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OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes

December 2013

COUNTRY BACKGROUND REPORT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND



This report was prepared by the Department of Education as an input to the OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes. The document was prepared in response to guidelines the OECD provided to all countries. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the national authority, the OECD or its Member countries. Further information about the OECD Review is available at www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy.

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Executive Summary

Purpose of this report

1. This Background Report is designed to provide factual information on how the Education system in the north of Ireland works, how it is funded, its key priorities and how delivery against those key priorities is progressing. The OECD review which this report is designed to inform and support presents an opportunity to analyse critically the strengths in our frameworks for evaluation and assessment and the areas for improvement, with a clear focus on learning from best practice internationally and with the ultimate goal of improving education outcomes for all our young people.

Positive Aspects of Our Education System

2. The educational standards achieved by school leavers have improved over the last five years.
- i. At compulsory school leaving age (age 16), 62% of our young people attain at the level of at least 5 grade A*-C passes at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level or equivalent level qualifications, including GCSEs in English and maths (level 2 qualifications).
 - ii. More pupils than ever are staying on at school to complete sixth form study. Fifty per cent of pupils now leave school with 3 or more A*-E grades at GCE (advanced) level or equivalent qualifications (level 3 qualifications);
 - iii. In 2006, the equivalent figures were 53% and 40% respectively.
 - iv. The number of students leaving school with no formal qualifications has been reduced from 27% in 1980 to 2% in 2012.
 - v. Recent results of TIMSS and PIRLS show that primary school pupils are performing well above the international average in both literacy, where our pupils are ranked 5th out of 45 countries surveyed, and numeracy, where they are ranked 6th out of 50 surveyed. In science, our pupils were ranked 21st, also scoring significantly above the international average.
 - vi. Academic outcomes for SEN pupils in mainstream schools have improved significantly over the past five years. The percentage of SEN pupils leaving school with five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C and with two or more A-levels at grades A-E has more than doubled over the past five years

Key Areas of Concern

- i. International survey evidence shows a decline in reading and maths of our 15 year olds from significantly above the OECD average in 2000 and 2003, to average in 2006 (and in 2009). While performance in examination outcomes at the top end remains comparatively high, a long tail of underachievement follows. The number of pupils who do not achieve 5 or more GCSEs at the key measure of grades A* to C, including English and Maths, remains high.
- ii. There are significant differences in examination outcomes between pupils from the least and most affluent backgrounds. Only 34% of the young people from low income backgrounds leave school with 5+ GCSEs at the key measure above, while 68% from more affluent backgrounds achieve this.
- iii. There are issues regarding differing levels of achievement between boys and girls.
- iv. The prevalence of SEN has increased in recent years with the most recent school census recording 20.9% of the school population as having SEN.
- v. Around one fifth of pupils have not achieved the expected levels of literacy and numeracy by the time they finish the primary phase of their education and move to the post-primary phase.
- vi. There remain significant variations in outcomes for pupils between schools that appear to share similar characteristics, including similar levels of disadvantage, and receiving similar resources.
- vii. There are significant challenges around overprovision, with too many schools and too many small schools in particular.
- viii. In some communities, education is not valued as it should be, leading to a downward cycle of low expectations and low aspirations leading to low achievement.

Background

Structure of education

3. Education policy and legislation in the north of Ireland is devolved to a locally elected and accountable Assembly. The Minister for Education is responsible for a resource budget of £1.9 billion (in 2012/13) to deliver a high-quality education for pupils in full-time education and other services including early years education and youth services. The Minister is responsible for setting the policy direction and allocating resources; for setting targets for the education system; and for accounting to the

Assembly for outcomes. The Department of Education (DE) provides the central governance and management of education in the north of Ireland. The Department is required to ensure the effective execution of policies relating to the provision of education and youth services. The Minister's key priorities include raising educational standards for all, and tackling underachievement wherever it occurs, with a particular focus on narrowing differences in outcomes between the most and least socio-economically advantaged pupils.

4. The Department's main statutory areas of responsibility are 0-4 provision; primary, post-primary and special education; and youth services. It does not cover further education or training programmes for those above the age of 16; or higher education – these are matters that fall within the remit of the Department for Employment and Learning.

