

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Review Body was established to consult and bring forward recommendations for the future organisation of post-primary education in Northern Ireland. Our proposal rests on three integral innovations:

- **the development of a Pupil Profile to provide information to parents, pupils and teachers on a wide range of attributes and achievement of children as they progress through their education;**
- **the abolition of the Eleven-Plus Transfer Tests and the end of academic selection as pupils move from primary to post-primary school, and its replacement by a procedure which gives priority to parental choice;**
- **the creation of local collaborative networks of schools in a system of Collegiates.**

2. The present structure is inflexible, fragmented, wasteful of resources and makes it difficult to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils. We have been left in no doubt that the Eleven-Plus Transfer Tests are socially divisive, damage self-esteem, place unreasonable pressures on pupils, primary teachers and parents, disrupt teaching and learning at an important stage in the primary curriculum and reinforce inequality of opportunity. Removing academic selection as the basis for transfer from primary to post-primary school removes the stresses associated with the Transfer Tests, improves curriculum progression and enhances the information available to pupils, parents, teachers and schools on young people's development. And while Northern Ireland has been very good at equipping its young people with academic qualifications, in future we must go further to ensure they are able to apply what they have learnt in new ways and fresh concepts.

3. Too often we reduce the richness of the education of our young people to a letter or grade, and create hurdles that close options, when we should be finding ways of opening up possibilities. For too many people the memories of school are not happy ones. This cannot continue. We owe our children the best

we have to give, for, if they are to have a tomorrow, their needs must be met today. And as we move into the 21st Century we can no longer be satisfied with an education system that was designed for a different time and for circumstances that no longer exist.

4. We are firmly convinced that the challenges being faced by our schools can best be addressed by enhanced collaboration and co-operation. Thus, we sought to find a way of allowing all schools to draw from the well of wisdom, experience and expertise of the system as a whole. There are significant strengths throughout all our schools and we sought to build on this firm foundation. Fundamental to this is the diverse experience and expertise of our teachers. So convinced are we at the richness of this human resource that we are confident the challenge we offer for a new future is practicable and achievable.

5. The key challenge lies in the combined aim of meeting the common interest we share in ensuring that all our young people receive a high quality education, while allowing schools to develop distinctive missions to provide for, and enable, choice and opportunity for young people as they develop towards adulthood.

6. By harnessing the energy, good-will and commitment of all our teachers, and the hitherto unimagined possibilities for development through Information and Communication Technology (ICT), we believe our proposal provides the strongest basis for meeting our common interest in providing all our young people with the high quality education they require to meet the challenges of the 21st Century, while allowing their individual personalities to shine.

Terms of Reference

7. Our Terms of Reference were:

“To consider research and other relevant information on the impact of selection on pupils, parents, teachers, the economy and society, and undertake widespread consultation in order to:

- identify and consider key issues arising from the current selective system of post-primary education;
- assess the extent to which the current arrangements meet the needs and aspirations of children and their parents and the requirements of the economy and society; and
- report to the Minister for Education our conclusions and recommendations on the future arrangements for post-primary education.”

We were also required to address the following specific issues:

- the most appropriate structures for post-primary education, including the age or ages at which transfer should occur;
- the administrative arrangements for transfer;
- the implications for the curriculum at primary and post-primary levels;
- the implications for current school structures;
- the implications for further and higher education and training;
- the anticipated impact of any proposed new arrangements on the economy;
- the costs of any revised arrangements; and
- the timing and phasing of any new proposed arrangements.

Part I

8. The first part of our Report sets the scene for the Review of Post-Primary Education and describes the public consultation process which has been of crucial importance in guiding the outcomes of this Review. The consultation process has highlighted a significant consensus on what is important in terms of education provision in the 21st Century. This has given us a vision for the future and has enabled us to identify the Guiding Principles upon which our public education system should be based. This in turn has enabled us to review the scope for meeting pupils' needs and is the basis for our evaluation of alternative models of education systems.

Chapter 1

9. This chapter contains a brief account of the origins and development of the current selective education system in Northern Ireland.

Chapter 2

10. Here, we set out the strategic context for the Review touching on political and global policy issues.

11. The Northern Ireland Executive committed itself in the Programme of Government to the provision of an education system based on excellence and equality of opportunity for all. In this Review we have sought to make a definitive contribution to the achievement of this objective in accordance with the Programme of Government's intentions -

"We need to improve significantly the educational successes of so many of the young people in our schools, colleges and universities. Our Vision is to extend accessibility, choice and excellence throughout our education system, raise standards and eliminate low achievement. We will create a highly educated society in which all school leavers have the qualifications and aptitudes to achieve self-fulfilment, to proceed to further or higher education, receive vocational or professional training for participation in a modern workforce and have lifelong opportunities to update their knowledge, skills and qualifications.". (*Paragraph 2.5*)

12. Our findings and proposal have taken account of local legislative and policy considerations, national policies and international policy statements. In particular, we have had regard to policy developments which will influence the future role and effectiveness of the post-primary education system, including the review of the Local Management of Schools funding formula, the review of the statutory curriculum, the rapidly developing 16-19 curriculum and the associated National Qualifications Framework, the strategy outlined in the joint Departmental report on “Unlocking Creativity” for the nurturing and development of creativity and adaptability within our education system, the development of a strategic approach to the promotion of a culture of tolerance, as referred to in the Belfast Agreement, the policy of Open Enrolment, the development of education technology and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 which requires all public bodies to promote equality of opportunity and good community relations. (*Paragraph 2.6*).

