

## RESEARCH INTO IMPROVING ATTENDANCE IN SCHOOLS SERVING DEPRIVED AREAS

### 1.1 KEY FINDINGS

Evidence from primary and secondary research into improving attendance in deprived areas illustrates that there is no single solution to the problem of poor attendance in schools serving deprived areas. What is apparent, however is that there are a number of common/recurring themes which point to a range of strategies/interventions that can be applied to help promote good attendance and to address poor attendance.

Drawing on evidence from primary and secondary research, a number of key themes have been identified for each of the research objectives. Each theme is described in the report – together with evidence of its effectiveness and relevant examples to illustrate the approach.

The research objectives and key themes are:

- the role of the school in promoting regular attendance of all registered pupils of compulsory school age and the identification of local and international good practice. Key themes related to this objective are:
  - school ethos and culture;
  - attendance policy and attendance targets;

- designated staff/defined roles and responsibilities;
- recording and monitoring attendance;
- rewards and sanctions for attendance; and
- strategies and supports to address poor attendance.
- the interface between schools in deprived areas, the home and the community around promoting regular attendance and the identification of local and international good practice. Key themes related to this objective are:
  - links with home/parents; and
  - links with wider community.
- the interface between schools and external support services and its effectiveness in promoting regular attendance at school. Key themes related to this objective are:
  - Education Welfare Service; and
  - Other supports.

## **1.2 INTRODUCTION**

Regular school attendance and educational attainment are inextricably linked. Regular attendance ensures that pupils get the best possible outcomes from their period in compulsory education. This also contributes to minimising the likelihood of a young person not being in education, training or employment post 16 years, reducing social exclusion and improving their chances of employment in the longer term, thereby improving their socioeconomic status and reducing intergenerational poverty.

Extensive research has been undertaken into the causes of poor attendance and the contributory factors are well known. In response to the needs of specific groups in this regard, the Department of Education has developed a series of programmes targeted at for example: Looked After Children, Travellers and School Age Mothers. Outside these well-defined groups, there are other pupils whose pattern of poor

attendance or nonattendance remains a concern; the Department of Education wishes to identify strategies which are successful in promoting attendance and addressing non-attendance.

Analysis of attendance data<sup>1</sup> shows that, as the level of Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME) in a school increases, so too do absence levels. For example: in primary schools where less than 10% of pupils enrolled had FSME, the overall absence level was 4% of total half days in 2009/10, whereas in schools where more than 50% of pupils enrolled have FSME, absence levels were 8.4% of total half days in 2009/10. The implication is that absence tends to be higher in more disadvantaged areas (since FSME is indicative of levels of deprivation). Analysis of attendance data by Neighbourhood Renewal Area (NRA) supports this; it shows that absence levels for primary pupils living in NRAs were higher than those in non-NRAs (overall absence rate of 7.4% of total half days compared with 4.9% in non-NRAs in 2009/10). However the issue is not clear-cut: with analysis showing wide variation between the attendance rates of schools with comparable levels of deprivation.

The Department of Education commissioned RSM McClure Watters (in association with C4EO) to undertake research into improving attendance amongst schools serving deprived areas. Key findings are presented in the research report and accompanying appendices – these draw on an extensive programme of primary and secondary research.

### **1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH**

#### **Research Aim**

The aim of the research is:

- To provide DE with information that will inform policy and practice in those schools with low attendance rates to help them in improving attendance.

---

<sup>1</sup> Attendance data for all grant-aided primary, post-primary and special schools is collected at pupil level in the school census in October each year.

It is expected that the subsequent attainment of children in deprived areas will thereby be improved in line with the Minister's education priority "closing the Performance Gap, Increasing Access and Equity".

## **Research Objectives**

The research objectives are to examine:

- the role of the school in promoting regular attendance of all registered pupils of compulsory school age and the identification of local and international good practice;
- the interface between schools in deprived areas, the home and the community around promoting regular attendance and the identification of local and international good practice;
- the interface between schools and external support services and its effectiveness in promoting regular attendance at school.

The findings from the research will be used to inform appropriate actions to promote regular and sustained attendance at schools in deprived areas.

## **1.4 MAIN FINDINGS**

### **1.4.1. Role of the school**

Drawing on evidence from primary and secondary research, a number of key themes have been identified with regards to:

- the role of the school in promoting regular attendance of all registered pupils of compulsory school age and the identification of local and international good practice.

Each theme is briefly described below.