5. The Department also has, in legislation, powers to inspect the quality of education in schools and this role is undertaken by its Education & Training Inspectorate (ETI).

6. There are 333,430 children in grant-aided and independent schools and in funded pre-school education¹. In 2012/13, over 98 per cent of pupils attended grant-aided schools (not including special schools), while 1.4 per cent attended special schools (schools catering specifically for pupils with moderate or severe learning disabilities) and 0.2 per cent attended independent schools. 1.4% of pupils are educated through the medium of Irish.

Compulsory Stages of Education

7. Compulsory education extends from age 4 to 16, covering 12 years of schooling. This period of schooling is broken into phases, known as Key Stages, as follows:

Primary education

- Foundation Stage – Years 1 and 2 (ages 4-6)
- Key Stage 1 – Years 3 and 4 (ages 6-8)
- Key Stage 2 – Years 5-7 (ages 8-11)

Post-primary education

- Key Stage 3 – Years 8-10 (ages 11-14)
- Key Stage 4 – Years 11 and 12 (ages 14-16)
- Post-16 (non-compulsory) provision – Years 13 and 14 (ages 16-18)

8. Students transfer at the end of Year 7 (age 11) from primary to post-primary school. While it remains Ministerial policy that transfer at this stage should be on the basis of non-academic criteria, the law does not prohibit post-primary schools from

¹ Department of Education, Northern Ireland (2013): Northern Ireland enrolments data.

admitting pupils based on academic performance. Parents can elect for their Year 7 children to sit unregulated tests which focus on English and maths. While the majority of post-primary schools do not use academic admissions criteria, many schools which were traditionally selective (largely but not exclusively grammar schools) still admit their pupils based on the results of these tests.

Education Management and Support Bodies

9. In line with the Executive's 2011-15 Programme for Government (and subject to the completion of Education Bill 2012) a single education authority, the Education and Skills Authority is to become operational in 2013.

Framework for evaluation and assessment

10. At system level, assessment, through summative examination and Key Stage assessment data and through inspection evidence from the ETI, gives parents, government and taxpayers information on the standards our schools are achieving, in return for the significant amount of public money invested in them.

11. The Department collates and publishes summative end of Key Stage assessment results and the inspection findings of the Education and Training Inspectorate are available to parents and published on the web. There is also an increasing focus beyond local assessment data and international benchmarking surveys have taken on increasing importance.

12. At school level, school improvement policy is based on self-evaluation by schools, leading to action to improve outcomes for their pupils. Within schools, assessment is integral to the work of teachers. They assess pupils to check that they have mastered a topic or if they have reached the expected standard - assessment of learning.

13. With the revised curriculum, and the use of computer-based diagnostic assessment in reading and maths in our primary schools, there is an increasing policy focus on assessment for learning.

14. Assessment is not seen as an end in itself; current policy emphasises that it should be used to inform the teaching and learning opportunities teachers provide for their pupils, and to identify when a child is underachieving – so that action can be taken to support that pupil. It should also inform parents and support their engagement with their child's education

System Evaluation

15. System evaluation is based on a process of target setting (on a trajectory towards achieving the Minister's long-term targets), and monitoring of progress. The targets focus on the achievements of pupils across the education system, with a

particular focus on the end of the primary phase, and for school leavers. Pupils are assessed at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 by teachers drawing on their professional judgement. School leavers are assessed by their performance in public examinations, at GCSE or equivalent or A level or equivalent.

16. Progress is monitored against the published system targets. This is supported by further, more detailed, analyses of the performance of schools and pupils taking account of pupil characteristics, such as entitlement to free school meals, and of school characteristics, such as school management type, or whether or not the school operates academic selection. This is used internally in the Department to identify areas requiring further intervention.

17. Targets are set at system level to encourage the raising of standards across all schools and to measure school performance. At Key Stages 1 to 3, these targets are set in relation to the expected Levels. At Key Stage 4, the main measure of performance used is achievement of at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including English and Mathematics. This measure equates to what is known as a “Level 2” qualification which is the level recognised as necessary for young people to progress into further and/or higher education and into employment and to function effectively in life and at work. Performance at this level contributes to wider economic targets focused on increasing the proportion of the workforce that is qualified at or above Level 2.

