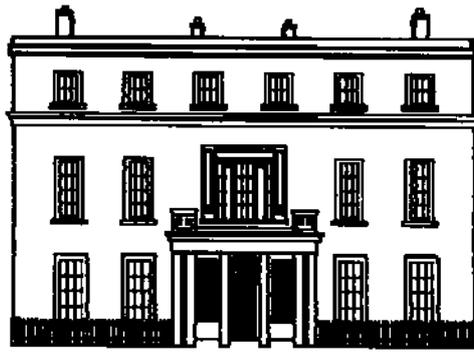




Annual Report 2009



**AN ROINN
OIDEACHAIS
AGUS EOLAÍOCHTA**

**DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
AND SCIENCE**

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Our Mission and Goals

The mission of the Department of Education and Science 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.

In pursuit of our mission, the Department has the following high-level goals:

1. Support and improve the quality, relevance and inclusiveness of education for every learner in our schools
2. Enhance opportunities in further education and youth services
3. Sustain and strengthen higher education and research
4. Support the delivery and development of education through policy formulation, high-quality planning and a strong customer focus

In support of these high-level goals, the Department is engaged in a wide range of activities at all levels of the education system, including:

- The provision of high-quality policy advice to the Minister and Government and as an aid to decision making and accountability to the Oireachtas;
- Conducting research, review, evaluation and development of policy relating to all areas of education;
- Ensuring high-quality education through the role of the Inspectorate at first and second level and through partnership with responsible authorities in higher and further education and the Youth sector;
- Discharging a wide range of operational, resourcing and support functions relating to the funding of the sector, the payment of teaching and non-teaching staff and grants to schools and other education bodies, the allocation of teaching resources and other supports, the provision of psychological and school transport services and performing a range of personnel and staff relations functions;
- Planning and provision of education infrastructure to support the delivery of high-quality education at all levels;
- Enhancing education through co-operation on a North-South basis and through active involvement in a variety of EU activities and with a number of other international agencies.

Chapter 1 – Supporting School Communities

High Level Goal One: Support and improve the quality, relevance and inclusiveness of education for every learner in our schools

Context

Attendance at full-time education is compulsory for all children between six and sixteen years of age. Although children in Ireland are not obliged to attend school until the age of six the practice is that the majority commence school in the September after their fourth birthday. Consequently, the vast majority of four-year-olds and nearly all five-year-olds are enrolled in the infant classes in primary schools.

First Level enrolment statistics for 2009/2010 school year		
<i>School Type</i>	<i>Number Schools</i>	<i>Total Enrolment</i>
Primary Schools	3,165	505,998
Special Schools	130	

Children from about 12 to 18 years attend a second-level school. Second-level schools include secondary schools, vocational schools and community and comprehensive schools.

Second Level enrolment statistics for 2009/2010 school year¹		
<i>School Type</i>	<i>Number Schools</i>	<i>Enrolment</i>
Secondary	384	185,006
Vocational	254	111,256
Community & Comprehensive	92	54,425

Objective 1.1: Develop appropriate policy initiatives and responses to underpin the effective day to day management and operation of schools including the provision of a range of financial, staffing and administrative supports.

Financial Supports – Primary Level

At primary level the two main sources of funding provided by the Department to schools are the Capitation and Ancillary Services grants.

Capitation funding is intended to contribute towards the cost of such items as heating, lighting, cleaning, insurance, general up-keep and general teaching aids required in the schools. Capitation grants are paid on

¹ These enrolment figures include PLC but exclude Core VTOS places. PLC Courses are provided predominantly in the VEC sector, but some Community & Comprehensive and Secondary schools also offer courses.

a per capita basis. In addition, special enhanced capitation rates, ranging from €12 to €86 per pupil depending on category, are paid in respect of children with special needs who attend special schools or special classes dedicated to children with particular special needs. The standard rate of capitation grant for 2009 was €200 per pupil which included an increase of €1.50 on the rate for the previous year. The total capitation grant expenditure at primary level for 2009 was approximately €11m.

Ancillary Services funding is provided to primary schools to provide for secretarial and caretaking services. The grant is intended to assist those schools that have not been provided with secretarial or caretaking assistance under the 1978/1979 schemes, under which certain schools receive the benefit of a full-time secretary or caretaker whose salary is fully funded by the Department. The amount of the grant paid to an individual school is determined by the enrolment figures. Schools with an enrolment of up to 60 pupils receive a minimum grant while schools with an enrolment of 500 pupils or more receive the maximum grant. The standard rate of the grant for 2009 was €155 per pupil which included an increase of €3.50 on the rate for the previous year. As a result the minimum grant to a school that applied in 2009 increased to €9,300 while the maximum grant increased to €77,500. Where a school has either caretaking or clerical assistance but not both under the Department's schemes it receives a grant of €79.25 per pupil subject to a minimum of €4,755 or maximum of €39,625 per annum. The total ancillary grant expenditure at primary level for 2009 was approximately €74m.

Financial Supports – Second Level

At second level the Department incurred expenditure in 2009 of over €153m in relation to:

- Grants paid to secondary schools in relation to current expenses and
- Provision of running costs of community and comprehensive schools together with non-teaching costs.

The per capita grant for recognised pupils in secondary schools for 2009 was €345 per pupil which included an increase of €4 on the rate for the previous year. The *School Services Support Fund* (SSSF) for second level schools was introduced for the 2000/01 school year. The purpose of the SSSF was to address the school needs in the areas of secretarial, caretaking and cleaning services. From 1st January 2009 the grant paid to voluntary secondary schools was €12 per pupil which included an €3 increase on the rate for the previous year.

Community and comprehensive schools, unlike voluntary secondary schools, do not receive capitation grants. Instead each school is given a budget, following a negotiation process on the basis of estimates received from the schools. The budget is based mainly on pupil numbers, but also takes into account factors which vary from school to school. SSSF funding for Community & Comprehensive schools is allocated as part of this budget.

The allocations made to VEC schools are determined by the CEO of the relevant VEC and are paid from non-pay funding provided by the Department. In 2009 the total non-pay funding, which also covers other VEC activities and expenses, made available to the 33 VECs was €66m.

Teachers

Through the provision of over 59,753 teacher posts (31,880 at first level and 27,873 at second level) the Department catered for a combined enrolment of approximately 857,000 students across the two levels for the 2009/2010 school year.

Payroll and Pension Services

The Department coordinates and administers a range of payroll services to:

- Teachers, special needs assistants and certain categories of clerical and caretaking staff employed in primary, secondary, community and comprehensive schools
- Retired teaching and non teaching staff formerly employed in primary, secondary, community and comprehensive schools

The Pension Section of the Department has both an administrative and regulatory role. Administrative services are provided to teachers, Special Needs Assistants and certain non teaching staff in primary, secondary, community and comprehensive schools. The services cover a range of pension matters and include:

- Processing pension benefits on retirement or death of scheme members
- Issuing quotations for the purchase of notional service for pension purposes
- Arranging transfer of service to and from other pension schemes
- Providing information for scheme members on their entitlements

The regulatory role includes:

- Amending relevant superannuation schemes
- Contributing to the development of pensions policy initiatives
- Providing pension related guidance and information to education sector bodies

In 2009:

- 1,981 teachers retired which was a significant increase from the previous year
- The Department's payroll system was expanded to incorporate the payment of part-time resource and language support teachers employed in primary schools
- Expenditure on the payrolls operated by the Payroll Division of the Department amounted to €4.47bn with 85,000 payments issuing every fortnight

School Transport Scheme

Bus Éireann operates this scheme on behalf of the Department. At second level, Chief Executive Officers of VECs assist by acting as Transport Liaison Officers.

In 2009/10 school year, the School Transport Service, which covers approximately 6,000 routes nationwide, carried approximately 125,000 pupils each day. This figure shows a decrease of 10,000 students using school transport when compared with the 2008/2009 figure of approximately 135,000 using the service. Accordingly expenditure by the Department in 2009 was down by over €8m to €177.6m.

A school transport helpline operates (1890 200 974) Monday to Friday.

The School Transport Appeals Board was set up in 2003. The Board, which is independent, examines appeals against decisions made by or on behalf of the Department regarding the provision of transport services and/or grant assistance under the terms of the school transport schemes. In 2009, 75 appeals were considered by the School Transport Appeals Board.

Objective 1.2: Promote the quality of teaching and learning

Evaluations in schools

The Inspectorate has statutory responsibility for evaluating the quality of educational provision in schools and centres for education.

The table below provides an overview of inspection activity conducted in 2009.

Type of inspection	2009
Whole-school evaluation (WSE) Primary	253
Whole-school evaluation (WSE) Post-primary	57
Subject inspections—stand-alone	378
Subject inspections—within WSE	182
Programme evaluations	35
Probation of teachers (Primary) for school year 2008/2009	2,469
Incidental Inspection (Primary)	196
Evaluation reports on Irish Colleges (<i>Coláistí Gaeilge</i>)	42
Centres for education (Youthreach, Senior Traveller Training Centre,)	14
Other	110
Total inspections	3,736

During 2009 a total of 863 school inspection reports, including some conducted prior to 2009, were published on the Department's website (www.education.ie). The publication of reports ensures that schools, parents and the general public have access to meaningful information on quality and standards in the education system. The publication and dissemination of inspection findings also supports the provision of relevant policy advice for the education system.

Reports published in 2009	
WSE Primary	246
WSE Post-primary	48
Centres for Education	17
Subject/Programme inspection within WSE	172
Stand-alone Subject/Programme inspections	380
Total	863

In addition to the publication of school inspection reports, the following reports were published by the Inspectorate in 2009 *Looking at Guidance; Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in the Primary School; Effective literacy and numeracy practices in DEIS Schools; and Olltuairisc ar Chigireacht ar na Coláistí Gaeilge 2007*.

The Irish versions of some previously published reports were also made available in 2009; *Ag Breathnú ar Eolaíocht na Sraithe Sóisearaí; Ag Breathnú ar Cheol; TFC i Scoileanna – Acmhoimr, Cuimsiú Daltaí a bhfuil Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais acu Treoirlínte Iar-bhunscoile*.

The Inspectorate also collaborated with the Gender Equality Unit in the production of *eQuality Measures*. This resource has been developed to assist post-primary schools in the promotion of gender equality using the strategy of gender mainstreaming.

Initial Teacher Training

The Department is responsible for devising and implementing effective policies and measures to ensure the adequate supply of suitably qualified and trained primary school teachers in the short, medium and long term. This involves a high-level of communication and interaction with, inter alia, the Colleges of Education and the Teaching Council. The Department is also responsible for implementing policies in relation to the post graduate diploma programme for post primary teachers, provided by the education departments of participating Universities.

For the 2009/2010 academic year, 490 places continued to be provided for by the Department on the post graduate course in primary teaching.

Total funding for the non Higher Education Authority (HEA) Colleges of Education for 2009 was €10.3 million.

National Pilot Project on Teacher Induction (NPPTI)

The main objective of this programme is to support the professional development of newly qualified teachers by way of systemic support in their first year of teaching, thus laying the foundations for subsequent professional growth and development. The Department invested over €780,000 in this programme in 2009. Phase VII of the NPPTI was successfully completed in 2009.

In-Service Teacher Training

The Education Centre network operates under the aegis of the Teacher Education Section in the Department and serves as a regional infrastructure for the provision of teacher professional development services and other support services for teachers at both primary and second level

There are 21 full time education centres and 9 part time centres nationally, organised in six regions. These centres host national programmes of curriculum reform and offer support services and courses covering a large range of subjects relating to teaching and learning.

Funding of over €4m was provided to the centres in 2009 which enabled them to run a total of 2,262 courses during the year, with over 24,000 teachers participating.

The Summer Course Programme continued in 2009. The principal objective of this programme is the advancement of teachers pedagogic (strategies of instruction, or a style of instruction) and management skills in the context of the work of the primary school.

639 summer courses were held in 2009 with a total of 24,000 teachers participating (over 10,000 attended a regular course and almost 14,000 availing of an on-line course).

Funding of €1.65 million was provided to the Technology Subjects Support Service (T4) in 2009. T4, which is hosted by the Galway Education Centre, provides support to teachers and schools in implementing the four new and revised post-primary technology subjects (Technology, Design & Communication Graphics (DCG), Architectural Technology and Engineering Technology).

Teacher Fee Refund Scheme

The purpose of this scheme is to provide funds towards the cost of course and examination fees on successful completion of in-career development courses approved by the Department and school authorities. In 2009, over €30,000 in funding was provided by the Department to a total of 422 successful applicants under this Scheme.

School Leadership Training

Since its inception in 2003 the Leadership Development for Schools (LDS) programme has expanded the range and supports that it offers to school leaders. This investment has led to a point where there are structured professional development opportunities for all school leaders in our education system from their point of appointment to day of retirement.

The LDS and, its counterpart in Northern Ireland, the Regional Training Unit (RTU) worked collaboratively in 2009 to advance a tender document inviting invitations from interested relevant groups to submit a tender for a research activity which will establish why some teachers present themselves as a candidate for leadership positions and why others do not. Following a successful tendering process this research commenced. The final report will include an independent analysis of both attracting school leaders in both jurisdictions and will also include recommendations on future collaboration to improve leadership development opportunities.