Chapter 3

13. In this chapter we describe how we undertook the Review. All of the information gathered during the consultation process, from written submissions, meetings, school visits and research into the education systems in other countries, was considered fully by the Review Body. The extensive engagement by so many people in the consultative process affirmed the keen interest of the wider community in the educational issues under review. The public response was invaluable in influencing our thinking and in enhancing our awareness of the practical implications surrounding the Review.

Chapter 4

14. In this chapter we present the key issues that were identified by the consultation process. These related to the Transfer Tests, the age of transfer, pupil assessment, equality of opportunity, the objectives and principles for education, curriculum issues, standards/qualifications, school structures, resources, teachers, and implementation and timetable for changes.

15. There was consensus throughout the public consultation process that our education system should provide for the development of the potential of every individual to contribute to society and the economy, both locally and internationally. There was recognition during the public consultation process of the need for better links between education and business and that these should be developed and formally integrated into the education system.

(Paragraph 4.44)

16. A number of other areas attracted significant majority support during the process of consultation. These were that:

- the Transfer Tests in their present form should be abolished;
- there should be parity of esteem between post-primary schools and between curriculum pathways;
- there should be equality of opportunity for all pupils;
- education standards should be raised generally. *(Paragraph 4.45)*

There were strong differences of opinions about the nature of the Transfer Arrangements, pupil assessment and optimum post-primary school structures.

(Paragraph 4.46)

Chapter 5

17. We set out our Vision for the future of post-primary education, together with the Guiding Principles which we used in formulating our recommendations for change. Our Vision is for an education system which “will recognise the individual abilities and needs of all young people, and provide them with high quality education, enabling them to realise their potential, to lead fulfilling lives and to play productive and positive roles in society as persons whose learning and development have been holistic” *(Paragraph 5.1)*

18. The Guiding Principles which should be at the heart of educational policy and practice are set out below.

- Each young person should be valued equally.
- All young people should be enabled to develop their talents to the full and to realise their creative potential, including accepting responsibility for their own lives and making a positive contribution to society.
- Young people should be encouraged to develop a love of learning.
- The education system should provide for the development of all aspects of the individual, including the intellectual, spiritual, moral, cultural, social, physical, emotional and creative.
- The promotion and demonstration of a culture of tolerance, reconciliation and respect for diversity of cultures should be a seminal purpose of education.
- Education should have regard to the changing needs of society and the economy.
- There should be recognition of and support for the key role of teachers in the delivery of a high quality education system.
- Each young person should be equipped with the values and skills needed for working and living in the 21st Century.
- There should be parity of esteem for vocational and academic educational opportunities.
- Lifelong opportunities and choices for learning should be available to all.
- There should be equality of opportunity, access and excellence for all.
- The curriculum and assessment arrangements should take account of research on learning abilities. (*Paragraph 5.7*)

These Principles are fundamental to the planning and provision of post-primary education and we have used them in that way in our work. In particular we have applied them as criteria for our analysis of evidence to the Review Body and in developing our recommendations for change.

Chapter 6

19. In this chapter we set out our views on educational needs and aspirations placing the learner at the centre of our analysis and conclusions. We focus on modern research on intelligence, continuity in curriculum and assessment, flexibility and choice in provision, parity of esteem for different courses, and key issues including the human rights of the child, special educational needs, equality and inclusion.

20. We consider the findings of modern research on intelligence and note that this and other research is supporting what perceptive teachers have always recognised, namely that each child has a range of abilities. A child is not usually narrowly endowed in terms of ability and if she or he is to develop competence and confidence as a learner, the learning and curriculum experienced needs to reach out to the whole range of the child's abilities. *(Paragraph 6.4)*

21. Research findings on multiple intelligences support the case for a broad curriculum for all children and that, given the opportunity to learn across the whole curriculum, the learner's prospects for achievement are greater, and motivation can be strengthened. *(Paragraph 6.5)*

22. The process of education from age four to nineteen needs to be designed, planned and implemented as a continuum. When children move from pre-school centres to primary school and then to post-primary school there should be continuity in their learning and experience of the curriculum. The learning and teaching provided should be informed by an assessment system that is both diagnostic and formative and enables children, teachers and parents to be well-informed about achievement across the curriculum and about progress in response to any interventions to meet special needs or circumstances. Learning and teaching should be geared towards opening up options and possibilities, not closing them down. *(Paragraph 6.6)*

23. We believe that flexibility and choice must increase progressively in curricular provision across ages eleven to nineteen. In the main, the curriculum followed from age eleven to fourteen should be common in scope in all schools, but even at this stage, pupils should be introduced to the wider choice of courses available from age fourteen and to the broad career paths from which they can select as they move through the age fourteen to nineteen phase of full-time education and training. *(Paragraph 6.9)*

24. We also believe that the careers education programme, which should include informed, objective guidance from professionally qualified staff within the school and elsewhere, should begin at Key Stage 3 and develop in both scope and significance throughout Key Stage 4 and beyond. *(Paragraph 6.10)*

25. In our view, schools, in partnership with external agencies, including specialists in careers guidance in the further and higher education sectors, need to re-examine current provision to determine how best to improve all aspects of careers education, and to ensure that careers guidance is fully integrated into the curriculum and given high status. Every pupil in post-primary education needs to be guaranteed easy and responsive access to expert advice either in person or through tele- or video-conference link. *(Paragraph 6.11)*

