can be attributed to the number of participants increasing at a faster rate than the level of funding provided by the TES. For example, in 2002, the number of local course participants increased by 33% while the level of funding decreased by 27%. In 2005 the number of participants increased by 6% while the funding increased by 0.9%.

The increases in unit costs in 2003, 2004 and 2006 can be attributed to the level of funding increasing at a faster rate than the number of participants. In 2003, the number of participants increased by 8.4% but the level of funding increased by 34%. Similarly, in 2004, the number of participants increased by 33% but funding increased by 39%. In 2006, funding increased by 0.36% but participation rates dropped by 4.4%.

8.17 Key question 4: How does unit cost compare between Education Centres?

The steering committee were of the view that it was not possible to compare Education Centres on an equitable basis due to the differences in the type of local course provision between Centres and the particular circumstances of different Centres (i.e. proximity to other CPD providers). It was therefore agreed that the range of unit costs in each year would be identified without specifying individual Centres. The table below details the average unit cost and the range of unit costs in each year.

Table 8.27: Range of unit cost per local course participant in full-time Centres.

Year	Mean unit cost	Range
2001	€214	€121 to €414
2002	€117	€74 to €345
2003	€144	€92 to €617
2004	€150	€92 to €555
2005	€144	€76 to €292
2006	€151	€71 to €354

The table above indicates the considerable variation between Centres in terms of unit cost. For example, in 2006, while the average unit cost per local course participant was €156, the range of unit cost varied from €71 in some Centres to €354 in others. This suggests that some Centres were more efficient in converting inputs into outputs. However, it is difficult to draw conclusions on this issue as the variance may be attributable to the factors outlined earlier - the type of local course provision (i.e. one off or multiple evenings), and the particular circumstances of individual Centres (in terms of proximity to other Centres/providers).

8.18 Key question 5: What are the level and trend of staffing resources associated with the Education Centres?

At present, each full-time Education Centre is staffed by a full-time Director (primary or post-primary teacher on secondment). Prior to 2007 and the introduction of the budget based system, each full time Centre received a specific allowance towards administrative staffing. An ICT Advisor, paid by the National Council for Technology in Education (NCTE), is based in each full-time Centre. The NCTE also provides funding for part-time secretarial support for the ICT Advisor. Centres hosting National Programmes employ additional staff specifically for the running of the National Programmes and are specifically funded for this purpose. Staff are also employed by Centres to rollout National Programmes in their area. All of the staff, including the Director, the ICT Advisor and any National Programme staff are employed by and formally report to the Management Committee. On a day-to-day basis, it is the Director who manages and supervises the staff. The annual honorarium to Directors of part-time Centres is paid by the TES but no annual allocation for staffing expenses is made to part-time Centres.[175]

It is not possible to establish the trend in staffing resources employed through the Education Centre Network. Until the introduction of the revised financial procedures in 2005, Education Centres were not required to provide statistical returns to the TES about the number of staff they employed. Under the new procedures each Centre is required to submit an annual return identifying the number of staff employed and the nature of their employment (e.g. number of core staff, national programme staff, full and part-time staff etc). The first return made under the new financial guidelines relates to 2006. The staffing return for 2006, as submitted by Education Centres to the TES, is outlined below.

[175] CMOD (2002), p.44

Table 8.28: Staffing levels in full-time Education Support Centres, 2006.

	Core Centre Staff								National Programme Staff					Self financing	
Centre	Total no. of staff	Seconded centre staff	Administrative staff (excl. Director and ICT Advisor)			Caretaking/ cleaning staff			Programme seconded staff etc	Programme non seconded staff			Service staff		
			Perm	Temp	Contract	Perm	Temp	Contract		Perm	Temp	Contract	-	Perm	Temp
Athlone	5.10	1.00	-	-	3.6	-	0.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Blackrock	44.09	2.00	6.84	-	-	0.60	-	-	29.00	3.65	-	-	-	2.00	-
Ck-on-Shannon	6.10	2.00	-	-	2.65	-	-	0.1	-			1.35	-	-	-
Clare	21.00	2.00	5.0	-	-	-	-	-	14.00	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cork	20.20	2.00	6.40	-	-	1.60	-	-	9.00	1.2	-	-	-	-	-
Donegal	6.85	1.00	2.70	1	-	1.15	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Drumcondra	45.95	2.00	4.85	-	-	1.00	0.30	-	36.00	-	-	1.00	-	0.8	-
Dublin West	143.20	2.00	-	-	5.5	-	-	2	126.00	-	-	7.5	0.20	-	-
Galway	7.85	2.00	2.25	-	-	1.00	0.6	-	-	2.00	-	-	-	-	-
Kildare	7.50	2.00	2.00	0.85	-	-	-	-	1.00	1.65	-	-	-	-	-
Kilkenny	6.00	1.00	1.00	-	3		-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Laois	5.80	2.00	3.50	-	-	-	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Limerick	10.50	2.00	4.00	-	-	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.5
Mayo	11.45	2.00	2.20	-	1.50	0.60	-	-	3.00	-	-	1		-	1.15
Monaghan	20.10	2.00	2.60	-	-	-	-	-	13.00	-	-	1.5	-	1	-
Navan	8.00	2.00	4.00	-	-	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Sligo	15.50	2.00	2.25	0.25	-	0.50	-	0.50	10.00	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tralee	8.75	2.00	0.50	3.75	-	-	0.5	-	2.00	-	-	-	-	-	-
Waterford	9.00	2.00	4.00	1	-	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wexford	7.35	2.00	2.00	-	1	-	0.43	0.92	-	-	-	1		-	-
West Cork	4.80	2.00	2.50	-	-	0.30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**414.09**	**39**	**58.59**	**6.85**	**17.25**	**9.75**	**2.63**	**4.52**	**243.00**	**8.50**	**0.00**	**15.35**	**0.20**	**3.80**	**4.65**

Overall in 2006, there were 414.09 WTE staff employed through the Education Centre Network. This comprised 138.59 core staff, 267.05 programme staff, and 8.45 self-financing staff. The average number of staff in a full-time Education Centre was 19.7. However, the number of staff ranges from between 4.8 (West Cork) and 143.20 (Dublin West).

There is a clear pattern to the distribution of staff between Education Centres. Those Centres that employ the most staff are those Centres that 'host' National Programmes. For example, Dublin West hosts the PCSP and the Substance Misuse Prevention Programme. These two programmes account for 133.5 of the 143.2 staff employed by the Centre. Similarly, the Centre with the second highest staffing level – Drumcondra – hosts the School Development Planning Service (primary) and the Religious and Sexuality Education programme. These programmes account for 37 of the 45.95 staff employed by the Centre. Those Centres that employ fewest staff numbers are those that do not host National Programmes (Athlone and West Cork).

Limerick Education Centre appears to have a high level of staffing (10.5 staff employed) in light of the fact that it does not host any national programmes. However, out of its staff complement, 3.5 staff are self financed by the Centre.

In an attempt to compare the Education Centres on an equitable basis, the table below ranks the Education Centres in terms of staff numbers employed, excluding staff associated with National Programmes.

Table 8.29: Number of WTE staff (excluding National Programme staff) employed by Education Centres, in descending order.

Education Centre	No. of staff
Blackrock	11.44
Limerick	10.50
Cork	10.00
Dublin West	9.5
Drumcondra	9.95
Waterford	9.00
Mayo	7.45
Navan	7.00
Clare	7.00
Tralee	6.75
Wexford	6.35
Kilkenny	6.00
Galway	5.85
Donegal	5.85
Laois	5.80
Monaghan	5.60
Sligo	5.50
Athlone	5.10
Kildare	4.85
West Cork	4.80
Ck-on-Shannon	4.75
Total	147.04

In total, there were 147.04 WTE staff employed by Education Centres in 2006 – excluding National Programme related staff. The average number of such staff employed in a full-time Centre was 7, with a range between 11.44 (Blackrock) and 4.75 (Carrick-on-Shannon).

In general, the Centres in large urban areas have the highest number of staff – Blackrock, Limerick, Cork, Dublin West and Drumcondra. Education Centres outside of urban areas have the least number of staff. The two Centres with the least number of staff are West Cork and Carrick on Shannon. This pattern is to be expected, given the fact that those Centres in urban areas (with the highest number of staff) are serving the largest teaching populations.

8.19 Key question 6: What is the ratio of staff to the number of local course participants in each Education Centre?

One indicator of the efficiency with which the Education Centres convert inputs into outputs is the relationship between staffing resources and the number of participants in local courses organized through the Centres. The steering committee for this review were of the opinion that comparisons should not be made between individual Centres on this issue due to (i) the fact that staff are involved in meeting the needs of local teachers in a number of ways apart from organising and administering local courses, and (ii) the differences in the type of local course provision between Centres which results in a higher number of participants in those Centres that organize more once off training sessions/workshops than courses arranged over several nights. It was therefore agreed to confine analysis to the ratio of WTE staff employed in the Centres as a whole (excluding the staff associated with the National Programmes) to the total number of local course participants. Table 8.31 identifies the mean ratio for the Education Centre Network, and also the range of values in individual Centres.

Table 8.30: Ratio of local course participants to Education Centre staff numbers (in descending order).

	No. of participants per WTE staff member
Mean	191: 1
Range	81:1 to 395:1

The average ratio of local course participants to WTE staff members in a full-time Education Centre in 2006 was 191:1. This means that for every member of staff, there were 191 local course participants. There was considerable variation between Centres on this issue. The ratios in individual Centres ranged from a high of 395:1 to a low of 81:1. As explained earlier, this may suggest that some Centres are more efficient in their use of staffing resources, but the variance between Centres may also be attributable to (i) the fact that staff are involved in other activities apart from organizing/administering local courses, and (ii) the nature of local course provision. For example, those Centres that organize a number of once off training sessions will have a higher ratio of participants to WTE staff members and will therefore appear more efficient than those Centres that organize a series of courses with the same

participants that run over a number of evenings due to the higher throughput of the former.

While staff members in Education Centres are employed in a number of different roles and duties, the organization and support of local courses is a core function of Education Centres and one would expect to see a relationship between the number of staff employed in a Centre and the number of local course participants. This analysis excludes staff employed to support the National Programmes. Therefore, if non Programme related staff are spending considerable amounts of time devoted to Programme related activities, this suggests that there may be an imbalance at Education Centre level in the priority accorded to national as opposed to locally identified needs.

8.20 National Support Programmes

The majority of National Programmes are implemented through the Education Support Centre Network. The programmes are hosted by full-time Education Centres and are managed by Management Committees which are chaired by a member of TES staff and which include representatives from the Inspectorate and the NCCA.

For the rollout of a National Programme of in-service, a steering group is established comprised of representatives from the TES and the NCCA, the relevant subject Inspector, the National Co-ordinator and the Director of the host Education Centre. The steering group has overall responsibility for the delivery of the training. The training is planned by the steering group in consultation with the trainers. The rollout is then planned by the National Programme Team and delivered by the trainers mainly through the Education Centres.[176]

Initially when Education Centres became involved in the hosting of National Programmes, the TES approached a particular Centre and asked them to arrange for the hosting of the programme. [177] In recent years, however, the TES has introduced a more transparent approach to this issue. When a new National Programme is established, the TES issue a request for tenders from Education Centres with an interest in hosting the programme. Tenders received from Education Centres are then assessed against specific criteria in order to ensure that the Education Centre selected has the capability to host the National Programme in an efficient manner.

The host Centre is responsible for the overall budget for the programme. The host Centre pays the team's expenses and any other costs that arise in the course of the programme. They also recoup the costs of the individual Education Centres who incur costs in rolling out the in-service training locally. The host Centre draws up a database of all the teachers who require training in the particular National Programme and liaises with each individual Education Centre who makes the necessary contacts with the schools in their area.

[176] CMOD (2002), p.10
[177] *ibid,* pp.10-11

Table 8.31 identifies the National Support Programmes that are currently 'hosted' by Education Centres.

Table 8.31: Location of National Programmes, 2007[178]

Education Centre	National Programme
Athlone	-
Blackrock	SLSS TYSS
Carrick on Shannon	-
Clare	LDS
Cork	SESS
Donegal	Mathematics Support Service
Drumcondra	RSE SDPS (Primary)
Dublin West	PCSP Substance Misuse Prevention Programme (SMPP)
Galway	Religious Education Support Service T4 Technology Support Service
Kildare	-
Kilkenny	-
Laois	-
Limerick	-
Mayo	JCPE
Monaghan	Geography History
Navan	National Behaviour Support Service Dublin Cool Schools
Sligo	Junior Science
Tralee	Biology
Waterford	-
Wexford	Home Economics
West Cork	-

As indicated in the table above, National Programmes are only located in full-time Education Centres. Some Centres have responsibility for more than one programme (Drumcondra, Dublin West, Galway, Monaghan) while eight others do not host any National Programmes (Athlone, Carrick on Shannon, Kildare, Kikenny, Laois, Limerick, Waterford and West Cork).

8.21 Efficiency of delivery of National Programmes – key questions

In order to assess the level of efficiency associated with the delivery of in-service training provided through the National Programmes it was necessary to address the following key questions:

1. *What are the level and trend of costs associated with the National Programmes?*
2. *What is the level and trend of the number of teachers trained?*

[178] Data supplied by TES

3. *What is the unit cost per teacher trained?*
4. *How does the unit cost compare between National Programmes?*
5. *What are the level and trend of staffing resources associated with the National Programmes?*
6. *What is the ratio of staffing resources to the number of teachers trained?*

Each of these questions is answered in turn below, thereby contributing to an assessment of the efficiency of the National Support Programmes.

8.22 Key question 1: What are the level and trend of costs associated with National Programmes?

The table below details the level of funding allocated to each National Programme by the TES (ICDU) in the period since 2001.

Table 8.32: Funding of National Programmes, 2001-2006

Programme	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
PCSP	€2,809,571	€5,393,543	€4,759,384	€5,073,746	€4,112,323	€3,834,471
CAPP	€15,000	€58,000	€73,000	€200,000	-	€52,793
Cool School	-	€25,400	-	€50,800	€69,244	€157,592
History	-	-	€104,000	€407,126	€189,740	€259,325
Geography	-	-	-	€200,000	€309,627	€443,162
Biology	€374,612	€438,900	€575,000	€465,000	€96,696	€353,189
SESS	-	-	-	-	€507,349	€2,094,110
IILT	-	€124,353	€100,000	€120,000	€44,000	€178,000
RESS	€61,620	€80,000	€224,400	€50,000	€128,000	€126,758
RSE	€10,000	€100,000	€100,000	€160,000	€47,700	€42,840
Home Economics	€130,000	€200,000	€190,000	€340,000	€60,000	€180,924
JC Maths		€105,000	€165,000	€265,000	-	€332,101
SPHE	€75,000	€145,000	€200,000	€372,000	€152,500	€201,779
Junior Science	-	-	€270,000	€420,000	€397,790	€452,850
SLSS	-	€175,000	€1,090,000	€1,591,902	€1,330,829	€2,103,703
SDPI	€345,000	€629,285	€593,027	€440,248	€932,053	€1,289,330
SDPS	€303,000	€290,157	€429,874	€835,250	€1,001,750	€717,922
SMPP	€383,028	€346,788	€511,000	€511,111	€524,000	€85,213
LDS	€35,100	€364,000	€279,000	€730,000	€617,371	€792,268
JCPE	-	-	€60,000	€230,000	€150,000	€233,670
Reading Recovery	-	-	-	-	-	€60,365
National Behaviour SS	-	-	-	-	-	€2,000,000
JCSP	-	-	-	-	-	€2,436,044
NPPTI Primary	-	-	€50,948	€26,200	€82,944	€83,200
NPPTI PPrimary	-	-	€86,828	€78,407	€164,928	€268,386
Total	€4,541,931	€8,475,426	€9,861,461	€12,566,790	€10,918,845	€18,779,995

These figures do not reflect the true cost of supporting the National Programmes as they do not take account of the cost of replacing teachers who attend prescribed in-service training during school hours and while the parent school remains open, as well as the cost associated with the personnel seconded to the National Programmes to actually deliver the training. When a teacher is seconded from a school to an initiative such as the PCSP, the DES incurs an additional salary, that of the replacement temporary teacher hired by the school.

No data are available at present on the cost of replacing teachers attending in-service but it is possible to estimate the cost of secondments associated with the National Programmes. The table below identifies the overall number of secondments in the period 2001 to 2006. It is not possible – due to a lack of records – to confirm the accuracy of the 2001/2002 data.

Table 8.33: Numbers seconded to National Programmes, 2001/02-2006/07.

2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Total
48	237	212	220	278	321	1316

A lack of data makes it difficult to identify the exact cost of these secondments in each year. For the purposes of this analysis an average cost of €45,489 has been used per secondment – this is equivalent to the 7th point on the salary scale and includes employer's PRSI and pension contribution. This was the cost of replacing teachers seconded to many of the National Support Programmes in 2006/2007. An added difficulty is that available data on secondments are collated on the basis of an academic year while the TES allocates funding on the basis of a financial year. The table below details the overall cost of replacing teachers seconded to the National Programmes in the period 2001/02 to 2006/2007.

Table 8.34: Cost of secondments to National Programmes.

Programme	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Total	€2,183,472	€10,788,893	€9,643,668	€10,007,580	€12,645,942	€14,608,969

In order to more accurately reflect the true cost of the National Support Programmes, it was necessary to combine the funding allocated through the TES with the secondment costs. As the latter were based on an academic year, they had first to be readjusted to reflect expenditure on the basis of a financial year. Table 8.35 reflects the overall cost of the National Programmes supported by the TES (including secondment costs by financial year) in the period 2002 to 2006. (This does not include the substitution cost of replacing teachers attending in-service training as these costs are not available)

Table 8.35: Full cost of National Support Programmes, 2002-2006

Programme	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
PCSP	€9,942,443	€9,137,700	€8,383,071	€8,615,734	€9,645,691
CAPP	€58,000	€118,489	€245,489	€34,117	€64,165
Cool School	€25,400	€0	€50,800	€114,733	€339,548
History	€0	€149,489	€600,454	€417,185	€475,398
Geography	€0	€68,234	€518,423	€730,400	€750,213
Biology	€962,024	€1,143,613	€840,284	€119,441	€421,423
SESS	€0	€45,489	€181,956	€723,422	€2,492,139
IILT	€124,353	€100,000	€120,000	€44,000	€178,000
RESS	€80,000	€224,400	€95,489	€309,956	€285,970
RSE	€111,372	€145,489	€205,489	€93,189	€88,329
Home Economics	€200,000	€508,423	€578,817	€71,372	€215,041
JC Maths	€105,000	€437,934	€469,701	€11,372	€366,218
SPHE	€145,000	€745,868	€917,868	€698,368	€747,647
Junior Science	€0	€383,723	€874,890	€864,052	€930,484
SLSS	€1,892,210	€2,693,487	€2,535,799	€2,342,959	€3,491,118
SDPI	€629,285	€2,151,025	€2,032,363	€2,546,913	€3,006,540
SDPS	€290,157	€930,253	€1,335,629	€1,502,129	€1,218,301
SMPP	€369,533	€613,350	€647,578	€660,467	€221,680
LDS	€409,489	€449,584	€877,839	€856,188	€1,269,903
JCPE	€0	€94,117	€366,467	€286,467	€370,137
Reading Recovery	€0	€0	€0	€56,861	€287,810
NBSS	€0	€0	€0	€0	€2,147,839
JCSP	€0	€79,606	€318,423	€238,817	€2,436,044
NPPTI Primary	€0	€50,948	€26,200	€82,944	€94,572
NPPTI PPrimary	€0	€86,828	€78,407	€164,928	€268,386
T4	€0	€0	€0	€0	€102,350
Total	€12,808,253	€20,358,048	€22,301,436	€21,586,015	€31,914,944

The table indicates that the period 2002-2006 witnessed significant investment in CPD provision by the TES. In total, in excess of €108 million was allocated to this area of TES activity in this five year period. Overall, there has been an increase of 149% in expenditure since 2002. As outlined in the table below, the percentage change in expenditure has not been consistent. There were increases in 2003, 2004 and 2006 but a small decrease of 3% in 2005. The increases in 2003 and 2006 were both significant – 59% and 48% respectively.

Table 8.36: Percentage change in funding allocated to National Programmes

Year	Funding €	% increase (decrease)
2002	12,808,253	-
2003	20,358,048	59%
2004	22,301,436	10%
2005	21,586,015	(3%)
2006	31,914,944	48%

The increases in 2003 were mainly attributable to significant increases in the funding allocated to existing programmes such as the SLSS, SMPP, SDPS

(primary and post primary), as well as the provision of funding for new programmes such as the support services in History and Geography, Junior Certificate P.E. and the NPPTI. It is also likely that the actual level of funding in 2002 was higher than that specified in Table 8.35 – the number of teachers seconded to work with the National Programmes in 2001/2002 cannot be established with certainty but it is likely to have been higher and therefore involved higher salary costs than those factored into the 2002 funding included in Table 8.35.

The increase in funding in 2006 was attributable to similar factors – a significant increase in the funding of some existing programmes such as JCSP, Reading Recovery, LDS, SLSS, SESS, PCSP, and the allocation of funding for new National Programmes such as the National Behaviour Support Service and T4. The increase in funding to the JCSP and the Reading Recovery Programmes was related to the implementation of the *DEIS* strategy which provides for an expansion of measures designed to tackle educational disadvantage.

8.23 Key question 2: What is the level and trend in the number of teachers trained?

While it has been possible to identify the overall inputs – in terms of financial resources – allocated by the TES to the National Support Programmes, it is far more difficult to establish the level of output in terms of the number of teachers trained. The number of teachers that received in-service training by each National Programme should be easily identifiable and this type of data collection should be an essential requirement for each Programme. However, data collection in relation to this area needs to be strengthened:

- The TES do not compile aggregate statistics on the number of teachers trained on an annual basis.
- Many Programmes do not collect regular data on attendance at in-service training.
- Some Programmes collect data on the number of schools targeted each year rather than the number of teachers trained.
- The coordinators of National Support Programmes do not receive central direction from the TES on the type of data they should be collecting.

As part of this review, the National Coordinator of each National Programme was asked to identify the number of teachers trained annually in the period 2004 to 2006. The data provided in response to this request were inadequate in a number of respects. It was therefore decided to access the NDP returns submitted to the TES by individual Programmes. Under the NDP, each programme is expected to make an annual return indicating expenditure for the year, the number of participants trained, and a gender breakdown of participants. However, the NDP returns are also incomplete. Some Programmes submit NDP returns to the TES but others do not. The data provided by those Programmes that do submit returns is often incomplete and a comparison of the information supplied in NDP returns with the response to

the request to submit data for this review highlighted a number of discrepancies.

In light of the difficulties in obtaining data on the number of teachers trained, it was not possible to identify the overall number of teachers that received in-service training and support through National Programmes on an annual basis. However, Table 8.37 identifies the number of teachers trained by those National Support Programmes in respect of which data are available (this constitutes the majority of National Programmes).

Table 8.37: Number of teachers trained by National Programmes, 2004-2006[179]

Programme	No of teachers 2004	No of teachers 2005	No of teachers 2006
PCSP	81930	91687	73831
CAPP	9662	9464	6291
Cool School	-	1121	907
History	1740	1890	2050
Geography	3556	3408	3129
Biology	1483	1741	659
IILT	791	1,080	451
RSE	782	735	871
Home Economics	621	698	1257
JC Maths	-	930	-
SPHE	2,247	2,057	2,438
Junior Science	4,656	4,587	-
SLSS	20811	24707	20814
SDPS pp	16432	18622	-
SMPP	362	518	-
LDS	756	822	-
JCPE	571	789	-
Reading Recovery	68	86	127
JCSP	2,400	3,520	3,520
NPPTI primary	45	133	288
NPPTI PPrimary	37	83	264
Total	148,950	164,091	116,897

The table above – which details figures for those National Programmes in respect of which data are available – indicates the significant level of activity in this area. The Programmes identified trained a combined total of 148,950 teachers in 2004, 164,091 in 2005 and 116,897 in 2006. In total, in the three year period, at least 429,938 teachers were trained by National Support Programmes. The figures for 2006 are incomplete as the NDP returns had not been submitted by some programmes at the time of writing.

[179] This table is based on data extracted from annual NDP returns, supplemented by data received from NCOs of individual programmes.

The programmes that targeted the highest number of teachers are generally those programmes responsible for in-service training in whole-staff areas such as the PCSP, SDPS and the SLSS. These programmes may have targeted the same teacher on more than one occasion in a particular year – for example, the PCSP organised in-service seminars in 2006 in Drama, History and Geography and some teachers may have attended training in all three subjects. This accounts for the fact that the PCSP trained more than 91,000 primary teachers in 2005 when there were some 26,000 teachers in the primary education system.

The relatively small numbers targeted by some of the other National Programmes is related to the size of the target population. The programmes that targeted the smallest number of teachers are the two pillars of the National Pilot Project on Teacher Induction and the Reading Recovery Programme. However, the intensity of the engagement with the teachers through these projects is far greater than in any of the other National Support Programmes. Teachers targeted by the NPPTI and the Reading Recovery Programme are supported on a continuous basis through the year as opposed to being targeted on a once off basis through an in-service seminar.