#### **1.4.1.1 Theme: school ethos and culture**

Key to the issue of addressing the prevention of absence and promotion of attendance is the ethos and culture within schools. This includes the following:

- A “whole school” approach which reinforces good attendance, highlights the links between attendance and attainment and permeates all aspects of school life.
- Leadership on attendance with a designated member of senior staff responsible for attendance.
- Attendance being treated as a priority and valued highly.
- Attendance being regularly discussed by the Senior Management Team and Board of Governors.
- Consistent approach to attendance by all members of staff.
- Attendance policy which is easily understood, regularly updated and disseminated widely.
- Conveying information clearly to parents and pupils on expectations in terms of attendance (what is expected, acceptable) and implications arising from non-attendance.

#### **1.4.1.2 Theme: attendance policy and attendance targets**

Having a written attendance policy provides clarity about a school's approach to attendance in terms of:

- clear and fair rules around attendance - what is an acceptable level of attendance (targets);
- how the school will record and monitor attendance including guidance for staff on registration and categorisation of absence;
- clear procedures to identify and follow up all absence and lateness (allocating individual staff roles and responsibilities);

- how the school will promote attendance (eg awareness-raising through displays, website, prospectus, parents' meetings, attendance projects, campaigns, etc);
- rewards for attendance;
- strategies for addressing poor attendance;
- sanctions for poor attendance;
- consequences of truancy and parentally condoned absence;
- steps to be taken in the event of non-attendance including clear trigger points for each intervention (from first day contact, to escalating circumstances eg referral to EWO etc);
- clear procedures for reintegrating long-term absentees and pupils who may, for specific reasons, have been on a reduced timetable;
- process for parents with regard to explaining absence;
- roles of school staff.

The existence of such a policy demonstrates the priority and value placed on attendance by a school. It also provides a framework for a consistent approach to attendance.

An attendance policy should be regularly reviewed and consulted on (eg amongst staff, pupils and parents).

#### **1.4.1.3 Theme: designated staff/defined roles and responsibilities**

Dealing with attendance requires a focus on a number of different activities including:

- leadership on attendance with a designated member of senior staff responsible for attendance;
- keeping attendance information under review – a responsibility for the Senior Management Team and Board of Governors;

- recording attendance/absence – responsibility shared by many staff members including office staff where Manual Registration or Optical Mark Reader (OMR) is used. (Note:
  - Manual Registration sheets – these are completed by teachers and sent to school office for administrator to update the electronic register;
  - Optical Mark Reader – OMR sheets are completed by teachers and sent to the school office for processing using an optical mark reader),
- monitoring and analysing attendance information to identify patterns of non-attendance, pupils with poor attendance, pupils at risk of falling below the 85% threshold, etc;
- liaison with other staff in school, parents, EWS and other external support agencies;
- promoting attendance eg through projects, campaigns, reward schemes, promotional material (prospectus, website, newsletter, etc) and meetings with parents;

These functions will be carried out by a variety of people including: teachers, Heads of Year, Vice-Principals, Principals, Governors, etc. Clarity with regards to roles and responsibilities ensures that all aspects of attendance are addressed and staff members know what is required of them with regards to attendance.

#### **1.4.1.4 Theme: recording and monitoring attendance**

In order to identify and manage attendance issues, information is vital. By collecting attendance data regularly, accurately and consistently, schools will quickly be able to access information on absence to monitor progress/ trends and set targets for improvement. Schools will also be able to access information which is straightforward identification of attendance/ absence on a given day to follow up immediately as well as accessing detailed information which can be investigated to identify patterns of non-attendance where a referral may be required to the EWS. (As noted in Section 2.3.2, the DE recommends that schools should consider a referral to the EWS when a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern and/ or drops below 85%.)

To ensure that relevant information is available and accessible requires:

- a system for recording attendance – ideally electronic;
- clear and unambiguous procedures for recording attendance; and
- clear guidance for staff on registration and appropriate categorisation of absence;
- clear procedures to identify and follow up all absence and lateness (allocating individual staff roles and responsibilities);
- consistent application of procedures by all staff;
- monitoring of post-registration truancy through taking class registers and spot checks;
- encouraging students and teachers to ensure attendance information is accurate; to achieve this, attendance information should be made available to parents and students.

This will enable:

- production of regular reports to assist in the monitoring and management of attendance issues; and
- regular in-depth analysis of attendance data to identify patterns and to highlight individuals/groups where intervention is required.