26. In developing the post-primary school system to meet the educational needs and aspirations of pupils and their parents, other important matters have to be addressed. These include respect for the human rights of the child, the implications of social disadvantage for the delivery of education, special educational needs, the recognition of equality of opportunity, a commitment to social inclusion and the role of education in promoting a culture of tolerance. *(Paragraph 6.19)*

Chapter 7

27. In this chapter we present our assessment of a range of alternative school structures. We conclude that a selective system of grammar and secondary schools does not provide a satisfactory basis for the future organisation of schools. We conclude also that the two main alternatives to the status quo both fall short of a number of the Key Principles on which we believe our education system should be founded. Our aim has been to identify

structural arrangements which will encourage and support mutual respect, co-operation and partnerships between schools in order to deliver a range of positive outcomes for all young people. This system, which we call a Collegial system, is based on local collaborative networks of schools. (Paragraph 7.28)

Part II

28. The second part of the Report includes our detailed conclusions and recommendations in relation to:

- the statutory curriculum at post-primary level;
- the development of a Pupil Profile of assessment;
- the Transfer Tests, selection by academic ability and the age of transfer;
- the administrative arrangements for transfer;
- the structural arrangements for a Collegial system of post-primary schools;
- the implications of the Collegial system for further and higher education, training and the economy;
- support arrangements, resources and responsibilities essential to the planning and management of this programme of change.

Each of these issues is dealt with separately but it is important that they are regarded as integral and interdependent parts of our proposal for the re-organisation of post-primary education.

Chapter 8

29. In this chapter we express our views and recommendations on the scope and structure of the curriculum and on assessment, and the development of a "Pupil Profile" as the key evidence base for informing learning, teaching and

career pathways. We share the view of many primary teachers that the present Key Stage 2 curriculum is over-prescriptive and limited in its opportunities for practical activities. It will be important for the current curriculum review to address these concerns and we would support the general principle of changing the curriculum to reduce the extent of the compulsory core and increase flexibility within statutorily prescribed areas. *(Paragraph 8.9)*

The Curriculum

30. We believe that the curriculum at Key Stage 3 should:

- be broad, balanced, relevant and demanding, but with sufficient flexibility to be adapted by teachers to meet the individual needs of all their pupils, and afford them the opportunity to experience success;
- include provision for pupils to develop competence in key skills such as literacy and numeracy, the use of Information and Communication Technology and problem-solving;
- foster self-esteem, self-confidence and the ability to work with others;
- include provision for personal and social education, and meaningful and timely careers education and guidance;
- provide opportunities to learn how to relate to the community and the environment and, in particular, to develop respect for diversity and commitment to contribute to the community and society in general,

and that the curriculum at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 should relate to these purposes and reflect them as appropriate to the age and stage of development of the learners. *(Paragraphs 8.10 and 8.11)*

31. Our view is that improved relevance, flexibility, differentiation and choice in the curriculum at Key Stage 4, supported by co-operation between schools, further education colleges, training organisations, the community and business, will remove the potential weaknesses of the current arrangements.

(Paragraph 8.13)

The Pupil Profile

32. The objective of the new assessment system should be to provide a more holistic picture of the individual child, within a "Pupil Profile", which would be used at Key Stage 2 to:

- guide parents and children in their choice of post-primary school; and
- support the child's teacher in discussion with the parents, and the child, on the child's learning (strengths, progress and needs); the child's attitude to learning and aptitudes for particular areas of learning; and the education provision within Collegiates which would match well with the parents' aspirations and the child's preferred learning and career pathways. *(Paragraph 8.23)*

33. The Pupil Profile would contain quantitative and qualitative information about a child's attributes, attitude and achievements across the whole curriculum. The Pupil Profile would accommodate most of the existing requirements on schools for recording and reporting an individual pupil's achievements. *(Paragraph 8.24)*

34. The Pupil Profile would be continued into Key Stage 3 and beyond. At this stage its purposes would be to:

- inform the pupil's choice of courses and career pathway at Key Stage 4;
- inform discussions involving the pupil, parents, teachers, careers guidance staff and others, as appropriate, about the match between the pupil's progress, aptitudes and needs, and his or her current learning programme. These discussions would take place annually during Years 8, 9 and 10 and could take place in-year, where circumstances warranted;
- inform discussions and decisions about the best options for and transfer, to other courses or schools, of any pupil whose learning needs and career aspirations change during Key Stage 3 or subsequently. *(Paragraph 8.25)*

35. We consider also that careers guidance should begin to play a role in the review, and any adjustment of the child's choice of courses of study and, where necessary, of school during or at the end of Key Stage 3. This process would require openness, trust and objectivity from all interests, if the needs and aspirations of the child are to be served fully. *(Paragraph 8.25)*

36. **We recommend that the Pupil Profile should be developed as a matter of priority, on the lines outlined above.** We consider that it would be for the Department, based on advice from Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment and in consultation with the education partners, to determine the detailed nature and scope of the Pupil Profile. *(Paragraph 8.27)*