Over €1.4m was spend on the LDS programme in 2009 which facilitated 52 two day residential programmes and 28 one day seminars which combined catered for a total 3,083 participants.

The National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS)

This Service, which was established in 2006, forms part of an overall coherent national framework of support for schools experiencing difficulty coping with persistent and serious student disruption. The service is staffed by experienced practitioners from across the education sector. Approximately €800,000 was provided by the Department in 2009 to fund this service.

Introduction of Project Maths to Pilot Schools

Project Maths is a ground-breaking curriculum development initiative in post-primary Mathematics. The project, which is scheduled to run from 2008 to at least 2013, will see the incremental development of revised syllabi in Junior and Leaving Certificate Mathematics alongside a significant programme of teacher professional development. The project will implement syllabus change in post-primary mathematics on a phased basis. Syllabus revision will be informed by classroom experience and changes in assessment will be aligned with and underpin changes in syllabuses. Strands 3 and 4 of the curriculum were introduced in the 24 pilot schools in September 2009. Professional development was provided for all Maths teachers in 2009 as a precursor to implementing the first phase of Project Maths in all schools from September 2010. The Leaving and Junior Certificate examinations for the pilot schools will begin to change from 2010 and 2011 respectively and for all other schools from 2012 and 2013.

The project has been established by the Department in collaboration with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) who are leading the implementation of the project.

Continued Integration of Professional Development Services

From September 2009 both the Substance Misuse Prevention Programme (SMPP) and the Child Abuse Prevention Programme (CAPP) were incorporated into the Primary Professional Development Service (PPDS).

At Post-Primary level the School Development Planning Initiative, the Social Personal and the Health Education Support Service, the Relationship and Sexuality Education Support Service and the Junior Cycle Physical Education Support Service were integrated into the Second Level Support Service.

Integrating ICT into teaching and learning

The **ICT in Schools Programme**, which commenced in 1998, is designed to provide students with the opportunity to achieve computer literacy and to acquire the necessary skills for participation in the Information Society. Strategies are pursued through the work of the Department's ICT Policy Section and the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE), in collaboration with other agencies, support services and representative bodies as appropriate.

The **provision of broadband to schools** is an essential building block within the Department's strategy of integrating ICT into teaching and learning. Following a procurement process, the roll-out of broadband connectivity commenced in June 2005. Over 99% of schools have been connected to the Network using a mixture of DSL, wireless, and satellite technologies. Under the Programme, schools connectivity is being routed to the Internet through a National Broadband Network, which has been developed by HEAnet. Each school is connected to the network via a high-speed broadband router, provided to the school and housed in the school, and a broadband access link. The Network provides centrally managed services for

schools such as security, anti-spam / anti-virus and content filtering. The overall cost of the Programme in 2009 was €7.8m.

A competitive procurement process for Phase II of the Schools Broadband Programme was carried out in 2009. The new service providers have commenced the rollout of the new contracts, and significant savings on the Programme are expected in 2010, in conjunction with improved bandwidth speeds for a large number of schools and a reduction of the number of schools who have a satellite solution.

In June 2009, the Government published a Policy Paper that sets out the Government framework for the transition to Next Generation Broadband. This included a proposal to equip second-level schools in Ireland with 100 Mbps of broadband connectivity and Local Area Networks (LAN) on a phased basis. This will enable students to learn and collaborate online and will provide potential for new forms of collaboration between schools.

The Department is working with the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources in a pilot project to roll out 100 Mbps broadband connectivity to 78 post primary schools. Contracts were awarded in 2009 and roll-out of the service has commenced with a view to having all 78 schools connected by mid 2010.

In November 2009 the Department published the *Smart Schools = Smart Economy* report which contains relevant recommendations on how best to realise the potential of ICT use in schools. As a first step in making funding available for ICT in schools as recommended in this report, primary schools received €22 million in grants towards the purchase of laptops and digital projectors and other ICT equipment.

Through the NCTE's **Teaching Skills Initiative**, over 12,000 teacher training places were taken up in 2009. This training, which includes technical courses, subject specific courses, internet, web design and digital media courses, addresses the specific needs of teachers in their use of ICT.

Additionally, the role of the school's ICT coordinating teacher, with the support of the school principal, is being prioritised as central in the provision of ongoing ICT support and advice to teachers. In this context, nationwide seminars, targeting ICT coordinating teachers in post-primary schools, took place in 2008 and for primary principals/teachers in 2009. These seminars focused on the development of the school's e-Learning Plan; the critical role of the principal; procurement frameworks; availing of ICT professional development; online tools and resources for teachers and children; examples of integration of ICT and supports available to teachers and schools.

The *Scoilnet* portal - a key access point in Irish education for those seeking curriculum-relevant learning resources – which is managed by the NCTE continues to grow, with traffic rising from *circa* 1 million visits in 2006 to 1.89 million visits in 2009. There are over 11,000 teacher-reviewed resources available in Scoilnet's repository.

Scoilnet's *German.ie* portal website for teachers and students of German in Ireland was launched during 2009. The development of the site is a result of collaboration between the NCTE, the Department of Education & Science (DES), the Goethe Institute, the German Teachers' Association and the Austrian Embassy in Ireland. German is the second most popular of the modern languages studied in second-level schools and the site, which is curriculum-focused, emphasises learning through topics of interest to students such as youth culture in Germany, fashion and music.

The NCTE published an e-Learning Handbook in November 2009, which outlines the process of planning for e-Learning in schools, and has been developed in consultation with the school development planning initiatives at primary and post primary level (PPDS & SDPI/SLSS). It provides a step by step guide to the development of the school's e-Learning Plan and outlines the key roles and responsibilities of all involved in the development of the plan.

The **Digital Schools Award** recognises excellence in schools approach to the integration of ICT in learning and teaching. During the course of 2009 eight additional schools received the award, bringing the total number of Digital Schools to fifty-six. In 2009 €1.58m in Dormant Account funding was provided to 100 schools serving the most disadvantaged areas for the purpose of providing one-off assistance to them to progress towards achieving this award.

In addition the NCTE continued to support **Webwise** (www.webwise.ie), the Irish Internet Safety Awareness Node of *Insafe* (the European network of internet safety awareness nodes) and a range of other innovative projects throughout 2009.

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

The NEPS was established in 1999 to support the personal, social and educational development of all children in Primary and Post-Primary schools through the application of psychological theory and practice in education, having particular regard for children with special educational needs.

All Primary and Post Primary schools have access to psychological assessments either directly through the assigned NEPS psychologist or through the Scheme for Commissioning Psychological Assessments (SCPA). Schools that do not currently have NEPS psychologists assigned to them may avail of the SCPA, whereby the school can have an assessment carried out by a member of the panel of private psychologists approved and paid for by NEPS. NEPS also provides, upon request, assistance to all schools and school communities that experience critical incidents.

The main focus of NEPS is on early intervention with pupils and staff in schools in order to maximise pupil potential, to combat school failure and to avoid acute crises for children and young people. In this context the Department has published and distributed a framework document entitled *Special Educational Needs – A Continuum of Support*. These guidelines present a continuum of assessment and intervention processes that acknowledge the central role of the class teacher, supported as appropriate, by the school's own special education needs personnel and by agencies external to the school. This approach derives from the three stage approach to assessment and intervention described in the NEPS Model of Service. Psychologists offer support to schools at each stage of this process through consultation with teachers and parents. Psychologists also work with schools and teachers in developing this approach. The use of the consultative model means that psychological advice and expertise can be made available to many more children than could be reached by engaging solely in individual casework.

NEPS provides, upon request, assistance to all schools and school communities that experience **critical incidents** and processes applications for Reasonable Accommodation in Certificate Examinations (RACE) and responds to queries in relation to individual children from other sections of the Department and from specialist agencies. In addition, NEPS contributes to policy development and provides a wide range of advisory and consultative functions with other divisions within the Department and with its agencies, especially in the area of special needs provision.

For the 2009/10 school year NEPS psychologists were assigned to 74% of primary schools (representing 83% of pupils) and 92% of post-primary schools (representing 93% of pupils) which was a marginal increase on previous year.

During the 2008/09 school year NEPS psychologists were involved with referrals (casework) in relation to some 7,433 named students, it is also estimated that they made interventions and provided advice on a further 7,000 un-named students. Some 2,694 assessments were funded under the SCPA at a cost of approx €0.9m.

In addition they made recommendations on some 4,095 additional pupils under the Reasonable Accommodation in Certificate Examinations scheme (RACE) on behalf of the State Examinations Commission.

Objective 1.3: Provide targeted resources to promote social inclusion in our schools

Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools – DEIS

In 2005, the Department launched DEIS, an action plan to address the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities. This action plan is being implemented on a phased basis over five years. Under this specific initiative, the Department provided financial assistance to schools amounting to over €21.5m in the 2009/10 school year. As part of the DEIS action plan, the measures outlined below have been implemented.

- Reduced pupil teacher ratio in primary schools in urban areas with most disadvantage
- Allocation of administrative principal on lower figures than generally apply in primary schools in urban areas
- Additional capitation funding based on level of disadvantage
- Additional funding for school books
- Access to School Meals Programme
- Access to numeracy/literacy supports and measures at primary level
- Access to Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) services
- Access to School Completion Programme (SCP)
- Enhanced guidance counselling provision at post primary level
- Access to planning supports
- Provision for school library and librarian support at second level
- Access to Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) and Leaving Certificate Applied
- Access to a range of professional development supports

In addition to the Department there are a number of other agencies involved in DEIS initiatives including the School Development Planning Initiative (SDPI), the Second Level Support Service (SLSS) and the Primary Professional Development Service (PPDS).

The PPDS, while responsible for providing assistance in the area of implementing curriculum change, is also responsible for the implementation and co-ordination of literacy and numeracy strategies. These include:

- ***The Reading Recovery*** programme which is a school-based intervention designed to reduce literacy problems within the education system. It is an early intervention, giving children who have particular difficulties in reading and writing after one year in primary school, a period of intensive, individual teaching.
- ***The First Steps*** programme which addresses literacy needs in primary schools. It includes professional development courses and support materials for primary teachers. It offers teachers an accurate means of assessing and monitoring children's competencies and progress in reading, writing, spelling and oral language.

- ***The Maths Recovery*** programme which has been developed as a systematic response to the problem of chronic failure in school mathematics. It provides a programme of intensive, individualised teaching to students, in order to advance them to a level at which they are likely to learn successfully in a regular class.
- ***The Ready Set Go Maths*** programme is an intervention programme which contains a practical handbook of guidance for teachers in the use of a wide range of activities and materials to enable them to improve the quality and effectiveness of early learning in numeracy for children.

The following statistics highlight the impact of DEIS nationwide:

- 105,400² children at primary level attend schools that benefit from additional measures to combat educational disadvantage
- 61,000 students at post-primary level attend schools that benefit from additional measures to combat educational disadvantage
- 679 extra classroom teachers have been appointed at primary level
- 136 extra classroom teachers have been appointed at post-primary level
- 30 additional Administrative Principals have been appointed, on lower enrolment and staffing figures than apply in primary schools generally, to DEIS urban primary schools
- 151,000 children in 881 DEIS schools have the services of 450 Home School Community Liaison/Rural Coordinators
- 180,000 children and young people attending 692 schools (224 post-primary and 468 primary) have access to the SCP
- Under the SCP approximately 35,000 children and young people at risk of early school leaving were specifically targeted for intensive interventions, with other interventions targeted on a whole school basis
- Under the SCP approximately 800 young people who have opted out of school were targeted for interventions with a view to re-engaging them with the education system
- 679 primary schools shared payments in the order of almost €1 million in additional grant assistance to address educational disadvantage. The number of eligible pupils in these schools was 38,910 which equated to 38.4% of total enrolment for these schools
- 202 post-primary schools shared payments in the order of almost €3.5 million in additional grant assistance to address educational disadvantage. The number of eligible pupils in these schools was 21,000 which equated to 34% of total enrolment for these schools
- 673 DEIS primary and 202 DEIS post-primary schools shared payments in the order of €7 million to support vulnerable children by ensuring that the continuity of availability of school books for disadvantaged children
- The number of DEIS primary schools actively implementing the Reading Recovery programme was 228 at close of 2009. 54 schools commenced training during the year.
- 104 DEIS primary schools implemented First Steps Reading in 2009
- 30 DEIS primary schools implemented First Steps Writing in 2009
- 6 DEIS primary schools implemented First Steps Speaking and Listening in 2009
- A total of 332 DEIS primary schools are now included in the First Steps programme
- A total of 272 DEIS schools are now actively implementing the Maths Recovery programme
- JCSP being implemented in 182 DEIS schools
- 24 DEIS schools are currently engaged in the JCSP Demonstration Library project

² The figures provided in the 2008 Annual Report relating to students included those attending 1,900 primary schools that benefited from additional capitation provided to support dispersed disadvantage in their schools. As this provision has now been withdrawn the 2009 figures have been modified accordingly.