#### **1.4.1.5 Theme: rewards and sanctions for attendance**

Reflecting the importance placed on attendance by many schools, a range of reward schemes have been put in place in order to promote good attendance. These can recognise:

- Individual attendance.
- Class attendance.
- Improving attendance.
- Good attendance.



The rewards might be weekly, termly or annually and vary from a certificate to a more tangible monetary reward (eg voucher). By their nature, these are generally more appropriate/effective in Primary Schools and for Junior Years in Post-primary schools.

Reward schemes promoting good attendance are complemented by sanctions on pupils with poor attendance – although these tend to be less commonplace.

#### **1.4.1.6 Theme: strategies and supports to address poor attendance**

Reflecting the need to address poor attendance through both supporting those who are poor attenders as well as re-integrating those who have been absent, schools draw on a wide range of strategies and supports. Each of these addresses different underlying issues – many of which are specific to schools serving deprived areas and reflecting the multiple disadvantages faced by pupils. Examples of interventions include:

- Rules/Procedures
  - Clear, fair rules around attendance - quickly and consistently applied by all staff.
  - Communicate attendance rules to students including consequences of truancy and parentally condoned absence.
  - Clear guidance for staff on registration/appropriate categorisation of absence.
  - Clear procedures to identify and follow up all absence and lateness (allocating individual staff roles and responsibilities).
  - Monitor post-registration truancy through taking class registers, spot checks.
  - Clear procedures for reintegrating long-term absentees and pupils who may, for specific reasons, have been on a reduced timetable.

- Use of attendance information
  - Encourage students and teachers to ensure attendance information is accurate.
  - Make attendance information available to parents and students.
  - Collect and use attendance data to monitor progress/trends and set targets for improvement.
  - Use of technology to monitor and address attendance.
- **Communication between school and parents**
  - Provide Free phone number to call to report a student's absence.
  - Provide Free phone number to text to report a student's absence.
  - Provide an email address to report a student's absence.
  - Accept paper note as a method of reporting a student's absence.
  - First Day Response (first-day absence contact).
  - Communicate attendance rules to parents including consequences of truancy and parentally condoned absence.
  - School absence letters – when levels of attendance becoming a 'cause for concern'
  - Informal meetings and/or telephone calls with parents to discuss the reasons for a pupil's poor attendance.
- Interventions in school
  - Identify pupils who are vulnerable to becoming persistent absentees and have individual action plans in place for each pupil.

- Individual Curriculum (alternative/flexible provision for disaffected pupils).
- Vocational options included in the curriculum recognising likely career pathways of students.
- Pastoral support plans for pupils with long term attendance difficulties - recognising that such pupils face multiple disadvantage.
- Effective counselling systems.
- Pupil Mentoring/Buddy System.
- Additional study support.
- Support for reintegration following absence.
- Attendance incentive schemes which recognise and reward good attendance.
- Activities before and after school as an incentive for pupils to come to school:
  - Pre-School activities (eg Breakfast Club, etc);
  - After-school Programmes.
- Activities which are conditional on full attendance.
- Attendance and punctuality projects.
- Attendance theme days/week.
- Dedicated member of staff supporting pupils with poor attendance:
  - Allocated resource for an attendance officer.
- Create Student-Generated Classroom Rules.
- Build Positive Student-Teacher Connections.
- Using school assemblies and visual displays to engage pupils.

- Sign Posting and access to external support for parents and pupils.
- Transition support (Primary to Post-primary).
- Programmes for parents (see Section 3).
- Home-school liaison project (see Section 3).
- Support for staff
  - Training for staff on specific needs of pupils eg young carers.
  - Access to training in relevant social and emotional behaviour skills for staff to equip them to support these pupils.

#### **1.4.2 Interface between schools, the home and the community**

Drawing on evidence from primary and secondary research, a number of key themes have been identified with regards to:

- the interface between schools in deprived areas, the home and the community around promoting regular attendance and the identification of local and international good practice.

Each theme is briefly described below.

##### **1.4.2.1 Theme: Links with home/parents**

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school. Reflecting this responsibility, the relationship between schools and parents/ carers is extremely important. Schools can assist parents to discharge their responsibility by:

- Parent/Carer responsibilities
  - Remind parents/carers of their legal responsibilities for ensuring their children's regular and punctual attendance.
  - Communicate clearly with parents/carers about the consequences of truancy and parentally condoned absence.