Chapter 9

37. In this chapter we set out our findings and recommendations on selection, transfer and admissions to schools. **We have concluded that the selective system, which in recent years has increased school enrolments in the grammar school sector at the expense of other school types, should end and thus provide the opportunity for the development of a process of informed parental preference as the basis for choosing which school would be most likely to meet the educational needs, aptitudes and interests of each child.** Of course, the expression of parental preferences does not mean unqualified parental choice and there would continue to be oversubscribed schools. Nevertheless, the allocation of priority to parental preference, when applied in the context of the changes in pupil assessment and a revised curriculum, would support the delivery of equality of opportunity, access and parity of esteem for all. *(Paragraph 9.35)*

The Transfer Tests

38. **We recommend that the use of the Transfer Tests as a means of selecting pupils for transfer to post-primary education should be ended at the earliest possible opportunity.** *(Paragraph 9.7)*

Age of Transfer

39. We have concluded that, for the purposes of the future development of post-primary education, transfer should continue to take place at age eleven. *(Paragraph 9.10)*

Selection by Academic Ability

40. We recommend that assessment of academic ability, whether by external testing or teacher evaluation, should not be used by post-primary schools for the purpose of selecting pupils for transfer from primary education. *(Paragraph 9.13)*

41. The Pupil Profile should follow the child from primary to post-primary school, but should not be made available to post-primary schools in advance of the completion of the Transfer arrangements. *(Paragraph 9.17)*

The Administrative Arrangements for Transfer

42. We recommend that parental preference should be accorded statutory priority for admissions purposes, and that all schools should be required to admit pupils in strict order of parental preferences: first preference applications should be admitted before second preference applications, etc.. *(Paragraph 9.24)*

Admissions Criteria

43. We consider that there should be a statutory requirement on all schools to use the following Year 8 admissions criteria (in order of priority).

- Parental (and pupil) preference, ie first preferences would have priority over second preference applications, etc. In circumstances where a school was over-subscribed at any parental preference stage, the Board of Governors should be required to apply the criteria set out below:
 - siblings already at the school, or the eldest child of a family;

- children of staff at the school, provided this applies to all staff employed at the school;
- compelling individual circumstances, ie special consideration for social, welfare or other personal reasons, which would be supported by appropriate documentary evidence to justify different treatment from the generality of other applicants;
- proximity to the pupil's home, ie, those for whom the school is the nearest suitable school. *(Paragraph 9.30)*

44. The duration of the process for allocating post-primary school places to children is considered to be unreasonably long by many parents and can cause stress and uncertainty. The removal of the Transfer Tests from the procedure should be used to simplify and shorten the timetable. The objective should be for the great majority of placements to be made by mid-May, and for all appeals to be decided before the end of the summer term, in the interests of the pupils. We consider that, in the absence of the Transfer Tests, this shorter timetable should be achievable, assisted by greater use of information technology for the recording and transfer of parental preferences between schools.
(Paragraph 9.33)

Chapter 10

45. In this chapter, we set out our recommendations for the establishment of a Collegial system of post-primary schools, a concept which flows directly from our Vision for the education service in the 21st Century. While most schools perform to the best of their ability in addressing the needs of their pupils, the present post-primary structures, with their focus on the independence and separateness of schools, do not encourage schools to work together, to share resources and expertise, or to develop partnerships. The introduction of a Collegiate structure would not threaten the ethos, educational identity or character of any post-primary school; rather it would provide a strong statutory framework, status and resources for schools to develop and co-operate, on the basis of interdependence and mutual respect, with the overriding objective of ensuring access to high quality education provision for all young people.
(Paragraph 10.43)

The Collegial System

46. We consider that the improvements which we believe to be necessary in post-primary education can best be developed within a statutory Collegial system of post-primary schools working together to provide the widest possible choice of educational opportunities for all their pupils. The Collegial system would consist of separate groups of schools called Collegiates. Each Collegiate would have a variety of schools representing the different management types. *(Paragraph 10.4)*

47. The key to success within Collegiates would lie in the ability of the constituent schools to collaborate and develop partnerships, exchange best practice and share resources, facilities and information - all geared to respond to the challenges facing the education service, to enhance educational provision and standards for all pupils, to optimise value for money and, not least, to support opportunities for the professional development of teachers within their own or other schools in the Collegiate. *(Paragraph 10.6)*

48. We are convinced that a Collegial system of post-primary education would provide the structure and opportunity for schools to co-exist and work together to best serve the educational needs and abilities of all their pupils in a way which is not achievable within the present selective system. *(Paragraph 10.7)*

49. We have concluded for reasons of equity, equality of opportunity, and, not least, best use of the available resources, grant-aided schools should not be able to opt out of the Collegiate structure. **We recommend that it should be a statutory condition of grant-aid, whether for recurrent or capital purposes, that all post-primary schools should be included in the Collegiate structure.** *(Paragraph 10.11)*

50. **We recommend the establishment of a structure of 20 Collegiates and that the ultimate responsibility for approving the number and detailed composition of Collegiates should be a matter for the Department of Education.** *(Paragraphs 10.13, 10.16 and 10.20)*

51. We are satisfied that our proposals for the location and grouping of Collegiates would reinforce choice and diversity of curricular provision in all schools and would facilitate the development of a culture of co-operation and partnership between schools, Collegiates, further education colleges, training organisations and local communities, in the delivery of high standards of education for all young people. *(Paragraph 10.18)*