New and newly amalgamated primary schools established since 2008 were surveyed in May 2009. Following an analysis of the data by the Educational Research Centre (ERC), one of these schools was included in the Band 1 urban strand of DEIS, four in Band 2 and two in the Rural strand.

National Education Welfare Board (NEWB)

The NEWB was established in 2002 and has a statutory function to ensure that every child either attends a school or otherwise receives an education. In particular, the Board has a key role in following up on children who are not attending school regularly, and where there is a concern about the child's educational welfare.

In May 2009, Minister for State Séan Haughey, T.D. extended the remit of the NEWB. From the start of the academic school year 2009/2010 the new remit brought together the Visiting Teacher Service for Travellers (VTST), the Home School Community Liaison Service (HSCL) and the School Completion Programme (SCP) as well as the National Educational Welfare Service (EWS) under one common management team thereby providing for a single, more focussed, strategic direction at local, regional and national levels, reflecting equally the nature and strength of each of the services. The underlying rationale for this new single strategic approach is to deliver better outcomes for children, families, and schools. A core part of the new strategy will be an integrated child and family centred education support service drawing on the skills, expertise and knowledge of the four services. The new integrated approach provides for better targeting of children who are not benefiting from education and ensures that these children are properly supported to maximise their educational potential.

In 2009 the Department provided funding of €9.9m to the NEWB.

Section 29 Appeals

Section 29 of the 1998 Education Act allows an appeal to be made to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science in respect of a decision by a Board of Management to permanently exclude a student from the school, to suspend a student from the school for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days in any one school year, or to refuse to enrol a student.

Throughout the year, Section 29 appeals were processed and heard in a timely and professional manner, in accordance with statutory timeframes and stipulations, ensuring a right of appeal for parents regarding decisions made by schools which might have a significant effect on their children's future education in that they involve decisions made to exclude, suspend or refuse to enrol their children to school.

In 2009, a total of 390 Section 29 appeals were admitted. 266 of these appeals were in relation to Post Primary schools and 124 were for primary schools. 218 of the appeals went to full hearing, of which 72 were upheld. 31 were settled through local resolution, 53 were settled through facilitation, and 88 were withdrawn.

Home Tuition

The Department operates a home tuition scheme³ for children who are currently without a school place. Applications for home tuition under this scheme are made through the local offices of the National Education Welfare Board. Applicants must be actively seeking a school place and not an offer of a school

³ See also page 19 re: special education home tuition scheme.

placement. This home tuition is solely provided as a temporary measure until a school place is obtained. This scheme also provides home tuition in respect of pregnant school girls attending recognised schools and who may need to take time off school arising from the pregnancy. Approximately 400 students availed of this scheme for the school year ending in June 2009. In 2009 the cost to the Department of this scheme was €1.3m.

Objective 1.4: Provide appropriate accommodation and facilities for the delivery of quality education

A total of €26m was invested in school infrastructure in 2009. The completion of 33 large scale projects provided for 11,950 permanent school places and enhanced facilities. In addition 2,466 smaller scale projects were also completed providing another 9,968 permanent school places.

2009 saw the introduction of an **Energy Efficiency Scheme** and a total of 1,500 primary and 370 post-primary schools were approved to improve roof and cavity wall insulation levels. In addition the **Summer Works Scheme** which had been suspended in 2008 was re-introduced and benefited 967 schools.

Large Scale Projects

In 2009, construction work was completed on 26 large scale primary school projects, which provided a total of 5,936 permanent school places in new schools (including 4,732 additional places) and permanent school places and enhanced facilities in existing schools for a further 1,064 pupils.

In 2009, construction work was completed on 7 large scale Post-primary school projects, which provided a total of 2,525 permanent school places in new schools (including 1,350 additional places) and permanent school places and enhanced facilities in existing schools for a further 2,425 pupils

Smaller Scale Projects

At primary level 1,672 smaller scale projects were completed in 2009, which included the provision of 9,968 additional primary school places under the Permanent Accommodation Scheme, Additional Accommodation and Small School Schemes.

At post-primary level 794 smaller scale projects were completed in 2009.

The DART (Design, Awareness, Research & Technology) Programme

The Department is at the forefront of design with respect to sustainable energy efficiency in school buildings and this performance has been recognised at both National and International level. The Department's Technical Guidance Document's set the benchmark for sustainable design in school buildings with a clear focus on energy efficiency and they are based on solid energy research projects. The Department's policy is supported by a strong research programme with thirty nine research projects at various stages including its energy website at www.energyeducation.ie. Primary Schools that are designed and built in accordance with the Department's Schools Technical Guidance documents must achieve an A3 Building Energy Rating and are capable of being more than twice as energy efficient as schools built to best International Practice. All new technologies and approaches are tested to ensure compatibility with school design and operational requirements. Successful and repeatable results are then incorporated into all new school designs and refurbishments

As of January 1st 2009 all non-domestic buildings being constructed, rented or sold require by law a Building Energy Rating Certificate which is based on the building's potential energy performance assuming standard occupancy. Public Buildings are dealt with slightly differently, these buildings, including schools, require a Display Energy Certificate (DEC) which is based on the operational performance of the building based on energy consumption. To facilitate schools in complying with their legal requirements and complete a DEC for their own school, the Department, in association with Sustainable Energy Ireland, launched www.energyeducation.ie in 2009.

Objective 1.5: Provide a range of resources and supports for learners with special needs

Educational Supports

The Department is committed to ensuring that all children with special educational needs can have access to an education appropriate to their needs preferably in school settings through the primary and post primary school network.

The Department provides for a range of educational supports and services for children with special educational needs, including teachers, special needs assistants, assistive technology, specialist equipment, enhanced equipment and special transport arrangements.

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) was established in 2003 to improve the delivery of education services to persons with special educational needs arising from disabilities with particular emphasis on children. Its services are delivered through a national network of Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs) who interact with parents and schools and liaise with the Health Service Executive in providing resources to support children with special educational needs. The cost to the Department of funding the NCSE in 2009 was €9.25m.

As of 31/12/09, there were 8,657 whole time equivalent learning support/resource teachers in mainstream primary and post-primary schools. In addition, a further 1,159 teachers provide education to children attending special schools.

Children with special care needs are also supported by Special Needs Assistants (SNAs). At the end of 2009, there were in excess of 10,300 SNAs in primary, post-primary and special schools.

The *Special Education Home Tuition Scheme* provides funding to parents to provide education at home for children who, for a number of reasons such as chronic illness, are unable to attend school. The scheme was extended in recent years to facilitate tuition for children awaiting a suitable educational placement and to provide early intervention for pre-school children with autism. Approximately 750 pupils availed of the Special Education Home Tuition scheme during the school year ending June 2009. The cost of running this programme in 2009 was in the region of €7.4 million.

The *July Education Programme* is available to all special schools and mainstream primary schools with special classes catering for children with autism who choose to extend their education services through the month of July. The Department also provides for a July Programme for pupils with a severe/profound general learning disability. Where school based provision is not feasible, home based provision may be grant aided through the home tuition scheme. 17 additional schools participated in the school based programme in 2009 bringing the total number of schools to 121 while 1530 children availed of July Education home based tuition in 2009. The total cost in 2009 was in the region of €7 million.

Special Education Support Service (SESS)

The role of the Special Education Support Service (SESS) is to enhance the quality of learning and teaching in relation to special educational provision. The service co-ordinates, develops and delivers a range of professional development initiatives and support structures for school personnel working with students with special educational needs in mainstream primary and post-primary schools, special schools and special classes. The SESS operates under the remit of the Teacher Education Section (TES) of this Department. The SESS provided over 29,000 training places in 2009 which represents an increase of approximately 9,000 places over 2008. Included in this was training provision for Individual Education Planning, which was delivered to 2,611 primary and 277 post-primary schools. In 2009 the Department provided €2.8m in funding to the SESS.

Teachers from 276 autism units had access to intensive training with regard to Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) in 2009. Seminars are offered four times per year on a regional and local basis and cover a range of ASD-specific approaches to learning and teaching. The ASD programme of continuing professional development caters for all schools with autism units, with particular emphasis on newly appointed teachers in new units as well as newly appointed teachers in existing units. The ASD programme is closely aligned to the provision of accreditation through St. Angela's College in Sligo leading to a Post-Graduate Certificate/Diploma Programme of Continuing Professional Development in Special Educational Needs (Autistic Spectrum Disorders) for Teachers.

The SESS formed a team of behavioural specialists (“SEN Behaviour Team”) to provide continuing professional development for teachers and draw up and supervise the behavioural programmes required by pupils with ASDs attending special schools/classes for children with ASDs. The team constitutes people who have highly specialised training particularly in the area of applied behaviour analysis (ABA).

Following a tender process which took place in 2008, the Institute of Child Education and Psychology was selected to provide a range of on-line programmes of continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers of students with special educational needs. These courses are part-funded by the Special Education Support Service.

CPD forms a significant part of the preparatory work necessary for the successful implementation of the Education for People with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act. While the full implementation of this Act has been deferred it is essential that teachers are provided with an understanding of individual education planning and are enabled to participate and implement the process therein prior to the implementation of the Act. In this context, the SESS provided one full day of CPD for the Principal and a number of key teaching staff in all Primary and Post-Primary schools during 2009. This programme of CPD commenced for Primary schools in May 2009 and for Post-Primary schools in October 2009. The CPD centres on principles of best practice in relation to individualised planning for students with Special Educational Needs.

Special Education Needs Post-Graduate Programmes

The provision of these programmes continues to develop, through the working relationship between the Department and the following institutions-

- St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra
- St Angela's College, Sligo
- Church of Ireland College of Education, Rathmines
- Mary Immaculate College, Limerick
- University College Dublin
- University College Cork

- National University of Ireland, Galway

These institutions provide a Combined Post-Graduate Diploma Programme of Continuing Professional Development for Teachers involved in Learning Support and Special Education. For the 2009/2010 school year there were 275 (199 primary and 76 post-primary) participants on this programme.

In addition the following Department sponsored intakes on post-graduate programmes occurred in 2009:

- 15 participants on the Post-Graduate Certificate in the education of pupils with ASD which has been run by St Patrick's College, Drumcondra since 2001
- 24 participating in the Post-Graduate Certificate/Diploma Programme of CPD in SEN (ASD) for Teachers
- A total of 75 places available on the on-line Certificate/Diploma in Education (Special/Inclusive Education) course for primary and post-primary teachers

Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) pilot scheme

The Department funds an ABA pilot scheme which was established in the absence of the network of special classes which is now available in schools. There is a commitment in the current Programme for Government to long-term funding for the centres that are in the ABA pilot scheme subject to agreement with the Department on standards that will enable them to be supported as primary schools for children with autism. Broad agreement has been reached on the core conditions to enable the centres participating in the scheme to be recognised as special schools for children with autism and applications were received in 2009 for special school recognition.

In 2009 an additional 25 classes for children with autism attached to mainstream and special schools were approved, bringing the total number of special classes at the end of 2009 to 335. Ten additional early intervention classes for children on the autistic spectrum were also approved during the year, bringing the total number of early intervention classes at the end of 2009 to 45.

Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004

A commitment was given in the renewed Programme announced in October 2009 to develop, in consultation with stakeholders, a costed multi-annual plan to implement some priority aspects of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act, focussing on measurable, practical progress in education and health services for children with special needs.

Objective 1.6: Provide targeted resources and supports for newcomer children

The resources allocated to schools to meet the needs of pupils learning English as an Additional Language (EAL) are additional to the other supports and funding provided to schools. All pupils including immigrant pupils (irrespective of their English language proficiency) are counted for the regular pupil teacher ratios in schools.

EAL Support Teachers

In collaboration with parents and mainstream class teachers, EAL support teachers identify pupils requiring additional language support, assess pupils' proficiency in English using the assessment materials, devise appropriate language programmes, deliver the programmes and record and monitor pupils' progress. They share their expertise with mainstream class teachers and assist in developing and disseminating good practice to support the development of students' English language proficiency. It is recommended that pupils receive additional EAL support teaching in the classroom or in timetabled EAL lessons for small groups in addition to the support they receive from the class teachers.

It is the responsibility of the school authority to deploy EAL support teachers having regard to the proficiency levels of individual pupils involved and in line with their evolving needs.

The level of support allocated to primary and post-primary schools is determined by the number of enrolled pupils for whom English is a second language and their assessed levels of English language proficiency.

Schools, at both levels, with between 14 and 30 pupils requiring EAL support qualify for one additional EAL support teacher. Schools with between 31 and 90 pupils qualify for a second EAL support teacher. As an additional alleviation measure, schools with substantial numbers of pupils requiring EAL may qualify for up to two additional EAL support teachers. A total of 1,550 EAL support teachers were allocated for the 2009/10 school year.

Where schools have fewer than 14 pupils requiring EAL support, grant aid is allocated at primary level to facilitate the Board of Management in funding the provision of part-time EAL support whilst post-primary level EAL support is allocated on the basis of part-time teaching hours.