- Remind parents/carers of the potential sanctions for failure to meet their responsibilities (eg legal sanctions, such as parent only prosecutions resulting in fines of up to £1,000 or in more serious circumstances, the EWS may apply for an Education Supervision Order (under Article 55 of the Children (NI) Order 1995) to place the child under the supervision of the Board or, where concerns are not solely related to attendance matters, a Supervision or Care Order (under Article 56) may be granted).
- Remind parents/carers to ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance.
- Stress to parents/carers the importance of continuity of learning, particularly in relation to family holidays during term-time.
- Encourage parents/carers to avoid booking family holidays during term-time.
- Clear attendance information is regularly communicated to parents/carers.
- Remind parents/carers to always notify the school as soon as possible - preferably on the first morning - of any absence.
- Home/ School engagement and communication
  - Explain link between poor attendance and reduced attainment to parents/carers.
  - Meet with parents/carers to discuss learning expectations of their child.
  - Encourage parents/carers to be aware of letters from school which their child brings home.
  - Encourage parents/carers to take an active interest in their child's school life and work.
  - Invite parents to presentations – eg rewards for good attendance.

- Remind parents/carers to ensure that their child completes his/her homework and goes to bed at an appropriate time.
- Encourage parents to attend parents' evenings and other school events.
- Discuss child's attendance at parent teacher evenings or when meeting parents.
- Encourage parents to talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend.
- Support for parents/carers on attendance
  - Parents/carers of Post-registration truants are promptly informed and where necessary actively involved.
  - Provide information about the range of support services that parents/carers can access.
  - Programmes/activities to build relationships with parents/families.
  - Use of parenting contracts where required.

These links between schools and homes/parents are underpinned by the need to:

- build and maintain strong relationships with parents and families;
- communicate with parents in ways that are: accessible and easily understood;
- understanding the issues/challenges that parents/carers face and the implications this may have on school attendance.

#### **1.4.2.2 Theme: Links with wider community**

Strengthening links between schools and the local community helps to promote positive relationships and to emphasise the value of education and the importance of attendance. It also provides another strand of support for the school in seeking to promote attendance. Some of the ways in which these links can be developed include:

- links with local businesses/community eg: through membership of Board of Governors;
- links with local businesses/community through provision of reward schemes for good attendance;
- recruiting support staff from the local community in order to break down barriers between home and school and help students and their families feel more at ease in the school environment;
- Voluntary activity in the local community (where pupils and in some cases parents get involved in voluntary activity and “give something back” to their communities); and
- Projects/interventions which provide support and/or constructive activities for children and young people and/or parents.

### **1.4.3 Interface between schools and external support services**

Drawing on evidence from primary and secondary research, a number of key themes have been identified with regards to:

- the interface between schools and external support services and its effectiveness in promoting regular attendance at school.

Each theme is briefly described below.

#### **1.4.3.1 Theme: Education Welfare Service**

The key support service that schools draw on with regards to attendance is the Education Welfare Service (EWS). This relationship works well when the following are in place:

- Named EWO/Named school staff member.
- Regular review meetings.
- Clear referral procedures.
- Service level agreement with EWS.
- EWS involvement in promoting good attendance.

### **1.4.3.2 Theme: Other Supports**

Schools also access support and engage with a range of other external support services. These multi-agency networks and partnerships work well when the following are in place:

- Clear understanding of roles/responsibilities of schools and other agencies re: attendance.
- Multi-agency networks and partnerships.
- Regular meetings with other key stakeholders.
- Sharing of attendance information.

## **1.5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1.5.1 Conclusions**

From the extensive primary and secondary research into improving attendance in deprived areas, it is apparent that there is no single solution to the problem of poor attendance in schools serving deprived areas. What is apparent, however is that there are a number of common/ recurring themes which point to a range of strategies/interventions that can be applied to help promote good attendance and to address poor attendance. It is encouraging to note that there is evidence of some elements of these examples of good practice (identified in the literature review) in the schools surveyed.

Most schools surveyed were in receipt of Extended Schools funding – enabling the provision of additional activities before, and after school. The availability of such funding provides schools with opportunities to strengthen links with families and communities and to engage/ communicate with parents and pupils on a range of issues including attendance. Therefore, receipt of Extended Schools funding may be a contributory factor in promoting attendance.



## 1.5.2 Recommendations

Arising from the review, there are a number of areas in which we have identified scope for change to assist with improvement in attendance.