Role of Collegiates

52. For Collegiates to be effective in contributing to our Vision for education, they must have the responsibility, authority and means to make a difference, and to assist individual schools to respond to the challenges facing the education service. To support this approach, and to ensure coherence, consistency and progress, **we recommend that there should be a planning and operational structure within each Collegiate, with specific objectives, functional responsibilities and dedicated resources to deliver change and improved standards.** *(Paragraph 10.22)*

Planning, Management and Support Structures

The Board of Principals

53. **We recommend that the key planning and decision-making body for each Collegiate should be the Board of Principals**, which would comprise the principal of each constituent school (each of whom would continue to be accountable to the school's Board of Governors), and which would operate primarily as a planning body in developing Collegiate policy and provision across the specific strategic objectives and functional areas described. Boards of Principals would not have a decision-making role in matters affecting the ownership or governance of schools. The position of Chair would rotate annually and would be supported by two Vice-Chairs. *(Paragraphs 10.23 and 10.24)*

The Collegiate Support Centre

54. **We propose that a Collegiate Support Centre should be established for each Collegiate**, which would be accountable to the Board of Principals through the designated Vice-Chair. A full-time Co-ordinator, supported by

administrative staff would have operational responsibility. The post of Co-ordinator would be open to qualified teachers, with senior management experience. While it would fall to the relevant education and library board to facilitate the process of appointment of Co-ordinators, for example, the advertisement of posts and contractual arrangements, they would report to and be directly accountable to the Board of Principals. *(Paragraphs 10.24 and 10.26)*

The Collegiate Liaison Council

55. The role of the Collegiate Liaison Council would be crucial in ensuring effective co-operation between schools in the Collegiate, further education colleges, training organisations, employers and others, in the planning and provision of relevant and high quality vocational and occupational courses and careers education for all pupils. For this reason **we consider that the Council's role and membership should be given statutory recognition within the Collegiate structure, in order to underline its significance and authority.** *(Paragraph 10.29)*

The Collegiate Standing Conference

56. While the Board of Principals would have direct responsibility for the operation of the Collegiate on a day to day basis, including decisions on matters such as the co-ordination and implementation of professional development and curriculum support arrangements, post-16 provision, learning support, extra-curricular activities and admissions, etc., it would be essential that the Boards of Governors of the schools in the Collegiate should be fully involved in the strategic planning and development of Collegiate policy hence their membership of a Collegiate Standing Conference. This would involve, the preparation of annual Action Plans based on an agreed policy framework, key objectives and specific targets for the period ahead. This planning function and cycle would be on an annual basis and would be facilitated by the Co-ordinator and Collegiate Support Centre. In addition to the Board of Principals and representatives from each school's Board of Governors, the Standing Conference would include the Chair of the Collegiate Liaison Council (and other co-opted interests). The Collegiate Standing Conference would be the key strategic planning authority within the Collegial structure. *(Paragraph 10.30)*

Collegiate Objectives and Functions

57. We consider that Collegiates should have responsibility for the following functions; curriculum development and support, professional development, admissions and transfer arrangements, pupil profiles, learning support, information and communication technology, post-16 arrangements, extra-curricular activities, community support and to promote improvement of standards. *(Paragraph 10.31)*

School Transport

58. We propose that transport assistance should be provided to any suitable school within the Collegiate which is designated as the 'local Collegiate'. *(Paragraph 10.42)*

Chapter 11

59. In this chapter we consider the major implications and opportunities for other education and training providers, for employers and for the economy which the establishment of Collegiates would bring.

60. Close liaison will be required to ensure that Collegiates' programmes blend easily with those of other providers of education and training. Where there are overlaps of provision, especially with further education colleges, collaboration is preferred to competition.

Collegiates and Further Education Colleges and Training Organisations

61. **We recommend that the initial assessment and identification of needs for collaboration with further education colleges and training organisations should be taken forward by the Boards of Principals of Collegiates, and that there should be regular and systematic opportunity for Collegiate Liaison Councils to support and guide the development and implementation of Collegiate policy in this area.** *(Paragraph 11.27)*

62. In addition, in order to establish the appropriate environment and basis for effective collaboration, **we recommend that the Department of Education**

and the Department for Employment and Learning should, as a matter of priority, draw up a coherent strategy for the development and funding arrangements for post-16 education and training, taking account of the interests of schools, further education colleges, training organisations and employers. *(Paragraph 11. 28)*

Collegiates and Providers of Higher Education

63. We recommend that all the providers of higher education should work with Collegiates, both at the individual level and within the Collegiate Liaison Councils, to encourage the establishment of Curriculum 2000, and to help raise the status of vocational education. This could be achieved by a combination of adjustments to admissions criteria, modifications to existing courses and the design of new courses matched optimally to the output of schools. *(Paragraph 11.37)*

Collegiates and Employers

64. We recommend that Collegiates, through their Collegiate Liaison Councils, should work with the Northern Ireland Business Education Partnership and others to establish relevant and appropriate links between schools, local business, industry and employers. *(Paragraph 11.42)*

Collegiates and Careers Education and Guidance

65. The Training and Employment Agency has already set in hand a review of careers guidance, and as part of this review we suggest that consideration should be given to the full delegation of responsibility for the delivery of careers guidance within schools to Collegiates, supported by a transfer of resources from the Careers Service of the Training and Employment Agency. *(Paragraph 11.45)*