English as an Additional Language Post-Primary Assessment Kit

This kit has been designed to assist EAL support teachers in determining the language proficiency of newcomer students. It contains sets of tests; CDs with the relevant listening tests; the listening scripts and copies of the sets of photos to be used as part of the speaking tests. The tests help to establish a student's level of English on arrival in school, monitor progress over time in language support and identify the point at which a student no longer requires additional language support. Two copies were sent to all Post Primary Schools in February 2009. In addition, copies were also sent to Education Centres and the pack was uploaded on the NCCA website.

Objective 1.7: Support the development and provision of high-quality early childhood education

Ireland operates a split system of governance with this Department having responsibility for early childhood education provision in targeted initiatives for 'at risk of educational disadvantage' children aged 3-4 (e.g. Early Start and Traveller Preschools) and the Infant Classes in primary schools catering for children aged 4-6 years.

Childcare Provision for children aged from birth onwards is governed by the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs which regulates and inspects a diverse range of private, community and voluntary service provision.

The April 2009 budget announcement of a free preschool year for all young children is a landmark development in the provision of early childhood care and education services. While the scheme is to be

funded through the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, the Department has funded two practice frameworks (Síolta and Aistear) to support the development of quality provision in participating services.

Síolta, which was developed in 2006 by the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education, operating under the aegis of the Department, is concerned with all areas of quality that impact on children's care and education. It includes early learning and development but also other standards such as Health and Welfare, Environments, Planning and Evaluation and Organisation. Aistear, which was developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment in 2009, is a curriculum framework which focuses specifically on supporting children's early learning and development from birth to six years. The two frameworks complement each other and Aistear can help practitioners work towards a number of the standards in Síolta such as curriculum, environments, identity and belonging, partnership with parents, interactions and play.

Workforce Development Plan for the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Sector

A Workforce Development is a key element of the Government's commitment to quality early childhood care and education. As part of the process of developing this Workforce Development Plan an extensive programme of research and public consultation was finalised in 2009. The following documents were published electronically on the website of the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs at www.omcya.ie:

- Developing the Workforce in the Early Childhood Care and Education Sector: Background Discussion Paper,
- Developing the Workforce in the Early Childhood Care and Education Sector: Consultation Document, and
- Developing the Workforce in the Early Childhood Care and Education Sector: Report on Findings from the Consultative Process.

Research Programme in Early Childhood Education

By end December 2009 the Department had provided funding of approximately €22k to the following research projects on the nature of pedagogy and practice in diverse early childhood education settings in Ireland:

- Inclusion of children with Special Educational Needs in mainstream preschool settings
- Continuing Professional Development of Staff (with a focus on pedagogy)
- Promoting continuity of experience for children across preschool and infant classes of primary school (focus on partnership with parents, pedagogy and transitions).

Interim reports from all projects were presented at a seminar in November 2009. All projects will produce final reports in 2010.

Chapter 2 – Further Education

High Level Goal Two: Enhance opportunities in further education and youth services

Context

The role of the Department is to promote, co-ordinate, fund and monitor the development of Further Education programmes for young people and adults who have either left school early or who need further education and training to enhance their employment prospects and to enable them to progress their education up the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

The Department is responsible for policy development and representation in relation to aspects of further education and training. In 2009 it continued to liaise with other Government Departments, in particular the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, to ensure an integrated, coherent national policy in relation to Further Education. There was also regular contact with the Department of Social and Family Affairs in relation to social welfare benefit entitlements of adult learners.

The level of overall expenditure on Further Education has grown from over €176 million in 2000 to almost €434 million in 2009. These figures include expenditure on staff costs in all programmes, non-pay grants to VECs and student support grants to Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) learners.

Further and adult education provision offers access, transfer and progression opportunities to learners. Courses, both full-time and part-time, are open to all but the main purpose is to provide a range of supports which will:

- Meet the needs of young early school-leavers
- Provide second-chance education to enable learners to progress their education up to a standard equivalent to upper secondary level
- Provide vocational preparation and training for labour market entrants and re-entrants.

Objective 2.1: Promote the quality of education provision

Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)

26 countries, including Ireland, have agreed to participate in this OECD programme. This five-year study will examine 21st-century skills of adults in these countries as a way of investigating the link between skills and outcomes in educational, social and labour-market contexts. Developmental work began in 2008. The field test data collection will take place in 2010 and the main data collection in 2011/2012. From 2010, the Department is funding the project in Ireland and the Central Statistics Office will be undertaking the survey work. The results of the survey are scheduled to be available in 2012/2013. In 2009 this Department and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment jointly contributed €84,000 to the costs of the consortium engaged by the OECD to run PIAAC centrally.

National Skills Strategy

The National Skills Strategy was launched in 2007 jointly by the Minister for Education and Science and the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment. The Strategy, prepared by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN), identified Ireland's current skills profile, provided a strategic vision and specific objectives for Ireland's future skills requirements, and set out a road map for how the vision and objectives can be achieved.

The Strategy set out clear long-term objectives for our education and training requirements to develop Ireland as a knowledge-based, innovation-driven, participative and inclusive economy with a highly skilled workforce by 2020.

In 2008, the Minister for State for Lifelong Learning, Seán Haughey T.D., established an inter-Departmental Committee tasked with drawing up an implementation plan for the Strategy. The Committee continued its work on the implementation plan and met on several occasions in 2009.

Evaluations of Centres of Education

Inspectors assigned to the Department's Regional Office Service conducted 14 evaluations of Youthreach and Senior Traveller Training Centres in 2009.

Intercultural Guidelines

In 2009, the Department developed a set of intercultural guidelines in Further Education. The initiative was funded under the National Action Plan Against Racism (NAPAR).

The initiative commenced with a survey of Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) and Senior Traveller Training Centres (STTCs) programmes to assess the level of intercultural activity taking place and to inform the development of guidelines. The Department then drafted guidelines and sought feedback from stakeholders. In December 2009, the Department finalised the guidelines and invited VECs to submit proposals to provide continuous professional development (CPD) based on the intercultural guidelines.

FÁS-IVEA National Co-operation Agreement

The National Co-Operation Agreement between FÁS and the Irish Vocational Education Association (IVEA) was agreed by both organisations in June 2009. Under the terms of the Agreement, a National Steering Group (NSG) was established, comprising senior representatives of FÁS, the IVEA, the then Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and this Department. The NSG held its first meeting in July 2009.

The Agreement provides for the establishment of 8 Regional Consultative Committees (RCCs) which will comprise senior management from FÁS and the relevant Vocational Education Committees (VECs). The RCCs are designed to provide a structure and framework which will enhance co-operation between all parties. At its first meeting, the NSG agreed that its role was to encourage and empower the RCCs in progressing this aim and emphasised the importance of two way communication in this regard.

Further Education Support Service

The Further Education Support Service (FESS, formerly the National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA) Support Service) was set up by the NCVA in 1997 to support centres offering NCVA modules and awards. It has since become the FESS, supporting Department of Education and Science funded centres registered with the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC). FESS is a full-time, year-round service managed by City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee with five Support Officers based in, City of Dublin, City of Cork, Cavan, North Tipperary and Wicklow VECs.

The FESS team has a broad range of expertise in the FE sector, including Post Leaving Certificate, Youthreach, VTOS, Community, Further and Prison Education. In 2009 the Department provided over €800,000 to fund this service.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

The Department provides grants to VECs to fund CPD for Youthreach, STTC and VTOS staff in order to:

- Standardise the approach to the provision of CPD in FE at national and local levels
- Maximise the effectiveness, coherence and reach of CPD activities in the FE sector and increase efficiency in the management and delivery of CPD in VECs
- Facilitate decision-making at the point of delivery of CPD activities and enable VECs to respond more flexibly to diverse local CPD needs
- Encourage provision of generic CPD programmes which cross programme divides

This grant is administered locally by the VECs and expenditure in 2009 was approximately €19,000.

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)

NALA was established in 1980 and is an independent charity committed to making sure people with literacy and numeracy difficulties can fully take part in society and have access to learning opportunities that meet their needs. NALA membership is open to all people and organisations interested and involved in adult literacy development. In 2009 the Department provided a grant of €1.8 million to NALA.

AONTAS

AONTAS is the National Adult Learning Organisation, a voluntary membership organisation which exists to promote the development of a learning society through the provision of a quality and comprehensive system of adult learning and education which is accessible to and inclusive to all. AONTAS provides an information referral service to adult learners and the general public, collects data on developments in the sector and undertakes research. AONTAS endeavors to work in partnership with other relevant organisations and Government Departments, and from time to time engages in specific projects designed to support the work of different sectors of the membership. In 2009 the Department provided funding of almost €1 million to facilitate its work.

Objective 2.2: Promote access and participation in further education

Further Education courses are provided at Levels 1 – 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Full-Time Programmes available

- ***Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)*** is targeted at unemployed persons over 21 years of age. Its primary target groups are the longer-term unemployed, the low-skilled and disadvantaged. VTOS participants are paid a training allowance and can avail of guidance and childcare supports. 2009 provision on VTOS was maintained at 2008 levels.
- ***Youthreach*** is targeted at young people aged between 15-20 who have left school early without any qualifications or vocational training. It provides an integrated programme of education, training and work experience. It was introduced jointly with FÁS in 1989. The Department of Education and Science Youthreach programme is operated by VECs. Participants are paid a training allowance and are also entitled to childcare support. 2009 provision on Youthreach was maintained at 2008 levels.
- ***Senior Traveller Training Centres (STTCs)*** for Travellers over 18 years of age. STTCs provide an integrated education, training and work experience programme with a specific emphasis on catering for the cultural needs of the travelling community. Participants are paid a training allowance and are also entitled to childcare support. There were 984 approved places as of 1st September 2009.
- ***Post Leaving Certificate programmes (PLC)*** are in place for learners over 16 years of age who have completed their Leaving Certificate and for adults returning to education. PLC Courses are provided predominantly in the VEC sector, but some Community and Comprehensive schools and Secondary schools also offer courses. An additional 1,500 approved PLC places were announced in the Supplementary Budget and allocated to VEC's and other providers, bring the total number of approved places to 31,688.

Part-Time Programmes available

Community Education

Community Education refers to education and learning, generally outside the formal education sector, with the aims of enhancing learning, empowerment and contributing to civic society. It is firmly community-based, with local groups taking responsibility for, and playing a key role in, organising courses and deciding on programme-content.

Adult Literacy

Adult Literacy programmes involve the provision of basic education, including reading, writing, spelling and numeracy skills, to adults whose skills are inadequate for functional participation in everyday life. Programmes also covered include personal development, learning to learn and IT skills. Funding has also been provided for specially targeted literacy programmes, such as intensive literacy, literacy for deaf people, family literacy, literacy for people with dyslexia, and workplace literacy. Funding for adult literacy (EU co-funded under the European Social Fund) and community education is provided through annual grants to VECs. English language tuition (ESOL) for adult migrants is also provided through the adult literacy budget.

In 2009 there were over 47,000 adult literacy participants (including 10,000 ESOL participants) and over 54,000 community education participants

Back to Education Initiative (BTEI)

The Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) (EU co-funded under the European Social Fund) aims to increase the participation of young people and adults with less than upper second level education in a range of learning opportunities. In 2009 VECs provided in excess of 28,000 opportunities to learners under the BTEI, which was an increase of 1,000 on 2008.

The National Adult Refugee Programme (ARP)

This programme is open to all those with refugee status. Participation in the Programme is available for a period of up to 1 year, 20 hours per week. This does not necessarily have to be continuous and, in very general terms, translates to approximately 920 hours for each Programme participant.

The purpose of the Programme is to assist, as best possible, in a process of integration into Irish society. At all times during the Programme participants must be actively seeking employment. The Programme offers assistance in 3 ways: up-skilling English language ability, assistance in accessing the work/study place and, through social activities, an increase in the understanding of both the culture and the general characteristics of Ireland.

As co-ordinating VEC, County Dublin VEC is responsible for arranging the resources (tutors, materials, accommodation etc.) that are required for the programme nationwide. It operates in a number of VECs across the country, depending on the location of refugees (County Dublin VEC work with the Office of the Minister for Integration in this regard). In 2009, funding of €2.8 million was provided for the Programme which attracted 550 participants.

Programme	2009 Expenditure €m	Approved Places
Full-time		
VTOS	77.4	5,000
Youthreach	66.1	3,692
STTCs	26.6	984
PLC	7.7*	31,688
Part-Time		
	2009 Expenditure €m	Participants (estimated)
BTEI	17.3	28,000
Literacy	30.0	47,000
Community Education	10.1	54,000

* *Expenditure on enhanced capitation and LDA payments only. Overall expenditure on PLC in 2009 was €183m, including pay, student support and capitation.*

Programme Supports

- The Adult Education Guidance Initiative (AEGI) commenced in 2000 with 10 pilot projects designed to support the objectives for lifelong learning set out in the *White Paper on Adult Education: Learning for Life 2000*. There are currently 40 projects nationwide, with all but one managed by the local VEC. The measure is designed to support access to Adult Literacy, VTOS, BTEI and other adult and community education programmes in the Further Education Sector. The service is also available to survivors of residential abuse and their families. AEGI provision was maintained at 2008 levels and the service dealt with more than 38,000 clients in 2009, an increase of 3,000 when compared to 2008.
- An annual childcare grant is provided to VECs to help learners with young children to return to the education system. Participants in the VTOS, Youthreach, STTCs and BTEI programmes are eligible. The aim is to attract people whose attendance is currently prevented by childcare responsibilities to enrol on these programmes. Approximately 1,850 children of 1,300 parents participating in Further Education programmes benefited from childcare support funding in 2009.