### **Recommendation 1: Attendance Policies in Schools**

At present, there is no requirement for schools to have an attendance policy however, some schools do have one. In the survey of schools completed as part of this research, almost 6 in 10 (58.6%) respondents indicated that their school has an attendance policy in place. Of the 10 schools with improving attendance<sup>2</sup> which were examined in more detail, 7 had an attendance policy. Without a formal written definition of a school's approach and hence a framework for dealing with attendance, it will be difficult to address attendance in a consistent way.

**We recommend that DE provide guidance to schools on the need to introduce attendance management policies and key elements to be included within these.**

### **Recommendation 2: Resources for Schools illustrating Interventions**

There is a wide range of information on strategies and supports to address poor attendance; many of which are commonly used in many locations. A brief information pack for schools in NI setting out a menu of the main interventions (eg Alternative Curriculum, Parent Programmes, etc) supported by short case studies would assist in helping schools to implement these in order to address poor attendance.

We recommend that DE prepare an information pack setting out the main types of interventions that could be introduced – supported by case studies – to address poor attendance.

---

<sup>2</sup> These are schools with consistently high and improving attendance as well as catering for relatively large proportion of pupils entitled to FSM. Survey results from these schools have been considered in order to establish if there are any common features in their practice that contribute to their performance in relation to attendance.

### **Recommendation 3: Evaluating Impact of Interventions on Attendance**

Whilst a variety of strategies and supports are in place to address attendance, there is relatively little information available on the impacts of these on attendance. In part this may be due to multiple factors being at play; it may also be the case that there may not be a structured monitoring and evaluation plan in place.

**We recommend that the information pack (see Recommendation 2) is supported by guidance on monitoring and evaluation – to help schools to identify the most successful interventions (this can be shared through Recommendation 4).**

### **Recommendation 4: Sharing Good Practice**

Many schools face common issues with regards to poor attendance; each school has a range of different approaches in place to address these. Given the common issues faced, a means of sharing information/good practice could assist schools in the practical implementation of attendance management strategies and drawing on the Recommendation 3, highlight approaches that are effective. Rather than introducing additional administration/meetings, etc, this “attendance - good practice” repository could be hosted on a website, for example.

**We recommend that an attendance network/forum is set up for schools in deprived areas to share information and good practice on attendance management strategies.**

## **1.6 METHODOLOGY**

The key strands of research included both primary and secondary research in order to identify effective approaches and best practice for promoting good attendance and addressing non-attendance. The methodology for this research was agreed with the Project Steering Group. In summary, our methodology comprised the following main stages.

- **Literature Review** – Drawing on literature from the following countries: England Scotland, Wales, Ireland; USA; Australia; and New Zealand.

- **Consultation** - This included the following main strands:
  - **School staff survey** issued to schools on the basis of location (in a Neighbourhood Renewal Area) or having a high Free School Meal entitlement – indicating a high proportion of the school population coming from areas of disadvantage/ deprivation;
  - **Board of Governors’ survey** issued to the same schools;
  - **Focus Groups with parents** (in 4 schools identified through EWS);
  - **Focus Groups with children** (in 4 schools identified through EWS);
  - **School Staff 1-to-1s** (in 5 schools with relatively high levels of Free School Meal Entitlement and Attendance); and
  - **Consultation with other stakeholders** including DE, DSD, Extended Schools Co-ordinators; representatives of 2 Full Service Pilot Projects; Youth Service and Neighbourhood Renewal Projects.
- **Review of Attendance Management Policies** (where available).

## 1.7 THE PROJECT

The project was undertaken for the Department of Education by RSM McClure Watters (formerly FGS McClure Watters). The total cost of the project was £27,935.

## 1.8 FULL REPORT

The full research report entitled “Research Into Improving Attendance in Schools Serving Deprived Areas” is available on the Department of Education website at <http://www.deni.gov.uk>



## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESEARCH BRIEFINGS (2000 TO DATE)

Three years later: a follow-up survey of teachers who qualified in 1995	RB 1/2000
Immersion education: a literature review	RB 2/2000
From pre-school to school: a review of the research literature	RB 3/2000
The effects of the selective system of secondary education in Northern Ireland	RB 4/2000
Department of Education funded research 2000/01	RB 1/2001
Assessment of the effectiveness of the Youth Service Community Relations Support Scheme (YSCRSS) during 1998/1999 and 1999/2000, in relation to the needs of youth and community groups	RB 2/2001
An investigation of the provision for health education in schools during 1998/99	RB 3/2001
Careers provision in schools at Key Stages 3 and 4	RB 1/2002
Evaluation of Raising School Standards Initiative (RSSI) using	RB 2/2002
Value Added measures of school performance	RB 3/2002
Literature review: effectiveness of different forms of interventions in the schools and youth sectors	
Outcomes for pupils who received an Irish-medium education	RB 4/2002
Multiply-suspended pupils: their educational career and support projects available to them	RB 5/2002
Reducing the bureaucratic burden on schools	RB 6/2002
Developing linguistic accuracy in Irish-medium primary schools	RB 7/2002
Bullying in schools: a Northern Ireland study	RB 8/2002
Community use of schools: an international literature review	RB 1/2003
Department of Education Funded Research 2002/03	RB 2/2003