Table 8.37 indicates that the number of teachers targeted by the National Programmes increased by approximately 13% in 2005 but decreased by 31% in 2006. The increase in the number of teachers trained in 2005 is mainly attributable to the increase in the number of primary teachers targeted by the PCSP. The apparent decrease in the number of teachers trained in 2006 is attributable to (i) the reduction in PCSP activity levels in that year and (ii) the fact that a number of Programmes had not yet submitted their NDP returns for 2006. One of these Programmes – the SDPS (post primary) targets between 16-18,000 teachers on an annual basis – and this will have a significant impact on the overall number of teachers trained.

In order to examine the relationship between inputs (the financial resources provided by the TES) and outputs (the number of teachers trained), the table below compares the percentage change in the level of funding allocated and the numbers of teachers trained in the three year period 2004 to 2006. This analysis is confined to those National Programmes in respect of which data in relation to the level of funding and the number of teachers trained are available for all three years.[180]

Table 8.38: Comparison of percentage change in funding and teachers trained.

Year	Funding	No. teachers trained
2004	-	-
2005	(11%)	12%
2006	40%	(18%)

There does not appear to be a correlation between the level of funding provided and the number of teachers trained. The level of funding decreased

[180] Namely, the PCSP, CAPP, History, Geography, Biology, IILT, RSE, Home Economics, SPHE, SLSS, Reading Recovery, JCSP, NPPTI primary and post primary pillars.

by 11% in 2005 but the number of teachers trained increased by 12%. The pattern is reversed in the following year, when the level of funding increases by 40% but the number of teachers trained decreases by 18%. It is difficult to draw conclusions from these data on account of the following: (i) this analysis is based on those programmes in respect of which data are available. It may be that a full analysis of all National Programmes – if relevant data were available – would support a different conclusion; (ii) the nature of the support provided by National Programmes can change from year to year, with the result that a year on year analysis is not comparing like with like. For example, the National Biology Support Service was replaced by the Biology Support Service following completion of intensive in-service training in the revised Biology syllabus in 2004. With the establishment of the BSS the nature of the support provided to Biology teachers also changed, from intensive in-service training to a more focused and locally based response to identified needs.

8.24 Key question 3: What is the unit cost per teacher trained?

A key measure of the efficiency with which the National Programmes convert inputs into outputs is the unit cost per teacher trained. However, it is not possible to establish a definitive unit cost due to a lack of data relating to (i) the total cost of all National Programmes, and (ii) the total number of teachers trained by each Programme. In order to provide an estimated unit cost, the table below details the average unit cost in respect of those programmes in respect of which data were made available for the period 2004 to 2006.

Table 8.39: Unit cost per teacher trained, 2004-2006[181]

	2004	2005	2006
Funding	€19,471,127	€18,005,723	€19,503,385
No of teachers	149,029	168,678	116,633
Unit cost	€131	€107	€167

The table above indicates that the average unit cost per teacher trained decreased from €131 in 2004 to €107 in 2005, a decrease of 20%, but increased again in 2006 to €167, an increase of 58%.

A change in unit cost is related to two factors: (i) a change in the level of funding allocated and/or (ii) a change in the number of teachers trained. The decrease in unit cost in 2005 is attributable to a decrease of 11% in the level of funding to the Programmes upon which the analysis is based and an increase of 10% in the number of teachers trained by those Programmes. The increase in unit cost in 2006 is attributable to a decrease of 3% in the level of funding allocated by the TES, but a larger decrease of 30% in the number of teachers trained. This analysis is based on data provided by the majority of National Programmes but some are excluded. It may be that an analysis encompassing

[181] This table is based on data available in respect of the following programmes: (2004) = PCSP, CAPP, HIST, Geography, NBSS/BSS, IILT, RSE, Home Ecs, Junior Science, SLSS, SDPS (pp), SMPP, LDS, JCPE, JCSP, NPPTI Primary, NPPTI PPrimary; (2005) = PCSP, CAPP, Cool School, HIST, Geography, NBSS/BSS, JC Maths, IILT, RSE, Home Ecs, Junior Science, SLSS, SDPS (pp), SMPP, LDS, JCPE, JCSP, Reading Recovery, NPPTI Primary, NPPTI PPrimary; (2006) = PCSP, CAPP, HIST, Geography, NBSS/BSS, IILT, RSE, Home Ecs, JCSP, NPPTI Primary, NPPTI PPrimary

all National Programmes would result in a different overall unit cost and a different conclusion. It is therefore impossible to make any definitive conclusion in the trend of unit costs on the basis of such incomplete data.

8.25 Key question 4: How does the unit cost compare between National Programmes?

The steering committee for this review were of the opinion that it was not possible to make meaningful comparisons between Programmes in terms of unit cost basis due to (i) the difficulty involved in identifying unit cost per teacher targeted by the National Programmes and (ii) the difficulty in making comparisons between Programmes that engage with teachers in different ways. Some of the Programmes are subject related (e.g. HIST, JCPE, NBSS) while others are non-subject related such as Reading Recovery and the LDS. In general, the costs associated with the subject related programmes are less than those associated with the non subject related programmes. This is to be expected due to the larger populations targeted by the subject related programmes, and the fact that the subject related programmes may engage with the same teacher on a much less frequent basis than some of the non subject related programmes. In addition, the example of the Biology Support Service alluded to earlier indicates the changing nature of in-service provision within individual programmes and highlights the fact that one cannot be guaranteed that National Programmes are being compared on the same basis over time.

However, in spite of these considerable difficulties (which all underline the need for caution in interpreting the analysis in this area) the table below highlights the degree of variation in unit cost between those Programmes in respect of which data were made available.

Table 8.40: Range of unit cost per teacher trained, 2004-2006

Programme	Unit cost 2004	Unit cost 2005	Unit cost 2006
Mean	€131	€107	€167
Range	€25 to €4,458	€4 to €3,234	€10 to €2,266

The table above indicates a considerable variation in the unit cost associated with different programmes. For example, in 2006 the average unit cost per participant was €167 but there was a range between €10 per participant and €2,266 per participant. The range of unit cost is related to the number of staff seconded to each Programme, the number of teachers trained by each Programme, and the nature of the support provided to teachers by each Programme. It is difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the relative efficiency of different Programmes in light of the considerations outlined above.

8.26 Key question 5: What are the level and trend of staffing resources associated with the National Programmes?

The table below indicates the number of staff associated with each of the National Programmes in the period 2001/2002 to 2006/2007. This data was supplied by the TES.

Table 8.41: Numbers seconded to National Programmes, 2001/02-2006/07.

Programme	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
PCSP	98	106	67	90	126	133
CAPP	1	1	1	1	-	1
Cool School	-	-	-	-	4	4
History	-	-	4	5	5	4
Geography	-	-	6	10	7	6
Biology	11	13	11	-	2	-
SESS	-	-	4	4	7	14
IILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
RESS	3	-	-	4	4	2
RSE	-	1	1	1	1	1
Home Economics	4	7	7	-	1	-
JC Maths	1	6	6	-	1	-
SPHE	10	12	12	12	12	12
Junior Science	-	-	10	10	11	9
SLSS incl JCSP	41	40	28	27	29	35
SDPI p	25	34	35	35	37	40
SDPS pp	5	11	11	11	11	11
SMPP	-	2	3	3	3	3
LDS	-	4	3	4	9	15
JCPE	-	-	3	3	3	3
Reading Recovery	-	-	-	-	5	5
NBSS	-	-	-	-	-	13
T4	-	-	-	-	-	9
Nat Behav SS	-	-	-	-	-	
NPPTI pp	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	**48**	**237**	**212**	**220**	**278**	**321**

In total, there has been an increase of 35% in the number of teachers seconded in the period from 2002/2003[182] to 2006/2007. There was an increase in the number of secondments in each year with the exception of 2003/2004. This is mainly attributable to the consolidation and review year of the PCSP. In 2003/2004 the PCSP did not hold any in-service training seminars in curricular areas with the result that the number of personnel seconded to the programme was thirty nine less than in the previous year.

The increase in the number of secondments illustrates the fact that the TES and the National Support Programmes rely primarily on a secondment based model of in-service delivery. There are attendant difficulties for school communities associated with this model. These difficulties are highlighted in the research literature and include the following:

- The uncertainty surrounding the length of secondments can lead to

[182] The data for 2001/2002 cannot be confirmed due to an absence of records.

difficulties for schools in securing substitute teachers for an indeterminate period.[183]

- Those teachers seconded to national support programmes are usually recruited because of their particular knowledge or expertise in a particular area – e.g. special education, school leadership, technology – and this leads to a corresponding loss in the expertise available to the parent school.
- It has also been argued that the secondment of teachers for short periods of time prohibits the effective documentation and evaluation of practice learned by those teachers before they return to their schools. The result is that a body of experience and knowledge is not built up and sustained in the area of in-service training ultimately impacting on the ability to formulate evidence based policies.[184]
- The fact that there are almost thirty National Programmes in contact with schools (both primary and post primary) can lead to confusion among school communities about relative roles and responsibilities of seconded personnel. It may also lead to overlap and duplication of effort between support staff. The data emerging from this review suggested an element of uncertainty among primary teachers at the relative roles of the PCSP Cuiditheoirí and the SDPI facilitators. Similarly, a recent review of the SLSS identified confusion among some teachers as to the role of various in-service and professional development providers.[185]

The confusion among school communities at the number of support programmes supported by the TES points to another important theme to emerge from the research literature – that of the lack of integration between National Support Programmes.

One of the motivating factors behind the establishment of the ICDU in 1994 was the need to develop a comprehensive national framework of CPD provision. However, a report on professional development in Ireland, published in 2001, did not find evidence to suggest that such a conceptual framework had been developed. [186] Funding for teachers' professional development had increased substantially in the period since the establishment of the ICDU but often in an ad hoc manner without any clear overall strategy.[187]

The TES inherited the responsibilities of the ICDU in relation to CPD as well as a broader remit in relation to the other areas of the teacher education continuum. However, the number of National Support Programmes has continued to grow in recent years, along with the potential for greater fragmentation of provision at national level and greater overlap between support programmes at local level.[188] Some measures have been taken to improve the level of integration. These include the establishment of the SLSS (see p.135). The introduction of the SLSS has introduced a greater degree of integration among National Programmes

[183] CMOD (2002), p.13; Granville, (2006), pp. 69, 75; Sugrue et al (2001), pp.71, 78.
[184] Sugrue et al (2001), p.43
[185] Damien Murchan et al (2005), *PCSP*, pp.167-168; Granville (2006), p.69, 75
[186] Sugrue et al (2001), pp.55-56
[187] M. Fullan (1999), *Change Forces – the sequel*, p.27. London: Falmer press
[188] Granville (2006), p.53

operating at second level. However, there are still a number of support programmes operating outside the SLSS umbrella – such as the School Development Planning Service (SDPS) and the Leadership Development Scheme (LDS) – and there is no equivalent overarching structure at primary level. This has led recent commentators to propose a greater degree of integration among National Programmes. The Granville report recommended reorganising the SLSS within a national *Centre for Educational Leadership, Innovation and Support (CELIS)*. The brief of CELIS would encompass curriculum support and innovation, school leadership and development, and continuing professional development. CELIS would incorporate SLSS and other mainly curriculum-related support services, and other services such as the SDPI and LDS[189]. The CMOD review went even further by recommending that the PCSP structure should be transferred to the SLSS following completion of the intensive phase of in-service training and that the SLSS should be re-structured into a schools support service providing support at both primary and post-primary level.[190]

A greater degree of rationalization in the support services may result in greater efficiencies in terms of (i) reducing overlap between the work of different support services, (ii) reducing the overall number of secondments, (iii) clarifying the role of the support services for teachers and schools, (iv) and making it easier for the formulation of overall CPD policy at national level.

8.27 Key question 6: What is the ratio of seconded teachers to teachers trained?

An indicator of the efficiency of the National Programmes is the ratio of personnel seconded to the Programmes to the number of teachers trained by such Programmes. However, in light of the difficulties in making comparisons between National Programmes that engage with teachers in substantially different ways, the steering committee agreed that particular programmes should not be identified as this could give a distorted view of relative efficiency between programmes. For example, it might indicate that those Programmes that engaged with teachers once per annum were more efficient than those that engaged with teachers on a continuous basis.

In consequence, the analysis was confined to identifying the average ratio of seconded teachers to teachers trained by the National Programmes in respect of which data are available (as outlined below).

[189] Granville (2006), pp.73-75
[190] CMOD, (2002), p.24

Table 8.42: Ratio of secondments to teachers trained[191]

	2004	2005	2006
No of teachers trained	145838	155001	112662
No. of secondments	167	172	210
Ratio	1:873	1:901	1:536
Range	1:121 to 1:9662	1:171 to 1:9464	1:227 to 1:6291

The table indicates that the ratio of secondments to teachers trained is 1:873 in 2004, 1:901 in 2005 and 1:536 in 2006. It appears therefore that there is an increase in the efficiency with which the staffing resources associated with the National Support Programmes were employed in 2005 but a significant decrease in the efficiency ratio in 2006. However, the apparent reduction in efficiency in 2006 is partly explained by the fact that data have yet to be returned by a number of programmes in respect of the number of teachers trained in 2006. One of these programmes – the SDPS (post primary) targets approximately 16 to 18,000 teachers per annum and this will have a significant impact on the 2006 ratio. The increased efficiency in 2005 is attributable to the fact that the number of secondments increased marginally over 2004 (an increase of 3%) while the number of teachers trained increased by 6%.

There is a wide range in the ratio between various National Support Programmes. For example, in 2006, some Programmes have a ratio of 227 teachers trained per seconded personnel while others have a ratio of 6,291 teachers per seconded personnel. However, as outlined earlier, it is difficult to interpret the level of efficiency associated with National Programmes in any meaningful way due to the fact that some programmes target the same teachers on more than one occasion while others target teachers only once per year, and due to the fact that some programmes are aimed at whole school staffs (PCSP, SDPS) while others involve concentrated support for a small number of teachers e.g. Reading Recovery and the NPPTI. It is therefore unclear if the programmes are being compared on an equitable basis.

8.28 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the efficiency with which the Colleges of Education, the Education Support Centres and the National Support Programmes convert inputs into outputs. In general, it is more difficult to establish the efficiency with which the TES employs its resources than the effectiveness with which it achieves its objectives. The evidence provides mixed results on the efficiency of the institutions supported by the TES (Colleges of Education, Education Support Centres and the National Support Programmes). This is mainly attributable to the following factors: (i) a lack of

[191] This table is based on available data on the number of teachers trained and the number of secondments made to the programmes. This encompasses the following programmes: In respect of 2004 = PCSP, CAPP, HIST, Geography, NBSS/BSS, RSE, Home Ecs, SPHE, Junior Science, SLSS (incl JCSP), SMPP, LDS, JCPE, Reading Recovery, NPPTI Primary, NPPTI Post Primary; In respect of 2005 = PCSP, CAPP, HIST, Geography, SDPS (pp), RSE, SPHE, SLSS (incl JCSP), SMPP, LDS, JCPE, Reading Recovery, NPPTI Primary, NPPTI Post Primary; In respect of 2006 = PCSP, CAPP, Cool School, HIST, Geography, NBSS/BSS, RSE, Home Ecs, SPHE, SLSS (incl JCSP), Reading Recovery, NPPTI Primary, NPPTI Post Primary

data in certain key areas, particularly in relation to the National Programmes, (ii) the difficulty in comparing institutions and programmes that engage with teachers in substantially different ways, and (iii) the lack of any identifiable international benchmarks against which performance can be compared.

The principal findings in relation to the Colleges of Education, the Education Support Centres and the National Support Programmes are outlined below, along with recommendations designed to strengthen the monitoring of performance in this area.

Colleges of Education

The main focus of the analysis in relation to the Colleges of Education for initial teacher education was on the relationship between inputs (financial and staffing resources allocated to the Colleges by the TES/HEA) and outputs (the number of students in teacher education programmes in the Colleges of Education).

While the level of funding allocated to the Colleges of Education for initial teacher education in 2006/07 was 38% higher than in 2001/2002, the number of students enrolled in teacher education programmes did not experience a corresponding increase. The number of students enrolled in such programmes in the Colleges of Education was 1.3% higher in 2006/07 than in 2001/02. While this appears to indicate a decrease in the overall level of efficiency with which the Colleges convert inputs into outputs, it does not take account of the following factors: (i) it is not possible – due to an absence of data - to establish the level of funding specifically allocated to initial teacher education. Caution must therefore be exercised in making conclusions on the basis of estimated figures; (ii) the analysis is confined to the role of the Colleges of Education in relation to teacher preparation and does not consider their broader role in relation to research programmes, CPD, and links with other institutions such as the Education Centres and the NPPTI; and (iii) the Colleges of Education are constrained by the TES in relation to the number of students they can enrol. A larger number of students might result in greater efficiencies. However, the TES prescribes the level of student intake to the B.Ed and Diploma programmes in each year in each College in an attempt to match the supply and demand of qualified teachers. In light of these considerations, it is not possible to make any definitive conclusion on the efficiency with which the Colleges of Education produce qualified teachers.

The main performance indicator used to measure the efficiency associated with the Colleges of Education was the unit cost per B.Ed and Graduate Diploma student. At present, no data are collected on unit costs in relation to the Colleges of Education. The two step procedure adopted in this review to estimate the unit cost of initial teacher education programmes was unsophisticated and the question of whether the colleges are being compared on an equitable basis cannot be ignored. The value of the analysis in making comparisons between institutions is therefore limited. However, in the absence of any other data it does provide an estimate, albeit a crude one, of the costs

associated with the Diploma and the B.Ed. programmes. It also facilitates analysis of the trend in unit cost within institutions over a number of years.

Overall, the average unit cost per student on the B.Ed programme appears to have increased by 35% over the period 2001/02 (€5,693) to 2006/07 (€7,705). There was a significant increase of 15% in the unit cost in 2002/03 and another relatively large increase of 9.8% in 2006/2007. The unit cost remained relatively stable in the period between 2003/04 and 2005/06.

The percentage change in the unit cost of the B.Ed is attributable to two factors: (i) the change in student numbers, and (ii) the change in the level of funding allocated by the TES/HEA. The number of students enrolled in the B.Ed programme has remained relatively stable during this period. The percentage change in unit cost, therefore, is mainly attributable to the change in the level of funding allocated. In the years when the unit cost rises, the increase in the level of funding is considerably higher than any corresponding increase in student numbers. For example, in 2002/2003 the number of B.Ed students increased by 3% while funding increased by 28%. In the three year period when the unit cost remained relatively stable (2003/2004 to 2005/2006) the change in the level of funding provided was more closely related to the change in student numbers. For example, in 2003/2004, the funding for the B.Ed programme increased by 5.6% while the student numbers increased by 2.4%.

The unit cost per Graduate Diploma student increased by 40% in the period 2001/02 (€5,854) to 2006/2007 (€8,217), broadly in line with rise in the B.Ed unit cost. However, the change in the unit cost of the Diploma has been more inconsistent during this period. There were rises in unit cost in each year with the exception of 2004/2005 when there was a sharp decline of 37% in the unit cost. As in the case of the B.Ed programme, the fluctuation in the unit cost is related to the change in student numbers and the change in the level of funding provided. For example, the rise of 19% in unit cost in 2002/2003 can be explained by a 48% increase in funding and a smaller increase of 25% in the number of Diploma students. The large decrease in unit cost in 2004/2005 – a decrease of 37% - is explained by a 44% reduction in funding and a smaller decrease of 12% in the number of students on the Diploma programme.

An important input in the provision of initial teacher education is the number of staff employed in the Colleges of Education. In absolute terms, the number of staff catering for students in teacher education programme appears to have declined significantly since December 2003. There were forty three less WTE staff working in this area in December 2006 compared to December 2003. This represents a decrease of more than 10%. The number of WTEs has actually declined in each year since 2003. There were decreases of 4% in 2004, 3% in 2005 and 4% in 2006. This suggests that there were increased efficiencies in this area within the Colleges of Education.

There have been marginal increases in the ratio of students on initial teacher education programmes to WTE staff members in each year since 2003. For example, there were 9.2 students per WTE staff member in December 2006

compared to 8.4 students per WTE staff member in December 2003. This suggests that the Colleges of Education have become more efficient in their use of staff resources in the period since 2003.

This chapter also adopted a broader interpretation of efficiency – as opposed to solely relating inputs to outputs – and examined the attrition rate on teacher education programmes. When the number of students who withdrew from initial teacher education programmes is considered in the context of overall student numbers, the percentages involved are minimal. The number of withdrawals as a percentage of total participants peaked in 2004/2005 when 1.35% and 1.08% of students withdrew from the B.Ed and Diploma programmes respectively. The proportion of withdrawals from the B.Ed and Diploma programmes is very similar, which is surprising given the fact that as postgraduate students, participants in the Diploma programme are not entitled to 'free fees'.

There is no comparable data in relation to completion rates in the University and IoT sector (the last published data relates to 1996/1997). However, the low number of withdrawals from initial teacher education programmes indicates that the Colleges of Education are successful in supporting students to complete their studies. This suggests, therefore, that the public funds allocated to the Colleges for the purpose of preparing student teachers are being used efficiently.

One issue that remains to be considered is whether the state supported Colleges of Education should continue to be funded by separate agencies - the TES and the HEA. Mary Immaculate and St. Patrick's College of Education are currently funded by the HEA while the other three institutions are supported directly by the TES. The reason for the difference between the five Colleges is unclear, apart from the fact that the two HEA funded colleges developed links with the University of Limerick and Dublin City University in the early 1990s. It would seem more logical if the five state supported colleges were funded through the same agency. This could lead to improved efficiencies and may also facilitate improved communication between the Colleges and its funding agency – the following chapter will indicate that the Presidents of all of the Colleges consider that improvements could be made in this area. On the issue of which funding agency should support the five Colleges it appears that the HEA may be more advantageously placed to support all five Colleges. It currently provides approximately 79% of the funding for initial teacher education and also has more advanced capacity in relation to establishing and monitoring unit costs for academic programmes.

Education Support Centres

The main focus of the analysis in relation to the Education Support Centres was on the relationship between inputs (financial and staffing resources allocated to the Centres) and outputs (the number of local course participants).

The overall level of funding provided to the Education Centres (core funding and local course funding) has increased by 37% in the period since 2001. (This

is comparable to the 38% increase in funding allocated to the Colleges of Education in the same period). The increase in the level of resources allocated to the Education Centres has resulted in an increase in the number of local courses organised and the number of local course participants. While funding increased by 37% in the period between 2001 and 2006, the number of local courses organised increased by 130% while the number of local course participants increased by 94%. This suggests an overall increase in the efficiency with which the Centres convert inputs into outputs. However, a year on year analysis suggests that there has not been an efficient use of resources on a consistent basis. While an increase (or decrease) in overall funding resulted in a corresponding or greater increase in local course participants in 2002 and 2005, this was the exception rather than the rule. In 2003, 2004 and 2006, an increase in the level of funding resulted in a much smaller increase (a decrease in 2006) in the number of participants in local courses.

There is considerable variation between individual Centres in the number of local course participants. For example, in 2006, the average number was 1,339 participants but there were 485 local course participants in some Centres compared to 2,509 in others. However, as explained earlier, this may be attributable to differences in the nature of the local courses provided in different Centres (one off sessions vs courses organised over a number of evenings) and the proximity of individual Centres to other CPD providers.

While local courses are only one element of the work of the Education Centres, they are a core element of their work, and one would therefore expect to see a strong relationship between an increase in overall funding and the number of local course participants. The overall funding referred to in the analysis of the Education Centres excludes funding allocated for National Programmes. This means that if a large portion of Education Centres' core funding is being targeted at supporting National Programmes, there may be an imbalance in the priority accorded to national as opposed to local CPD priorities. However, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions in this area due to the fact that Education Centres engage with local teachers in a number of different ways apart from local courses.

The main indicator of the efficiency with which the TES is converting inputs (core funding from the TES and local course funding) into outputs (the number of local course participants) was the unit cost per local course participant. This was calculated by dividing the overall funding from the TES by the total number of participants in local courses organised by full-time Education Centres. Overall, the unit cost per participant has declined by €63 since 2001, representing a decrease of 29%. This suggests an increase in efficiency in the period since 2001. However, the rate of change in the unit cost was not consistent. The unit cost declined in 2002 and 2005 but increased in 2003, 2004 and 2006.

The decrease in unit cost in 2002 and 2005 can be attributed to the number of participants increasing at a faster rate than the level of funding provided by the TES. For example, in 2002, the number of local course participants increased by 33% while the level of funding decreased by 27%. In 2005 the number of

participants increased by 6% while the funding increased by 0.9%. The increases in unit costs in 2003, 2004 and 2006 can be attributed to the level of funding increasing at a faster rate than the number of participants. In 2003, the number of participants increased by 8.4% but the level of funding increased by 34%. Similarly, in 2004, the number of participants increased by 33% but funding increased by 39%. In 2006, funding increased by 0.36% but participation rates dropped by 4.4%.