66. We are satisfied that the Collegiate structure offers significant opportunities for improving careers education and guidance in schools. Each Collegiate would have a large body of staff with wide and varied expertise and experience, and its constituent schools will also bring with them their various contacts with employers, trainers and further and higher education. Opportunities for the sharing of resources, such as careers teachers and

careers information, together with the potential transfer of resources from the Careers Service to the Collegiates, would provide a very strong basis for enhancing the status, effectiveness and efficiency of careers education and guidance in schools. (*Paragraph 11.47*)

Collegiates and the Economy

67. We are confident that the proposed Collegiate structure could play a significant role in facilitating and developing the partnerships and collaboration necessary between schools, further education colleges, higher education institutions, and employers. Together they constitute a powerful tool for converting Northern Ireland from a low-skilled and low-productivity economy to a knowledge-based, high-skilled and high-productivity economy. (*Paragraph 11.52*)

Chapter 12

68. In this chapter we set out our views on the processes and support systems which are necessary to make our proposals work; these fall into three broad categories:

operational issues, and in particular, the arrangements for admissions, learning support, curriculum support and development, professional development and post-16 provision;

infrastructural issues, covering capital improvements, surplus capacity and small schools;

resources, and in particular, school funding, costs and accountability (including the related matters of quality and standards).

Operational Issues

Admissions Arrangements

69. It would be important for Boards of Governors and Collegiates to be supported by the education and library boards in developing their own arrangements for handling and transferring admissions applications within and

between schools and Collegiates, both at Year 8 and in subsequent years. (Paragraph 12.3)

Learning Support Service

70. The development of learning support arrangements within Collegiates would be a key issue for schools in meeting the challenges of educational underachievement, special needs and social disadvantage. It would be a matter for each Collegiate to assess the overall needs of constituent schools and to consider how those might be addressed. (Paragraph 12.5)

71. **We recommend that each Collegiate should establish learning support arrangements in which specialists from health care, social services, education (including outreach teachers) and other interests within local communities would work collaboratively and in partnership with schools.** (Paragraph 12.9)

Curriculum Support and Development

72. The introduction of a revised curriculum would require investment in a number of areas, including teacher development and the organisational and administrative systems in schools, for example in timetabling arrangements. These changes would be necessary, irrespective of the model of post-primary education in place. However, we believe that the changes in prospect, especially the enhancement of curricular diversity and choice, would be more easily achieved in the context of a Collegial system. (Paragraph 12.11)

Professional Development

73. Teachers in Northern Ireland have consistently demonstrated their professionalism and adaptability, in responding to the pace of change in education in particular over the past ten years. **It would be essential** that teachers should have access to relevant, ongoing and planned opportunities for professional development in responding to these new challenges. There would also be significant implications for the nature of teacher training. (Paragraph 12.15)

Post-16 Arrangements

74. As a priority, Collegiates, in partnership with further education colleges and training organisations should develop principles, criteria and standards governing post-16 provision, and use information technologies to the full in order to secure access, progression, coherence, effectiveness and appropriateness for all sixteen to nineteen year-olds in full-time education and training in their areas. *(Paragraph 12.27)*

75. **We recommend that, in drawing up the principles, standards and criteria for endorsement by the Collegiate Standing Conference, focused on the policy objectives set by Government, Collegiates should take advice from appropriate professional sources about post-16 curriculum and qualifications and should have regard to the quality standards and findings of the Education and Training Inspectorate.** *(Paragraph 12.27)*

Infrastructural Issues

Capital Improvements

76. We accept that our proposals for post-primary education are challenging for many interests, but ultimately it would be for schools to deliver the changes. It is essential that they should be able to do so within the Collegiate structure on the basis of mutual respect and equal status. The standard of accommodation and facilities available to schools have an important bearing on their status and the esteem of pupils and teachers. Accordingly, we consider that a 'Collegiate Improvement Programme' should be established to support the important developmental stages of the Collegiate system. *(Paragraph 12.31)*

77. **We would recommend that up to £45 million should be allocated for this purpose, perhaps spread over two to three years.** We propose also that it should be for Collegiates to assess the priorities within their constituent schools, in the first instance, and to submit project bids to the Department of Education for consideration. The management of approved projects would be taken forward by the relevant management authority for each school, in the normal way. *(Paragraph 12.32)*

Surplus Capacity

78. The existence of surplus capacity, which is not evenly distributed across the proposed Collegiates, would provide opportunities within some Collegiates for schools to develop specialisms or create new settings for post-16 courses.

In preparing bids for capital development we would expect schools and Collegiates to take account of existing facilities and accommodation. Collegiates would be required to show in their annual Action Plans that they were making good use of existing capacity, including any surplus accommodation. In preparing these plans, Boards of Principals would be expected to consult Boards of Governors and other interests.