The Education Experience of Young People in Juvenile Justice Centres A Study of Careers Education and Guidance	RB 1/2004
Out of School Hours Learning Provision and School Improvement in Northern Ireland	RB 2/2004
The Professional Development of Teachers and Principals in Irish-medium Education	RB 3/2004
Traveller children's experiences in mainstream post-primary schools in Northern Ireland: a qualitative study	RB 1/2005
The nature of Youth Work in Northern Ireland: purpose, contribution and challenges	RB 2/2005
Parental attitudes to the statutory assessment and statementing procedures on Special Educational Needs	RB 3/2005
A study into current practice and potential models for the effective teaching of Personal Development at Key Stage 3 in Northern Ireland curriculum	RB 4/2005
Language Development Programmes – coverage and effectiveness of Provision in Northern Ireland (0-36 months)	RB 1/2006
Attitudes of the Socially Disadvantaged towards Education in Northern Ireland	RB 2/2006
Effective Pre-school Provision in Northern Ireland (EPPNI)	RB 3/2006
The Development of Inclusive Schools in Northern Ireland: A Model of Best Practice	RB 4/2006
Department of Education Funded Research 2005/06	RB 5/2006
The recruitment and retention of teachers in post-primary schools in Northern Ireland	RB 6/2006
An evaluation of the need and early intervention support for children (aged 2-4 years) with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder in Northern Ireland	RB 1/2007

Alternative Education Provision (AEP) in Northern Ireland	RB 2/2007
The Nature and Extent of Bullying in Schools in the North of Ireland	RB 3/2007
Department of Education Funded Research 2006/07	RB 4/2007
An investigation of youth work, as a process of informal learning, in formal settings	RB 1/2008
E-Consultation with pupils – A pilot study	RB 2/2008
Good practice in literacy and numeracy in British and Irish cities	RB 3/2008
Department of Education Funded Research 2008/09	RB 1/2009
The Special Education Needs of Bilingual (Irish-English) Children	RB 2/2009
Audit of Counselling and Therapeutic Interventions in Primary Schools and Special Schools in the north of Ireland	RB 3/2009
Effective Pre School Provision in Northern Ireland (EPPNI) Pre-School Experience and Key Stage 2 Performance in English and Mathematics	RB 1/2010
School governors: the guardians of our schools	RB 2/2010
PISA 2009: Achievement of 15-year olds in Northern Ireland	RB 3/2010
Study into how the education system can improve the attendance of looked after children at post-primary school	RB 1/2011
Research into the Nature and Extent of Pupil Bullying in Schools in the north of Ireland	RB 2/2011
Needs assessment and feasibility study for the development of high level diagnostic tools in Irish for children with special educational needs in the Irish-medium sector	RB 1/2012

## **PURPOSE OF DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESEARCH BRIEFINGS**

The Department of Education (DE) places a high value on the wide circulation of research results to ensure that research has the maximum impact on policy and practice in education. DE Research Briefings are designed to provide attractive, interesting and easy access to research findings for policy makers, researchers, teachers, lecturers, employers and the public to facilitate informed discussion of education issues. Research cannot make decisions for policy makers and others concerned with improving the quality of education. Nor can it by itself bring about change. But it can create a better basis for decisions, by providing information and explanation about educational practice and by clarifying and challenging ideas and assumptions.

**The full range of DE Research Briefings can be accessed at the DE Internet site - [www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch\\_pg.htm](http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg.htm)**

DE Research Briefings may be photocopied for use within your own institution.

If you have difficulty getting access to DE Research on the DE website please contact us at:

Statistics and Research Branch  
Department of Education  
Rathgael House  
43 Balloo Road  
Rathgill  
BANGOR  
Co Down  
BT19 7PR

Telephone: 028 9127 9401

Fax: 028 9127 9594

e-mail: [statistics@deni.gov.uk](mailto:statistics@deni.gov.uk)

**Edited and produced by Statistics and Research Branch.**