It is not possible to establish the trend in staffing resources employed through the Education Centre Network due to an absence of longitudinal data. However, an analysis of the figures for 2006 indicates that there were 414.09 WTE staff employed through the Education Centre Network. This comprised 138.59 core staff, 267.05 programme staff, and 8.45 self-financing staff. The average number of staff in a full-time Education Centre was 19.7. However, the number of staff ranges from between 4.8 (West Cork) and 143.20 (Dublin West). There is a clear pattern to the distribution of staff between Education Centres. Those Centres that employ the most staff are those Centres that 'host' National Support Programmes. Those Centres that employ fewest staff numbers are those that do not host National Programmes – or that host National Programmes with a small number of seconded staff.

In terms of non-National Programme related staff, there were 147.04 WTE staff employed by Education Centres in 2006. The average number of such staff employed in a full-time Centre was 7, with a range between 11.44 (Blackrock) and 4.75 (Carrick-on-Shannon). In general, the Centres in large urban areas have the highest number of staff – Blackrock, Limerick, Cork, Dublin West and Drumcondra. Education Centres outside of urban areas have the least number of staff. The two Centres with the least number of staff are West Cork and Carrick on Shannon. This pattern is to be expected, given the fact that those Centres in urban areas (with the highest number of staff) are serving the largest teaching populations.

The average ratio of local course participants to WTE staff members in a full-time Education Centre in 2006 was 191:1. This means that for every member of staff, there were 191 local course participants. There was considerable variation between Centres on this issue. The ratios in individual Centres ranged from a high of 395:1 to a low of 81:1. As explained earlier, this may suggest that some Centres are more efficient in their use of staffing resources, but the variance between Centres may also be attributable to (i) the fact that staff are involved in other activities apart from organizing/administering local courses, and (ii) the nature of local course provision. For example, those Centres that organize a number of once off training sessions will have a higher ratio of participants to WTE staff members and will therefore appear more efficient than those Centres that organize a series of courses with the same participants that run over a number of evenings due to the higher throughput of the former.

While staff members in Education Centres are employed in a number of different roles and duties, the organization and support of local courses is a core function of Education Centres and one would expect to see a relationship

between the number of staff employed in a Centre and the number of local course participants. This analysis excludes staff employed to support the National Programmes. Therefore, if non Programme related staff are spending considerable amounts of time devoted to Programme related activities, this suggests that there may be an imbalance at Education Centre level in the priority accorded to national as opposed to locally identified needs.

The TES has introduced a number of measures in recent years which will strengthen the potential for increased efficiency in relation to the Education Centre Network. These include (i) the introduction of revised financial procedures in 2005, (ii) the move to an activity based funding model for the local courses, (iii) the channelling of funding for local courses in part-time Centres through the full-time Centres, and (iv) the request for Education Centres to submit an annual staffing return to the TES. In particular, the introduction of a budget based method of funding for the Education Centres (as part of the revised financial procedures) is a positive move. The budget based system, which was fully implemented for the first time in 2007 replaces the previous method of allocating funding under different headings – general allocation, administrative staffing allowance and maintenance grant. In contrast to the previous system of specific grants to Centres for specific purposes, there is greater flexibility in how Centres use the resources allocated to them, within the financial guidelines issued by the TES. This devolution of responsibility to local level is in accordance with best practice under the public sector modernization programme and is more likely to result in greater efficiency than the old system of centralized control.

National Support Programmes

It is much more difficult to establish the efficiency with which the National Support Programmes convert inputs (financial resources, secondments) into outputs (teachers trained).

While it was possible to identify the funding directly allocated by the TES and the secondment costs associated with each National Programme, it was not possible to identify the cost of providing substitution cover for those teachers attending prescribed in-service training. The available data indicates that there has been significant investment in CPD provision by the TES in recent years. Overall, there has been an increase of 149% in expenditure in this area in the period from 2002 to 2006 which is a much higher rate of increase than that associated with the Colleges of Education (a 38% increase in the period 2001 to 2006) or the Education Support Centres (a 37% increase in the same period).

The rate of increase in CPD funding has not been consistent. There were increases in 2003, 2004 and 2006 but a small decrease of 3% in 2005. The increases in 2003 and 2006 were both significant – 59% and 48% respectively. The increases in 2003 were mainly attributable to significant increases in the funding allocated to existing programmes such as the SLSS, SMPP, SDPS and SDPI, as well as the provision of funding for new programmes such as the support services in History and Geography, Junior Certificate P.E. and the

NPPTI. (The apparent increase in 2003 may also be related to an under estimation of 2002 funding).

The increase in funding in 2006 was attributable to similar causes – a significant increase in the funding of some existing programmes such as JCSP, Reading Recovery, LDS, SLSS, SESS, PCSP, and the allocation of funding for new National Programmes such as the National Behavioural Support Service and Technology 4 (T4). The increase in funding to the JCSP and the Reading Recovery Programmes were related to the implementation of the *DEIS* strategy which provides for an expansion of measures designed to tackle educational disadvantage.

While it has been possible to identify the overall inputs – in terms of financial resources – allocated by the TES to the National Support Programmes, it is far more difficult to establish the level of output in terms of the number of teachers trained. The data that were made available indicate that the area of CPD is one of considerable activity. The evidence suggests that more than 429,000 teachers were trained by the National Programmes identified in the period 2004 to 2006.

The programmes that targeted the highest number of teachers are those programmes responsible for in-service training in whole-staff areas such as the PCSP, SDPS (post primary) and the SLSS. The relatively small numbers targeted by some of the other National Programmes is related to the size of the target population. The programmes that targeted the smallest number of teachers are the two pillars of the NPPTI and the Reading Recovery Programme. However, the intensity of the engagement with the teachers through these projects is far greater than in any of the other National Support Programmes.

The number of teachers targeted by the National Programmes increased by approximately 13% in 2005 but decreased by 31% in 2006. The increase in the number of teachers trained in 2005 is mainly attributable to the increase in the number of primary teachers targeted by the PCSP. The significant decrease in the number of teachers trained in 2006 was caused by (i) the reduction in PCSP activity levels in that year and (ii) the fact that a number of Programmes had not yet submitted their NDP returns for 2006 at the time of writing. One of these Programmes – the SDPS (post primary) targets between 16-18,000 teachers on an annual basis – and this will have a significant impact on the overall number of teachers trained.

There does not appear to be a correlation between the level of funding provided and the number of teachers trained. The level of funding decreased by 11% in 2005 but the number of teachers trained increased by 12%. The pattern is reversed in the following year, when the level of funding increases by 40% but the number of teachers trained decreases by 18%. It is difficult to draw conclusions from these data on account of the following: (i) this analysis is based on those programmes in respect of which data are available. It may be that a full analysis of all National Programmes – if relevant data were available – would provide a different conclusion; (ii) the nature of the support

provided by National Programmes can change from year to year, with the result that a year on year analysis is not comparing like with like. For example, the National Biology Support Service was replaced by the Biology Support Service following completion of intensive in-service training in the revised Biology syllabus in 2004. With the establishment of the BSS the nature of the support provided to Biology teachers also changed, from intensive in-service training to a more focused and locally based response to identified needs.

A key measure of the efficiency with which the National Programmes convert inputs into outputs is the unit cost per teacher trained. The absence of complete data on all of the Programmes means that it is not possible to identify an overall unit cost per teacher trained. An analysis of those Programmes in respect of which data were available indicated that the mean unit cost per teacher trained decreased from €131 in 2004 to €107 in 2005, a decrease of 20%, but increased again in 2006 to €167, an increase of 58%.

A change in unit cost is related to two factors: (i) a change in the level of funding allocated and/or (ii) a change in the number of teachers trained. The decrease in unit cost in 2005 is attributable to a decrease of 11% in the level of funding to the Programmes upon which the analysis is based and an increase of 10% in the number of teachers trained by those Programmes. The increase in unit cost in 2006 is attributable to a decrease of 3% in the level of funding allocated by the TES, but a larger decrease of 30% in the number of teachers trained. This analysis is based on data provided by the majority of National Programmes but some are excluded. In particular, the number of National Programmes in respect of which data relating to 2006 are available is far less than in relation to 2004 and 2005. It may be that an analysis encompassing all National Programmes would result in a different overall unit cost and a different conclusion. It is therefore impossible to make any definitive conclusion in the trend of unit costs on the basis of such incomplete data.

The number of teachers seconded to work with the National Programmes illustrates the almost exclusive reliance on this form of in-service delivery. In total, there has been an increase of 35% in the number of teachers seconded in the period 2002/2003 to 2006/2007. A number of difficulties associated with this model were identified and it was suggested that the TES should consider whether there is scope for rationalisation of the existing National Programmes with a view to reducing overlap between individual Programmes. The potential of involving other education providers in the delivery of in-service training could also be considered.

Analysis in this chapter indicated that the ratio of secondments to teachers trained was 1:873 in 2004, 1:901 in 2005 and 1:536 in 2006. It appears therefore that there was an increase in the efficiency with which the staffing resources associated with the National Programmes were used in 2005 but a significant decrease in the efficiency ratio in 2006. However, the apparent reduction in efficiency in 2006 is partly explained by the fact that data have yet to be returned by a number of programmes in respect of the number of teachers trained in 2006. The increased efficiency in 2005 is attributable to the

fact that the number of secondments increased marginally over 2004 (an increase of 3%) while the number of teachers trained increased by 6%.

There is a wide range in the ratio between various National Support Programmes. However, it is difficult to make comparisons between National Programmes on this issue due to the fact that some programmes target the same teachers on more than one occasion while others target teachers only once per year, and due to the fact that some programmes are aimed at whole school staffs (PCSP, SDPS) while others involve concentrated support for a small number of teachers e.g. Reading Recovery and the NPPTI. Some programmes target parents as well as teachers while others focus exclusively on teacher training.

There are also complications in the attempt to compare the same programme over time. The nature of the support provided by individual programmes can change over time. The example of the National Biology Support Service/Biology Support Service illustrates the means by which the type of support provided by a National Programme can evolve over time.

8.29 Recommendations

Initial Teacher Education

- The TES should discuss with the HEA the possibility of transferring financial responsibility for Froebel College, Colaiste Mhuire and the Church of Ireland College of Education to the HEA. Discussions in this area should include consideration of any administrative implications of this transfer of financial responsibility.

National Support Programmes

- The TES should strengthen the collection of data relating to the National Programmes. National Coordinators should be informed about the type of data that should be collected on a routine basis in respect of each National Programme. This data should include the number of teachers trained by each Programme on an annual basis (per financial year rather than per academic year) and the number of teachers trained as a proportion of the target population.
- The TES should collect data on the total cost of CPD provision. This includes data on the direct funding to National Programmes, the costs associated with secondments, and the costs associated with providing substitute cover to teachers attending in-service training. This will allow for the full cost of CPD activity to be identified.
- The TES should consider whether there is scope for rationalisation of the existing National Programmes with a view to reducing overlap between individual Programmes.

Chapter Nine

Communication

9.1 Introduction

This chapter examines communication between the TES and (1) the Colleges of Education, (2) the Education Centre Network, and (3) the National Programmes and makes recommendations on how the quality of communication could be improved. This addresses item 6 in the terms of reference.

9.2 Data sources

The analysis in this chapter is based on two main data sources: (i) a literature Review and (ii) a survey of key stakeholder groups.

Literature review

The literature review involved an analysis of a range of published and unpublished sources. While the quality of communication between the TES and other stakeholders had not been addressed previously, various aspects of the issue had been explored in a small number of reports[192] The literature review provided background information on some of the issues involved in this area and also helped to inform the design of a questionnaire that issued to key stakeholder groups.

Survey of key stakeholder groups

It was decided to survey three different stakeholder groups: (i) the President of each of the five main Colleges of Education, (ii) the Co-ordinator of each of the twenty nine National Support Programmes, and (iii) the Director of each of the thirty Education Support Centres.

Separate questionnaires were designed for each stakeholder group. Each questionnaire consisted of a mix of open-ended and fixed-alternative questions, designed to elicit qualitative and quantitative data. The questionnaire circulated to each stakeholder group was structured along similar lines, with a specific aspect of communication being addressed in each section of the questionnaire, as outlined in Table 9.1 below.

[192] Granville (2006); CMOD (2002)

Table 9.1: Structure of questionnaire[193]

Section of questionnaire	Focus of section
Section A	General background information
Section B	Budget notification process.
Section C	Policy formation process
Section D	Communication issues

A satisfactory response rate was achieved in respect of each survey, ranging from 80% among Directors of Education Centres to 100% among Presidents of the Colleges of Education. A copy of a questionnaire is attached in appendix 5. (Appendix 8 contains a number of data tables supporting the analysis in this chapter).

9.3 Budget notification

The questions in section B of the questionnaire explored the level of stakeholder satisfaction with the process of annual budget notification. This is an issue relevant to all of the stakeholders surveyed, with the exception of two Colleges of Education that are funded through the HEA and three National Coordinators who indicated that they are supported by the TES but funding is channelled through the Second Level Support Service (SLSS). The responses of each stakeholder group to the questions in Section B are discussed in turn below.

Presidents of Colleges of Education

As outlined in chapter two, the three Colleges of Education supported by the TES (CICE, Froebel College and Colaiste Mhuire) are funded on a different basis, with the CICE funded on a budget basis and Froebel and Colaiste Mhuire funded on a capitation grant basis.

Presidents of the three Colleges funded directly through the TES identified the month in which they had received notification of their 2006 budget ("budget" in this context refers to the main source of funding from the TES). One of the Colleges had received notification in September 2006; the two other Colleges had not been notified (of their capitation grant) at the time of writing (October 2006). One of the Presidents indicated that this normally occurs around December. Only two Presidents indicated their preferred date for notification of their 2006 budget: both would have liked to have been notified earlier (April and May 2006 respectively).

Presidents were divided in their views over whether the timing of the existing notification process adversely affected the planning process within their College.

[193] The questionnaire circulated to Education Centre Directors included a fifth section, Section E, designed to elicit information on the summer and local courses administered by the Centres. This data was used to evaluate the effectiveness of the summer and local courses (see chapter seven).

One President indicated that there were no adverse affects, while two indicated that planning was affected. Both of these Presidents had similar concerns relating to the uncertainty created by the timing of the notification:

"Our income is derived from tuition fees, registration, examination and student services fees as dictated by the DES and a capitation grant. We do not yet know what the capitation grant for this year will be. As the above items are our only source of income it is not possible to do a budget until end of November. My main concern is meeting academic, other salaries and other fixed charges before planning what else is possible……it is not possible to adequately plan for research or developments in the College due to having to be extremely careful about funds". [President 3]

Two Presidents were of the view that changes were necessary to the process of budget notification, while one expressed satisfaction with the existing system. The proposed improvements related to two issues: (1) earlier notification to the Colleges of their funding streams, and (2) the possibility of introducing multi annual budgeting to allow for a more stable planning environment.

Directors of Education Support Centres

The vast majority of the Education Centre Directors (20 out of 22) had received notification of their 2006 allocation in January/February 2006 but two Directors did not receive notification until May-June 2006.

All twenty two Directors were of the opinion that budget notification should have been received by February 2006 at the latest. However, opinion varied over the precise month. Twelve Directors would have liked to have been informed before January 2006, the actual month in which the majority of Education Centres received notification. The other ten Directors were satisfied to receive details of their budget in January 2006 (with one specifying January/February). However, of the twenty one Directors who specified both the actual month in which they received notification of their 2006 budget and their preferred month, the preferred month was earlier in fifteen cases.

Seven Directors also indicated (although not specifically asked) the month in which they had been informed of their 2006 funding allocation for local courses. As indicated in chapter seven, local courses are organised by the Education Centres throughout the year, generally in spring and autumn (summer courses operate in July and August). However, five of the seven Directors indicated that they had only received notification of their budget for these courses in May 2006, with another Director having received notification in June. Three Directors also indicated the month in which they would have liked to have received details of their 2006 local course budget. Each Director preferred a different month within the period November 2005 to January 2006. All three preferences specified by Directors are significantly earlier than the actual notification date, suggesting that

this is an area where some Directors are not satisfied. This was also an area identified in the CMOD review of the Education Centre Network.[194]

Directors were almost equally divided in their views on whether or not the timing of the budget notification adversely affected planning within their Centre, with twelve Directors (ten full-time and two part-time) indicating that it did have an adverse effect and eleven (ten full-time and one part-time) indicating that it did not.

Those Directors who felt that there was an adverse impact identified two main concerns. The most common issue was the uncertainty created by the late notification of budget approval. Directors indicated that this uncertainty was not conducive to forward planning:

Earlier notification would ensure more accurate planning. Ideas and projected costs of e.g. projects with Colleges of Education, or with networking groups or newly qualified teachers etc could be planned more easily if budget was known in advance. At present funds for such projects may be applied for but much work may have been undertaken to no avail if request for funding is then refused. [Director 17]

The second issue raised by respondents was in relation to the funding of local courses. A number of respondents expressed concern at the late notification of the funding allocated by the TES for such courses.

"The precise plan for Local Courses for January to Easter needs to be ready for publication early in January, and that for Easter to summer just after Easter. The fact that notification of funding may not come until May, as in 2006, means that those courses are planned without knowledge of the year's budget. That has serious implications for autumn courses, which can then be organised only on the basis of what is left". [Director 20]

Eighteen Directors (15 full time and 3 part-time) indicated that they would like to see changes made to the budget notification process while five Directors (all full time) were satisfied with existing arrangements. The most frequent suggestion was for earlier notification (relating to both the general Education Centre budget and also the local course budget).

The second most frequent recommendation was the need for a more straightforward and/or transparent method of calculating the Education Centres' budget. In particular, Directors specifically referred to the need to clarify aspects of the formula used to allocate funding for local courses. As indicated in the previous chapter, a new system of funding for local courses (based primarily on activity levels) was introduced by the TES in 2004.

[194] CMOD (2002), p.48

National Coordinators.

Eighteen NCOs identified the specific month in which they had been notified by the TES of their 2006 allocation (another three NCOs received notification through the SLSS rather than the TES, others did not know the precise date). Of those respondents who gave a specific month, the timing ranged from November 2005 to June 2006. Only one respondent had been informed before 2006, with the remainder having been informed in 2006. Seven Directors had received notification of their 2006 allocation in the second quarter of 2006 (April-June).

Eighteen NCOs indicated the month in which they would have liked to have received details of their 2006 budget. Of these, the majority chose December 2005 or January 2006. All of the respondents felt that approval should have been received by the end of March 2006 at the latest. Of the fourteen NCOs who specified both the actual month in which they received notification of their 2006 budget and their preferred month, the preferred month was earlier in thirteen instances.

A majority of NCOs felt that the timing of the existing budget notification did not adversely affect planning within their national programmes. Twelve NCOs were of this opinion, compared to nine who felt that the planning process was affected. Among the latter, the main concern (as also with the Education Centre Directors) was the uncertainty created by the delay:

Over the years I have come to realise that the budget will not be approved until near to the summer time and have become more able to spend based on that knowledge – it is very nerve-wracking however in that you are hoping that any spending that you are doing will not backfire on you but the programme of support has to continue and so spending has to go on. [NCO 28]

Other issues raised by a number of NCOs as barriers to strategic planning included the lack of multi annual budgeting and the fact that the financial and academic year were not concurrent.

Out of twenty one NCOs, fifteen indicated that they would like to see changes made to the existing budget notification process. Recommendations related to two main areas: (i) the need for earlier budget notification, and (ii) the need for multi annual budgeting: In relation to multi annual budgeting, one NCO outlined the rationale behind this recommendation: "*It would be much better to have a three/five year plan with an indication of a budget allocation for that period. This would also have a CPD benefit for schools as they could be informed of a calendar of events for that period and be able to plan CPD for their staff members accordingly". [NCO 13]*

9.4 Policy formation

Section C in the stakeholder questionnaire explored the extent to which stakeholders feel involved in the process of policy formation at national level. Similar questions (with some adaptation) were asked of all of the stakeholder groups. The response of each stakeholder group to the questions in Section C is discussed in turn below.

Presidents of the Colleges of Education

Presidents were asked for their views on the extent to which they are consulted by the TES in relation to policy formation in two areas: (1) pre-service education, and (2) CPD (excluding pre-service education).

In relation to pre-service education, the Presidents were evenly divided in their characterisation of the extent to which they were consulted by the TES. Two Presidents considered themselves to be frequently consulted, while two felt that they were either not very frequently or never consulted. Significantly, the division in opinion appears to be related to college size. The two Presidents who consider themselves to be frequently consulted represent two of the larger Colleges of Education.

The Presidents were less positive in characterising the extent to which they were consulted by the TES in the area of CPD (i.e. all areas other than pre-service education). Of the four Presidents who responded to this question, only one President felt frequently consulted while three considered themselves to be not very frequently or never consulted. This suggests that the role of the Presidents in terms of influencing policy formation is confined to pre-service education, which does not support the concept of the teacher education continuum.

Presidents were unanimous in their view that measures could be adopted by the TES to improve the level of consultation with the Colleges of Education in relation to both pre-service education and CPD in general. The measures proposed by Presidents related to three areas: (i) more regular meetings, (ii) increased partnership, and (iii) reduced staff turnover in the TES.

The most frequent recommendation, proposed by all five Presidents, referred to the need for meetings with the TES on a more regular basis. Two respondents referred to an initiative that was introduced by the Colleges in 2000/2001 as a means of improving consultation with the TES but was never repeated: "*Five years ago, the DES agreed to have an annual meeting devoted exclusively to policy issues with [the Colleges of Education]. This was done once and was very successful. It has not been done since". (President 5)* This "annual" meeting was intended as a forum for identifying the priorities of both the Colleges and the TES and for sharing and developing strategic plans.

As well as advocating more regular meetings, two Presidents recommended "improved partnership arrangements" between the TES and the Colleges. These Presidents represented two of the smaller Colleges of Education and it may signify a perception that they are not accorded equal status with the larger colleges when it comes to being consulted by the TES.

Presidents were also asked to characterise the existing method of national policy formation in relation to both (1) pre-service education and (2) continuing professional development in general. This was a fixed alternative question with respondents asked to choose one of the following options: top-down, bottom-up or a mixture of top-down and bottom-up.

In relation to pre-service education, opinion among the Presidents was divided. Two characterised the method of policy formation as top-down, while two considered it to be a mixture of top-down and bottom-up. Significantly, there is a correlation between college size and the characterisation of the policy making process, with Presidents of smaller colleges more inclined to characterise the policy-making process as top-down while Presidents of larger colleges considered it to be more of a consensual process.

Only three Presidents commented on the nature of policy formation in other areas of CPD: one characterised it as top-down while two considered it to be a mixture of top-down and bottom-up. There was no correlation between college size and attitude towards policy making in this area.

Education Centre Directors

A majority of Education Centre Directors (12 out of 22) were of the view that they were not very frequently or never consulted by the TES in relation to national policy formation. All three part-time Directors who responded to this question were of this opinion. This perception does not support the concept of the teacher education continuum as it suggests that provision is being centrally planned without adequate consultation of major stakeholder groups.

Seventeen Directors (fourteen full-time and three part-time) felt that improvements could be adopted to improve the level of consultation. All of the recommendations share a common theme: a perception among Directors that the Education Centre Network is a resource that is not fully exploited by the TES in relation to policy-making and that measures should be taken to strengthen the level of consultation with Directors in this area. Some of the Directors suggested that the most effective means of ensuring that they, and other partners in education, contributed to the policy-making process would be the establishment of a consultative forum:

I would like to see a forum of interested parties set up on a formal footing to discuss the 'national' policy direction of CPD. I think there are many

opinions/providers …all ploughing individual/isolated furrows. A more coherent/consensual/rational approach would better serve the system and the needs of teachers... avoiding duplication, in some instances /self-promotion and unnecessary confusion for schools/teachers. [Director 1]

Some Directors felt that the monthly meetings of the Education Centre Directors or meetings of the Association of Teacher Education Centres of Ireland (ATECI) could be an appropriate forum for integrating the Network more fully into the policy making process. They felt that meaningful engagement by the TES in these meetings could assist in providing Directors with an opportunity to link into strategic policy.

The monthly meetings of Directors are generally attended by TES personnel for part of a day, but these are usually confined to TES informing Directors of plans. A request from TES on specific areas where policy is to be formulated could be dealt with by Directors and Directors' ideas then relayed to TES through the convenors of the Directors meetings. [Director 20]

Directors of the part-time Centres considered themselves to be particularly excluded from the policy-making process, with one such Director characterising part-time Centres as 'the poor relations of the [Education Centre] Network'. *[Director 10]*

The twenty two Directors who characterised the existing system of policy formation in relation to CPD, were almost evenly divided in their opinion, with twelve Directors characterising the policy formation process as top-down, and ten considering it to be a mixture of top-down and bottom-up. The three Directors of part-time Centres who responded to this question all characterised policy making as top-down.

National Coordinators

There were greater levels of dissatisfaction among national coordinators than among Education Centre Directors at the frequency with which they are consulted by the TES in relation to policy formation. Of the twenty four NCOs who responded to this question, only a quarter indicated that they were very frequently or frequently consulted by the TES. All three of the NCOs who indicated that they were part of the broader SLSS umbrella considered themselves to be either not very frequently or never consulted by the TES. As in the case of the Presidents and the Directors, this perception among NCOs does not support the concept of the teacher education continuum.