School Assessment

18. The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) inspects statutory education and training provision: from early years provision, primary schools, post-primary schools, special schools, further education and work—based learning institutions, youth organisations and higher education teacher education providers. It also inspects non-statutory pre-school and youth settings. Inspectors are recruited competitively from amongst senior and experienced educators and trainers in all of these sectors.

Teacher Appraisal and Professional Development

Contractual status of teachers and principals

19. The Employing Authority of teaching staff in controlled schools is the Education and Library Board (ELB) and in Catholic maintained schools it is the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS). The employer in all grant-aided schools is the Board of Governors of the school. In grant-maintained integrated schools, other maintained and voluntary grammar schools, the Board of Governors is both the employing authority and the employer.

20. Whilst the Employing Authority holds the contract of employment, the day to day management of schools such as the determination of staff complements, discipline, supervision and dismissal of staff is delegated to the Board of Governors (regardless of management type).

Professional Development

21. The Curriculum Advisory and Support Service (CASS) in each of the Education and Library Boards provides advisory and support services to all grant aided schools and are the main providers of in-service education and training (INSET). In order to provide such training CASS carries out an annual training needs audit of schools (including nursery schools/teachers) from which it then prepares a scheme of support. It is therefore a matter for schools to prioritise the training they require in any given year. To inform this, the professional development requirements of individual teachers can be established by school leaders through the course of the annual Performance Review and Staff Development (PRSD) scheme .

22. The arrangements for professional support will transfer to the new Education and Skills Authority (ESA) once established.

23. A central principle in the design of that service will be the facilitation of collegiality and peer support. It will help create more opportunities and space for teachers to work together in sharing practices and research, developing and evaluating lesson plans and building consensus on what constitutes good teaching practice.

Teachers' competence framework

24. The teacher competence model underpins all stages of teacher education and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) In 2007, the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) revised the competences and published them in "Teaching: the Reflective Profession"

25. This document sets out the 27 competences which student teachers and qualified teachers develop throughout their careers under 3 areas of professional practice:

- I. Professional Values and Practices;
- II. Professional Knowledge and Understanding;
- III. Professional Skills and Application in Assessment.

26. Each competence has also been delineated by way of phase exemplars, across each phase of teacher education:

- initial teacher education
- induction
- early professional development
- continuing professional development, collaborative practice and school improvement

Student Assessment

27. The key focus of statutory assessment arrangements in support of the revised curriculum (and the introduction of diagnostic assessment in primary schools) is on supporting teachers' essential role in assessment for and of learning, to recognise and affirm the professional judgement of teachers. The arrangements are intended to balance requirements at the following levels.

- **At Pupil level:** this is an integral part of the work of a teacher. This includes both assessment of learning, for example checking that a pupil has reached the expected standard, and assessment for learning, where assessment is used to inform teaching and learning, to identify where a pupil is underachieving, for example, so that action can be taken to support that pupil.
- **At School level:** allows school leaders to assess the performance of their schools, identify gaps and areas for development. Schools can benchmark themselves against others in similar circumstances using system data and can set targets and deliver actions to drive school improvement. This is at the heart of the Department's school improvement policy.
- **At System level:** giving parents, taxpayers and government information on the standards schools are achieving in return for the public money being invested in them. It allows the identification of what is working well and where improvement is needed.

28. The Department has stressed that assessment should be used to inform the teaching and learning opportunities teachers provide for their pupils, and to identify when a child is underachieving – so that action can be taken to support that pupil. The new arrangements implemented from September 2012 also aim to address existing concerns around consistency of teachers' judgements within and between schools, particularly when assessment information is being used at system level as an indicator of performance.

Chapter 1: The school system

Structure

29. Following political agreement to the devolution of certain policy and legislative powers from the UK government at Westminster to a local Assembly in 1999, legislative responsibility for education was one of the functions devolved to the Northern Ireland Assembly and to a locally elected Minister for Education. The Minister is responsible for a resource budget of £1.9 billion (in 2012/13) to deliver a high-quality education for pupils in full-time education and other services including early years education and youth services.