Supports	2009 Expenditure €m	Beneficiaries
AEGI	6.85	38,000
Childcare	4.35	1,850 children of 1,300 parents

- The Youthreach Guidance Counselling and Psychological Service (GCP) is available to participants in Youthreach, STTCs and FÁS Community Training Centres (CTCs). It is administered by way of grants to VECs and is used to deliver prioritised services from a spectrum of needs ranging from initial orientation and guidance to vocational information as well as psychological services. Total expenditure on the GCP in 2009 was €1.336 million
- The Special Educational Needs Initiative (SENI) was introduced in 20 Youthreach centres in 2007. This initiative provided for additional staffing to deal with the special educational needs of learners, staff training, case supervision and professional support for staff. This provision was maintained in 2008 and again in 2009. 2009 expenditure was €1.52 million

Objective 2.3: Support the development of youth work services

On foot of a government decision taken in 2008 responsibility for Youth Affairs was transferred to the Office of the Minister for Children in the Department of Health and Children from this Department with effect from 1 January 2009. Consequently this objective relating to youth services is no longer applicable to the Department.

Chapter 3 – Higher Education and Research

High Level Goal Three: Sustain and strengthen higher education and research

Context

As of December 2009 the Department was responsible for general policy, including research, funding and oversight responsibilities for the Higher Education sector. The policy approach has regard to the overall aim of the higher education system in enabling people to reach their full potential as individuals and active citizens, with a particular focus on the participation of those groups currently under-represented in the sector. These include socio-economically and educationally disadvantaged students, mature students and students with disabilities.

In recent years, Government and policy makers have increasingly looked to this sector to deliver important national policy goals in addition to their missions of teaching and learning, scholarship and research. In addition to promoting social inclusion and citizenship these policy goals include:

- Enhancing the skill levels of the population to meet the needs of a modern high-technology economy and society
- Promoting economic development, traditionally through developing and enhancing the skills and abilities of the labour force but increasingly through research, the development, application and commercialisation of new knowledge and the emerging role of Higher Education Institutions as potential and actual sources of enterprise and economic growth
- Promoting regional and cultural development

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) is the statutory planning and development body for higher education and research in Ireland. Recurrent funding is allocated by the Department to the HEA, which in turn deals with the individual budgets of the seven Universities, fourteen Institutes of Technology and a number of designated higher education institutions. In addition, the Department also has direct responsibility for the resourcing of a small number of higher education institutions. The Department also funds the provision of infrastructure required for the delivery of higher education including research infrastructure.

In its Strategy Statement 2008-2010 the Department identified the following priorities for higher education and research:

- To widen and increase participation
- To modernise programme delivery
- To achieve world-class quality at all levels from undergraduate education to advanced fourth level research

Objective 3.1: Enhance the quality of higher education and its capacity to respond to changing needs

In 2009, almost €1.32bn in recurrent funding was provided to the University and Institute of Technology (IOT) sectors. Recurrent funding to the third level sector includes grant in lieu of the cost of tuition fees which amounted to some €379million in the 2008/09 school year.

Revised Recurrent Funding Mechanism in the University Sector

The introduction by the HEA of a revised recurrent funding mechanism in the university sector was finalised in 2008. The model is being kept under review and it is anticipated that it will be further developed in the coming years. The development of the model in the case of the Institute of Technology sector has commenced. The model for the institutes will have built-in accountability features in terms of reliability, comparability of data and student audit processes, similar to that operating in the universities' funding model.

Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF)

The Government introduced the SIF in 2006 to drive modernisation, change and reform in core higher education activities. Projects approved under the Fund are aimed at institutional reform, enhancing teaching and learning, improving access and life long learning and enabling the development of fourth level activity. A key success of the Programme has been the level of inter-institutional collaboration it has generated throughout the sector. In 2009 recurrent expenditure under this fund amounted to €27 million.

Further details with regard to this fund are available from the HEA website (www.heai.ie).

Higher Education Infrastructure Investment

In 2009 the Department continued its programme of investment in mainstream higher education infrastructure. Over €137m was invested in delivering a range of projects that provide modern, fit for purpose facilities. Five major projects were fully completed delivering 34,935m² of new and improved facilities for almost 4,000 students. In addition, 11 projects were in design while a further 7 projects targeted to deliver approximately 47,000 m² were on site.

The Devolved Grant Scheme, which had previously only covered the Institutes of Technology, was expanded in 2009 to include the 7 Universities. Under the Scheme twenty one minor works projects, relating to the upkeep of facilities, were funded in 2009 at a cost of almost €40m.

As a result of a major expansion to the Government's Public Private Partnership Programme announced in 2005 €270m was allocated for the provision of 16⁴ new third level projects in 8 locations. In July 2009, the 1st bundle of third level PPP projects consisting of six buildings in 4 Third Level Institutions were handed over to the National Development Finance Agency (NDFA) for procurement and the 3 short listed tenderers were announced in December. Pre-procurement work on the 2nd Bundle Third Level Projects consisting of six buildings in 2 Third Level Institutions is nearing completion while the pre-procurement process for the 3rd Bundle Third Level Projects commenced in November 2009.

⁴ Infrastructure work relating to Tallaght IT was originally included in the Programme.

Grangegorman Development Agency

The Grangegorman Development Agency was established in May 2006. In 2009, the Agency completed the Strategic Plan and Budget for the proposed development of the Grangegorman site. The Strategic Plan includes the options and the associated costs of moving the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) campus to the Grangegorman site as well as making recommendations on site provision for the relevant health facilities. The Strategic Plan and Budget was received by the Department in 2009.

National Strategy for Higher Education

In February 2009 the Minister launched a process to develop a new national strategy for higher education. The process, which is being led by a high level strategy group comprising national and international expertise, is examining how well Ireland's higher education system is performing, how it ranks internationally, how well existing resources are being used and how the system can be re-configured to best meet the many challenges it faces over the next decade having regard to the key role it has to play in contributing to Ireland's economic recovery. It is envisaged that the strategy will provide a vision and related set of national policy objectives for Irish higher education over the coming 20 years and identify the operational framework for the sector which will enable it deliver those objectives. It is expected that the strategy group will finalise its report in 2010.

Activation Initiatives taken in 2009

The Department worked closely with other key Departments in developing responses to support the upskilling and reskilling of unemployed people.

During 2009 the higher education sector developed a number of new flexible learning initiatives to support unemployed people return to education and engage in upskilling. They include:

- From September almost 1,800 unemployed people were supported to embark on part time undergraduate and postgraduate courses that support the goals of the "Smart economy"
- More than 1,000 people participated on newly developed part-time transition programmes and accelerated programmes in the Institutes of Technology. The transition programmes were developed to assist unemployed people who may be some time out of the formal education system develop some of the necessary skills for studying at third level and the accelerated programmes allowed students to complete the first year of a standard two year programme in an accelerated manner
- A new education programme was developed by the Institutes of Technology to allow redundant apprentices acquire additional certified skills in the education sector. The programme aimed at developing core skills in maths, ICT and business in order to facilitate students progressing to other higher education programmes or completing their apprenticeship at a later stage

Growth in Demand for Higher Education

Applications for entry to higher education continued to increase. CAO applications in 2009 were up 6% on 2008 and CAO acceptances for the 2009/10 school year, at 45,582, were up 8.3% on the previous year (2008/09). The total number of full-time enrolments in Department of Education and Science aided higher education institutions is estimated to be 156,000 for the 2009/2010 school year, up approximately 7% on the previous year.

Objective 3.2: Significantly increase PhD numbers and research activity
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Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation (SSTI)

This Strategy constitutes one of the principal pillars of the National Development Plan 2007-2013, and is the Government's blueprint for developing Ireland's research and innovation capacity. The SSTI provides for a range of programmes of support across a number of Government Departments and aims to improve the scale and quality of research and technology transfer arrangements carried out in Ireland in the higher education, public and enterprise sectors.

The Department is a major partner in the delivery of SSTI and had direct funding responsibility in 2009 for a number of funding programmes under the SSTI, all of which are primarily aimed at developing research capacity in the higher education system through the provision of physical infrastructure and the development of high quality fourth level education. These programmes include the Programme for Research in Third-Level Institutions (PRTLTI) and the award schemes of the two Irish Research Councils.

Programme for Research in Third-Level Institutions (PRTLTI)

The Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTLTI) is the most significant research programme directly supported by the Department in 2009. It supports the building of strategic institutional research capacity, enabling the establishment of research centres and facilities; and joint research programmes and national initiatives. There have been four cycles of funding to date, delivering a total investment of €65 million.

A fifth cycle of funding was announced in early 2009 and proposals were requested for strategic, collaborative projects across all disciplines under 3 categories: infrastructure and facilities, structured PhD education, and new and emerging potential areas. Proposals were assessed by an independent international panel during 2009 and awards were planned to be announced in 2010.

Further information, including funding details, with regard to this Strategy is available from the HEA website (www.heai.ie).

Research Facilities Enhancement Scheme

The Research Facilities Enhancement Scheme was completed in 2009. The objective of this scheme was to enhance research facilities within institutions by enabling higher education institutions to:

- Undertake the necessary refurbishment, conversion and/ or upgrade of their facilities, to enable the undertaking of high-quality research in line with institutions' strategic priorities. The scope of the scheme will extend both to existing facilities in use for research purposes as well as facilities planned to be adapted for exclusive use for existing research purposes; and
- Acquire necessary equipment for conducting research as mentioned above. Accordingly, the new scheme will incorporate and replace the Research Equipment Renewal Scheme.

The scheme provided over €54m in funding to 20 higher education institutions.

Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology (IRCSET)

The IRCSET is an independent and autonomous research funding and monitoring body which promotes science and engineering research in Ireland. It operates research funding initiatives, which support talented researchers in their early stage career formation across Masters, Doctoral and Postdoctoral levels, in the sciences, engineering and technology. These initiatives are designed to ensure that Ireland will become an internationally attractive location for high-level research. The emphasis of its funding programmes is on exploratory research aimed at yielding new concepts, findings and innovations within Ireland.

Funding is made available through a series of competitive calls for applicants. Selection for funding is based on merit and the decision process is overseen by independent assessment panels. IRCSET awarded 210 postgraduate scholarships and 58 postdoctoral fellowships in 2009.

Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS)

The IRCHSS, which was established in 2000, provides funding for cutting-edge research in the humanities and social sciences, including business and law. The IRCHSS operates a suite of interlinked research schemes, including the Government of Ireland Post-Graduate Scholarship Scheme.

The IRCHSS secured funding under the EU Framework Programme (FP7) for Marie Curie co-funded post doctoral awards. The funding secured was the largest Irish award under FP7 in 2009. The objective of the 3 year co-funded Scheme (CARA) is to encourage Irish-based researchers who have gained most of their research experience in Ireland, to avail of a structured period of overseas mobility with associated career development actions.

In addition, IRCHSS awarded 136 postgraduate scholarships and 26 postdoctoral fellowships in 2009.

Technological Sector Research

Funding under this programme is available for the Institutes of Technology and the Dublin Institute of Technology. There are three strands:

- Post-graduate Research & Development Skills: training in R&D skills for graduates leading to a Masters degree. This aims to increase the supply of highly skilled graduates to enable industry to become and remain competitive
- Enterprise Platform Programme: training programmes for graduate entrepreneurs involving education/enterprise training and advice/mentoring from business and industry
- Core Research Strengths Enhancement: support to develop research capacity in Institutes of Technology

HEAnet

HEAnet provides high quality Internet Services to Irish Universities, Institutes of Technology and the wider research and educational community. It provides direct connectivity for its community to other networks in Ireland, Europe, the USA and the rest of the world. The services provided by HEAnet are vital for underpinning research activity in Ireland - high speed internet access is essential if Ireland is to remain at the international forefront of developments in research and technology.

In addition to the third level institutions, HEAnet also provides internet services to a number of other bodies such as Schools, Central Applications Office (CAO), Health Research Board, Environment Protection Agency (EPA) and the ESRI. In addition to core funding from this Department, all clients are subject to a subscription fee.

Irish Research eLibrary (IReL)

IReL is a nationally-funded, electronic research library, providing online access to full-text articles from thousands of international quality, peer-reviewed research publications across a range of disciplines. Since the release of the first resources in 2005, millions of journal articles have been downloaded each year.

Summary of expenditure in 2009

College	Expenditure in 2009 €m
PRTLTI	31.4
IRCSET	26.1
IRCHSS	14.4
Tech Sector Research	7.0
HEAnet	3.6
E-journals (IReL)	4.0
Other	0.30

Objective 3.3: Promote access to higher education particularly for under represented groups and provide flexible learning opportunities

The Department is responsible for leading the development of national policy on equity of access to higher education for all students particularly among those groups which are currently underrepresented in the sector. To that end, it supports a range of dedicated measures, which facilitate greater levels of participation by disadvantaged students, mature students and students with disabilities.