Twenty NCOs felt that measures could be adopted by the TES to improve the level of consultation while three felt that no changes were necessary. Of those advocating changes, all recommendations related to the need for more regular meetings (i) between individual NCOs and the TES, (ii) between NCOs as a

collective and the TES, and (iii) more regular meetings of the steering committees of National Programmes. Other NCOs advocated the establishment of a "discussion forum" to help inform policy-making in relation to CPD. Such a forum could also be used "*to discuss CPD issues, co-ordination of in-service, budgets, common concerns, etc"*. *[NCO 13]*

In relation to how they would characterise the existing system of policy formation in relation to CPD, of the twenty three NCOs who responded to this question, eight characterised the existing system of policy formation as top-down, two as bottom-up, and thirteen as a mixture of top-down and bottom-up.

9.5 Communication

Section D of the stakeholder questionnaire examined the level of satisfaction among stakeholders with the quality of communication with the TES. The same questions were asked of each stakeholder group. The Presidents of the Colleges of Education were asked two additional questions relating to specific aspects of their relationship with the TES. The response of each stakeholder groups to the questions in Section D is discussed in turn below.

Presidents of the Colleges of Education

Presidents were asked to rate the quality of the communication between the TES and their College in respect of three specific issues that are central to the relationship between the Colleges and the TES:

- Notification of approved student intake for Bachelor of Education and/or Graduate Diploma in Education programmes.
- The mix of subjects on the B.Ed and Graduate Diploma programmes.
- The assessment by the DES Inspectorate of final year students on the Bachelor of Ed. and Graduate Diploma programmes

In relation to the three policy areas selected, Presidents were most satisfied with the quality of communication in respect of the assessment of final year students on the B.Ed and Graduate Diploma programmes: all five respondents rated the quality of communication in this area as being either very good or good.

The rating in respect of the other two areas was less positive, with three out of five Presidents rating the quality of communication in respect of student intake as poor or very poor. A similar pattern emerged in relation to the mix of subjects on the teacher education programmes. Two of three Presidents rated the quality of communication in this area as poor. There is no relationship between college size and the rating awarded in either of these two areas.

All five Presidents were of the view that improvements could be made to the quality of communication in these areas. Three made recommendations in relation

to the notification from the TES of student intake. In particular, respondents wanted earlier notification of student intake each year in order to facilitate the planning process. They also wanted a greater level of engagement with the TES on this issue. They felt that decisions on the numbers of students enrolled in the Colleges each year should be made on a consultative basis rather than unilaterally by the TES.

In relation to the mix of subjects on the teacher education programmes, Presidents recommended a "*greater level of communication in relation to both the mix and duration of subjects on the B.Ed. programme". (President 1)* Another President recommended improving communication with the primary Inspectorate within the DES as a means of ensuring the relevance of the subject-mix: "*[There should be more] meetings with the Primary Inspectorate who could itemise the areas of the Curriculum that need attention and how those at the chalk-face are coping with the challenges. Alerting College personnel as to the areas that need to be addressed and how the colleges could work collaboratively with the Inspectorate to address the issues/concerns". (President 3)*

In relation to the Inspectorate's assessment of final year students' teaching practice, two Presidents made recommendations. While commenting that the inspectors' reports were "particularly insightful" and acknowledging the workload of the Inspectorate, one President expressed the hope that in selecting final year students for assessment, the Inspectorate would examine "*a greater cross section of the students". (President 3)* This sentiment was echoed by another President who had concerns that "*the DES makes assumptions based on the assessment of a "convenient" sample of students which would not necessarily be representative of the student population". (President 5)* This President also expressed the view that in order to treat the Colleges on an equitable basis, Inspectors should take account of the length of time that students spend in the classroom during teaching practice as this varies between Colleges.

Presidents were asked to assess the quality of the communication between the TES and their College in relation to four common methods of communication: (i) formal meetings, (ii) formal written communication (post or email), (iii) formal telephone communication, and (iv) informal communication (whether at meetings, by written communication or by telephone). (See table 1 in appendix 8)

The most positive ratings were in respect of formal telephone communication and informal communication. Three out of four Presidents rated the quality of both of these methods of communication as either good or very good. The least positive rating was given in respect of formal written communication (whether by post or email). Three out of four Presidents considered the quality of communication through this medium to be poor. Presidents were divided in their assessment of formal meetings, with two considering communication through this medium to be of a high quality and two considering it to be poor. There was no relationship

between college size and the rating awarded by Presidents in respect of any of the four methods of communication.

Four Presidents made recommendations to improve these methods of communication. Recommendations related to four areas: (i) more regular meetings with the TES, (ii) clarification of the role and responsibilities of the TES *vis a vis* the Colleges of Education, (iii) improved communication with smaller colleges, and (iv) an increase in TES staffing levels.

In relation to their overall level of satisfaction with the existing channels of communication between the TES and their College, opinion among the Presidents was divided. One President expressed satisfaction, but three indicated that they were not satisfied. All three Presidents who indicated that they were not satisfied gave reasons to support their position. Two Presidents expressed concerns over the level of staff turnover within the TES and felt that this was having "a negative impact on teacher education". The other cause for concern identified by Presidents was the lack of regular meetings between the TES and the Colleges of Education.

Education Centre Directors

Overall, the level of satisfaction among Education Centre Directors in relation to the four methods of communication explored (Meetings; Written communication; Telephone communication; Informal communication) is relatively high. More than three quarters of all respondents rated the quality of communication as good or very good in respect of each method. The most favourable rating was in respect of telephone communication. The least favourable rating related to meetings, where five out of twenty two Directors rated the quality of communication as poor or very poor (see table 2 in appendix 8). There is a relationship between the status of the Education Centre (i.e. full or part-time) and attitude towards communication, with the part-time Directors more inclined to rate the quality of communication as poor.

Nineteen Directors (15 full time and 4 part-time) indicated that measures could be adopted to improve the quality of communication with the TES, while five (all full time) disagreed. The most frequent recommendation related to the general area of administration. Directors highlighted a number of practical issues that they considered to be an obstacle to effective communication. This included making meetings between members of the TES and the Education Centres as effective as possible by ensuring that an agenda is circulated in advance of meetings, that meetings are minuted, and that action items arising from the meeting are identified and followed up by the relevant parties. Echoing an earlier recommendation from one of the College Presidents, one Director suggested that meetings could be made more productive if the relevant personnel were in attendance on both sides.

Other comments by Directors relating to "administrative" issues included the earlier notification of deadlines to Directors, acknowledgements to issue in respect of all correspondence received by the TES, ensuring that reminders for information requests are only sent to those Education Centres that have not yet responded to the original request, and ensuring that documents sent by Education Centres via email and blocked by the DES' IT system are not overlooked by the TES staff.

The second most frequent recommendation from Directors related to the area of 'partnership' and/or building trust between the Education Centres and the TES. A number of Directors also expressed a wish for greater engagement and consultation by the TES with the Education Centres: *"… there needs to be greater clarity regarding the development of policy. How it happens, what the processes are… greater time to be given to developing a strategy regarding national priorities. It is simply not good enough to list the priorities, they need to be discussed and addressed in a coherent nationwide strategy". [Director 24]* In relation to this area, three Directors specifically referred to the need for greater "trust" to be developed between the TES and the Network.

Another frequent recommendation related to communication between the TES and the management committees of Education Centres. Directors recommended that the TES convene regular meetings with members of the management committees or attend the annual AGM of each management committee. Two Directors indicated that members of the TES had attended the AGM of their management committee in 2005/2006 and considered this to be a very positive initiative. In a similar vein, other Directors suggested that meetings with the ATECI or with Directors on a regional basis would help to improve communication between the TES and the Education Centre network. The Directors of the three part-time Centres who participated in the survey all recommended greater involvement by the TES with the part-time Centres.

In terms of their overall level of satisfaction with the existing channels of communication between the TES and their Education Centre, eighteen Directors (seventeen full-time and one part-time) indicated that they were satisfied with the overall quality of communication while eight (five full time and three part-time) indicated that they were dissatisfied (two respondents answered both yes and no).

Those who were not satisfied with the quality of communication made a number of recommendations. These included a reduction in staff turnover in the TES, greater communication with part-time Centres, and the adoption of a formal communication strategy.

National Coordinators

National Co-ordinators rated the quality of each of the four communication methods explored (Meetings; Written communication; Telephone communication;

Informal communication) as of a relatively high standard. However, satisfaction levels varied according to each method. The most positive rating was given in respect of informal communication with twenty out of twenty two respondents considering the quality of communication to be good or very good. The level of satisfaction with written and telephone communication was relatively high, with more than three quarters of the twenty two respondents rating the quality as good or very good respectively. The least positive rating was given in respect of meetings. While fourteen National Coordinators rated the quality of communication through this medium as good or very good, six considered it to be poor and two very poor (see table 3 in appendix 8)

Twenty one NCOs felt that measures could be adopted by the TES to improve existing channels of communication, while three felt that no changes were necessary. The main recommendation related to administrative issues: NCOs indicated that it was often difficult to identify which member of the TES was responsible for a particular issue or programme and that this impeded effective communication. Another NCO felt that a constant turnover of staff within the section did not help in this regard. Some NCOs recommended the production and circulation to NCOs of an organisational structure or staff directory of the TES outlining the members of staff within the section and their various areas of responsibility:

"[Production of a] staff directory and a handbook for NCOs / RDOs to include – organisational structure with TES, list of NCOs and RDOs, guidelines for (a) calendar dates for submissions, secondment notifications to schools etc.(b) guidelines for secondment, block release, associates, course presenters payments etc.(c) budget guidelines,(d) sample letters to Principals teachers (e) procedures and protocol when dealing with Directors and staff in Education Centre – venue bookings etc". [NCO 15]

Other recommendations by NCOs on how communication could be improved also related to general administrative issues. This included early notification of deadlines for information requests, acknowledgements for correspondence submitted to the TES, and more information sharing between members of the TES.

The second most frequent recommendation was the need for more regular meetings: between the TES and individual NCOs, between the TES and all NCOs, and for more regular meetings of the steering committees for the National Programmes. One NCO expressed the view that there "*has been a decrease in the number of formal meetings"* and as a result "*there seems to be no uniform system for the regular communication of 'big picture' information to national programme personnel. Current practice seems somewhat haphazard and dependent on the timing of formal management meetings and the TES personnel available to attend them. [NCO 12]* Another NCO advocated annual meetings of

all NCOs *"to discuss issues of common concern and the sharing of good practice". [NCO 13]*

As well as the need for more regular meetings, respondents also felt that there was a need to make meetings more productive. One respondent outlined the necessary steps: *"1. Clarity for all re purpose of all meetings, to include desired outcomes. 2. Adequate preparatory work by all parties. 3. Decision making parameters clear and decisions reached asap. 4. Prompt follow up on decisions/actions to be undertaken". [NCO 2]*

Another area where NCOs made recommendations was in relation to National Programmes operating under the SLSS umbrella. Five NCOs felt that there was a need for greater input into policy-making by the National Coordinators associated with such Programmes.

In terms of overall level of satisfaction with communication with the TES, NCOs were almost equally divided in their views: twelve NCOs expressed satisfaction with the existing system, and thirteen NCOs indicated that they were dissatisfied. Two NCOs indicated that they were both satisfied and not satisfied. The two main areas for dissatisfaction were 'administrative issues' and the need for more regular meetings, followed by a need for greater input into policy making by National Programmes under the SLSS umbrella.

9.6 Conclusion

Before conclusions are drawn from the above analysis, the measures adopted by the TES to improve communication with stakeholders must be acknowledged. These measures include the following:

- Officials from the TES have since February 2006 attended the majority of the Education Centre Annual General Meetings, the monthly meeting of Directors and the Annual General Meetings of the Association of Teacher Education Centres in Ireland (ATECI).
- Bi-laterals are held on a regular basis with Directors of Education Centres and after National Programme Steering Committee meetings.
- Following the adoption of the agreed Financial Procedures for Education Centres in late 2005 all of the above meetings take place as set out in a diary schedule.
- Regular bi-laterals, telephone and e-mail correspondence with National Co-ordinators along with quarterly (minimum) National Steering Committee meetings are held for all National Programmes.
- Budget templates were agreed as set out in the Financial Procedures which now allows for estimates, budget submissions and budget approvals to be carried out in a systematic and efficient manner.[195]

[195] Information supplied by the TES

Following the adoption of these agreed procedures the TES consider that the lines of communication are more efficient and effective for all stakeholders.

The analysis in this chapter was based on feedback supplied through a survey of key stakeholder groups. In total, questionnaires were circulated to sixty three different individuals in the three stakeholder groups. Fifty three completed questionnaires were returned, representing an overall response rate of eighty four percent.

Budget

One of the clearest themes to emerge from the survey is the desire among stakeholders for earlier budget notification. Of the thirty six respondents who specified the actual month in which they received notification from the TES of their 2006 budget, and the month in which they would have liked to have received notification, the preferred month was earlier than the actual month in thirty cases (eighty three per cent).

On the issue of whether the existing timing of the budget notification had an adverse impact on planning, respondents were divided in their opinions. Overall, forty nine per cent of respondents were of the opinion that the planning process was affected, while fifty one per cent felt that planning was not affected. Among the latter, the main theme to emerge from all three stakeholder groups was the uncertainty created by a perceived delay in budget notification. Stakeholders in all three groups indicated that the uncertainty created by late notification affected their ability to plan strategically.

Seventy four per cent of all respondents indicated that improvements could be made to the budget notification system. There is considerable similarity between the recommendations made by each stakeholder group in this area. The most frequent suggestion was earlier notification. This was something identified by members in each stakeholder group. In total, nineteen respondents made this recommendation. This was viewed as a means of reducing uncertainty and of creating a stable environment in which strategic planning could be facilitated more easily.

Other issues raised included the need for multi annual budgeting and for a more straightforward and/or more transparent method of calculating the budget allocation for Education Centres, particularly in relation to the local courses.

Policy

In total, fifty respondents indicated how frequently they were consulted by the TES in relation to policy formation at national level. Of the fifty respondents, sixty four per cent indicated that they were not very frequently or never consulted

by the TES in relation to policy formation. As indicated earlier, this perception does not support the concept of the teacher education continuum as it suggests that provision is being centrally planned without adequate consultation of major stakeholder groups.

The Presidents of the Colleges of Education were also asked for their views on how often they were consulted in relation to pre-service education policy formation. The responses to this question were mixed, with the Presidents of the two larger Colleges considering themselves to be frequently consulted in this area, and Presidents of the two smaller Colleges feeling that they were either not very frequently or never consulted.

Eighty four percent of respondents were of the view that the level of consultation could be improved. The five Presidents of the Colleges of Education were also unanimous in their view that measures could be adopted by the TES to improve the level of consultation with their Colleges in respect of pre-service education. The main recommendation to emerge from all three stakeholder groups related to the need for greater consultation by the TES with each stakeholder group.

- Two Presidents advocated the re-establishment of the annual meeting which was initiated in 2000/2001 but discontinued.
- Some Education Centre Directors proposed the establishment of a consultative forum which could include other education partners. Other Directors felt that the monthly meetings of the Education Centre Directors or meetings of the ATECI could be used to integrate the Network more closely into the policy making process. Part-time Directors expressed particular concern that they were not consulted directly by the TES.
- NCOs advocated more regular meetings, whether between individual NCOs and the TES, between NCOs as a group and the TES, or for more regular meetings of the steering committees of national programmes.

In total, forty eight respondents characterised the system of policy formation in relation to CPD. Just over half (fifty two per cent) of the respondents to this question characterised the method of policy formation in relation to CPD as a mixture of top-down and bottom-up. This indicates that a majority of stakeholders feel that they have some input into the policy-making process. However, forty four per cent of respondents characterised policy formation as top-down and this may indicate a feeling among some stakeholders that their concerns are not being reflected in national policy. This reinforces the perception that the continuum of teacher education has not yet been realised as major stakeholders do not feel that their views are integrated into national policy on teacher education. This makes it more difficult to integrate the three areas of the continuum – initial teacher education, induction and CPD.

The Presidents of the Colleges of Education were also asked to characterise the existing method of national policy formation in relation to pre-service education.

The Presidents of the two smaller Colleges characterised the method of policy formation as top-down, while Presidents of two of the larger Colleges considered it to be more of a mixture of top-down and bottom-up. This appears to indicate that Presidents of the larger Colleges of Education consider themselves to have a greater role to play in policy making in relation to pre-service education than the Presidents of the smaller Colleges.

Communication

Of the sixty three stakeholders surveyed as part of this study, the vast majority gave their assessment of the quality of communication with the TES through four common channels of communication. The responses in respect of each method of communication are outlined in Table 9.2 below.

Table 9.2: Quality of four methods of communication

	Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor
Quality of communication through formal meetings (n=49)	35%	35%	24%	6%
Quality of formal written communication (n=50)	34%	42%	20%	4%
Quality of formal telephone communication (n=48)	38%	44%	15%	3%
Quality of informal communication (n=47)	43%	43%	13%	1%

More than seventy percent of respondents rated the quality of communication with the TES through all four methods of communication as either good or very good. The most positive rating by respondents was in respect of the quality of informal communication. Eighty six per cent of respondents rated the quality of communication through this medium to be good or very good. The least positive rating was in respect of formal meetings – seventy per cent of respondents rated the quality of communication through this medium as good/very good, with thirty percent regarding the quality to be poor or very poor.

In addition to the standard questions asked of each stakeholder group, the Presidents of the Colleges of Education were also asked to rate the quality of the communication between the TES and their College in respect of three specific issues:

- Notification of approved student intake for Bachelor of Education and/or Graduate Diploma in Education programmes.
- The mix of subjects on the Bachelor of Education and Graduate Diploma in Education programmes.
- The assessment by the DES Inspectorate of final year students on the Bachelor of Education and Graduate Diploma in Education programmes

In relation to the three policy areas selected, Presidents were most satisfied with the quality of communication in respect of the assessment of final year students on the B.Ed and Graduate Diploma programmes: all five respondents rated the quality of communication in this area as being either very good or good. The rating in respect of the other two areas was less positive, with three out of five Presidents rating the quality of communication in respect of student intake as poor or very poor. A similar pattern emerged in relation to the mix of subjects on the teacher education programmes. Two out of three respondents rated the quality of communication in this area as poor. There is no relationship between college size and the rating awarded by the President in either of these two areas.

All five Presidents were of the view that measures could be adopted by the TES to improve the quality of communication in these three areas. In relation to student intake and the mix of subjects, Presidents' recommendations amounted to a desire for greater consultation by the TES. On the issue of the Inspectorates' assessment of final year students' teaching practice, two Presidents recommended that the DES Inspectorate should select a more representative sample of final year students for assessment.

Measures to improve communication

Out of fifty two respondents, forty four (eighty five per cent) were of the opinion that improvements could be made to existing communication channels. The response to this question was consistent among all three stakeholder groups, with approximately eighty per cent or more of each group of the opinion that the quality of existing communication could be improved.

The recommendations to improve communication related to a number of areas. The most frequent recommendation related to the need for more meetings with the TES on a more regular basis. This was a high priority for all three stakeholder groups. As well as more regular meetings, stakeholders wanted to ensure that these meetings were as productive and efficient as possible. Respondents expressed a wish that meetings should be scheduled well in advance on agreed dates with formal agendas, that minutes should be taken and circulated to attendees after the meeting, that there should be consistency of personnel attending meetings, and that issues agreed at meetings should be followed up promptly.

The second most frequent recommendation related to 'administrative' issues. This was a priority for both the Education Centre Directors and the NCOs. The type of recommendations made in this area included the following:

- Notification of requests for information as early as possible from the TES.
- Acknowledgement of all correspondence received by the TES.

- Production of a staff directory for stakeholders indicating the names and contact details of each staff member of the TES and their relevant areas of responsibility.
- Greater continuity amongst staff in the TES.
- Increase in staff numbers in the TES to deal with the volume of queries.
- Greater information sharing between TES staff so that the same information does not have to be sent by stakeholders to different staff members.

Overall quality of communication

Fifty five stakeholders indicated whether or not they were satisfied with the overall quality of communication with the TES. More than half (56%) of respondents were satisfied. However, a sizeable minority of respondents (44%) indicated that they were not satisfied. The highest level of dissatisfaction was found among the Presidents of the Colleges of Education and the National Coordinators. A majority of each of these stakeholder groups was dissatisfied. The main reasons for dissatisfaction were (i) the level of staff turnover within the TES, (ii) the lack of regular meetings, and (iii) administrative issues.

While issues relating to meetings, staff turnover and administration were the priorities for stakeholders, evidence also emerged from the data that certain sub groups of stakeholders were less satisfied with the quality of communication with the TES. The Directors representing part-time Education Centres and some of the NCOs representing national programmes within the umbrella structure of the SLSS recommended that the TES should engage with them more directly.

The recommendations arising from this analysis are outlined below.

9.7 Recommendations

Consultation

- The TES should explore means of establishing a more effective system of communication with its main stakeholders.
- Meetings organised by the TES should be made as productive as possible by ensuring that advance notification is given to attendees, that an agenda issue in advance, that minutes be taken and circulated after the meeting, that any action items arising from the meeting be followed up on by the relevant parties, and that there is continuity in TES personnel attending the meetings (where possible).

Budget notification

- TES to notify all three stakeholder groups of their budget allocation(s) or main funding stream(s) as early as is practicable.

- TES to clarify for all Education Centres the formula used to calculate local course funding.

Administrative issues

- The TES should address the issues identified by stakeholders as obstacles to effective communication (including early notification of requests for information, acknowledgement of correspondence, production of a TES staff directory etc).

Chapter Ten

Future Performance Indicators

10.1 Introduction

This chapter details the performance indicators that should be used to better monitor the future performance of the TES. It also identifies the data sources that will need to be utilised in order to facilitate the monitoring process. The identification of future performance indicators fulfills item 8 of the terms of reference for this review.

10.2 Performance Indicators

This review is based upon the evaluative framework established by the Programme Logic Model. Part of the process of constructing the PLM was the identification of performance indicators that could be used to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness with which the TES achieved its objectives. It is therefore proposed that the performance indicators detailed in the PLM be used by the TES for future monitoring of performance in the area of teacher education. The table below reproduces the relevant element of the PLM diagram from chapter four. The diagram also identifies the data sources (in italics) that could be used to monitor the performance indicators.

Table 10.1: Performance indicators used to assess efficiency and effectiveness

Area of TES work	Efficiency indicators	Effectiveness indicators
Initial teacher education	⇒ The annual unit cost of initial teacher education per B.Ed and Diploma student in each of the Colleges of Education. o *Annual funding to each College of Education for B.Ed and Diploma programme respectively.* o *Annual number of students enrolled in B.Ed and Diploma programmes in each College.* ⇒ The annual ratio of staff to students on teacher education programmes in each of the Colleges of Education. o *Annual staff numbers in each College devoted to teacher education programmes.* o *Annual number of students enrolled in B.Ed and Diploma programmes in each College.* ⇒ The annual level of attrition within the teacher education programmes within each College of Education. o *Annual number of students who withdraw from the B.Ed and Diploma programmes respectively in each College of Education.*	⇒ The number of unqualified teachers within the primary system on an annual basis. o *The number of unqualified and under-qualified teachers employed at primary level at the start of each school year.* ⇒ The extent to which NQTs perceive themselves to have been well prepared for the classroom as a result of their initial teacher training. o *This data to be collected through a survey of NQTs every three years.* ⇒ The extent to which the DES Inspectorate consider student teachers during their final teaching practice and NQTs during their probationary year to be performing effectively in the classroom. o *The ratings awarded by the Inspectorate in their monitoring of 10% of the cohort of students during their final session of teaching practice.* o *The ratings awarded by the Inspectorate in their monitoring of 10% of the cohort of probationary teachers.*
Induction	⇒ The annual unit cost per teacher supported by the NPPTI. o *The level of funding allocated to the NPPTI (primary and post primary pillars respectively), including secondment and substitution costs on an annual basis.* o *The number of NQTs supported by the NPPTI (primary and post primary pillars respectively) on*	⇒ The level of satisfaction among participants in the NPPTI with the training and support provided. ⇒ The number of NQTs who would have left the teaching profession without the support of the NPPTI. ⇒ The extent to which NQTS become more competent and confident professionals as a result

	an annual basis.	of their participation in the NPPTI. o *Survey of NQTs who have participated in the NPPTI at the end of each phase of training.* ⇒ The number of NQTs targeted through the NPPTI as a proportion of the total number of NQTs on an annual basis. o *The number of NQTs participating in the NPPTI (primary and post primary pillars respectively)* o *The total number of NQTs from the Colleges of Education, and the Education Departments of Universities.*
In-service training and professional development	⇒ The unit cost of in-service training and professional development per teacher trained on an annual basis. o *The allocation to each programme of CPD/Education Centre on an annual basis.* o *The number of teachers trained in each programme of CPD (National Support Programmes and local courses) on an annual basis.*	⇒ The level of satisfaction among participants with the quality and relevance of the training provided. ⇒ The relevance of the training provided to teachers' professional needs. o *Participant evaluation sheets.* ⇒ The number of teachers implementing the revised curricula (in which training has been delivered) ⇒ The number of teachers implementing new teaching methodologies and skills as a result of training received. o *Data to be collected from a teacher survey to be conducted at the end of each intensive phase of in-service training*. ⇒ The change in pupil learning outcomes following the introduction of revised curricula. o *Data collated by State Examinations Commission.*

		⇒ The change in student learning and development arising from teacher professional development. o *This indicator to be developed by the TES in conjunction with the DES Inspectorate.* ⇒ The number/proportion of teachers participating in in-service training and development. o *The attendance levels at each phase of in-service training by each national programme or local/summer course.* o *The total number of teachers working in that area (e.g. the number of primary level teachers in the case of PCSP and summer courses, the number of History teachers in the case of the HIST)*

10.3 Data sources

The table above identifies the data sources that could be used to monitor the performance of the TES in the areas of initial teacher education, induction, in-service training/CPD and communication. The vast majority of these data sources are routinely collected by sections within the DES, including the TES itself, the Primary Administration Brach, the Primary Teachers Payments Section, and the Inspectorate. Other data sources are collected by the Colleges of Education, the Education Centres and the National Support Programmes. Monitoring of performance indicators will therefore require a greater sharing of data between the TES and other sections or agencies.