30. The Minister for Education is responsible for setting the policy direction and allocating resources; for setting targets for the education system; and for accounting to the Assembly for outcomes. The Department of Education (DE) provides the central governance and management of education. The Department is required to ensure the effective execution of policies relating to the provision of education and youth services. The Minister's key priorities include raising educational standards for all, and tackling underachievement wherever it occurs, with a particular focus on narrowing differences in outcomes between the most and least socio-economically advantaged pupils. The Department's main statutory areas of responsibility are 0-4 provision; primary, post-primary and special education; and youth services (see below for details of this terminology). It does not cover further education; training programmes for those above the age of 16; or higher education – these are matters that fall within the remit of the Department for Employment and Learning.

31. There are 333,430 children in grant-aided and independent schools and in funded pre-school education². In 2012/13, over 98 per cent of pupils attended grant-aided schools (not including special schools), while 1.4 per cent attended special schools (schools catering specifically for pupils with moderate or severe learning disabilities) and 0.2 per cent attended independent schools. 1.4% of pupils are educated through the medium of Irish. The 2012/13 number of schools by management type (see paragraph 37 for definitions) are detailed in Annex A.

Pre-school education

32. The commitment in the Executive's Programme for Government 2011-15 is to 'ensure that at least one year of pre-school education is available to every family that wants it.' Funded pre-school places are available in statutory nursery schools and units and in those voluntary and private settings participating in the Pre-School Education Expansion Programme (PSEEP). The Programme incorporates a number of features

² All figures Department of Education, Northern Ireland (2013): Northern Ireland enrolments data.

designed to promote high quality pre-school education provision in all settings. These include a curriculum which is common to all those involved in pre-school education, minimum accommodation requirements, minimum standards for staff qualifications and staffing levels, and support from a qualified teacher or early years specialist. All centres are subject to regular inspection.

Compulsory Stages of Education

33. Compulsory education extends from age 4 to 16, covering 12 years of schooling. This period of schooling is broken into phases, known as Key Stages, as follows:

Primary education

- Foundation Stage – Years 1 and 2 (ages 4-6)
- Key Stage 1 – Years 3 and 4 (ages 6-8)
- Key Stage 2 – Years 5-7 (ages 8-11)

Post-primary education

- Key Stage 3 – Years 8-10 (ages 11-14)
- Key Stage 4 – Years 11 and 12 (ages 14-16)
- Post-16 (non-compulsory) provision (sometimes called Key Stage 5) – Years 13 and 14 (ages 16-18)

34. Students transfer at the end of Year 7 (age 11) from primary to post-primary school. While it remains Ministerial policy that transfer at this stage should be on the basis of non-academic criteria, the law does not prohibit post-primary schools from admitting pupils based on academic performance. Parents can elect for their Year 7 children to sit unregulated tests which focus on English and maths. While the majority of post-primary schools do not use academic admissions criteria, many schools which were traditionally selective (largely but not exclusively grammar schools) still admit their pupils based on the results of these tests. Voluntary Grammar schools (under either Catholic or non-denominational management: see paragraph 37) cater for 33% of the post-primary school population, with a further 10% of pupils attending controlled grammar schools. The majority (57%) of pupils attend non-selective schools (or in a small number of cases, partially selective schools).

35. Where there is oversubscription, each school sets its own criteria to select pupils, such as: proximity of home to school; whether a sibling already attends the school; and/or ranking in the unregulated tests if they engage in academic selection.

36. In general, education legislation applies to grant-aided schools, that is, schools which receive grant-aid through the ELBs or directly from DE.