Financial Supports

The principal support, in financial terms, is provided under four student grant schemes, which make available means-tested financial assistance to students in further and higher education. These schemes are the Higher Education Grants Scheme, the Vocational Education Committees' Scholarship Scheme, the Third Level Maintenance Grants Scheme for Trainees and the Maintenance Grant Scheme for Students attending Post Leaving Certificate Courses. The schemes are administered by the local authorities and the VECs. In 2009 the Department implemented a new payments process, which involves an advance of monies to awarding authorities to enable them to make grant payments to students without undue delay and subsequently reconcile the difference between the monies advanced and those actually paid out by way of student grants.

The maximum standard rate of maintenance grant for 2009 was €3,420. Students qualifying for the non-adjacent ordinary grant, plus the special rate of maintenance grant, received €6,690. In 2009, 69,486 (provisional) students received grants under the *Student Grant Schemes* at a combined cost of €306m.

The special rate of maintenance grant is a specific grant payable to qualifying students on top of the highest level of the regular grant. The additional amount is paid to eligible students from particularly low-income backgrounds. The special rate applies to all the maintenance grant schemes. Expenditure on special rate of maintenance grant amounted to €51m in 2009 and is included in the €306m above.

The *Student Assistance Fund* provides financial assistance for full-time higher education students who are experiencing financial difficulties whilst attending college. Students can apply directly to their college for Student Assistance to help them with either temporary or ongoing financial difficulties. The Student Assistance Fund provides a further source of funding for higher education students in addition to other schemes. For the 2009/2010 school year the Department allocated €5m to this fund. While full data for the 2008/2009 school year is not yet available it is estimated that approximately 9,800 students benefited from this fund.

The *Fund for Students with Disabilities* allocates funding to further and higher education colleges for the provision of services and supports to full-time students with disabilities. The Fund aims to ensure that students can participate fully in their academic programmes and are not disadvantaged by reason of a disability. Eligible students can receive assistance from the Fund from PLC level right up to doctoral level. They do not have to be in first year of a course to be eligible to apply for the Fund. In 2009 a total allocation of €1.74m was approved for support for students under this fund. In the 2008/09 school year, a total of 3,844 students, through both individual and group applications, benefited from this Fund.

The primary aim of the *Millennium Partnership Fund* was to support students from Partnership areas with regard to their retention and participation in further and/or higher education. For the 2009/2010 school year approximately €2.18m was allocated to the fund.

The website on financial supports for students www.studentfinance.ie was launched in January 2008. This website provides comprehensive information on a range of financial support schemes including the Maintenance Grant, the Student Assistance Fund and the Fund for Students with Disabilities. From September 2009 a downloadable application form was available on the website allowing the student to print down the application form and complete it in full and return it by post to their Local Authority/VEC.

The Department also provides for a number of third-level scholarship opportunities, including scholarships targeting disadvantaged areas. In the school year 2009/10, there were 249 scholarship holders. Total expenditure in 2009 was €1.9m.

Payment of student grants by Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT)

In 2009 the Department worked closely with a number of local authorities and VECs to advance the planned payment of student grants by EFT directly into student's bank accounts. While the migration of student grant payment from payment by cheque to payment by electronic funds transfer offers numerous benefits to the student, the institution and the grant administering agencies, the timing and accurate provision of verification of student attendance by the institutions is critical to the efficient administration of EFT by the grant administering agencies. To date the feedback from the participating awarding authorities is extremely positive in terms of the very significant administrative efficiency that is already being realised.

In order to ensure the transition from cheques to EFT is progressed in a satisfactory manner, the Department facilitated a limited test phase in the 2009/10 school year. The test phase involves a number of grant administering agencies and a number of institutions and the development of a standard protocol in respect of the exchange of data on the verification of continued attendance of grant holders by their institutions. The test phase will be subject to review at the end of the school year. To date, the feedback from the participating awarding authorities is extremely positive in terms of the very significant administrative efficiency that is already being realised.

National Office for Equity of Access to Third Level Education

The Department established a National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education (also known as the National Access Office) in the Higher Education Authority in 2003 to facilitate educational access and opportunity for under-represented groups in higher education. The groups prioritised are:

- Socio-economic groups under-represented in higher education;
- Mature students;
- Students with a disability.

In 2009, the Department continued to provide funding to this office which administers a number of access measures on behalf of the Department.

Chapter 4 – Improving and Developing Services

High Level Goal Four: Support the delivery and development of education through policy formulation, high-quality planning and a strong customer focus.

Context

In these challenging economic times the Department's priority has been to deliver optimum outcomes to all learners from within existing, and in many cases, diminishing resources. Learners, their parents, educators and others expect high standards of service, more accountability and quality planning to meet future education needs of society. The Department remains committed to:

- Delivering high-quality services that meet the needs of our customers and clients across all sectors of the education system; and
- Continued implementation of the Government's programme for modernisation across the public sector.

The specific priorities of the Department identified in the 2008-2010 Statement of Strategy are:

- To improve and develop the service we deliver
- To develop and review policies for the education system
- To continue implementation of the modernisation agenda
- To implement the Government's decentralisation programme

Objective 4.1: Deliver effective policies to address existing needs and emerging challenges in the education sector

Policy planning and review

Policy development is an integral part of the Department's services. The Department supports research, evaluation and planning to ensure an effective policy framework through its Central Policy Division.

Data Collection

In 2009 there was enhanced dissemination of data through an online interactive website to enable users of statistics to search for and download data they need. The database contains detailed time series information on a range of education topics including primary, secondary and third level enrolment, teachers, pupil-teacher ratio, schools, expenditure on education, school transport and all other education information previously available in the Annual Statistical Report (ASR). Users can search the Education Statistics Database facility to find data of interest or to generate customised statistical tables in a user-friendly manner. Users can sub-set a dataset, restructure it and display it on screen or download it in a file-type of their choice. The Education Statistics Database is available from the Department's website www.education.ie.

The Department moved from a paper-based Census of Primary Schools to an electronic transfer of information which saw a faster completion of the Primary Census with early indications of enrolment. Among the advantage to the spreadsheet approach is that it is more efficient for both the principal to fill in and for the Department to process. Totals are calculated automatically and errors and crosschecks are

being built in to the form. This means that errors will be caught and fixed at the time of filling in the forms eliminating the need for the Department to contact the school again later in the year in order to resolve errors or inconsistencies. Also, because some of the work is done automatically in the spreadsheet, the overall time required for principals to fill in the form will be reduced.

At post primary level the Department amalgamated the collection of information on applicants for additional Traveller support hours and English language support into the annual October returns data collection eliminating the need for separate data collections on these topics, thus reducing burden on schools. In compliance with Data Protection requirements schools have been advised by the Department to inform parents that these data are being collected and returned to the Department for the purpose of allocating additional resources.

Arising from the Data Strategy the Department launched a comprehensive inventory of all data collections from schools. The objective of the Inventory exercise is to examine the data collections from schools with a view to eliminating duplication and reducing the overall administrative burden on schools, as well as to examine how the overall amount of Department resources devoted to data collection from schools could be reduced, in light of continuing reduction of staffing numbers, and from the point of view of making the most efficient use of the resources available to the Department. This work is ongoing.

Value for Money and Policy Reviews

The Government's Value for Money and Policy Review Initiative is part of a framework introduced to secure improved value for money from public expenditure. The objectives of the Value for Money and Policy Review Initiative are to analyse Exchequer spending in a systematic manner and to provide a basis on which more informed decisions can be made on priorities within and between programmes. It is one of a range of modernisation initiatives aimed at moving public sector management away from the traditional focus on inputs to concentrate on the achievement of results.

Five Value for Money Reviews were underway as of 31st December 2009, with scheduled completion dates before the end of 2010:

- Review of the Summer Works Scheme
- Review of Insurance Arrangements for Schools
- Review of Special Needs Assistants
- Review of expenditure on language support for migrant students at primary and post-primary schools who do not speak English (or Irish) as a first language
- Review of School Transport

Development of the pilot Community National School of patronage

The piloting phase of the new model of Community National School was in its second year in 2009. The two Community National Schools in Dublin 15 - Scoil Ghráinne in Phibblestown and Scoil Choilm in Porterstown are characterised by an ethos of inclusion, equality and harmony, where each child and member of the school community is valued and treated with respect. The schools are multi-faith, welcoming and respect children of all faiths and none. They recognise and aim to accommodate the wishes of parents to have their children receive religious and morality based education, or faith formation, within the school day. This commitment, within a multi-faith environment, is an important distinguishing feature of the model.

The implementation of the pilot model is being overseen by a joint DES-VEC Steering Committee. Evaluation of the pilot is being undertaken by a sub-committee of the Steering Group.

Qualifications

The Department supports the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) and the Further and Higher Education and Training Awards Councils (FETAC and HETAC) in promoting the development and implementation of the National Framework of Qualifications, quality assuring a wide range of further and higher education and training provision and making awards to learners.

The Qualifications section of the Department progressed the preparation of legislation to amalgamate the NQAI, FETAC and HETAC into a single agency. The new agency will also take on responsibility for the external quality assurance review of universities, a function which is currently performed by the Irish Universities Quality Board and the Higher Education Authority. A Consultation Paper on the amalgamation was published in May 2009 and 33 responses from stakeholders were received. The amalgamation is expected to be complete in 2011.

A seminar to raise awareness of Directive 2005/36 on the recognition of professional services was hosted by the Qualifications section on 2nd December 2009. The event was attended by representatives from Irish Competent Authorities and presentations were given by guest speakers from the European Commission, the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland, the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment, the Medical Council, and FÁS.

The NQAI in September hosted a seminar, jointly organised with the European Commission, to mark the completion of the referencing of the National Framework of Qualifications to the European Qualifications Framework. Ireland was the first country to fully complete this referencing process.

The NFQ levels of university major Diplomas and non-major awards were published on the NQAI website in 2009. The Authority continued to collaborate with the universities, the NUI, and the Irish Universities Association (IUA) to secure the inclusion in the Framework of the remainder of the universities' current awards and the placement of the awards made prior to the introduction of the Framework (also termed 'legacy awards').

The NQAI produced a Guide to help higher education and training providers reference the NFQ in marketing and promotional materials and published the Framework Implementation and Impact Study Report, which was prepared by an external Study Team of national and international experts.

HETAC continued with its programme of institutional review and has published 8 reports on its website. This priority activity will continue in 2010. HETAC completed a major overhaul of a key standards policy - Assessment and Standards - which was published in December 2009.

FETAC published its first annual Monitoring Report in 2009 - 180 providers were monitored by FETAC during 2009. FETAC continued to make progress on the migration of existing awards to the Common Awards System (CAS) during 2009. The aim is to migrate all existing awards into CAS by June 2011.

In 2009, FETAC made awards to over 131,000 and 20,500 HETAC awards were issued.

A Regulatory Impact Analysis on the proposed Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Bill was completed in 2009. The RIA will be published with the draft legislation in due course.

Integration of Migrants to Ireland

In response to significant developments in the area, including the appointment of a Minister of State with cross-departmental responsibility for integration (including in this Department), the Department established an Integration Unit in late 2007.

In 2009 staff from the Integration Unit made presentations at a number of external seminars on the education of migrant students including at an EU conference in October, at the OECD and at national events such as the ELSTA (English Language Support Teachers Association) conference and the SDPI (School Development Planning Initiative) conference. In addition the Department held two briefing sessions for embassy staff one on higher and further education and another on qualifications recognition. The embassy briefing gave information which put embassies in a position to give their citizens up to date, accurate information on the Irish education system and gave them contacts within the Department of Education and Science to pursue any issues of concern.

The Department actively participated in the EU Commission's consultations on the Green Paper on Migrant Education, through both the Department's International and Integration Sections. The process was completed in November 2009 with the issue of EU Education Council conclusions on migrant education.

Ireland was one of six countries which took part in an OECD thematic review of migrant education and the Integration Unit co-ordinated Ireland's participation (objective 4.5 also). Following consultation meetings with stakeholders and two visits by the OECD study team, the Irish country report was published in December 2009. Ireland also contributed to the development of a handbook for policy makers by the OECD which was scheduled for publication early in 2010.

The Economic and Social Research Institute was commissioned by the Department to undertake a large-scale study into "Adapting to Diversity: Irish Schools and Newcomer Students". This was based on quantitative data from a survey sent to all post-primary principals, and principals in 1,200 primary schools as well as qualitative data from 16 schools (primary and post-primary). The report was published in June 2009.

Based on the extensive research outlined above and consultations with stakeholder groups, the Integration Unit continued its work on developing an Intercultural Education Strategy which is scheduled for completion in 2010.