However, some of the data will require new data sources to be developed. This primarily relates to the performance indicators of a qualitative nature. In order to gather data to monitor performance in the areas of levels of satisfaction with aspects of teacher training or communication with the TES it will be necessary to conduct surveys designed to elicit qualitative data. It may not be necessary to conduct such surveys on an annual basis. It will also be necessary to strengthen data collection in other areas – particularly in relation to the number of teachers trained on an annual basis by the National Programmes.

In addition, as recommended in chapter seven, it will be necessary to develop an indicator or indicators to facilitate an assessment of the impact of the teacher education programmes supported by the TES on student learning and development. The TES should work with the DES Inspectorate in developing such an indicator(s) along with relevant data sources.

Chapter Eleven

Conclusions and Recommendations

11.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the main findings and conclusions arising from this review of the programmes managed by the TES and identifies the main recommendations that are designed to strengthen performance in this area in the future. Before conclusions are drawn and recommendations are made, the chapter identifies the limitations of the methodological approach adopted in this review.

11.2 Limitations of research methodology

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of the research methodology adopted in this review. These limitations relate to the difficulty in applying the Programme Logic Model (PLM) to the work of the TES, to the task of conducting a VFM assessment of an entire section as opposed to a particular programme or project, and to difficulties associated with some of the specific research methods adopted.

Difficulties associated with applying the PLM to the TES

There were some difficulties experienced in attempting to identify the inputs and outputs in some areas of TES activity, and also in relation to measuring performance i.e. in measuring the extent to which the TES used the resources allocated to it efficiently and effectively in order to achieve the final outcome. The main difficulties arose in relation to initial teacher education and in-service training/CPD and they were caused by an absence of appropriate data. One significant consequence of the lack of relevant data was the inability to measure progress towards the final outcome of TES activity – improvements in pupil learning. This was attempted in relation to one area of in-service training/CPD where the examination results of students in Leaving Certificate history and biology were assessed in the context of the introduction of revised syllabi. However, in general, the focus in this review has been on intermediate outcomes.

Difficulties associated with reviewing an entire section as opposed to a particular programme or project.

A number of difficulties were encountered in trying to conduct this VFM assessment of the TES rather than a specific programme supported by the TES. In the first instance, it was difficult to maintain a balance between treating the subject in sufficient depth and ensuring a manageable and readable VFM review. Efforts were made to refine the focus of the review by excluding the pre-service preparation of post primary teachers and confining the analysis of in-service training to a limited number of individual programmes. However, the size and complexity of the policy area under review meant that a number of issues had to be excluded. For example, in relation to initial teacher education, it was not possible to examine issues such as the student selection process or the mix of subjects on teacher education programmes, or the relative merits of the consecutive and

concurrent approaches to pre-service education. Similarly, in relation to in-service training, it was not possible to examine the means by which a programme of national in-service is planned and administered. In addition, the focus on a limited number of National Programmes carries the inherent risk that the Programmes chosen may not be representative of all of the Programmes supported by the TES.

Difficulties associated with specific research methods

The analysis in chapters five, six and seven is based on data derived largely from two sources (1) teacher surveys and (2) participant evaluation sheets. This is unavoidable due to the qualitative nature of some of the performance indicators identified. However, both data sources are heavily reliant on self-reporting by teachers about the quality of the in-service training they have received. This may undermine the objectivity of some of the views expressed. Participants may have distorted their real views for a number of reasons. They may feel a sense of collegiality with those teachers delivering the in-service training programmes. In other cases, they may feel it necessary to exaggerate the extent to which they are implementing some of the new curricula assessed in order to reflect well upon the profession as a whole. Finally, at the end of a training session participants are often too tired to give a considered response to the questions asked in an evaluation sheet and may find it more convenient to give a positive response.

In addition, some of the participant evaluation sheets employed by National Programmes are positively biased in their format. The evaluation sheets employed as part of the monitoring process associated with the PCSP, the HIST and the NBSS, and the local and summer courses, all contain more positive than negative categories. In some instances it is not possible for participants to award a negative rating to an aspect of in-service training as the categories are all positive (e.g. Excellent, Very good, Good, and Fair). This could lead to a positive bias in the resulting data. However, the number of participants who selected the lowest category in respect of their assessment of any of the training examined as part of this review is very slight. This suggests that even with a more balanced participant evaluation sheet there would have been a small proportion of negative assessments.

A related point is the fact that the survey relating to local and summer courses only focused on teachers who were known to have participated in such courses and only courses organized through Education Centres. Teachers who did not participate in summer and local courses, or who participated in courses organized by other providers, may have provided different feedback about the quality of the training provided. Unfortunately time constraints did not permit a more representative sample of teachers to be selected.

Some of the respondents to the teacher surveys might have had difficulty in accurately recalling the effectiveness of the training they received through the various programmes included in this analysis. This may not be relevant to the summer and local courses, and the training provided by the HIST, as this training was provided relatively recently. However, there could be a ‘recall effect’ in relation to the training and support provided through the NBSS, as this concluded its intensive phase of in-service in 2004, as well as some of the earlier training and

support provided by the PCSP and the NPPTI.

The overall response rate was satisfactory in respect of each survey with one exception. The proportion of participants who responded to the NPPTI survey was disappointing. The poor response rate, particularly among post primary NQTs, may be attributable to the fact that NQTs often move from the school in which they completed their probationary year. The NPPTI database only contained the contact details of the original school in which the NQT was located at the time of their participation in the project. This meant that the views of those teachers who changed school in the time since completion of the NPPTI were not represented.

It should also be noted that the data collected as part of the *Learning to Teach* and *Beginning to Teach* reports were based on the perceptions of a limited number of teachers (student teachers and probationary NQTs) at a very early stage in their professional development. It is only to be expected that there are areas where such individuals require further support, particularly in the case of the student teachers assessed as part of the *Learning to Teach* report.

11.3 Conclusions and recommendations

The overall conclusion from this review is that the TES is achieving its objectives in an effective manner. It is more difficult to draw conclusions about the level of efficiency with which the inputs provided by the TES (financial resources and staffing levels) are converted into outputs (graduates from the Colleges of Education, teachers trained). The available evidence suggests that performance in this area by the Colleges of Education, the Education Support Centres and the National Support Programmes is mixed and there are some areas where efficiency could be improved. Recommendations arising from this review are designed for two purposes: (i) to improve performance in relation to efficiency, effectiveness and communication with stakeholders, and (ii) to enhance the capability of the TES to monitor the performance of those agencies and programmes it supports to achieve its objectives. It is therefore proposed that funding should continue to be allocated to the TES for the provision of professional development opportunities for teachers in the areas of pre-service, induction and in-service training, provided that the recommendations in this review are adopted.

11.4 Effectiveness

11.4.1 Initial Teacher Education

The evidence suggests that the TES has achieved its objective in relation to initial teacher education in an effective manner. Effectiveness was measured against (i) the extent to which the TES ensures an adequate supply of appropriately qualified NQTs to meet the demands of the primary education system, and (ii) the extent to which teacher education programmes adequately prepare NQTs for the classroom.

The analysis suggests that the TES has been forced to play catch-up to the level of demand for qualified primary teachers. The unprecedented number of new teaching posts arising from government commitments (namely the creation of 5,000 new teaching posts in the period 2002 to 2007) resulted in an increase in the number of

unqualified and under-qualified teachers in the primary system. The delay between the TES approving an increase in student intake to the Colleges of Education and the corresponding increase in the number of graduates means that it is difficult to achieve perfect equilibrium between the supply of and demand for qualified teachers.

However, a number of measures have been introduced to increase the number of qualified teachers within the system. This includes the re-introduction of the Graduate Diploma – which produces qualified teachers in a shorter timeframe than the traditional B.Ed programme. The measures adopted by the TES have resulted in a seventy seven percent increase in the number of graduates from the Colleges of Education in the period 2001-2006 and have contributed to a decline in the number of unqualified and under-qualified teachers in the system. The number of unqualified teachers declined by fifty two percent in the period June 2001 to March 2007. In the period since March 2003, the number of under-qualified teachers declined by sixty nine percent. The evidence suggests that the number of unqualified and under-qualified teachers could be eliminated by the start of the 2008/2009 school year on the basis of the number of posts in the system at present.

In terms of the quality of the graduates produced from the Colleges of Education, the data indicate that – in general – the NQTs are performing effectively in the classroom. The Inspectorate considered that 62% of student teachers in 2003/04 were effective in their general work in the classroom. Among NQTs on probation in 2003/04, only 0.19% were considered to be 'not satisfactory' while another 4.5% had their probationary period extended. This represents a very small proportion of the overall number of teachers on probation.

Overall, the feedback from NQTs (through the teacher survey) about the quality of the pre-service education they had received was broadly positive. Among graduates of the five main Colleges of Education, more than eighty six percent considered themselves well prepared for the classroom following the completion of their initial teacher education, eighty nine percent considered their pre-service education to have been relevant or very relevant, and seventy four percent considered the duration of their initial teacher training to have been of an appropriate length.

The Colleges of Education are producing candidates capable of performing effectively in the classroom. This is the intermediate outcome of the TES in the area of initial teacher education. As outlined in chapter four, the expectation is that effective teaching practice in the classroom (intermediate outcome) results in teachers being able to communicate knowledge effectively to students and to facilitate student learning, and this will contribute to more effective classroom learning for students (the final outcome).

However, the data emerging from the quality assurance role of the DES Inspectorate, and the feedback from NQTs themselves collected for this review, suggest that there are some areas in which student teachers and NQTs require further support in order to enhance their performance in the classroom.

- There was a sizeable minority of NQT respondents (fourteen percent) that considered themselves inadequately prepared for the classroom.
- Eleven percent of NQTs were dissatisfied with the relevance of their initial

teacher training.

- While almost three quarters of NQTs considered the duration of their initial training to have been appropriate, one in four felt that it was too short.

NQTs had concerns in relation to both curricular and non-curricular areas of school life. In relation to the curriculum, English was the area where respondents felt least well prepared, particularly the skills required to teach reading and writing to pupils, followed closely by Music, Visual Arts and Drama. NQTs were less positive about their level of preparedness in relation to the non-curricular aspects of school life. The area of greatest concern to respondents was dealing with parents. This was followed closely by catering for children with special needs, classroom management and discipline, and administration (including roll books, timetabling, and report writing).

The majority of NQTs were of the view that the quality and relevance of pre-service education could be improved. The most frequent recommendations were for a more practical focus to teacher education programmes, and for additional teaching practice and more opportunities for teacher observation.

The analysis in this review suggests the need to view initial teacher education as part of a continuum consisting also of an induction period for NQTs and also by a comprehensive programme of CPD opportunities aimed at addressing the needs of NQTs as well as more established professionals (this issue is further discussed below).

It is considered important that the views of NQTs are considered when future pre-service provision is being planned. Recommendations are therefore made to strengthen data collection in this area through 'exit' surveys of graduates from the Colleges of Education, and more regular reports by the Inspectorate on the performance of student teachers and NQTs on probation. (*Recommendations 3 and 4 below*).

11.4.2 Induction

The evidence collated as part of this review suggests that the TES has achieved its objective in relation to the induction of NQTs into the teaching profession in an effective manner. There is a high level of satisfaction among NPPTI participants with the quality of support and training provided through the project. Participants viewed the support provided as being of very high quality, and very relevant to their needs. The vast majority of respondents were also of the view that the project had contributed significantly to making them more competent and confident professionals.

Almost three quarters (71%) of respondents to the teacher survey were of the opinion that their participation in the project had helped to smooth the transition from college to school life. Of the remaining twenty nine percent, a significant number had already been teaching for more than a year before participating in the project and they felt that they had already adapted to school life. The main areas in which the NPPTI had eased the transition to school life was in the provision of advice and support in practical issues that NQTs confront, in helping to overcome

the feeling of isolation often experienced by NQTs, and also in providing dedicated time for planning issues.

Data from the teacher survey indicate that participants in the NPPTI consider the support they received to have played an important role in their decision to remain within the teaching profession. Overall, almost three quarters of respondents felt that the pilot project had contributed to their decision to remain within the profession. The evidence suggests that the NPPTI is playing a vital role in (i) easing the transition from college to school life, thereby overcoming any feelings of isolation experienced by NQTs and encouraging them to remain within the education system, and (ii) in refining and complementing the skills and knowledge acquired by NQTs during initial teacher education, thereby ensuring effective performance in the classroom.

The retention of qualified teachers within the education system is the intermediate outcome of TES activity in this area. The evidence suggests that the NPPTI is contributing towards this intermediate outcome. The rationale behind the work of the TES is that by retaining qualified teachers within the system they will contribute towards pupil learning which is the final outcome of all TES activity.

Respondents to the teacher survey did highlight some aspects of each of the three main elements of the NPPTI - teacher observation, mentoring and professional development - where the quality of the support provided could be strengthened. However, the NPPTI is a project that has evolved considerably since its initial iteration in 2002/2003, a number of these measures have already been adopted by the NPPTI project teams.

One area where the NPPTI could be developed is in relation to the coverage of the project. The proportion of NQTs targeted by the NPPTI is relatively low. Only 8% of primary NQTs and 7% of post primary NQTs have participated in the project since its inception. However, the proportion of participants has increased in recent years. The current phase of the NPPTI (phase 5) has targeted approximately 17% of all primary and post primary NQTs. While the further expansion of the project is desirable, this must be considered within the context of available resources and within the context of the constraints within the education system – for example in relation to the number of established teachers willing to act as mentors. It is therefore recommended that the TES consider the further extension of the NPPTI on a phased basis – and within the context of available resources – until all newly qualified teachers are targeted. (*Recommendation #6 below*)

11.4.3 Continuing Professional Development/In-service training

The main conclusion that emerges from this review is that the TES is effective in achieving its objective in relation to CPD. The vast majority of participants are satisfied with the quality and relevance of the training provided through support services such as the PCSP, the HIST and the NBSS and through the summer and local courses. Participants also viewed the training and support provided as equipping them with the skills and methodologies required to implement new curricula. The overwhelming majority of respondents to the teacher surveys considered themselves to have been well or very well prepared to implement the

revised Primary School Curriculum (1999), and the revised History and Biology curricula at Leaving Certificate level.

More importantly, the proportion of teachers who were fully implementing revised curricula/subjects and new teaching methodologies acquired during in-service training and support was also very high. This is the intermediate outcome of TES activity in this area. The expectation is that the implementation of the revised curricula and the new teaching methodologies will result in improved student learning – the final outcome of all TES activity.

An analysis of student performance in Leaving Certificate biology and history suggests that the introduction of revised curricula in those subjects has had mixed results. There was a general improvement in the grades achieved by students in Leaving Certificate history but the impact of the revised biology syllabus has not coincided with any significant change in student performance at higher level. However, at Ordinary level, there was a significant reduction in the proportion of biology students achieving a lower grade (E, F, NG) - a decline of 7.2 percentage points in four years.

The analysis also suggested that the TES has succeeded in recent years in redressing the balance between centrally identified in-service priorities and school and teacher needs. The programme of CPD supported by the TES appears to have been, until recent years, weighted in favour of centrally identified priorities at the expense of locally identified needs. However, a number of recent initiatives are impacting positively on addressing 'local' needs. The RCSS, the RDOs associated with the SLSS, and the BSS Associates are working with teachers on a regional and local basis and – with the assistance of the Education Centre Network – are identifying and addressing local teacher and school needs. However, further progress may be required before teachers and schools are willing to take responsibility for identifying and addressing their own CPD needs. This is suggested by the relatively low participation rates in the voluntary summer and local courses. Data from the summer course teacher survey indicate that the proportion of the overall teaching population who participate in summer courses ranges from between fifty two to sixty per cent of the teaching population. In relation to local courses, the evidence suggests that participation rates are as low as twenty five percent of the overall teaching population.

One reason for the relatively low level of participation in summer and local courses may be a perception among teachers that such courses do not reflect their actual needs. Only one in three respondents to the summer course teacher survey and approximately half of the respondents to the local course survey indicated that they had ever been consulted by their local Education Centre as part of a needs analysis. In contrast to these findings, Education Centre Directors indicated – through a separate survey – that the summer and local courses organized by their Centres are based upon an analysis of the in-service and professional development needs of local teachers.

The discrepancy between the findings from the teacher and Director surveys suggest that the existing methods of communication are not penetrating into the entire teaching community. It is therefore recommended that Education Centres

should conduct regular needs analyses in order to identify the personal and professional needs of local teachers. This data should be used to inform local and summer course provision. This data should also be transmitted to the TES. (*Recommendation #7 below*)

A related issue that needs to be addressed is the proportion of teachers (approximately 10-15%) that do not participate in the in-service training prescribed by the TES to support the implementation of revised subjects or curricula. The fact that such a sizeable minority are missing training in how to implement revised syllabi/curricula could undermine teachers' ability to fully engage with and fully implement the required curricular changes in the classroom, thereby impinging on student learning which is the final outcome of TES activity. It is recommended that the TES should monitor the attendance levels at compulsory in-service training. Those teachers who do not attend prescribed in-service should be contacted for an explanation. Any factors that are preventing teachers from attendance should be identified by the National Support Programmes and addressed by the TES. (*Recommendation #8 below*)

While, the evidence indicates that the TES has been effective in achieving its objective in relation to in-service training and CPD, there are areas where each of the programmes reviewed could be strengthened. Recommendations are made in respect of each programme included in this review. (*Recommendations 14 to 24 below*)

Data Collection and Evaluation

A consistent theme to emerge from the analysis of effectiveness in this review is the need to strengthen the existing methods of data collection, particularly in relation to the local courses and the National Support Programmes. Recommendations are made to ensure that future data collection is more rigorous, and that the aggregated data is conveyed to the TES for monitoring purposes. (*Recommendations 9 and 10 below*).

The process of data collection and evaluation would be made more efficient by the use of appropriate participant evaluation sheets. There is an inconsistency among individual Education Centres and National Programmes in the type of participant evaluation sheets employed to monitor the quality of training provided. Centres and National Programmes differ in the extent to which they employ fixed and open-ended questions and also in the length of their respective evaluation sheets. Recommendations are therefore made to ensure greater consistency among Education Centres and National Programmes in the type of participant evaluation sheets employed. (*Recommendations 12 and 13 below*).

In order to assist the process of evaluation, there is a clear need for the development of an appropriate indicator or indicators that would facilitate a more balanced assessment of the impact of teacher professional development programmes supported by the TES on student learning and development. This issue could be explored by the TES in conjunction with the DES Inspectorate. *(Recommendation # 11)*

Scheduling of Continuing Professional Development/in-service training

One issue that was not considered in detail in this review is the scheduling of in-service training. Compulsory in-service training provided by National Support Programmes (i.e. training designed to support the introduction of revised curricula or syllabi) is invariably held during school time. This incurs the cost of employing paid substitutes to replace teachers attending in-service training, or necessitates school closures (particularly at primary level in the event of whole staff training). In contrast, voluntary in-service training – largely though summer and local courses – is held outside of school time i.e. during the summer months or after school hours.

The scheduling of prescribed in-service training exclusively during school time has been criticized by some commentators on the basis of the disruption caused to schoolwork and also the disruption caused to parents who have to make alternative arrangements in the event of school closures.[196] This issue is mentioned specifically in the latest social partnership agreement, *Towards 2016*.[197]

It has been suggested that the inherited, traditional teacher contractual arrangements are no longer satisfactory for the evolving circumstances of contemporary schooling.[198] Some commentators have suggested that the possibility of engaging in in-service training outside of existing school hours is a necessary option that needs to be considered. [199]

Despite the frequency with which this issue has been mentioned in recent reports, there are no firm recommendations on how best to balance the need for prescribed in-service training with the need to avoid excessive loss of school time. The Teaching Council may provide the most appropriate forum for discussing this issue and arriving at an agreed solution to the scheduling of in-service training.[200] *Towards 2016* provides for an exploration by the social partners of alternative approaches to this issue.[201] It is recommended that, as outlined in *Towards 2016*, the issue of the future scheduling of in-service training should be explored by the TES in consultation with the relevant education partners and the Teaching Council. Such discussions should encompass the issue of the future viability of EPV days for summer courses and the possibility of opening summer courses to post primary participants *(Recommendation #25 below)*.

[196] Coolahan (2003), p.51
[197] *Towards 2016*, p.126
[198] Coolahan (2003), p.51
[199] Damien Murchan et al (2005), *PCSP*, p.252; CMOD (2002), p.23; Collinson, V. and Cook, T.F. (2001). '"I Don't Have Enough Time": Teachers' Interpretations of Time as a Key to Learning and School Change.' Journal of Educational Administration, 39/3, 266-281. Referred to in Damien Murchan et al (2005), *PCSP*, p.213
[200] Granville (2006), p.69
[201] *Towards 2016*, p.126

11.5 Efficiency

It is more difficult to establish the efficiency with which the TES employs its resources than the effectiveness with which it achieves its objectives. The available evidence provides mixed results on the efficiency with which the institutions supported by the TES (Colleges of Education, Education Support Centres and the National Support Programmes) convert inputs into outputs. This is mainly attributable to the following factors: (i) a lack of data in certain key areas, particularly in relation to the National Programmes, (ii) the difficulty in comparing institutions and programmes that engage with teachers in substantially different ways, and (iii) the lack of any identifiable international benchmarks against which the performance by the TES can be compared.

In light of these factors it is difficult to make definitive conclusions in the area of efficiency. The analysis in this review suggests that there are some areas of teacher education where inputs are being converted into outputs in an efficient manner; however, there are also a number of areas where efficiency levels could be improved.

Colleges of Education

While the level of funding allocated to the Colleges of Education for initial teacher education in 2006/07 was 38% higher than in 2001/2002, the number of students enrolled in teacher education programmes increased by 1.3% over the same period. While this appears to indicate a decrease in the overall level of efficiency with which the Colleges convert inputs into outputs, it does not take account of the following factors: (i) it is not possible – due to an absence of data - to establish the level of funding specifically allocated to initial teacher education. Caution must therefore be exercised in making conclusions on the basis of estimated figures; (ii) the analysis is confined to the role of the Colleges of Education in relation to teacher preparation and does not consider their broader role in relation to research programmes, CPD, and links with other institutions such as the Education Centres and the NPPTI; and (iii) the Colleges of Education are constrained by the TES in relation to the number of students they can enrol. A larger number of students might result in greater efficiencies. However, the TES prescribes the level of student intake to the B.Ed and Diploma programmes in each year in each College in an attempt to match the supply and demand of qualified teachers.

The main performance indicator used to measure the efficiency associated with the Colleges of Education was the unit cost per B.Ed and Graduate Diploma student. At present, no data are collected on unit costs in relation to the Colleges of Education. The two step procedure adopted in this review to estimate the unit cost of initial teacher education programmes was unsophisticated and the question of whether the colleges are being compared on an equitable basis cannot be ignored.

Overall, the average unit cost per student on the B.Ed programme appears to have increased by 35% over the period 2001/02 (€5,693) to 2006/07 (€7,705). There was a significant increase of 15% in the unit cost in 2002/03 and another relatively large increase of 9.8% in 2006/2007. The unit cost remained relatively stable in the period between 2003/04 and 2005/06.

The percentage change in the unit cost of the B.Ed is attributable to two factors: (i) the change in student numbers, and (ii) the change in the level of funding allocated by the TES/HEA. The number of students enrolled in the B.Ed programme has remained relatively stable during this period. The percentage change in unit cost, therefore, is mainly attributable to the change in the level of funding allocated. In the years when the unit cost rises, the increase in the level of funding is considerably higher than any corresponding increase in student numbers. In the three year period when the unit cost remained relatively stable (2003/2004 to 2005/2006) the change in the level of funding provided was more closely related to the change in student numbers.

The unit cost per Graduate Diploma student increased by 40% in the period 2001/02 (€5,854) to 2006/2007 (€8,217), broadly in line with rise in the B.Ed unit cost. However, the change in the unit cost of the Diploma has been more inconsistent during this period. There were rises in unit cost in each year with the exception of 2004/2005 when there was a sharp decline of 37% in the unit cost. As in the case of the B.Ed programme, the fluctuation in the unit cost is related to the change in student numbers and the change in the level of funding provided.

An important input in the provision of initial teacher education is the number of staff employed in the Colleges of Education. In absolute terms, the number of staff catering for students in teacher education programme appears to have declined significantly since December 2003. There were forty three less WTE staff working in this area in December 2006 compared to December 2003. This represents a decrease of more than 10%. The number of WTEs has actually declined in each year since 2003. There were decreases of 4% in 2004, 3% in 2005 and 4% in 2006. This suggests that there were increased efficiencies in this area within the Colleges of Education.