Types of Schools

37. The main types of school management are:-

- a. **Controlled:** Controlled (nursery, primary, special, secondary and grammar) schools are managed and funded by Education and Library Boards (ELBs) through Boards of Governors. Primary and secondary school Boards of Governors consist of representatives of transferors³ (along with representatives of parents, teachers and ELBs). Nursery, grammar and special school Boards of Governors consist of representatives of the latter 3 categories. The controlled sector includes a small number of controlled integrated and controlled Irish Medium schools.
- b. **Maintained** Maintained (mainly but not exclusively Catholic Maintained) schools are managed by Boards of Governors which consist of members nominated by trustees, along with representatives of parents, teachers and ELBs. These schools are funded through the ELBs for their running costs and directly by the Department in relation to capital building works. For Catholic Maintained schools, the Employing Authority is the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS)
- c. **Voluntary:
(Non-Maintained)** These are mainly voluntary grammar schools, managed by Boards of Governors which consist of persons appointed as provided in each school's scheme of management (usually trustees or foundation governors) along with representatives of parents and teachers and, in most cases, members appointed by the Department or ELBs. Currently, Voluntary Grammar schools are funded directly by the Department.
- d. **Grant-Maintained Integrated
Schools (GMI)** Grant-maintained integrated primary and post-primary schools are also managed by Boards of Governors and funded directly by the Department.

³ The "Transferors" are in the majority of cases representatives of the three main Protestant Churches in the north of Ireland. Their rights to representation on the Boards of Governors of controlled schools were established in law some time ago following the transfer of church-owned schools to the ownership of the state.

38. The practical operation of all schools is a matter for Boards of Governors (BoG). They are responsible for the delivery of the curriculum, admission of pupils, and in the case of schools with delegated budgets, for the management of their own financial affairs, including staffing matters.

39. Grant-aided schools (other than Special schools) are funded in the same way through a Common Funding Formula (CFF), all must provide the same curriculum and, under open enrolment arrangements, parents can choose to apply to any school. Spending decisions are delegated as far as possible to each school's Board of Governors, working with the principal. Special schools operate under a different funding regime, wherein all staffing and school maintenance costs are met directly by the ELB from a non-delegated budget - a small budget is delegated to the Board of Governors to meet other costs, e.g. heating, lighting, cleaning. There are also a very small number of independent schools that are not grant-aided by the Department of Education.

40. It should be noted that the Common Funding Formula is currently under review. An independent panel was appointed to review the Common Funding Scheme. The aim of the Review is to ensure the development of a revised Scheme that is fit for purpose, sufficiently targets social needs and is consistent with, and supports, DE policy objectives. The Panel submitted its report to the Minister for Education in January 2013. He is currently considering its findings and recommendations alongside the responses to a public consultation before making decisions on the way forward.

ELBs, CCMS, CnaG and NICIE

41. There are presently five regional, statutory education bodies, known as Education and Library Boards (ELB). The ELBs have duties to secure the provision of efficient primary and post-primary education to meet the needs of their areas (Article 5(2) of the Education & Libraries (NI) Order 1986) and to provide training, advice and support, for schools to bring about improvement (Article 23 of the Education (NI) Order 2006)⁴. ELBs are also accountable for the funding provided directly to them and for the funding delegated to controlled and Catholic maintained (and other maintained) schools (DE is the statutory funding authority for grant maintained integrated and voluntary grammar schools). The ELBs are therefore responsible for ensuring schools achieve good outcomes for their pupils in return for the money invested in schools⁵. The ELBs also act as the employing authority for all staff in controlled schools and for all non-teaching staff in Catholic maintained schools and have overall responsibility for ensuring the provision of high quality education in their board area and for supporting the development of governors, principals, teachers and other school-related staff.

42. The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) has a duty to 'promote the effective management and control of catholic maintained schools by the[ir] Boards of

⁴ When it is established, the Education & Skills Authority (ESA) will assume the responsibilities of the ELBs and CCMS and will be the statutory funding authority for schools of all types. ESA will have a specific duty to promote the raising of standards in schools.

⁵ Para 10.1 of *Guidance on Financial & Management Arrangements for Controlled and Maintained Schools*.

Governors'. In doing so, CCMS can, with DE's approval, provide, or secure the provision of, any advice and information for governors, principals and staff it considers appropriate (Article 142 of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989). CCMS is the employing authority for all teaching staff in these schools.

43. Additionally, two sectoral bodies, Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG) and the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) receive funding from the Department to support and provide a voice for the Irish-medium and integrated sectors respectively. In addition to the statutory duty on the Department "to encourage and facilitate" integrated education, there is a duty to have regard to the general principle that, "so far as is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure, pupils shall be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents" and a general duty on each Board to "secure that there are available in its area sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary education and the schools available for an area shall not be deemed to be sufficient unless they are sufficient in number, character and equipment to afford for all pupils opportunity for education offering such variety of instruction and training as may be desirable in view of their different ages abilities and attitudes."