(Paragraph 12.36)

Small Schools

79. There is a range of ways and means by which the challenges faced by small schools could be addressed within the Collegiate structure and transformed into opportunities. Our proposals have the potential to help the sustainability of small schools in the context of the projected demographic trend in enrolments. We understand the importance of these schools to their local communities and would want any changes to their status to be considered in the light of a thorough review of the needs of the pupils. Each of the models considered requires creativity and flexibility in thinking and action, the setting aside of vested interests and open communication and trust. If we are to effect the improvement in provision and outcomes to which all children are entitled, we cannot justify anything less. *(Paragraphs 12.42 and 12.44)*

Resources

School Funding

80. We believe that consideration should be given to the scope for modifying the way in which the age-weighted pupil unit element of the Local Management of Schools Scheme impacts disproportionately on the budgets and teaching resources of those post-primary schools which are particularly sensitive to changes in pupil numbers. **We recommend that the pupil-related element of budgets be calculated on the basis of a three-year rolling average of pupil**

enrolments, rather than on a precise head count, in order to ameliorate the impact of very small changes in enrolments from year to year, and to give smaller schools (in particular) more certainty in their budget allocations and financial planning. We would like to see modification of the Local Management in Schools scheme given urgent and sympathetic consideration by the Department of Education. (*Paragraph 12.48*)

Costs

81. Our Terms of Reference specifically required us to consider the costs of any revised arrangements. To assist with this we commissioned a strategic economic appraisal of our proposals.

82. The resource needs of Collegiates fall into two broad categories - first, **existing resources** which should be re-allocated to Collegiates, and second, the **extra resources** which we consider would be essential to make the new structures work in the interests of all schools and our young people. The existing resources which should be made available to Collegiates would relate specifically to the services and functions for which Collegiates should have direct responsibility, in particular, curriculum support, professional development, the learning support service and careers guidance provision. Based on figures obtained from the Department of Education and the Department for Employment and Learning, the existing level of resources in these areas **total some £19.5 million**. The re-allocation of these resources to Collegiates would therefore be neutral in cost terms, although we are convinced that their delegation to the Collegiate level would allow for a more effective and responsive approach to locally-determined needs. (*Paragraph 12.51*)

83. At the same time, it is essential, if Collegiates and the other integral parts of our proposal are to work, that there should be adequate resources made available, particularly in the early stages of implementation. These essential needs include: the development and application of the Pupil Profile and the expanded assessment system described at Chapter 8; the staffing and support costs of the co-ordination arrangements for Collegiates, and including the costs associated with the Collegiate Standing Conferences, Collegiate Liaison Councils and the location of Collegiate Support Centres outlined in Chapter 10. These additional costs have been estimated at some **£2.7 million** for all

Collegiates, ie, an average of £135 thousand per Collegiate. These costings are intended to illustrate that we do not envisage an expensive layer of administration; rather the arrangements would reflect the facilitating and co-ordinating aspects of the roles of the Collegiate, Co-ordinator and the Support Centre. *(Paragraph 12.51)*

Accountability

84. We considered a number of possible options for the delegation and management of Collegiates' financial resources, including direct funding by the Department of Education and the designation of a single education and library board as the responsible body for the allocation of resources to all Collegiates. Bearing in mind current structures, we propose that the responsibility for allocating resources should be divided between the five education and library boards. *(Paragraph 12.55)*

Quality and Standards

85. The pursuit of best value is an obligation and a responsibility set out by government for all who work in public services. A truly learner-centred post-primary education system will need to focus its self-evaluation on economy, efficiency, effectiveness and quality if the pursuit of improvement is to be well-founded and successful. *(Paragraph 12.57)*

86. **We recommend that Collegiates, in their research and development programmes, should give priority to defining indicators, criteria and measures that will give them reliable feedback on the extent to which they are achieving best value, and provide insight into the aspects of their provision which are most in need of improvement.** *(Paragraph 12.59)*

87. This work should be undertaken in partnership with external agencies, both in the public and private sectors, which are engaged in quality assessment, target setting and performance management, and in consultation with the Education and Training Inspectorate. The Inspectorate's evaluations of educational provision should inform the decisions of managers and the practice of teachers in schools within Collegiates, as well as the planning of the Boards

of Principals, Collegiate Liaison Councils, and Standing Conferences.
(Paragraph 12.59)

88. **We also recommend that Collegiates, through Boards of Governors and their Collegiate Standing Conferences, should arrange to consult pupils, parents, the local community and business, in the process of developing standards, indicators and procedures for self-evaluation.**
(Paragraph 12.59)

Chapter 13

89. In this chapter we identify the implications of our conclusions and recommendations for primary legislation, the implementation and sequencing of new transfer arrangements, the establishment of Collegiates, the review and development of the curriculum and assessment, the professional development of teachers, and capital and revenue costs across the system.

90. A number of our recommendations would require changes to primary legislation. As we could not predict the timetable for the handling of the legislative process in the Northern Ireland Assembly, we have not attempted to set out a detailed timetable for the implementation of our proposal. Leadership will be a vital ingredient in the management of change at all stages in this process: leadership from the Northern Ireland Assembly, Government Departments, teacher unions, statutory authorities, governors and from principals and senior management in all schools. Against that background, we envisage that there could be four phases of implementation, although it is inevitable that these would overlap in places. (Paragraph 13.4)

Phase One

91. In phase one, a first priority must be the implementation of new transfer arrangements to replace the existing Transfer Test Procedure. This could not be done in isolation from the proposed changes in assessment and, in particular, the development of the Pupil Profile. It would be essential also for preliminary planning to be initiated for the establishment of the Collegiate structure. These three crucial areas therefore need to be taken forward simultaneously in this Phase. (Paragraph 13.5)