There have been marginal increases in the ratio of students on initial teacher education programmes to WTE staff members in each year since 2003. For example, there were 9.2 students per WTE staff member in December 2006 compared to 8.4 students per WTE staff member in December 2003. This suggests that the Colleges of Education have become more efficient in their use of staff resources in the period since 2003.

An examination of the attrition rate within teacher education programmes also indicates that the Colleges of Education are using the resources allocated to them in an efficient manner. When the number of students who withdrew from initial teacher education programmes is considered in the context of overall student numbers, the percentages involved are minimal. The number of withdrawals as a percentage of total participants peaked in 2004/2005 when 1.35% and 1.08% of students withdrew from the B.Ed and Diploma programmes respectively. The proportion of withdrawals from the B.Ed and Diploma programmes is very similar, which is surprising given the fact that as postgraduate students, participants in the Diploma programme are not entitled to ‘free fees’.

There is no comparable data in relation to completion rates in the University and IoT sector (the last published data relates to 1996/1997). However, the low number

of withdrawals from initial teacher education programmes indicates that the Colleges of Education are successful in supporting students to complete their studies. This suggests, therefore, that the public funds allocated to the Colleges for the purpose of preparing student teachers are being used efficiently.

At present the five state supported Colleges of Education are funded by separate agencies: Mary Immaculate and St. Patrick's College of Education are currently funded by the HEA while the other three institutions are supported directly by the TES. The reason for the difference between the five Colleges is unclear, apart from the fact that the two HEA funded colleges developed links with the University of Limerick and Dublin City University in the early 1990s. It would seem more logical if the five state supported colleges were funded through the same agency. This could lead to improved efficiencies and may also facilitate improved communication between individual Colleges and their funding agency (this was an issue raised in chapter nine). On the issue of which funding agency should support the five Colleges it appears that the HEA may be more advantageously placed to support all five Colleges. It currently provides approximately 79% of the funding for initial teacher education. It is therefore recommended that the DES should consider, in conjunction with the HEA, the possibility of transferring financial responsibility for Froebel College, Colaiste Mhuire and the Church of Ireland College of Education to the HEA. Discussions in this area should include consideration of any administrative implications of this transfer of financial responsibility. (*Recommendation #26*)

Education Support Centres

The overall level of funding provided to the Education Centres (core funding and local course funding) has increased by 37% in the period since 2001. (This is comparable to the 38% increase in funding allocated to the Colleges of Education in the same period). The increase in the level of resources allocated to the Education Centres has resulted in an increase in the number of local courses organised and the number of local course participants. While funding increased by 37% in the period between 2001 and 2006, the number of local courses organised increased by 130% while the number of local course participants increased by 94%. This suggests an overall increase in the efficiency with which the Centres convert inputs into outputs. However, a year on year analysis suggests that there has not been an efficient use of resources on a consistent basis. While an increase (or decrease) in overall funding resulted in a corresponding or greater increase in local course participants in 2002 and 2005, this was the exception rather than the rule. In 2003, 2004 and 2006, an increase in the level of funding resulted in a much smaller increase (a decrease in 2006) in the number of participants in local courses.

While local courses are only one element of the work of the Education Centres, they are a core element of their work, and one would therefore expect to see a strong relationship between an increase in overall funding and the number of local course participants. The overall funding referred to in the analysis of the Education Centres excludes funding allocated for National Programmes. This means that if a large portion of Education Centres' core funding is being targeted at supporting National Programmes, there may be an imbalance in the priority accorded to national as opposed to local CPD priorities.

The main indicator of the efficiency with which the TES is converting inputs (core funding from the TES and local course funding) into outputs (the number of local course participants) was the unit cost per local course participant. This was calculated by dividing the overall funding from the TES by the total number of participants in local courses organised by full-time Education Centres. Overall, the unit cost per participant has declined by €63 since 2001, representing a decrease of 29%. This suggests an increase in efficiency in the period since 2001. However, the rate of change in the unit cost was not consistent. The unit cost declined in 2002 and 2005 but increased in 2003, 2004 and 2006.

The decrease in unit cost in 2002 and 2005 can be attributed to the number of participants increasing at a faster rate than the level of funding provided by the TES. In contrast, the increases in unit costs in 2003, 2004 and 2006 can be attributed to the level of funding increasing at a faster rate than the number of participants.

It is not possible to establish the trend in staffing resources employed through the Education Centre Network due to an absence of longitudinal data. However, an analysis of the figures for 2006 indicates that there were 414.09 WTE staff employed through the Education Centre Network. This comprised 138.59 core staff, 267.05 programme staff, and 8.45 self-financing staff. The average number of staff in a full-time Education Centre was 19.7. There is a clear pattern to the distribution of staff between Education Centres. Those Centres that employ the most staff are those Centres that 'host' National Support Programmes. Those Centres that employ fewest staff numbers are those that do not host National Programmes – or that host National Programmes with a small number of seconded staff.

In terms of non-National Programme related staff, there were 147.04 WTE staff employed by Education Centres in 2006. The average number of such staff employed in a full-time Centre was 7. In general, the Centres in large urban areas have the highest number of staff while those located outside of urban areas have the least number of staff. This pattern is to be expected, given the fact that those Centres in urban areas (with the highest number of staff) are serving the largest teaching populations.

The average ratio of local course participants to WTE staff members in a full-time Education Centre in 2006 was 191:1. This means that for every member of staff, there were 191 local course participants. There was considerable variation between Centres on this issue. The ratios in individual Centres ranged from a high of 395:1 to a low of 81:1. This may suggest that some Centres are more efficient in their use of staffing resources, but the variance between Centres may be attributable to other factors: (i) staff are involved in other activities apart from organizing/administering local courses, and (ii) those Centres that organize a number of once off training sessions will have a higher ratio of participants to WTE staff members and will therefore appear more efficient than those Centres that organize a series of courses that run over a number of evenings due to the higher throughput of the former. However, there may be greater benefits to teachers in attending ongoing training over several nights rather than a once off workshop.

While staff members in Education Centres are employed in a number of different roles and duties, the organization and support of local courses is a core function of Education Centres and one would expect to see a relationship between the number of staff employed in a Centre and the number of local course participants. This analysis excludes staff employed to support the National Programmes. Therefore, if non Programme related staff are spending considerable amounts of time devoted to Programme related activities, this suggests that there may be an imbalance at Education Centre level in the priority accorded to national as opposed to locally identified needs.

The TES has introduced a number of measures in recent years which will strengthen the potential for increased efficiency in relation to the Education Centre Network. These include (i) the introduction of revised financial procedures in 2005, (ii) the move to an activity based funding model for the local courses, (iii) the channelling of funding for local courses in part-time Centres through the full-time Centres, and (iv) the request for Education Centres to submit an annual staffing return to the TES. In particular, the introduction of a budget based method of funding for the Education Centres (as part of the revised financial procedures) is a positive move. The budget based system, which was fully implemented for the first time in 2007 replaces the previous method of allocating funding under different headings – general allocation, administrative staffing allowance and maintenance grant. In contrast to the previous system of specific grants to Centres for specific purposes, there is greater flexibility in how Centres use the resources allocated to them, within the financial guidelines issued by the TES. This devolution of responsibility to local level is in accordance with best practice under the public sector modernization programme and is more likely to result in greater efficiency than the old system of centralized control.

National Support Programmes

It is much more difficult to establish the efficiency with which the National Support Programmes convert inputs (financial resources, secondments) into outputs (teachers trained).

While it was possible to identify the funding directly allocated by the TES and the secondment costs associated with each National Programme, it was not possible to identify the cost of providing substitution cover for those teachers attending prescribed in-service training. The available data indicates that there has been significant investment in CPD provision by the TES in recent years. Overall, there has been an increase of 149% in expenditure in this area in the period from 2002 to 2006 which is a much higher rate of increase than that associated with the Colleges of Education (a 38% increase in the period 2001 to 2006) or the Education Support Centres (a 37% increase in the same period).

The rate of increase in CPD funding has not been consistent. There were increases in 2003, 2004 and 2006 but a small decrease of 3% in 2005. The increases in 2003 and 2006 were both significant – 59% and 48% respectively. The increases in 2003 and 2006 were mainly attributable to significant increases in the funding allocated to existing programmes as well as the provision of funding for new support services

(e.g. History and Geography in 2003 and the National Behavioural Support Service and Technology 4 Support Service in 2005).

While it was not possible, due to incomplete data, to establish the overall number of teachers trained by National Programmes on an annual basis, the available evidence indicates that more than 429,000 teachers were trained by the National Programmes identified in the period 2004 to 2006.

The number of teachers targeted by the National Programmes increased by approximately 13% in 2005 but decreased by 31% in 2006. The increase in the number of teachers trained in 2005 is mainly attributable to the increase in the number of primary teachers targeted by the PCSP. The significant decrease in the number of teachers trained in 2006 was caused by (i) the reduction in PCSP activity levels in that year and (ii) the fact that a number of Programmes had not yet submitted their NDP returns for 2006 at the time of writing. One of these Programmes – the SDPS (post primary) targets between 16-18,000 teachers on an annual basis – and this will have a significant impact on the overall number of teachers trained.

There does not appear to be a correlation between the level of funding provided and the number of teachers trained. The level of funding decreased by 11% in 2005 but the number of teachers trained increased by 12%. The pattern is reversed in the following year, when the level of funding increases by 40% but the number of teachers trained decreases by 18%. It is difficult to draw conclusions from these data on account of the following: (i) this analysis is based on those programmes in respect of which data are available. It may be that a full analysis of all National Programmes – if relevant data were available – would provide a different conclusion; (ii) the nature of the support provided by National Programmes can change from year to year, with the result that a year on year analysis is not comparing like with like. For example, the National Biology Support Service was replaced by the Biology Support Service following completion of intensive in-service training in the revised Biology syllabus in 2004. With the establishment of the BSS the nature of the support provided to Biology teachers also changed, from intensive in-service training to a more focused and locally based response to identified needs.

A key measure of the efficiency with which the National Programmes convert inputs into outputs is the unit cost per teacher trained. The absence of complete data on all of the Programmes means that it is not possible to identify an overall unit cost. An analysis of those Programmes in respect of which data were available indicated that the mean unit cost per teacher trained decreased from €131 in 2004 to €107 in 2005, a decrease of 20%, but increased again in 2006 to €167, an increase of 58%.

A change in unit cost is related to two factors: (i) a change in the level of funding allocated and/or (ii) a change in the number of teachers trained. The decrease in unit cost in 2005 is attributable to a decrease of 11% in the level of funding to the Programmes upon which the analysis is based and an increase of 10% in the number of teachers trained by those Programmes. The increase in unit cost in 2006 is attributable to a decrease of 3% in the level of funding allocated by the TES, but

a larger decrease of 30% in the number of teachers trained. This analysis is based on data provided by the majority of National Programmes but some are excluded. It may be that an analysis encompassing all National Programmes would result in a different overall unit cost and a different conclusion. It is therefore impossible to make any definitive conclusion in the trend of unit costs on the basis of such incomplete data.

The number of teachers seconded to work with the National Programmes illustrates the almost exclusive reliance on this form of in-service delivery. In total, there has been an increase of 35% in the number of teachers seconded in the period 2002/2003 to 2006/2007. A number of difficulties associated with this model were identified and it was recommended that the TES should consider whether there is scope for rationalisation of the existing National Programmes with a view to reducing overlap between individual Programmes (*Recommendation #29*)

Analysis in this review indicates that the ratio of secondments to teachers trained was 1:873 in 2004, 1:901 in 2005 and 1:536 in 2006. It appears therefore that there was an increase in the efficiency with which the staffing resources associated with the National Programmes were used in 2005 but a significant decrease in the efficiency ratio in 2006. However, the apparent reduction in efficiency in 2006 is partly explained by the fact that data have yet to be returned by a number of programmes in respect of the number of teachers trained in that year. The increased efficiency in 2005 is attributable to the fact that the number of secondments increased marginally over 2004 (an increase of 3%) while the number of teachers trained increased by 6%.

11.6 Communication

The issue of communication was explored through surveys of key stakeholder groups – the Presidents of the Colleges of Education, the Directors of the Education Support Centres, and the Coordinators of the National Programmes. The evidence indicates a widespread perception among all three stakeholder groups that they are not consulted on a regular basis by the TES in relation to policy formation. Overall, eighty-four percent of respondents were of the view that the level of consultation could be improved. The main recommendation to emerge from all three stakeholder groups related to the need for more regular meetings with the TES.

As well as more regular meetings, stakeholders wanted to ensure that these meetings were as productive and efficient as possible. Respondents expressed a wish that meetings should be scheduled well in advance on agreed dates with formal agendas, that minutes should be taken and circulated to attendees after the meeting, that there should be consistency of personnel attending meetings, and that issues agreed at meetings should be followed up promptly.

Another key theme to emerge from the stakeholder surveys is the desire among stakeholders for earlier budget notification. This was an issue raised among all three stakeholder groups. Almost half of the respondents indicated that the existing timing of the budget notification had an adverse impact on planning in terms of the uncertainty created by a perceived delay in budget notification. Other issues to

emerge in relation to budgetary issues were a desire for the introduction of multi annual budgeting, and a confusion among some Education Centre Directors about the formula used to calculate funding for local courses.

Stakeholders also highlighted concerns in the area of 'administrative' issues. This was a particular priority for the Education Directors and NCOs of National Programmes. They highlighted a number of issues that were obstacles to effective communication. This included unrealistic deadlines set by the TES for information requests, a lack of continuity among TES staff, a perceived staff shortage within the TES, and poor data sharing within the TES.

In response to the feedback from participants, recommendations are made for more regular meetings between the TES and its major stakeholders, for earlier notification of annual budgets to stakeholder groups, and for the TES to address the 'administrative' issues that are impeding effective communication. (*Recommendations 30 to 35 below*).

It must be acknowledged that the TES has made considerable efforts to improve the level of communication with stakeholders in recent times. For example,

- Officials from the TES have since February 2006 attended the majority of the Education Centre Annual General meetings, the monthly meeting of Directors and the Annual General meetings of the Association of Teacher Education Centres in Ireland (ATECI).
- Bi-laterals are held on a regular basis with Directors of Education Centres and after National Programme Steering Committee meetings.
- Following the adoption of the agreed Financial Procedures for Education Centres in late 2005 all of the above meetings take place as set out in a diary schedule.
- Regular bi-laterals, telephone and e-mail correspondence with National Co-ordinators along with quarterly (minimum) National Steering Committee meetings are held for all programmes.
- Activity reports are communicated to TES twice a year under the NDP reporting structures which are discussed at the Directors meetings beforehand.
- Budget templates were agreed as set out in the Financial Procedures which now allows for estimates, budget submissions and budget approvals to be carried out in a systematic and efficient manner.[202]

Following the adoption of these agreed procedures the TES consider that the lines of communication are more efficient and effective for all stakeholders.

11.7 Teacher education continuum

Apart from the issues relating to efficiency, effectiveness and communication, one central theme to emerge from this review was the need to view teacher education as a continuum. The ideal of the 'continuum' of teacher education has been promoted since the early 1990s. This perspective promotes the concept of the '*3 Is* – Initial

[202] Information supplied by the TES

Teacher Education, Induction into Teaching and In-service teacher education'.[203] According to this perspective, there should a seamless provision of teacher education, with teachers supported by quality professional development opportunities from the time they enter the Colleges of Education to the time that they eventually retire from the profession. The important implication of this seamless provision for the TES is that there should also be joined up policy between the three main policy areas involved.

The report on national education policy published by the OECD in 1991, the Green Paper (1992), the White Paper (1995) and the report of the National Education Convention (1994) all endorsed the idea of a teacher continuum.[204] The report of the Convention indicated that there was widespread support for the view of "*the teaching career as a continuum involving initial teacher education, induction processes and in-career development opportunities, available periodically throughout a teacher's career*".[205]

The OECD report in 1991 identified three key constraints to the realization of the continuum: policy, infrastructure and resources. A report produced in 2001 on the position of policy and practice on teacher education in Ireland at that time suggested that infrastructure and resources had increased significantly in the decade since the OECD report but that policy was lagging far behind. The extension of the Education Centre Network and the increase in the number of teachers seconded to work with National Programmes were clear signs of increased investment but in the absence of an overall coherent policy framework, much of this increased investment was allocated in an ad hoc manner and served only to contribute to the fragmentation of provision in this area.[206]

One of the motivating factors behind the establishment of the ICDU – and later the TES – was the desire to make a reality of this continuum. The TES, established in 2004, incorporates the original brief of the ICDU but also encompasses other areas within the DES that have a remit for teacher education via the Colleges of Education and the education departments in the Universities and Colleges. In theory, therefore, the TES has provided a more strategic focus to the area of teacher education as it has responsibility for the three main areas that constitute it: (i) initial teacher education, (ii) induction, and (iii) in-service training/Continuing Professional Development. However, there is a lack of evidence to suggest that the continuum has become any more of a tangible reality in recent years.

Some reports have highlighted progress towards this goal – such the growth of partnership between the Second Level Support Service (SLSS) and the Colleges of Education[207] - however, there is still no overall policy framework within which the three main policy areas of teacher education act in coordination towards a common objective. The research literature is remarkably silent on the measures that should be adopted to improve coordination. While the aim of making a reality

[203] Coolahan (1994), p.85.
[204] OECD (1991), *Review of National Policies for Education: Ireland*, p.98. Paris: OECD. Quoted in White Paper (1995), p.133; Coolahan (1994), p.85; White Paper (1995), p.133
[205] Coolahan (1994), p.85
[206] Sugrue et al (2001), pp.120-121
[207] Granville (2006), p.76

of the continuum is widely advocated, no recommendations have been made to actually realize this aim.

The data emerging from this review suggests that further progress needs to be made in order to make a reality of the teacher education continuum. For example, feedback from participants in the NPPTI indicate that NQTs regard initial teacher education as the foundation for their teaching career but they recognise that further support is required in a number of areas. A high proportion of respondents to the NPPTI teacher survey were of the view that they required additional support and professional development in specific areas.

Further progress needs to be made by the TES in two main areas: (i) greater data collection and data sharing about teachers' professional and personal needs, and (ii) greater consultation and involvement by relevant stakeholders in the development of CPD policy.

In relation to data, one of the main recommendations to emerge from this review is the need for a greater focus on data collection. There is a real need – at each level of the teacher continuum – to ensure that CPD provision reflects the needs of teachers at each stage of their career. In order to do this, the needs of teachers have first to be identified. This review recommends 'exit' surveys to be conducted by the Colleges of Education (*Recommendation # 3 below*) and regular needs analyses to be conducted through the Education Centres (*Recommendation # 7 below*), as well as the continued identification of NQTs' priorities through the NPPTI. This data will be complemented by data collated through the support services such as the RCSS, the SLSS and the SDPS as well as areas identified through Whole School Evaluation (WSE) reports by the Inspectorate. The data arising from these needs analyses provide a solid basis for a comprehensive programme of CPD that encompasses all areas of the teacher education continuum and which reflects the needs of all teachers. However, in order for this to become a reality the data from the needs analyses must be shared between the relevant agencies so that an overall picture of individual teacher and school needs emerges. This can then be used to plan an informed and relevant programme of CPD for teachers and schools on a national, regional and local basis.

The second area that requires greater attention is the need for greater consultation among stakeholders in the development of national policy formation. The results of the stakeholder surveys, detailed in chapter nine, suggest that there is room for improvement in the level of consultation between the TES and the three main stakeholder groups – the Presidents of the Colleges of Education, the Education Centre Directors, and the coordinators of National Support Programmes.

Sixty four per cent of respondents to the stakeholder surveys indicated that they were not very frequently or never consulted by the TES in relation to policy formation. This perception does not support the concept of the teacher education continuum as it suggests that provision is being centrally planned without adequate consultation of the major stakeholder groups. It is difficult to integrate the various areas of teacher education without consultation of those involved in the provision of such education. Another significant finding to emerge from the stakeholder surveys is the fact that forty four per cent of respondents characterised the policy

formation process as being 'top-down'. This appears to indicate a feeling among some stakeholders that their concerns are not being reflected in national policy. This reinforces the perception that the continuum of teacher education has not yet been realised as major stakeholders do not feel that their views are integrated into national policy on teacher education.

The main recommendation to emerge from the stakeholder surveys was a desire for more formal meetings with the TES on a more regular basis. Some stakeholders also highlighted the need for greater consultation – either among their own stakeholder group (the National Coordinators and the part-time Directors in particular) as well as between the three stakeholder groups. The basic desire among stakeholders is for greater opportunity to inform the policy-making process. Unless the views of those stakeholders responsible for implementing the three main elements of the continuum are reflected in policy formation it will be extremely difficult to ensure a seamless provision between initial teacher education, induction and CPD.

In order to contribute to making a reality of the teacher education continuum, it is recommended that the TES should convene a consultative forum on an annual basis with representatives from the three stakeholder groups consulted – the Presidents of the Colleges of Education, the Education Centre Directors, and the National Coordinators. This forum will provide an opportunity for a sharing of ideas and data, and will ensure that the three main policy areas in which the TES is involved are working together to ensure a true continuum of teacher education *(Recommendation #35).*

11.8 Overall conclusion

This review has examined the performance of the TES in the areas of initial teacher education, induction and in-service training/CPD and also in relation to the quality of the communication between the TES and its three main stakeholders (the Presidents of the Colleges of Education, the Education Centre Directors and the National Coordinators of the National Programmes).

A number of recommendations have been made to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of teacher education, and also to improve communication between the TES and its stakeholders. It is notable that the majority of the recommendations proposed in this review relate to the area of in-service training/CPD. This is not altogether surprising, given the fact that almost three quarters of the 2007 TES budget is allocated to this area of teacher education. It also reinforces the finding from the analysis of TES objectives in chapter three that this was the policy area that appeared most frequently in policy documents. This suggests that the need for further progress by the TES is greatest in this area, in comparison to initial teacher education and induction.

This examination of the performance of the TES is timely in light of the changing landscape of teacher education. The establishment of the Teaching Council will have important consequences for this policy area in the years ahead. Part of the Council's remit is the creation and maintenance of a register of teachers. Only those teachers listed in the register will be eligible to teach in Irish schools. As the

Council progresses its work it will establish a set of criteria for continued inclusion in the register. One of the likely criteria will be participation in a prescribed number of in-service/professional development days within a certain time period. This will ensure that the teaching profession is continually updating its knowledge and skills. The introduction of such a requirement will impact considerably on the work of the TES as it will increase the level of demand for a comprehensive and coordinated programme of teacher education. It is the contention of this review that the TES must strengthen performance in certain key areas, and the quality of its communication with key stakeholders, in order to meet the new challenges that lie ahead. This is particularly relevant in the area of data collection, and also in relation to communication with stakeholders. Unless the TES introduces a robust system of data collection it will not be able to effectively evaluate and monitor the programme of teacher education it supports. It is also important that the TES ensures that it has effective channels of communication with its main stakeholders: this is a *sine qua non* of further progress in the area of teacher education. The recommendations proposed in this review are designed to assist the TES to meet existing challenges as well as repositioning it to engage with future developments in this area.

Summary of Recommendations

Initial Teacher Education

1. The views of NQTs regarding their desire for more experience in non-curricular areas (such as dealing with parents, classroom management and discipline, catering for pupils with special needs, and administrative issues associated with primary teaching) should be conveyed to the Colleges of Education to inform future developments in relation to pre-service education.
2. Colleges of Education should ensure that opportunities for teaching practice and teacher observation are provided in as wide a variety of school and class settings as possible.
3. Colleges of Education should conduct 'exit' surveys of graduates from the B.Ed and Diploma programmes to ensure that their views on the quality and relevance of pre-service education are used to inform the design of pre-service programmes.
4. The DES Inspectorate should compile on a more regular basis an analysis of the results of the monitoring process associated with student teachers during their final teaching practice and also of NQTs during their probationary period.

Induction

5. The views of NQTs on the areas where the existing implementation of the NPPTI could be strengthened should be conveyed through the TES to the NPPTI project team.
6. The TES should consider the further extension of the NPPTI on a phased basis – and within the context of available resources – until all NQTs are targeted.

In-service training/CPD

7. Education Centres should conduct regular needs analyses of local teachers in order to identify the personal and professional needs of teachers. This data should be used to inform local and summer course provision. This data should also be transmitted to the TES.
8. The TES should monitor the attendance levels at compulsory in-service training. Those teachers who do not attend prescribed in-service should be contacted for an explanation. Any factors that are preventing teachers from attendance should be identified by the National Support Programmes and addressed by the TES.
9. Education Centres should ensure that data is collected from each participant in a local course through a participant evaluation sheet.
10. In relation to National Support Programmes, the feedback from participants at each in-service training session organised through the National Support Programmes should be aggregated electronically and submitted to the TES for monitoring purposes.
11. The TES should work with the DES Inspectorate to develop an indicator or indicators that would facilitate a more balanced assessment of the impact of the teacher education programmes supported by the TES on student learning and development.
12. In order to facilitate evaluation of the local and summer course provision, each Education Centre should employ a standard evaluation sheet (to be agreed by the TES) for local and summer course provision. This evaluation sheet should be no longer than a single page and should contain a mix of quantitative and qualitative type questions. In deciding on the type of question mix, the TES should balance the need for evaluative comments with the need to be able to act upon the data collected. The new evaluation sheet should include questions directly asking respondents for their views on the quality and relevance of the training provided. The evaluation sheet should afford participants an equal opportunity to award a positive and negative rating.
13. The TES should ensure that it has an input into the design of a standard evaluation sheet for all National Programmes. Any variation from this standard evaluation sheet should be approved by the TES. As in the case of the summer and local courses, the TES should balance the need for evaluative comments with the need to be able to act upon the data collected. The new evaluation sheet should include questions directly asking respondents for their views on the quality and relevance of the training provided. The evaluation sheet should afford participants an equal opportunity to award a positive and negative rating.