Objective 4.2: Support the modernisation of the education sector through a partnership process that promotes good industrial relations practice

The Department promotes good industrial relations practice and encourages and supports the modernisation of the education sector by the following means:

- Advising client groups on industrial relations and employment legislation issues
- Operating a pay and allowances sanctioning system for all grades
- Advising institutions on the implementation and verification requirements of the modernisation agenda for the education sector, as set out in social partnership agreements
- Co-ordinating and organising the performance verification process through the Education Sector Performance Verification Group

In line with the terms of the *Towards 2016* Agreement, revised procedures for the suspension and dismissal of teachers and Principals were issued in September 2009.

In 2009 funding for Partnership arrangements in the Educational Sector amounted to €175,000.

Objective 4.3: Support and develop staff and seek continuous improvement in the effectiveness, value and quality of our services

ICT Supports

The Department relies on a number of ICT systems to support key business functions. During 2009 a number of significant enhancements to key systems were completed. In addition to the changes to the payroll system identified elsewhere in this report, both the On-Line Claims System (OLCS) and the Department's internal Financial Management System were enhanced during the year.

Two new developments that commenced in 2009 were the Pupil Entity Implementation project (PEIP) and the Inventory of School Accommodation project (ISAP). The PEIP, which is scheduled for completion in 2010, will streamline the internal Departmental processes and reduce the administrative burden associated with the collection and recording of pupil data. The ISAP, which is also scheduled for completion in 2010, will facilitate the efficient collection of key data from schools.

Other activities included a proof of concept of a Business Intelligence software tool to provide improved analysis of Departmental information and the transfer of the infrastructure supporting online services for schools from a private data centre to the Office of the Revenue Commissioners.

Staff Training and Development

The Department engages with staff and management in identifying training needs and organises and supports a wide range of training and development programmes for staff. Support is available for the Inspectorate, the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), the Planning and Building Unit (PBU) and the IT Unit with regard to their specific professional and technical training needs.

In excess of 2,700 days of training, which was targeted at the Departments priority business needs and mainly delivered in house, was provided in 2009. This training was presented in areas that included, Financial Management, induction training for new staff, Irish language training, customer service, presentation skills, chairing meetings, IT (end-user) and IT technical training. The Department also continued to prioritise management training to enhance its capacity to adequately meet new and evolving challenges through the provision of training programmes for middle and senior managers and two-day grade networks for managers. To support staff in the provision of quality written information a collection of writing skills guideline documents was produced and writing skills workshops were provided.

In 2009 the Department commenced training and roll-out of new expenditure monitoring reports to line sections which will replace existing standalone reporting processes and will provide faster and easier access to information. This will improve the overall Management Information Framework.

In addition to organised training and development, the Department continued to foster a learning culture by providing support for staff attending further education courses in their own time that are relevant to the Department and the broader Civil Service.

European Structural and European Regional Development Funds

In 2009 the Department continued to support the delivery of education services by ensuring maximum drawdown of assistance from the European Structural Funds (ESF) under the Human Capital Investment Operational Programme (HCIOP) and the ⁵BMW and ⁶S&E Regional Operational Programmes, and by monitoring and reporting progress on education measures.

Claims for the drawdown of financial assistance from the ESF were lodged by the relevant EU deadlines in 2009. Site visits were conducted in accordance with EU Regulations to verify the veracity of returns being made. Over €36m in ESF aid receipts was received by the Department in 2009 on the basis of verified expenditure returns submitted by Final Beneficiaries, i.e. VECs, Institutes Of Technology, Universities and the Higher Education Authority. The total amount of ESF aid to be claimed by the Department during the period 2007-2013 is €130 million.)

At the end of 2006 the Department was asked by the Department of Finance to identify additional eligible expenditure to compensate for under-expenditure in the BMW Region as an amount of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) aid was at risk of being lost to Ireland. By June 2009 certified claims of an additional €12.913 million of eligible expenditure were submitted in respect of third level colleges in the BMW Region under this fund.

In 2009 the Department monitored and reported on progress in relation to educational measures in the HCIOP, Productive Sector OP and the BMW and S&E Regional Operational Programmes. Comprehensive progress and financial reports on all measures were provided for the Spring and Autumn Monitoring Committee Meetings.

In addition the Department promoted compliance with NDP/EU requirements – issued circulars and guidelines on ESF Regulations for the 2007-2013 round of funding to all public beneficiaries; attended information seminars/meetings on the operation of the Human Capital Investment OP and the Regional OPs, facilitated audits/control visits and followed up on issues raised at audit.

Objective 4.4: Manage the Department's response to the initiatives for the redress of child abuse in residential institutions

The Commission to Inquire Into Child Abuse

The Department fulfils a dual role as sponsor of and respondent to the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse, which was established in May 2000 to inquire into the causes, nature, circumstances and extent of child abuse in industrial and reformatory schools and other institutions.

The Commission to Inquire Into Child Abuse issued its report in May 2009. The Department has since then been working towards implementation of the Report's recommendations in relation to counselling, education, family tracing services and designing of a memorial, and implementation of Government policy in relation to further contributions from the religious congregations towards redress.

⁵ BMW refers to Border, Midlands and Western Regional Operational Programme

⁶ S&E refers to Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme

Expenditure of some €3.57 million was incurred by the Department in respect of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse in 2009. Total expenditure on the Commission to the end of 2009 was €62.933 million.

Residential Institutions Redress Board

The Department provides funding and support to the Residential Institutions Redress Board, which was established in December 2002, to provide financial awards to victims of child abuse in residential institutions.

In 2009 the Redress Board processed some 1,200 awards as well as related legal costs. The total number of applications processed to end 2009 was 13,745. The Department paid approximately €4.28 million in redress awards and associated costs during 2009. Cumulative expenditure to the end of 2009 was €99 million.

Education Finance Board (EFB)

The Department continued to support the role of the EFB which was established in February 2006 to provide education grants to former residents of institutions and their families.

In 2009, 1,914 grants were approved by the EFB in respect of former residents and their families. Approximately €1.81 million was expended on education grants by the Board leaving it with an available balance of approximately €5.35 million at the end of 2009 to provide education grants to former residents and their families into the future.

FOI requests relating to former residents

During 2009, the Department processed 384 Freedom of Information applications for records from former residents of industrial schools and other institutions bringing the total number of such applications processed up to 12,177 by the end of 2009. Further enquiries arose in 94 cases that had previously been dealt with under the act.

Advice and support

The Department provided funding of approximately €1.023 million in 2009 for advice and support services for former residents of institutions.

Objective 4.5: Contributing to the development of

- North/South cooperation through the exchange of information and learning and joint action in agreed areas of common interest
- Education through cooperation and decision making at EU and international level

North South Cooperation

Two further meetings of the North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC) in Education Sectoral format took place in 2009. Ministers reviewed developments in North South cooperation in the areas of Educational Underachievement, Special Educational Needs, Teacher Qualifications and Teachers' Superannuation and School, Youth and Teacher Exchanges. At the second of these meetings, Ministers also welcomed arrangements for a new study on North South cooperation in the education sector being undertaken on behalf of their two Departments.

A bilateral meeting to discuss cooperation issues of mutual interest took place between both Ministers for Education in early 2009. Issues discussed included the work of the North South Exchange Consortium (NSEC) and the proposed study on North South cooperation in education. A separate bilateral meeting to discuss cooperation issues of mutual interest in the higher and further education and international education sectors took place between our Minister and the Minister for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland later in the year. Issues discussed included cooperation in higher education including development of strategies and cross-border research collaboration.

In early 2009 senior officials from both Departments met to discuss existing and potential areas of North South cooperation in the education sector, including sharing experience and good practice in addressing problems. In addition, a further meeting of officials from both Departments and support agencies for Irish Medium Education (IME) was held in Dublin in June. Relevant personnel agreed to jointly compile a catalogue of existing support material in this sector. Officials undertook to give further consideration to establishing priorities for future collaboration in the IME sector.

Both Departments jointly organised, in the context of their joint work on tackling educational underachievement, a peer learning event on school attendance in 2009. This event saw a range of academics, professionals and policy makers jointly considering existing services, sharing their experiences and examining best practice relating to school attendance. The Departments also held North South conferences on Traveller Education and Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) during the year.

In 2009 the two Departments continued to work towards implementation of the report of the joint North South *Review of Educational Exchanges and Supporting Mechanisms*.

In 2009, the Department continued to co-fund with the Northern Ireland Department of Education a range of North South cooperation initiatives including the *European Schools*, *Dissolving Boundaries* and *Civic Link* programmes. The table below provides a breakdown of participants in North South projects and programmes that received funding support in 2009.

Total Number Schools	1,105
Total Number of Youth Groups	17
Total Number of Teachers/Trainers	1,046
Total Number of Students	33,207
Total Number of Young People	4,729

The terms of a new Funding and Management Agreement between the Minister and the US-Ireland Alliance to enhance management and governance arrangements for the George Mitchell Scholarship Fund were agreed in 2009. This new agreement will be underpinned by legislation to be introduced by the Minister.

The Department contributed approximately €850,000 in revenue and capital expenditure to the Middleton Centre for Autism (Armagh) in 2009. The Centre is funded on a 50/50 basis by this Department and the Department of Education in Northern Ireland.

EU Education Policy

The Department contributes to the promotion of Ireland as a centre for international education through policy development and co-ordination; by supporting Departmental agencies which regulate and support international education in Ireland; by awarding scholarships to international graduate students who wish to undertake research in Ireland and by facilitating inward and outward visits by educational leaders and decision-makers.

Under the Treaties governing the European Union, Member States have full responsibility for the organisation of their education and vocational training systems, the content of teaching and their cultural and linguistic diversity, while the EU's role is to encourage and facilitate cooperation and support and to supplement the actions of the Member States. In practice, the European Commission and Member States work together on a range of education and training policy areas according to Member States' mutual priorities, and with the objective of sharing best practice between national experts under the so-called "open method of coordination".

EU Education Ministers meet at the Education Council in Brussels three times each year to discuss and agree policies for cooperation. In addition, an informal meeting of EU Education Ministers is held during each six-month Presidency i.e. twice annually. The Education Council is supported by the Education Committee, which is attended by staff from the Department. This Committee, which is the primary forum where Ireland can influence the drafting of agreed documents to reflect national priorities, met seventeen times in 2009.

The most noteworthy policy adopted by Ministers at the Education Council in 2009 was an updated strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training - *ET 2020*. ET 2020 is the most important document agreed over the past 8-10 years in European education policies, as it sets out the parameters and the policy framework for EU cooperation in the field of education & training up to 2020. This framework sets out four long-term strategic objectives for the period up to 2020, with short term priorities set down under each of these objectives for the period 2009-2011. The four long term objectives are:

- Making lifelong learning and learner mobility a reality
- Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training
- Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship
- Enhancing innovation and creativity, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training.

The implementation of these objectives is now focused on the short-term priorities set down for 2009-2011, and a variety of activities including conferences, thematic and sectoral working groups, one-off peer learning activities and study visits, each of which is to have a concrete and useful output, were planned or arranged to contribute to this process.

In 2009 staff from the Department also attended two meetings of the informal High Level Group on Education and Training in order to discuss and agree high level strategic policy direction in the field of education and training.

The Department also participated in a number of meetings and events related to the designation of 2009 as the European Year of Creativity and Innovation.

Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013.

In keeping with its role in supporting and supplementing the actions of the Member States in the area of education and training, the European Commission has adopted a range of programmes supporting cross-border mobility, networking and sharing of best practice. These education and training initiatives have integrated by the Commission under a single umbrella the “Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013”.

With a budget of nearly €7 billion for 2007 to 2013, this programme enables individuals at all stages of their lives to pursue learning opportunities across Europe. It consists of four sub-programmes: Erasmus, Comenius, Leonardo DaVinci and Grundtvig, as well as transversal programmes covering inter-sectoral themes such as ICT and languages

Between 2007 and 2013, Ireland will receive over €80 million from this Programme, which will allow some 18,500 Irish third-level students and lecturing staff to participate in Erasmus educational exchanges. This EU funding will also provide opportunities for some 2,500 Irish trainees to benefit from European work placements, for some 800 workers to up-skill during placements in European companies, for some 500 vocational education and training professionals to exchange best practice and around 550 schools and 150 adult education organisations to participate in various European partnerships. In addition to these, some 300 adult educators will participate in the Grundtvig Programme, and over 1,100 teachers and future teachers will be given the opportunity to participate in the Comenius programme. The total funding allocated to Ireland under the Programme in 2009 was nearly €1.6m.

The Lifelong Learning Programme is administered in Ireland by the HEA (Erasmus) and Léargas (all other sub-programmes).

Council of Europe

In addition, the Department continued to be represented on the Steering Committee for Education (CDED) of the Council of Europe. It was represented at two meetings of the Committee in 2009.

Promoting Ireland as a centre of international education

In 2009 the Department put in place a new framework to promote, quality-assure and co-ordinate international education services in Ireland, as part of the Government's overall policy of developing Ireland as a centre of international education. This included the allocation of responsibility for marketing and promotion of higher education to Enterprise Ireland, promotion of English language learning to Fáilte Ireland and the regulatory framework for international education to the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI).

Consequently, as of 31st December 2009, two bodies under the aegis of the Department, International Education Board Ireland (IEBI) and the Advisory Council for English Language Schools (ACELS), ceased operations with their staff and responsibilities being reallocated to Enterprise Ireland, the HEA and

the NQAI as part of the new promotion and regulation structures. These amalgamations will lead to more efficient delivery of services in the promotion and regulation of international education.