92. The implementation of the proposed new transfer arrangements, in their totality, would be dependent on the development of the Pupil Profile as part of an enhanced pupil assessment system, which would play a key part in enabling parents to make informed choices of post-primary school. Given that this new system could take up to six years to develop and test fully before it could be put in place for Key Stage 2, **we recommend that transitional arrangements for assessment should be developed by CCEA to enable the Transfer Tests to be eliminated from the process of transfer in the early stages of that potential timetable.** It would, of course, be necessary for these transitional arrangements to be based on the Principles set out in Chapter 8. In our view, a reasonable target for this would be the **Autumn of 2003**, ie, in time for use in the 2004 transfer process. It is essential that teachers, parents and pupils in Key Stage 2 should be given adequate notice of this change, so that the transition from a selective to a non-selective post-primary system is smooth and to ensure that all primary-age pupils have a clear understanding of the system which would be in place when they are transferring to post-primary education. *(Paragraph 13.6)*

93. The ending of the Transfer Tests would be the crucial first step in the development of a non-selective system of transfer from primary to post-primary education. This would require significant changes to the administrative arrangements for transfer and schools admissions criteria and would also involve significant changes in the statutory framework of criteria which post-primary schools could employ in circumstances of over-subscription. This would require legislative change. Transitional transfer arrangements on the basis set out above would be dependent on the necessary legislative cover being in place, well in advance of the suggested timetable for the 2004 transfer process. *(Paragraph 13.8)*

94. In the first school term of the academic year within which changes are made to the transfer procedure, **detailed guidance should be issued to the parents of all Primary 7 pupils, setting out the nature and timetable for the imminent transfer system, and, specifically, the role of the teacher/parent/pupil interview in considering school preferences, the purpose of the Pupil Profile (or its alternative under the transitional arrangements), and the operation of post-primary schools' admissions criteria.** *(Paragraph 13.9)*

95. Primary legislation would be required to establish Collegiates. This would take time to put in place and, in preparation for this, **Collegiates should be set up in shadow form, together with their Liaison Councils.** This would enable planning to be initiated for, inter alia, the appointment of Collegiate Co-ordinators, for locating Collegiate Support Centres, the development of policy for the learning support service, and the review of post-16 provision across constituent schools. *(Paragraph 13.10)*

Phase Two

96. Clearly the curriculum proposals and changes we have outlined would take several years to develop and test fully and establish in all schools. Given the key role of the curriculum for the transition from primary to post-primary education, and in the development of relevant assessment arrangements to support and inform transfer, **we would recommend that initial priority should be given to the development and implementation of the anticipated changes to Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3.** *(Paragraphs 13.12 and 13.13)*

97. In phase two, there must be a substantial investment in the professional development of teachers, with initial priority being focused on teachers involved at P6 and P7 and in Years 8 to 10 in post-primary schools. Support for teachers must be properly addressed within each stage of planning for the revised curriculum. *(Paragraph 13.14)*

98. The planning and delivery of support and training to teachers for the revised Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3, and assessment, should be organised by the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service of the education and library boards, in collaboration with the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment and the shadow Collegiates. This responsibility would transfer in due course to Collegiates as an integral element of their function in shaping and supporting curricular provision across their constituent schools. **We recommend that the overall transfer of this function should be completed within two years of the formal establishment of Collegiates.** *(Paragraph 13.15)*

99. In this intermediate phase, arrangements should be developed by the Department of Education, in consultation with the education and library boards and the Department for Employment and Learning, for the determination of the quantum of resources to be made available to Collegiates, as outlined in the discussion of costs at Chapter 12. *(Paragraph 13.16)*

100. At the same time, preliminary plans should be developed for the review of the capital improvement needs of secondary schools. This planning should involve the shadow Collegiates, with appropriate support and guidance from the Department of Education and the statutory authorities. *(Paragraph 13.17)*

Phase Three

101. During phase three, the Collegiate structures would come into place and the transition from a culture of competition and separateness to a system based on co-operation, interdependence and mutual respect, would evolve. *(Paragraph 13.18)*

102. Each Collegiate would have a dedicated budget for its management, administration and support services. Clear lines of accountability would be essential at the commencement of this operational stage. An early priority would be the formal appointment of Collegiate Co-ordinators, administrative staff and the membership of the Collegiate Liaison Councils. When this management and support structure has been put in place, Collegiates would be expected to prepare medium-term Action Plans setting out their plans for the development of partnerships and collaboration between member schools - including curricular support, professional development, learning support arrangements and post-16 provision. This process would be led by the Board of Principals and the Boards of Governors of the constituent schools, working through the Collegiate Standing Conference. *(Paragraph 13.19)*

103. The first Collegiate Standing Conference should be convened within six months of the establishment of the Collegiate structure, and thereafter each Autumn, geared to the review of the Collegiate's performance during the previous school year, and to the development of forward planning and objectives. *(Paragraph 13.19)*

Phase Four

104. In phase four, which should be initiated when the Collegiates have been in place for at least five years, the objective would be to review the new arrangements, taking account of the experience of Collegiates and any changes in the environment within which they had been operating. Such a review would also provide the opportunity to develop and consolidate the organisational structures and relationships with statutory authorities, with a view to the possible delegation of further functions, responsibilities and resources to Collegiates. *(Paragraph 13.21)*

Conclusion

105. The Review Body is under no illusions about the challenges which our recommendations will pose for the education service. This implementation plan is not intended to be prescriptive; rather it is our view of the sequence of actions which will be necessary to deliver our Vision for post-primary education in the 21st Century. We believe that this is both realistic and achievable and with commitment and leadership, can be fully put in place over the next five to eight years. *(Paragraph 13.23)*