Primary Curriculum Support Programme

14. The PCSP seminars (and with wider application, in-service training seminars in general) should be tailored as specifically as possible to individual school and teacher contexts. Trainers should also be adequately prepared in advance to adapt their seminar delivery to the needs of the teachers in attendance.
15. Attention should be given to how to maximize the time spent by Cuiditheoirí during school visits. Maximum use of the internet and the PCSP website should be made to ensure that routine queries – relating to accessing resources etc – can be dealt with outside of the time devoted to school visits.

16. The concerns expressed by teachers over the complexity of the curriculum should be communicated to the NCCA.
17. The issue of reducing any potential overlap or duplication between the work of the SDPI facilitator and the PCSP Cuiditheoirí should be examined. The potential for integrating these support services at primary level should be considered.
18. The reason for the lack of integration of ICTs in the classroom needs to be examined. This should be complemented by an increased promotion of ICTs as a teaching and learning tool for pupils and teachers alike by the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE).
19. The findings relating to the extent to which primary teachers are (i) linking classroom planning to the school plan, and (ii) using the curriculum strands (rather than textbooks) as the starting point for classroom planning, (iii) making linkages between different subject areas, and (iv) employing a variety of assessment tools, should be conveyed to the relevant support services (PCSP, SDPI) and the DES Inspectorate to inform their future work with primary teachers.

Summer and Local Courses

20. In order to ensure that teachers across the country have equal access to summer courses, the summer course booklet should be posted on the website of each Education Centre as well as on the DES and Drumcondra Education Centre website.
21. Each summer and local course should have a clearly identifiable outcome (such as improved teacher understanding of specific aspects of a subject area, understanding of specific teaching methodologies etc) which can be measured through feedback on a participant evaluation sheet. This will facilitate the future monitoring and evaluation of course provision.
22. The TES should ensure that summer and local courses organised by providers other than Education Centres should also be subject to appropriate monitoring and evaluation procedures.

HIST Support Service

23. *Length of syllabus:* the concerns raised by a cohort of history teachers about the length of the history syllabus and its implications for the future take up of the subject should be communicated to the NCCA.

NBSS

24. *Length of syllabus:* the concerns raised by a cohort of Biology teachers about the length of the Biology syllabus should be communicated to the NCCA.

Scheduling of in-service training/CPD

25. As outlined in *Towards 2016*, the issue of the future scheduling of in-service training should be explored by the TES in consultation with the relevant education partners and the Teaching Council. Such discussions should encompass the issue of the future viability of EPV days for summer courses and the possibility of opening summer courses to post primary participants.

Efficiency

26. The DES should consider, in conjunction with the HEA, the possibility of transferring financial responsibility for Froebel College, Colaiste Mhuire and the Church of Ireland College of Education to the HEA. Discussions in this area should include consideration of any administrative implications of this transfer of financial responsibility.
27. The TES should strengthen the collection of data relating to the National Programmes. National Coordinators should be informed about the type of data that should be collected on a routine basis in respect of each National Programme. This data should include the number of teachers trained by each Programme on an annual basis (a financial year rather than an academic year) and the number of teachers trained as a proportion of the target population.
28. The TES should collect data on the total cost of CPD provision. This includes data on the direct funding to National Programmes, the costs associated with secondments, and the costs associated with providing substitute cover to teachers attending in-service training. This will allow for the full cost of CPD activity to be identified.
29. The TES should consider whether there is scope for rationalisation of the existing National Programmes with a view to reducing overlap between individual Programmes.

Communication

30. The TES should ensure that it has an effective system of communication with its main stakeholders.
31. Meetings organised by the TES should be made as productive as possible by ensuring that advance notification is given to attendees, that an agenda issue in advance, that minutes be taken and circulated after the meeting, that any action items arising from the meeting be followed up on by the relevant parties, and that there is continuity in TES personnel attending the meetings (where possible).
32. TES to notify all three stakeholder groups of their budget allocation(s) or main funding stream(s) as early as is practicable.
33. TES to clarify for all Education Centres the formula used to calculate local course funding
34. The TES should address the issues identified by stakeholders as obstacles to effective communication (including early notification of requests for information, acknowledgement of correspondence, production of a TES staff directory etc).
35. The TES should convene a consultative forum on an annual basis with representatives from the three stakeholder groups consulted – the Presidents of the Colleges of Education, the Education Centre Directors, and the National Coordinators. This forum will provide an opportunity for a sharing of ideas and data, and will ensure that the three main policy areas in which the TES is involved are working together to ensure a true continuum of teacher education.

Appendix 1: Membership of Steering Committee

Dept. of Education & Science:
Dr. Paul Ryan*, Principal Officer, Teacher Education Section.
Mr. Jim Kavanagh, Primary Divisional Inspector, Teacher Education Section.
Mr. David Walshe**, Assistant Principal Officer, Teacher Education Section.
Dr. Tony Gaynor, Assistant Principal Officer, Teacher Education Section.
Ms. Laura Bracken***, Higher Executive Officer, Teacher Education Section.
Mr. Jonathon Sweeney, Clerical Officer, Teacher Education Section.
Mr. Fintan O'Brien, Assistant Principal Officer, Central Policy Unit.

* Dr. Paul Ryan left the Committee in March 2007.
** Mr. David Walshe joined the Committee in June 2006, replacing Mr. Barry Conroy.
*** Mr. Paul McClaren joined the Committee in February 2007, replacing Ms. Laura Bracken.

External Members
Mr. Muiris O'Connor, Policy and Planning Section, Higher Education Authority.
Ms. Jennifer Gygax, Recurrent Grants Section, Higher Education Authority.
Mr. Sydney Blain, President, Church of Ireland College of Education.
Dr. Pauric Travers, President, St. Patrick's College of Education.
Ms. Eileen O'Connor, Director, Drumcondra Education Centre
Ms. Eileen Flynn, National Coordinator, School Development Planning Support Initiative.

Appendix 2: Component elements of the NPPTI

NPPTI Primary

	Mentoring	Professional development
NQTs	5 days	3 days
Mentors	4 days	3 days
Principals	N/A	2 days

NPPTI Post Primary

	Mentoring	Professional development
NQTs	36 hours	3 days
Mentors	18 hours	3 days
Principals	N/A	2 days

Appendix 3: Research methodology

Literature review

A review of material relating to the policy and practice of teachers' professional development was undertaken in order to provide a context to the work of the TES and to inform the development of 'key questions' that the review would have to address in order to ascertain levels of efficiency and effectiveness within the section. In light of the pace of change within the policy area of teacher education, this review of literature was confined to reports and articles published after 1995 (an exception was made in relation to some major policy documents published in the early 1990s).

A number of valuable evaluations and reviews have been completed in recent years in the area of teacher education. At pre-service level, these include the reports of the Kellaghan (2001)[208] and Byrne (2002)[209] Working Groups, as well as two recent reports published by the DES Inspectorate – *Beginning to Teach* (2005)[210] and *Learning to Teach* (2007)[211]. In the area of induction, the first phase of the National Pilot Project on Teacher Induction has recently been evaluated (2006)[212]. In relation to the third main area of TES activity – CPD- there have been a number of reports in recent years. These include a review of the policy and practice of professional development in Ireland (2001)[213], a review of the Education Centre Network (2002)[214], as well as evaluations of specific programmes such as the SLSS (2005)[215] and the PCSP (2006)[216]. At a general level, the background report for the OECD published in 2003[217] contains a chapter on teacher education, highlighting strengths and weaknesses of the existing system of professional development.

From a longer perspective there were also a number of important policy documents produced in the 1990s which have helped to shape the current provision of teacher education. These include the Green (1992) and White (1995) papers on education as well as the report of the National Education Convention (1994) which was held in 1993. Other more recent policy documents also contain a focus on teacher

[208] DES (2001), *Report of the Advisory Group on Post Primary Teacher Education. (Kellaghan report)* Dublin: DES
[209] DES (2002), *Report of the Working Group on Primary Pre-service Teacher Education (Byrne report)* Dublin: DES
[210] DES (2005), *Beginning to Teach: Newly Qualified Teachers in Irish Primary Schools* Dublin: DES
[211] DES (2007), *Learning to Teach: Students on teaching practice in Irish primary schools.* Dublin: DES
[212] Killeavy, Maureen and Murphy, Regina (2006), *The National Pilot Project on Teacher Induction: Final Report* (unpublished)
[213] C.Sugrue, M, Morgan, D. Devine, D. Raftery, (2001) *Policy and Practice of Professional Development for Primary and Post-primary Teachers in Ireland: a critical analysis* (unpublished).
[214] Centre for Management and Organisational Development (2002) *Review of Education Centre Network*, Dublin: CMOD. (unpublished)
[215] Gary Granville (2006), *Cultivating Professional Growth: An Emergent Approach to Teacher Development. Final Evaluation Report on the Experience and Impact of the Second Level Support Service* (unpublished)
[216] Damian Murchan, Andrew Loxley, Keith Johnston, Micheline Quinn, Helen Fitzgerald (2005), .*Evaluation of the Primary Curriculum Support Programme* (unpublished).
[217] J. Coolahan (2003), *Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers – Country Background Report for Ireland*) Dublin: DES

education, including the social partnership agreement *Towards 2016*, the *National Development Plan 2007-2013*, and the *Strategy for Science and Technology Innovation 2006-2013*.

The literature review helped to inform this VFM assessment in three ways:

- In the first instance, it identified some of the key issues that would need to be addressed as part of the examination of the efficiency and effectiveness of the TES. These issues include the timing of in-service delivery, the continuum of teacher education, the length of initial teacher education programmes, and the issue of extending induction provision to all NQTs.
- Secondly, the literature review also highlighted some of the areas in which data would have to be collated in order to assess efficiency and effectiveness, and also provided examples of robust research methodologies that could be adopted. The evaluations of the PCSP and the SLSS were particularly useful in this regard as they relied heavily on the collection of qualitative data from participants in in-service training. The discussion of objectives in chapter three indicated that qualitative data collection would form a major element in the attempt to measure the extent to which the TES has achieved its objectives.
- Finally, some of the reports consulted as part of the literature review provided data – from participants in teacher education programmes supported by the TES – that supplemented the data collected as part of this review, thereby increasing the validity of the conclusions drawn.

Document analysis

The literature review was supplemented by an analysis of files and relevant documents relating to the administration of the various programmes and agencies supported by the TES. The documents analysed were supplied by TES personnel, and by staff in selected Education Centres, Colleges of Education, National Support Programmes, and agencies such as the Higher Education Authority and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

Surveys

Surveys formed a central element of this review. A number of the performance indicators identified in relation to the effectiveness of the TES could only be measured through qualitative feedback from teachers who had participated in training supported by the TES. In addition, the examination of communication between the TES and its major stakeholders, as required in item six of the Terms of Reference, necessitated consultation of a wide variety of different stakeholders. The most expedient means of obtaining such data – on a sufficient scale – was through postal questionnaires.

Six separate teacher surveys were conducted among participants in the following professional development programmes:

⇒ National Pilot Project on Teacher Induction (NPPTI)
⇒ Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP)
⇒ Summer course programme
⇒ Local course programme

⇒ National Biology support service (NBSS)
⇒ History In-service Support Team (HIST).

A survey was also conducted of three stakeholder groups (Presidents of the Colleges of Education, Directors of the Education Centres, and the Coordinators of the National Support Programmes) in order to explore the issue of communication with the TES.

Each questionnaire was designed following consultation with the steering committee and was informed by the themes that emerged from the literature review and document analysis. The surveys targeted at participants in the in-service training provided by the PCSP, NBSS and HIST were piloted on the National Coordinators of these programmes, and the feedback received was incorporated into the final questionnaires before issue.

Overall, a total of 1,833 questionnaires were circulated and 1,160 were returned giving an overall response rate of sixty three percent. This relatively high response rate for a postal survey was facilitated by the issue of reminders to the sample population(s) and also by the use of the websites of the National Programmes targeted to publicise the surveys and to urge those surveyed to return completed questionnaires.

Details of the population, sample, sampling frame, and response rate for each individual survey are outlined below.

Details of surveys conducted as part of VFM review

Subject of survey	Population	Sample	Sampling frame	Sample type	Response rate
NPPTI	All NQTs who had participated in the NPPTI	400 NQTs (250 primary and 150 post primary)	Database of NPPTI participants	Random	41%
PCSP	All primary teachers	300 primary teachers	DES database of all primary teachers	Random	58%
Summer course programme	All primary teachers who had participated in summer courses in 2006	300 primary teachers	Attendance books for summer courses in Education Centres in 2006.	Random.	79%
Local course programme	All teachers who had participated in local courses in 2005/2006	300 teachers (mix of primary and post primary)	Attendance books for local courses in Education Centres in 2005/06	Random.	60%
HIST	All LC History teachers	235	DES database of LC History teachers	Random	77%
NBSS	All LC Biology teachers	235	DES database of LC Biology teachers	Random	77%
Education Centre Directors	All EC Directors	All 30 Directors	DES database of Education Centres	Census	80%
Presidents of Colleges of Education	All Presidents of Colleges of Education	All 5 Presidents	DES database of Colleges of Education	Census	100%
Coordinators of National Programmes	All coordinators of National Programmes	All 29 NCOs	DES database of NCOs	Census	86%

The overall response rate was satisfactory in respect of each survey with one exception. The proportion of participants who responded to the NPPTI survey was disappointing, particularly among post primary participants. The poor response rate may be attributable to the fact that NQTs often move from the school in which they completed their probationary year. This is particularly the case in relation to post primary NQTs. The NPPTI database only contained the contact details of the original school in which the NQT was located at the time of their participation in the NPPTI. This meant that those teachers who changed school in the time since completion of the NPPTI were not represented among respondents.

All samples were randomly selected and are therefore expected to be broadly representative of the target population. A copy of two sample questionnaires is attached in Appendices 4 and 5.

Postal surveys have a number of recognised weaknesses.[218] For this reason, it was decided to supplement the data emerging from the surveys conducted as part of this review with data from other research methods. This triangulation of research methods has a number of advantages as it helps the researcher in the following ways:

- To obtain a variety of information on the same issue
- To use the strengths of each method to overcome the deficiencies of the other.
- To achieve a higher degree of validity and reliability.
- To overcome the deficiencies of single-method studies.[219]

Interviews

Informal unstructured Interviews were held with some key personnel at the start of the review process in order to gain an understanding of the area of teacher education in general and/or to gain an insight into the operation of particular agencies or programmes. These were information gathering sessions designed to inform the design of the review rather than formal structured interviews with a fixed set of questions. The personnel consulted in this manner included the following:

- Dr. Paul Ryan, PO, TES
- Ms. Eileen O'Connor, Director, Drumcondra Education Centre
- Ms. Marie McLoughlin, National Co-ordinator, Primary Curriculum Support Programme
- Mr. Michael Garvey, National Co-ordinator, Second Level Support Service

[218] S.Sarantakos, (1988) *Social Research*, p.225; Bryman (2004), p.134
[219] S.Sarantakos, (1988), p.169

Other data sources

Where possible the data from the teacher surveys were supplemented by other data sources. The DES Inspectorate plays a major role in evaluating the quality of much of the work supported by the TES. For example, the Inspectorate assess the performance of a sample of student teachers during their final session of teaching practice and also monitor a sample of NQTs during their initial probationary year in the classroom. The Inspectorate also monitor a sample of the summer courses organised by the Education Centres each year. The monitoring and assessment reports compiled by the Inspectorate in relation to pre-service education and the summer course programme were analysed as part of this review. Feedback was also sought from subject inspectors of Leaving Certificate History and Biology in order to supplement the feedback from the teacher surveys in these subjects.

Participant evaluation sheets

Another useful data source was the evaluation sheets completed by participants in in-service training programmes supported by the TES. Participants in each programme of in-service are requested to complete an evaluation sheet to ascertain their views on the quality and relevance of the training provided. The questions explore teachers' perception of seminar content, presentation, structure and venue.

In general, after each seminar, the trainer or tutor aggregates the teacher responses and submits the summarised results for the day to the National programme head office or to the Education Centre hosting the summer/local course. The National Coordinator of the National Programme or the Education Centre Director (in the case of the summer/local courses) analyses the data returned from the course tutor as well as the participant evaluation sheets, in order to inform the planning of seminar/course provision.

The aggregate reports for all of the in-service seminars provided through the PCSP, and the HIST support service were analysed as part of this review. However, it was only possible to analyse a sample of the evaluation sheets compiled in respect of the summer and local courses and the NBSS.

In relation to the summer and local course programme, a standard evaluation sheet appears to have been originally designed by the ICDU (the predecessor to the TES). This sheet is still employed by the majority of Education Centres although most of them have adapted it to some degree. Some Centres have introduced their own evaluation sheet. Tralee Education Centre employs a nine page evaluation form which aims at formative as well as summative evaluation. Participants are asked to complete the form at intervals during each day of training to evaluate their learning at key stages during the course. The form is also more qualitative in nature than the standard sheet, with a greater emphasis on open-ended rather than fixed-alternative questions.

As part of this review, the evaluation sheets completed by participants in seven different Education Centres in 2004, 2005 and 2006, were examined. The Centres selected for inclusion in this study were chosen on a random basis. Part-time Centres were not considered for inclusion in the sample because of the very small number of courses organised by such Centres.

It was not possible to analyse the participant evaluation sheets from all of the courses organised by the selected Education Centres because of (1) the absence of evaluation sheets for some courses, and (2) some courses were delivered by National Support Programmes (e.g. SESS, Walk Tall) that employ their own individualized evaluation sheets and it was not possible to reconcile the questions on these evaluation sheets to those on the "standard" evaluation form. In total, evaluation sheets from 3,991 participants on 208 summer courses were analysed.

The evaluation sheets completed by participants in local courses in six different Education Centres during the 2005/2006 school year were examined. As the local courses are organised in spring and autumn it was decided to focus on 2005/2006 as the most recent full year of local courses. The Centres selected for inclusion in this study were the same as those included in the summer course analysis (with the exception of Tralee which was not included due to time constraints).

It was not possible to analyse the participant evaluation sheets from all of the courses organised by the selected Education Centres. Data collection by Education Centres in respect of local courses is not as rigorous as in the case of the summer course programme. In a number of the Education Centres included in this review, there are no evaluation or attendance sheets for a significant proportion of local courses. It may be more difficult for Education Centres to monitor the local courses for a number of reasons. They often consist of one off seminars or lectures in respect of which participants may not feel it necessary to complete an evaluation/attendance sheet. In addition, those courses that are run over a number of nights often have a high level of initial attendance but experience an increasing attrition rate as the course progresses. As the courses are often evaluated on the final day, it means that the number of participants completing evaluation sheets is far less than the number who originally commenced the course. Whatever the reason, there are signs that the monitoring and evaluation process associated with the local courses organised through the Education Centre Network is not as thorough as that associated with the summer course programme. In total, evaluation sheets from 1,607 participants on 115 local courses were analysed.

In relation to the NBSS, it would have been desirable to analyse, at an aggregate level, feedback from the participant evaluation sheets for each phase of in-service training. Unfortunately, the data from participant evaluation sheets was not aggregated by the NBSS in such a format. Each RDO compiled a summary of the evaluation sheets collected at the end of each training session and these were

forwarded to the National Coordinator, but no overall statistics were compiled to show the overall level of satisfaction among participants at each phase of in-service training. In the absence of such aggregate level data it was decided to examine a sample of the summary reports compiled by the RDOs.

The evaluation sheets used by the NBSS, in common with those employed by other National Programmes, are biased in favour of a positive response. Participants are generally asked to rate aspects of the in-service training on a Likert type scale consisting of the following options: Excellent, Very well, Well, Fairly well, Fair. It is therefore not possible for a participant to give a negative rating.

In addition, a number of the questions on the NBSS evaluation sheet are of questionable value. From participants' perspective they are difficult (and time consuming) to answer, and from policy makers' perspective they are difficult to analyse and act upon. Examples of such questions are outlined below:

"Describe how you are feeling as a teacher of Biology at the end of todays cluster meeting." (Question taken from evaluation sheet for Year 2, Phase 2)

"In what way did the educational emphasis in session 1 differ from or mirror the educational emphasis in your everyday practice?" (Question taken from evaluation sheet for Year 3, Phase 3)

"In reflecting overall on session 1, please identify and elaborate on the key problems facing you as a teacher of biology." (Question taken from evaluation sheet for Year 3, Phase 3)

The NBSS has indicated that the move away from a standard evaluation sheet was an attempt to replace the traditional summative type evaluation with a more formative assessment by participants.

"Evaluation forms were initially focussed on participants` reaction but quickly graduated to a focus on participants` learning. Oral personal reflection strategies were also used and participants were invited to describe the crucial knowledge and skill development and give examples of their application. The attainment of specific learning goals was central to this form of evaluation".[220]

The host Centre for the NBSS – Tralee Education Centre – has also adopted this approach in the evaluation of its summer course programme. The move towards a formative approach to evaluation has merits as it provokes trainees to think about the quality and of the training they are participating in. However, it can also yield a large volume of unwieldy data which can be very time consuming for participants to produce and for administrators to analyse.

[220] NBSS (2004 unpublished), *Recommendations arising from the experience of hosting and administering the National Biology Support Service, 2001-2004,* p.18 (unpublished)

Appendix 4: Questionnaire circulated to primary school teachers in relation to the Primary Curriculum Support Programme.

Section A: Background

The questions in this section are designed to elicit information to help inform analysis of the responses to the questions in Sections B, C, and D.

Q. 1 **Male _____** **Female _____** *(please tick as appropriate)*

Q. 2 **How many years have you been teaching?** *(to nearest year)*
_____ years.

Q. 3 **Please specify the class level you currently teach** *(i.e. junior infants, fifth class, multi-class)***: _____**

Q. 4 **In which type of area is your school located:** *(please tick one of the following options)*

Urban (city) _____
Urban (town) _____
Rural _____

Q. 5 **Please indicate which of the following categories apply to your school:** *(please tick <u>all</u> of the following options that apply to your school)*

Single Sex school _____
Mixed school _____
Designated Disadvantaged status _____
Gaelscoileanna _____
Special School _____
Educate Together _____
Hospital School _____

Section B: In-service training

The questions in this section are designed to elicit your views on the quality and relevance of the in-service training provided by the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP).

Q. 6 **Please indicate the subjects in respect of which you have completed the programme of in-service training delivered by the PCSP:***(please tick each subject listed below in respect of which you have completed in-service training)*

English _____
Mathematics _____
Visual Arts _____
Gaeilge _____
SPHE _____
Science _____
Geography _____
History _____
Music _____
Physical Education _____

Q. 7 **How would you characterise the length of time allocated for in-service training in each of the following subjects:** *(please tick one of the boxes marked 1 to 3 below in respect of each subject in which you have completed in-service training)*

	Too short (1)	**Appropriate (2)**	**Too long (3)**
English			
Mathematics			
Visual Arts			
Gaeilge			
SPHE			
Science			
Geography			
History			
Music			
Physical Education			

Q. 8 **How would you rate the overall quality of the in-service training provided by the Primary Curriculum Support Programme at the facilitated seminar day(s) for each of the following subjects?** *(please tick one of the boxes marked 1 to 4 below for each subject in respect of which you attended the facilitated seminar day/s)*

	Very good (1)	**Good (2)**	**Poor (3)**	**Very Poor (4)**
English				
Mathematics				
Visual Arts				
Gaeilge				
SPHE				
Science				
Geography				
History				
Music				
Physical Education				

Q.9 **How relevant is the in-service training provided by the Primary Curriculum Support Programme to your needs in your school context:** *(please tick one of the boxes marked 1 to 4 below for each subject in respect of which you received in-service training from the PCSP)*

	Very relevant (1)	**Relevant (2)**	**Not very relevant (3)**	**Not at all relevant (4)**
English				
Mathematics				
Visual Arts				
Gaeilge				
SPHE				
Science				
Geography				
History				
Music				
Physical Education				

Q. 10 **How well did the in-service training you received from the Primary Curriculum Support Programme prepare you to implement each of the following subjects in the Primary School Curriculum (1999)?** *(please tick one of the boxes marked 1 to 4 below for each of the subjects in respect of which you received in-service training)*

	Very well prepared (1)	**Well prepared (2)**	**Poorly prepared (3)**	**Very poorly prepared (4)**
English				
Mathematics				
Visual Arts				
Gaeilge				
SPHE				
Science				
Geography				
History				
Music				
Physical Education				

Q. 11 **Are there are any particular strands/strand units in the Primary School Curriculum (1999) that you feel inadequately prepared to implement following completion of in-service training in that subject?**

Yes _____ No _____ *(please tick as appropriate)*

If Yes, please specify the strand(s)/strand unit(s):

_____

_____

_____

Q. 12 Are there any measures that could be taken to improve the in-service training provided by the Primary Curriculum Support Programme?