In addition, a new High Level Group on International Education, drawing together Government Departments, State agencies and representatives of the educational sectors, was established in 2009 with the task of developing a strategy for Ireland's enhanced performance in international education, with a report due in mid 2010.

Strengthening education links with strategic partner countries

Inter-governmental education links with key partner countries were strengthened, with a particular focus on the Middle East and Asia. There were outward Ministerial visits to Bahrain (as part of a Presidential visit) and Saudi Arabia. There were inward Ministerial-level visits from China and Saudi Arabia, and senior official-level visits from Malaysia and Bahrain.

UNESCO

The Department acts as the Irish national commission for United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation. Ireland's delegation to 2009 General Conference of UNESCO was headed by the Minister of State at the Department, and comprised representatives from a number of Government Departments. The General Conference set the policy direction for UNESCO for the period 2010-2012, with a particular emphasis on educational issues in the developing world.

OECD

International Section looks after the general administration related to OECD matters and makes the payments for contributions to programmes, e.g. CERI, PISA, and obtains copies of the OECD publications. Ministers for Education attend the OECD's Education Policy Committees on a biannual basis.

In 2009, the Department engaged in a range of OECD-led education activities, including those organised by the Education Policy Committee (EDPC), the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), the Indicators of Education Systems (INES) and the Programme on Educational Building.

Chapter 5 – Supporting Delivery & Focusing on the Needs of our Customers

Organisation Capacity

2009 was a challenging year from a human resources perspective with significant losses of staff due to the Incentivised Scheme of Early Retirement, the Incentivised Career Break Scheme, the Department of Social and Family Affairs levy and the ongoing moratorium on recruitment and promotion involving a loss of some 100 posts. Significant operational services are delivered by the Department many of which operate to tight and in some cases immutable timescales. As a result, it has been necessary to prioritise work accordingly and to focus on filling vacancies in these critical areas to ensure the least possible impact on service delivery in the education sector.

In 2009 Schools' Division in its restructured format became fully operational. This Division is responsible for the allocation of staffing and financial resources to primary and post-primary schools. It is also responsible for issuing guidance and direction to schools on various governance and policy issues including those relating to the terms and conditions of employment for school staff. This guidance and direction is typically issued by way of circulars which are listed on the Department's website. Schools' Division also deals with parents and pupils in relation to information on their child's education and time at school. The intention of the re-structuring was to re-organise resources on a thematic basis to build up expertise, avoid duplication of work, and to be better positioned to deal with cross sector issues. Prior to this internal resources and services were structured on a primary/ post-primary sector basis.

Customer Services

The Department's customer base encompasses all walks of Irish life. Everyone has a direct contact with education at some point of their lives, whether as a student, parent, teacher, employer, employee, as a member of the community or as a participant on parents associations, school boards of management or other governing boards. Each of these has a direct interest in the development and delivery of high-quality education services. The Government, members of the Oireachtas, the social partners and the Department's own staff, as internal customers, are all important client groups.

The Department is committed to delivering quality services that meet the needs of our customers, particularly learners. This commitment is reflected in the Department's Strategy Statement 2008-2010 and is underpinned in the performance management processes in the Department, where customer service is identified as a core competency for our staff. This commitment is reinforced in our Customer Charter and Customer Action Plan which were revised in 2009. The Department is also committed to communicating with and delivering services to customers through the medium of Irish, where that is their preference.

Website

In July details of the school building programme were published on the Department's website in a move that will allow projects to be tracked as they progress through all stages of the programme. This initiative, which significantly improves access to information on the school building programme, gives an overview of the school building programme including all projects approved to progress towards tender and construction, those moving through architectural planning and at those at application stage.

During the course of 2009 the Department's website, www.education.ie, had nearly 1.3 million hits by over 568,000 unique visitors from over 200 countries.

Decentralisation

In December 2009, the Government announced that decentralisation of the Department of Education and Science to Mullingar would be deferred on affordability grounds pending an overall review of the Decentralisation Programme in 2011.

Supporting the Parliamentary process

In 2009 the Department replied to 4,035 Parliamentary Questions asked by Deputies in Dáil Éireann, 3,781 of these were written replies and 254 were responded to orally by the Minister during Question Time. The questions and answers are published and are available on the Oireachtas website. 106 requests for observations in relation to Draft Memoranda for the Government were also received.

In addition the Minister's Office received in excess of 7,500 representations during 2009.

Freedom of Information (FOI)

The Department received 569 new requests during 2009 of which 415 were personal, 149 were non-personal and 5 were mixed. These figures include requests from former residents of the residential institutions mentioned elsewhere in the report.

The Department granted 109 FOI requests in full, part-granted 204 requests and refused 144 requests during 2009. In addition 17 requests were withdrawn, 50 requests were dealt with outside of FOI and 2 were transferred out of the Department.

Financial Management

In line with the provisions of the Prompt Payments of Accounts Act the Department discharged its statutory responsibility in relation to the payment and recording of prompt payment interest paid. Interest penalties in accordance with section 4 of the Act were paid in a very small number of cases in 2009 as illustrated below:

Gross Voted out-turn	€9.356 billion
Total number of late payments on which Prompt Payment Interest (PPI) penalties charged	75
Net Prompt Payment Interest (PPI) penalties incurred	€1,556.91

Appropriate internal audit and risk management procedures are in place to ensure compliance with public financial procedure guidelines, prompt payment legislation and to meet statutory requirements. Internal Audit undertakes its work in accordance with an annual work programme which is overseen by the Department's Audit Committee. The Committee has a membership of five (including three external members, one of whom is Chairperson) and provides advice in relation to internal control, the risk management environment and audit matters. During 2009 a total of six audit reports were presented to the Committee, including two which were commitments under the National Audit Plan agreed with the European Commission in relation to six discrete programmes supported by the European Social Fund. In addition, the Internal Audit Unit reviewed the adequacy of the follow up action from previous audit reports.

Contributing to cross-departmental cooperation

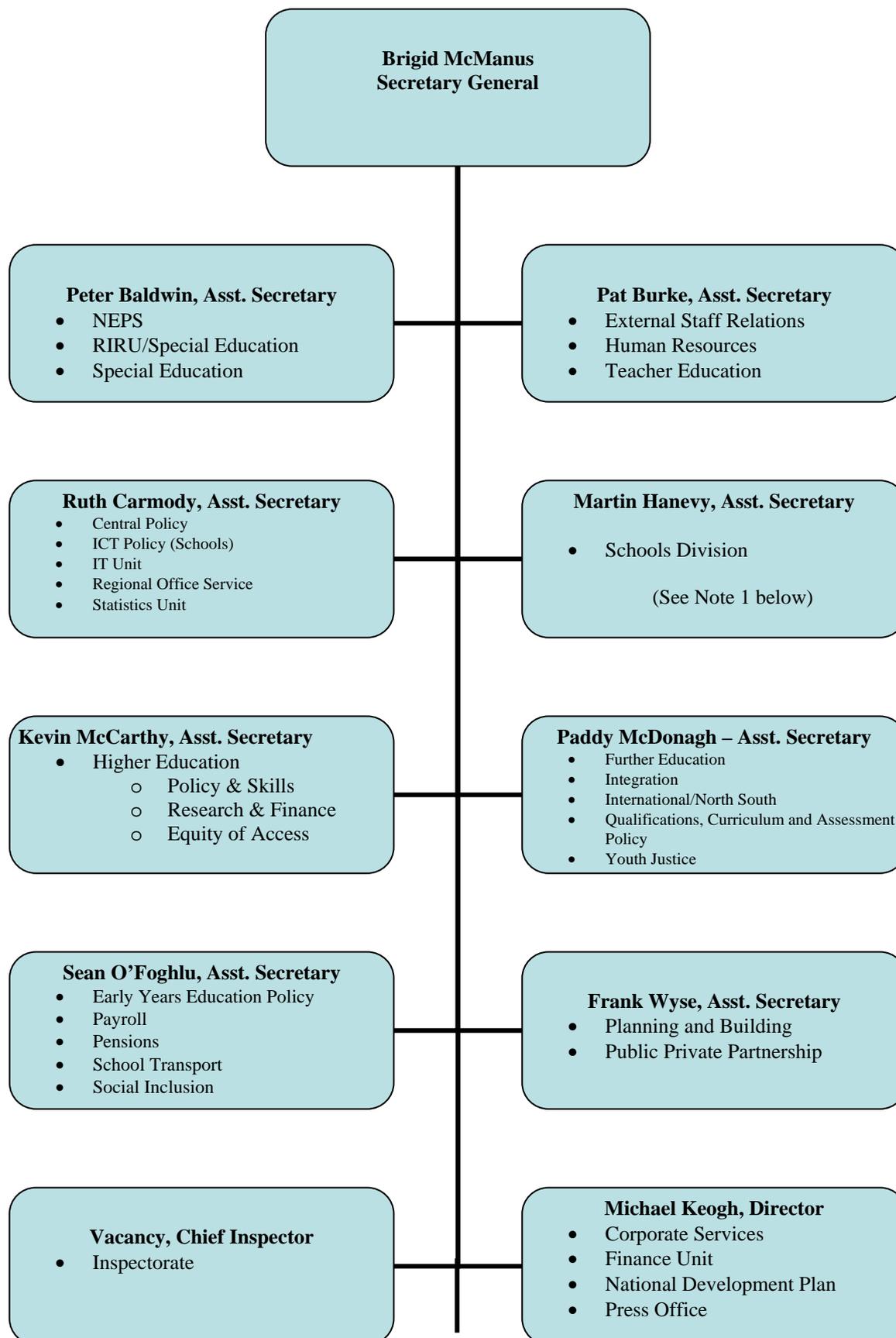
The Department's Strategy Statement for 2008-2010 notes the role of education in supporting wider Government policy objectives is very significant and spans the full range of the agenda for economic development, social inclusion, quality of life and active citizenship. This is reflected in the key cross-cutting responsibilities of each of the Ministers of State assigned to this Department. Each of their roles involves oversight and leadership of arrangements for co-ordinating with other Departments to achieve major Government policy objectives for:

- lifelong learning
- the integration of newcomers in Ireland
- developing Early Childhood Education
- promoting innovation in the economy;
- promotion of co-ordinated delivery of services in the health and education sectors to people with disabilities and special educational needs, and those aspects of the implementation of the EPSEN and Disability Acts relating to education that require co-ordination in the health sector and oversight of the cross-sectoral implementation group established in the context of the implementation of the Acts

Other notable cross-cutting issues include interaction with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and local authorities in planning for the provision of new schools to meet the needs of emerging communities, implementing Government strategy for future skills supply and developing our research and development capacity (with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and others), advancing the broad social inclusion agenda, including the implementation of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy, (with Department of the Taoiseach and others), the development of policies to promote the Irish language, the implementation of the National Drugs Strategy, the RAPID programme (with the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs), the promotion of equality measures across the education system (in liaison with the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Equality Authority) and the implementation of Reach Out: The National Strategy for Suicide Prevention (in collaboration with the Department of Health and Children and the Health Service Executive).

On these and on a range of other policy issues, Department officials continued to be involved in regular contacts with other Departments and agencies on both a bilateral basis and through formal co-ordinating structures such as inter departmental committees, senior officials groups and cabinet subcommittees during 2009. The Department also provided representation to a wide range of entities, such as City/County Development Boards, Drug Task Forces, Limerick Regeneration and Children's Services Committees at local and regional level during the year.

Appendix A: Organisation Chart - December 2009



Organisation Chart (Continued)



Note 1: Schools Division consists of:

- Financial and VEC Financial/Administrative Personnel.
- Parents, Learners and Database section.
- Teacher Allocation and School Governance Policies.
- Teachers and Special Needs Assistants – Terms and Conditions.

Note 2: Mr. Eamonn Stack retired as Chief Inspector in November 2009. His successor, Dr. Harold Hislop, was appointed in February 2010.

Appendix B: Non-commercial bodies under the Aegis of the Department in 2009

⁷ Advisory Council for English Language Schools	(ACELS)
An Chomhairle um Oideachais Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta	(COGG)
Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse	(CICA)
Education Finance Board	(EFB)
Further Education & Training Awards Council	(FETAC)
Grangegorman Development Agency	(GGDA)
Higher Education and Training Awards Council	(HETAC)
Higher Education Authority	(HEA)
⁸ International Education Board – Ireland	(IEBI)
Léargas - The Exchange Bureau	
National Centre for Technology in Ireland	(NCTE)
National Centre for Guidance in Education	(NCGE)
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment	(NCCA)
National Council for Special Education	(NCSE)
National Education Welfare Board	(NEWB)
National Qualifications Authority of Ireland	(NQAI)
Residential Institutions Redress Board	(RIRB)
Residential Institutions Review Committee	(RIRC)
State Examinations Commission	(SEC)
The Teaching Council	

⁷ The ACELS ceased operations on 31 December 2009

⁸ The IEBI ceased operations on 31 December 2009