Yes _____ No _____ *(please tick as appropriate)*

If Yes, please specify the measures that could be adopted:

_____

_____

Q. 13 Have you ever accessed the Primary Curriculum Support Programme website?

Yes _____ No _____

If No, please proceed to Question 16.

Q. 14 How often you access the Primary Curriculum Support Programme website?

Very often _____
Often _____
Not very often _____
Hardly at all _____

Q. 15 How would you rate the quality of the Primary Curriculum Support Programme website?

Very good _____
Good _____
Poor _____
Very poor _____

Section C: Cuiditheoir service

The questions in this section are designed to elicit your views on the quality of the support provided through the Cuiditheoir Service (also known as the Regional Curriculum Support Service).

Q. 16 How many times did you engage on a pedagogical/professional matter with a Cuiditheoir in each of the following school years? *(please specify the number of engagements in each year listed)*

2005/2006 school year: _____
2004/2005 school year: _____

Q. 17 How many times during a school year would you like to engage with a Cuiditheoir to discuss pedagogical/professional issues?:

_____

Q.18 What is/are the main reason(s) for your meeting(s) with the Cuiditheoirí?

_____

_____

Q.19 In your opinion, what is the most important function of the Cuiditheoir service?

_____

_____

Q.20 How would you rate the quality of the advice/support provided by the Cuiditheoirí? *(please tick one of the options below)*

Very good _____
Good _____
Poor _____
Very poor _____

Q.21 Is the advice/support provided by the Cuiditheoirí relevant to your needs?

Yes _____ No _____

If No, please state reason why:

_____

_____

Q.22 How useful are the Cuiditheoirí in supporting you to implement each of the following subjects in the Primary School Curriculum (1999)? *(please tick one of the boxes marked 1 to 5 in respect of each subject in the table below)*

	Very useful (1)	**Useful (2)**	**Not very useful (3)**	**Not at all useful (4)**	**I have never received support from a Cuiditheoir in this subject (5)**
English					
Mathematics					
Visual Arts					
Gaeilge					
SPHE					
Science					
Geography					
History					
Music					
Physical Education					

Q. 23 How would you rate the quality of the materials/handouts provided by the Cuiditheoirí? *(please tick one of the options below)*

Very good _____
Good _____
Poor _____
Very poor _____

Q. 24 Are there any measures that could be adopted to improve the support provided by the Cuiditheoir service?

Yes _____ No _____

If Yes, please specify the measure(s) that could be adopted:

_____

_____

Q.25 How clear are you about the distinction between the role of the Cuiditheoirí and the School Development Planning Service (SDPS) facilitators? *(please tick one of the following options)*

Very clear _____
Clear _____
Not very clear _____
Not at all clear _____

Section D: Implementation of primary curriculum

The questions in this section are designed to elicit your views on the extent to which aspects of the primary curriculum are being implemented.

Q.26 Does your school have a school plan?

Yes _____ No _____ *(please tick as appropriate)*

If No, please proceed to Question 29.

Q.27 Are all of the subjects in the Primary School Curriculum (1999) reflected in your school plan?

Yes _____ No _____ *(please tick as appropriate)*

If No, please specify the subjects that are not reflected in your school plan:

_____

_____

Q.28 Do you link your classroom planning with the content of the school plan?

Yes _____ No _____ *(please tick as appropriate)*

If No, please specify reason why:

_____

_____

Q.29 Do you use the individual strands of the curriculum as the starting point for your classroom planning in each of the following subjects? *(please answer Yes or No in respect of each of the subjects listed in the table below)*

Subject	Yes	No
English		
Mathematics		
Visual Arts		
Gaeilge		
SPHE		
Science		
Geography		
History		
Music		
Physical Education		

If you answered No in respect of the any of the subjects in the table above, please state the reason(s) why:

_____

Q. 30 How often do you integrate the following subjects with other subjects in the Primary School Curriculum (1999)? *(please tick one of the boxes marked 1 to 4 in respect of each of the subjects listed in the table below)*

	Very often (1)	Often (2)	Not very often (3)	Not at all (4)
English *and other subjects*				
Mathematics *and other subjects*				
Visual Arts *and other subjects*				
Gaeilge *and other subjects*				
SPHE *and other subjects*				
Science *and other subjects*				
Geography *and other subjects*				
History *and other subjects*				
Music *and other subjects*				
Physical Ed. *and other subjects*				

Q.31 Please indicate how often you employ the following assessment tools: *(please tick one of the boxes marked 1 to 4 in respect of each of the assessment tools listed in the table below)*

	Very often (1)	**Often (2)**	**Not very often (3)**	**Not at all (4)**
Teacher observation				
Teacher designed tasks and tests				
Work sample				
Portfolios				
Projects				
Curriculum profiles				
Standardised tests				
Diagnostic tests				

Q.32 Do you use assessment results to inform your classroom planning for pupils?

Yes _____ No _____

If No, please specify reason(s) why not:

_____

Q.33 How often do you integrate Information Communication Technologies into your implementation of each of the following subjects? *(please tick one of the boxes marked 1 to 4 in respect of each of the subjects listed below)*

	Very often (1)	**Often (2)**	**Not very often (3)**	**Not at all (4)**
English				
Mathematics				
Visual Arts				
Gaeilge				
SPHE				
Science				
Geography				
History				
Music				
Physical Education				

Q. 34 Are you implementing all aspects of the Primary School Curriculum (1999)?

Yes _____ No _____

If Yes, please proceed to Question 37.

Q. 35 Please specify the subject(s) and the specific strand(s)/strand unit(s) that you are not currently implementing:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q. 36 Please specify the reason(s) you are not implementing all aspects of the Primary School Curriculum (1999):

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q. 37 Any other comments you would like to add? *(additional space overleaf)*

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION IN COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE – ALL INFORMATION SUPPLIED WILL BE TREATED IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE PREPAID ENVELOPE BY Monday 11th December. TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:

DR. TONY GAYNOR,
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OFFICER,
TEACHER EDUCATION SECTION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE,
BLOCK 2 / LOWER GROUND FLOOR
MARLBOROUGH STREET,
DUBLIN 1.

Appendix 5 Questionnaire circulated to Education Centre Directors re quality of the communication with the TES

Section A: Education Centre Details

The questions in this section are designed to elicit general information which will inform analysis of the responses to the questions in Sections B, C, D and E below.

1. How many years have you served in your current position as Director of an Education Support Centre? *(to nearest year)*

_____

2 Status of your Education Centre *(please tick as appropriate)***:**

Full-time Centre _____ Part-time Centre _____

3. Does your Education Centre currently host a National Programme (e.g. PCSP, Leaving Certificate History etc)?

Yes _____ No _____ *(please tick as appropriate)*

If Yes, please specify the National Programme:

_____

Section B: Budget notification

The questions in this section explore issues relating to the manner in which details of your annual budget are communicated to you by Teacher Education Section.

4. When did the Teacher Education Section notify your Centre of its approved budget for 2006?

Month _____ Year _____

5. In your opinion, when should the Teacher Education Section have notified your Centre of its approved budget for 2006?

Month _____ Year _____

6. Does the current timing of the budget notification adversely affect the planning process within your Education Centre?

Yes _____ No _____ *(please tick as appropriate)*

If Yes, please outline the manner in which the planning process is adversely affected:

_____

_____

_____

7. Are there any aspects of the existing budget notification process that you would like to see changed?

Yes _____ No _____ *(please tick as appropriate)*

If Yes, please specify:

_____
_____
_____

Section C: Policy Formation

The questions in this section explore the extent to which Education Centre Directors feel involved in the process of policy formation at national level.

8. How would you describe the extent to which you, as Director of an Education Centre, are consulted by Teacher Education Section in relation to policy formation in the area of continuing professional development? *(please tick one of the following options)*

Very frequently consulted _____
Frequently consulted _____
Not very frequently consulted _____
Never consulted _____

9. Are there are measures that could be adopted by Teacher Education Section to improve the level of consultation with you in relation to policy formation in the area of continuing professional development?

Yes _____ No _____ *(please tick as appropriate)*

. **If Yes, please specify:**

_____
_____
_____

10. How would you characterise the existing method of policy formation in relation to continuing professional development *(please tick one of the following options):*

Top-down _____
Bottom up _____
Mixture of top-down and bottom up _____

Section D: Communication

The questions in this section explore the existing communication channels between Teacher Education Section and the Education Centre Network in relation to particular methods of communication.

11. How would you characterise the quality of communication between Teacher Education Section and your Education Centre in respect of each of the following methods of communication *(please tick one of the following options – very good, good, poor, very poor - for each of the communication methods identified in the box below)***:**

Method of communication	**Very Good**	**Good**	**Poor**	**Very Poor**
Meetings				
Written communication (post or email)				
Telephone communication				
Informal communication (whether at meetings, by written communication or by telephone)				

12. Are there are measures that could be adopted by Teacher Education Section to improve the quality of communication with your Education Centre in relation to any of the methods of communication identified above (e.g. meetings, written communication, telephone communication etc)?

Yes _____ No _____ *(please tick as appropriate)*

If Yes, please specify:

_____
_____
_____
_____

13. In general, how would you characterise the response rate by Teacher Education Section to any queries you might have: *(please tick as appropriate)*

Very good _____
Good _____
Poor _____
Very poor _____

14 Overall, are you satisfied with the existing channels of communication between Teacher Education Section and your Education Centre? *(please tick as appropriate)*

Yes _____ No _____ *(please tick as appropriate)*

If No, please identify the main reason for your dissatisfaction:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Section E: Summer and Local Courses

The questions in this section explore the manner in which Education Centres select the courses offered as part of their Summer and Local course programmes.

15. Are the courses offered by your Education Centre as part of its Summer and Local Course programmes based upon an analysis of the in-service and professional development needs of local teachers in your catchment area? *(please tick as appropriate)*

Yes _____ No _____

If Yes, please proceed to next question.
If No, please skip to Question 18.

16. How frequently do you consult with teachers in your local catchment area in order to identify their needs in relation to in-service training and professional development? *(please tick as appropriate)*

Once a year _____
Once every two years _____
Once every five years _____
Other (please specify) _____

17. By what means do you consult with teachers in your local catchment area in order to identify their needs in relation to in-service training and professional development? *(please tick as appropriate)*

Teacher surveys _____
Visits to schools _____
Posters in schools _____
Website _____
Other (please specify) _____

18. Does your Education Centre have a teacher database that identifies the teachers in your catchment area that have participated in the following: *(please tick as appropriate)*

Summer Courses Yes _____ No _____
Local Courses Yes _____ No _____

19. Any other comments you wish to make:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION IN COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE – ALL INFORMATION SUPPLIED WILL BE TREATED IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE BY FRIDAY OCTOBER 13TH VIA EMAIL TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS: tony_gaynor@education.gov.ie

OR BY POST TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:

DR. TONY GAYNOR,
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE,
BLOCK 2,
LOWER GROUND FLOOR
MARLBOROUGH STREET,
DUBLIN 1.

Appendix 6: Supplementary tables relating to chapter five.

Table 1: Number of primary school teachers 1993/1994 to 2004/2005

Year	No. of teachers	PTR
1993/1994	20,776	24.3
1994/1995	20,901	23.5
1995/1996	21,052	22.7
1996/1997	21,035	22.3
1997/1998	21,100	21.8
1998/1999	21,500	21.0
1999/2000	21,850	20.3
2000/2001	22,850	19.2
2001/2002	23,935	18.4
2002/2003	24,700	18.0
2003/2004	26,039	17.1
2004/2005	26,262	17.1

Table 2 - Student intake to the B.Ed and Diploma programme in main Colleges of Education, 1998/99-2005/06

Year	B.Ed.	Diploma	Total intake	Percentage Change
1998/99	750	283	1033	-
1999/00	976	283	1259	22%
2000/01	999	302	1301	3.3%
2001/02	1025	460	1485	14%
2002/03	1038	464	1502	1%
2003/04	1046	294	1340	(11%)
2004/05	1054	278	1332	(1%)
2005/06	1133	287	1420	7%

Table 3: Overall trend in graduate numbers from all Colleges of Education, 2001-2006

Year	B.Ed.	P.Grads	Total	Percentage Change
2001	706	272	978	-
2002	793	269	1,062	9%
2003	959	430	1,389	31%
2004	974	453	1,427	3%
2005	965	695	1,660	16%
2006	986	748	1,734	4%

Table 4: Level of preparedness following completion of initial teacher education (n=87)

Very well prepared	Well prepared	Not well prepared	Not at all prepared
15%	71%	14%	0

Table 5: Relevance of initial teacher training (n=88)

Very relevant	Relevant	Not very relevant	Not at all relevant
23%	66%	11%	0

Table 6: Appropriateness of length of initial teacher education (n=87)

Too long	Appropriate	Too short
2%	74%	24%

Table 7: Respondents preparedness to implement the Primary School Curriculum (1999) (n=89)

Very well	Well prepared	Not very well	Not at all well
39%	53%	8%	-

Table 8: Level of preparedness for non curricular aspects of school life (n=89)

Very well	Well prepared	Not very well	Not at all
7%	45%	36%	12%

Appendix 7: Supplementary tables relating to chapter seven.

Table 1: Participants' assessment of the quality of the PCSP website (n=132)

Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor
42%	55%	3%	0

Table 2: Participants' rating of the extent to which the aims of PCSP seminars were achieved.

Subject	Range of Excellent/Very well rating
Gaeilge	n/a
English	n/a
Visual Arts	83-90%
Mathematics	85-91%
SPHE	84-91%
Science	91-95%
Music	95-99%
Physical Education	96-99%
Geography	92-96%
History	92-97%
SESE	84-94%
Drama	50-95%

Table 3: Participants' rating of presentation/facilitation of PCSP seminars

	Range of Excellent/Very well rating
Mathematics	91%
Visual Arts	89%
SPHE	91%
Science	95%
Music	91%
Physical Education	97%
Geography	96%
History	96%
SESE	96%
Drama	95%

Table 4: Respondents' view of the quality of the advice provided by the RCSS (n = 153)

Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor
61%	35%	3%	1%

Table 5: Respondents' view of the relevance of the advice provided by the RCSS (n = 158)

Relevant	Not relevant
89%	11%

Table 6: Quality of the handouts provided by the RCSS (n=146)

Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor
51%	41%	6%	2%

Table 7: Respondents' views on quality of their summer course (n=236)

Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor
78%	21%	1%	-

Table 8: Inspectors' rating of aspects of summer courses.

	2003				**2005**				**2006**			
	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
Organisation	77%	14%	6%	3%	77%	18%	5%	0	89%	11%	-	-
Presentation	74%	18%	8%	0	82%	14%	4%	0	92%	8%	-	-
Participation	62%	33%	5%	0	68%	16%	16%	0	93%	7%	-	-

Table 9: Percentage of summer courses recommended for future approval

	Recommend approval without amendment	Do not give approval without amendments	Do not approve again
2001	89%	9%	1%
2002	90%	10%	0
2003	81%	19%	0
2005	92%	4%	0
2006	100%	-	-
Mean	90%	9%	1%

Table 10: Breakdown of curricular related summer courses by subject area (%)

2001		2002		2003		2004	
Subject	%	Subject	%	Subject	%	Subject	%
Visual Arts	21	Visual Arts	20	Visual Arts	25	Visual Arts	19
PE	16	PE	18	PE	14	P.E.	15
SPHE	16	SPHE	15	History	12	Science	13
Science	9	Science	10	SPHE	11	Music	13
Music	9	Music	10	Science	11	SPHE	11
History	8	History	8	Music	9	Drama	7
Drama	7	Drama	6	Gaeilge	6	English	6
English	5	English	4	Drama	5	Gaeilge	6
Geography	4	Gaeilge	4	English	3	History	5
Gaeilge	3	Geography	2	Geography	2	Geography	2
Mathematics	1	Mathematics	1	Mathematics	2	Mathematics	2
Religious Ed	1	Religious Ed.	1	Religious Ed	1	Religious Ed	1

Table 11: Participants' views on quality of their local course (n=175)

	Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor
Primary	80%	18%	1%	1%
Post Primary	60%	38%	2%	-
Overall	74%	24%	1%	1%

Table 12: Participants' rating of extent to which aims of HIST training Phase 1 (2004) were achieved

Aim of in-service	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fairly good	Fair
To develop an understanding of the Revised History Syllabus N=1,265	50%	36%	10%	3%	1%
To introduce teachers to the general features of the Revised History Syllabus N=1249	49%	38%	10%	2%	1%
To familiarise teachers with the structure of the Topics N=1,248.	49%	36%	12%	2%	1%
To introduce teachers to the Documents Based Topic.N = 1,254	56%	32%	9%	2%	1%
To provide opportunities throughout the day for relevant discussion (N =1,234)	49%	32%	13%	4%	2%

Table 13: Participants' rating of extent to which aims of HIST training Phase 2 (autumn 2004) were achieved

Aim of in-service	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fairly good	Fair
To introduce the Research Study N=1,224.	60%	31%	7%	1%	1%
To familiarise teachers with new modes of assessment N=1,205	50%	35%	11%	2%	2%
To introduce teachers to the use of the Internet N=1,211	62%	27%	8%	2%	1%
To provide opportunities throughout the day for relevant discussion (N =1,210	58%	29%	9%	2%	2%

Table 14: Participants' rating of extent to which aims of HIST training Phase 3 (spring 2005) were achieved

Aim of in-service	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fairly good	Fair
To explore with teachers some approaches to teaching a topic (N=1211)	62%	30%	7%	1%	0
To explore with teachers some approaches to teaching a case study (N=1212)	63%	28%	8%	1%	0
To explore the benefits of using different kinds of evidence (N=1205)	70%	24%	5%	1%	0%
To provide opportunities throughout the day for relevant discussion (N = 1,208	60%	28%	8%	3%	1%

Table 15: Participants' rating of extent to which aims of HIST training Phase 4 (2005) were achieved

Aim of in-service	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fairly good	Fair
To explore aspects relating to the preparation of the research study (N=1,275)	67%	28%	5%	0	0
To review assessment requirements and consider sample questions.(N=1,261)	52%	36%	10%	2%	0
To explore a number of approaches relating to key personalities (N=1,244)	61%	30%	8%	1%	0
To provide opportunities throughout the day for relevant discussion.(N=1,261)	59%	29%	9%	2%	1%

Table 16: Participants views on the effectiveness of the HIST in-service presentations.

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fairly good	Fair
Phase 1 (N=1244)	54%	35%	8%	2%	1%
Phase 2 (N=1197)	62%	30%	6%	1%	1%
Phase 3 (N= 1208)	64%	28%	6%	1%	1%
Phase 4 (N=1278)	66%	27%	6%	1%	0
Phase 5 (N=1203)	69%	26%	4%	1%	0

Table 17: Participants assessment of year 2, phase 1 NBSS training - Day 1 Activities[221]

	Laboratory set-up			Instructions for Activity			Skill attainment sheet			Procedure used		
Activity	Excellent	Good	Fair	Excellent	Good	Fair	Excellent	Good	Fair	Excellent	Good	Fair
A	89%	9%	2%	86%	13%	1%	84%	15%	1%	84%	14%	2%
B	90%	10%	-	90%	10%	-	93%	6%	1%	90%	7%	3%
C	84%	15%	2%	79%	20%	1%	85%	14%	1%	80%	16%	4%
D	79%	17%	4%	80%	17%	3	81%	18%	1%	78%	18%	4%
E	71%	22%	7%	79%	20%	1%	79%	21%	-	72%	19%	9%
F	82%	17%	1%	89%	11%	-	85%	15%	-	85%	15%	-

Table 18: Participants assessment of year 2, phase 1 NBSS training - Day 2 Activities

	Laboratory set-up			Instructions for Activity			Skill attainment sheet			Procedure used		
Activity	Excellent	Good	Fair	Excellent	Good	Fair	Excellent	Good	Fair	Excellent	Good	Fair
A	87%	12%	1%	88%	11%	1%	87%	12	1%	85%	14%	1%
B	85%	14%	1%	81%	19%	-	88%	12%	-	84%	15%	1%
C	90%	9%	1%	92%	8%	-	92%	8%	-	88%	12%	-
D	83%	15%	2%	83%	16%	1%	85%	14%	1%	82%	17%	1%
E	85%	12%	3%	82%	17%	1%	85%	14%	1%	83%	14%	3%
F	92%	7%	1%	95%	4%	1%	92%	6%	2%	92%	5%	3%

[221] Phase one of year two consisted of training in twelve laboratory activities spread over two days. Participants were asked to rate each activity under four headings: (i) Laboratory set up; (ii) Instructions for Activity; (iii) Skill attainment sheet, and (iv) Procedure used

Table 19: Rating awarded by participants in Year 2, Phase 2 NBSS in-service training[222]

	Session 1 (Risk assessment)			Session 2 (Preparation for ecology)		
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Excellent	Good	Fair
Content	43%	46%	11%	70%	23%	7%
Methodology used	32%	57%	11%	73%	23%	4%
Relevance to your needs	41%	31%	28%	70%	27%	3%

Table 20: Participant rating of year 3 phase 1 NBSS in-service training[223]

	0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%
Competence	5%	3%	8%	29%	55%
Confidence	4%	4%	8%	25%	58%
New methodologies	7%	3%	13%	32%	45%
Networking	5%	6%	18%	31%	40%
Student centred focus and motivation	5%	4%	11%	33%	47%
Assessment strategies	7%	3%	17%	37%	36%
Reflective practice	8%	2%	17%	33%	40%

Table 21: Participant rating of year 3 phase 2 NBSS in-service training[224]

	< 40%	40-55%	55-70%	70-85%	85-100%
Competence	1%	2%	11%	26%	60%
Confidence	1%	3%	8%	27%	61%
Share experience	4%	2%	7%	37%	50%
Creative and imaginative approaches	1%	1%	7%	39%	52%
Renewal of enthusiasm	3%	1%	5%	33%	58%

Table 22: Participant rating of year 3 phase 3 NBSS in-service training[225]

	Session 1			Session 2		
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Excellent	Good	Fair
Content	55%	39%	6%	47%	47%	6%
Methodology	53%	44%	3%	53%	40%	7%
Relevance	52%	35%	13%	52%	34%	14%

[222] This phase of training consisted of two sessions – a session on risk assessment, and a session on preparation for ecology. Participants were asked to assess each session under the three headings of (i) 'Content', (ii) 'Methodology', and (iii) 'Relevance' to their needs.

[223] Participants were asked to express, as a percentage, their level of competence and confidence in conducting a study of an ecosystem following completion of year 3 phase 1 training. They were also asked to express, in similar terms, their level of success in understanding (i) new methodologies, (ii) a focus on networking, (iii) a student centred approach to teaching and learning, (iv) assessment strategies and (v) reflective practice.

[224] Participants were asked to rate, as a percentage, their level of competence and confidence in the skills necessary to carry out the prescribed laboratory activities in a classroom situation. They were also asked to asses the extent to which the in-service session had provided them with (i) opportunities to share experience and expertise in laboratory practice, (ii) to explore creative and imaginative approaches, and (iii) to renew their interest in, mastery of and enthusiasm for laboratory practical work.

[225] As part of this phase of in-service training, participants were asked to rate two sessions under three headings – (i) Content, (ii) Methodology, and (iii) Relevance to their needs.

Table 23: PSCP respondents' clarity about the roles of RCSS and SDPS facilitators (n= 163)

Very clear	Clear	Not very clear	Not at all clear
18%	23%	45%	14%

Table 24: Inspectors' assessment of the extent to which summer courses have facilitated professional development

	2005				2006			
	Great extent	*Acceptable extent*	*Limited extent*	*Not at all*	*Great extent*	*Acceptable extent*	*Limited extent*	*Not at all*
New content knowledge	76%	24%	0	0	100%	-	-	-
Knowledge of new methodologies	56%	40%	4%	0	87%	13%	-	-
Motivation to try new approaches	76%	20%	4%	0	87%	13%	-	-
Motivation to disseminate new knowledge to colleagues	60%	40%	0	0	93%	7%	-	-

Appendix 8: Supplementary tables relating to chapter nine.

Table 1: Presidents' assessment of quality of communication methods (n=4)

Method of communication	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor
Formal Meetings	0	2	2	0
Formal written communication (post or email)	0	1	3	0
Formal telephone communication	0	3	1	0
Informal communication (whether at meetings, by written communication or by telephone)	1	2	1	0

Table 2: Education Centre Directors' assessment of quality of communication

Method of communication	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor
Meetings (n=23)	11	7	4	1
Written communication (post or email) (n=23)	12	7	3	1
Telephone communication (n=22)	13	6	2	1
Informal communication (whether at meetings, by written communication or by telephone) (n=21)	10	7	3	1

Table 3: National Co-ordinators' rating of quality of communication

Method of communication	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor
Meetings (n=22)	6	8	6	2
Written communication (post or email) (n=23)	5	13	4	1
Telephone communication (n=22)	5	12	4	1
Informal communication (whether at meetings, by written communication or by telephone) (n=22)	9	11	2	0

Appendix 9: Bibliography

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