44. In line with the 2011-15 Programme for Governments⁶, and subject to the completion of Education Bill 2012, the ELBs and CCMS (alongside the ELB Staff Commission and the NI Youth Council) are to be dissolved and replaced by a single education authority, the Education and Skills Authority (ESA). NICIE and CnaG should continue as Support Bodies for their sector, alongside similar entities for Controlled and Catholic Schools.

45. Roles and responsibilities are summarised in the following table:

Body⁷	Current Responsibility	Future
ELB curriculum advisory & support services*	ELBs are statutorily required to provide curriculum advisory & support services (CASS), including leadership support, to all grant-aided schools, regardless of sector or management type.	ESA shall take on this responsibility and plans are being developed for a Regional School Development Service
Funding authority*	The ELBs are responsible for funding all controlled and maintained (including other maintained) schools in their areas. DE is the statutory funding authority for voluntary grammar and GM integrated schools.	ESA shall be the funding authority for all grant-aided schools.

⁶ [Programme for Government and Budget | Northern Ireland Executive](#)

⁷ The functions of bodies marked with an * will be transferred to ESA when it is established.

Body⁷	Current Responsibility	Future
Employing authority * (teachers and principals)	Controlled schools – the ELB. Catholic maintained schools – CCMS. Voluntary grammar, grant maintained integrated and other maintained schools – the Board of Governors.	ESA shall be the employing authority for all staff working under contract in grant-aided schools.
Board of Governors	The BoG has responsibility for the overall leadership and management of its school, including staff.	This will remain the same.

46. The Department has a general duty to secure the effective execution by the ELBs, CCMS and BoGs of their statutory duties and the Department's policy for the provision of the education service (Article 3(b) of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989).

Education and Training Inspectorate

47. The Department has in law a power to carry out inspections and accordingly has its own inspectorate, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI), which is responsible for inspecting and reporting on the quality of education in pre-school, school and youth settings (and which also provides inspection services for other government departments). Inspection findings are available to parents, and published on the web. It is worth noting that, while the ETI is an integral part of the Department, its inspection processes are designed to be objective and independent.

48. The Department has the power to appoint inspectors or other officers to inspect schools and to give directions to remedy any matter referred to in an inspection report (Article 102, as amended, of the Education & Libraries (NI) Order 1986). Inspection is a key part of work to raise standards, as it provides a professional evaluation of a school's strengths and areas for improvement, which, if addressed effectively, will improve the quality of its provision and outcomes achieved for pupils. Inspection is also an important part of arrangements for the accountability of the education system to the Executive, Assembly and public for the quality of provision and standards achieved in schools.

Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)

49. The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) was established under The Education and Libraries Order (NI) 1993, as amended by the

Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. CCEA's constitution is set out in Schedule 3 of the 1998 Order. CCEA has both executive and advisory functions. CCEA functions include:

- continually reviewing all aspects of the curriculum, examinations and assessment for grant-aided schools;
- undertaking statutory consultation on proposals relating to legislation involving curriculum, examinations and/or assessment;
- advising DE on matters concerning curriculum, assessment, examinations and external qualifications;
- developing qualifications, conducting qualifications and assessments, and moderating relevant qualifications and assessments, ensuring that educational standards are recognised as equivalent to those upheld by other similar UK bodies;
- accrediting and providing advice on approval of qualifications;
- publishing and disseminating information relating to curriculum, assessment and examinations;
- developing and producing teaching support materials for use in schools; and
- carrying out research and development.

50. In its capacity as an awarding organisation, CCEA currently accounts for circa 70% of the local market share for GCSE (Yr 12) and circa 73% for GCE (Yr 14) examinations.

The Statutory Curriculum

51. A revised statutory curriculum was introduced into all grant-aided schools on a phased basis from 2007 with three key aims in mind:

1. to ensure that the core curriculum delivered in all grant-aided schools was relevant to the needs, aspirations and career prospects of all young people;
2. to promote a greater focus on skills and their application as well as knowledge and on connecting learning across the curriculum; and
3. to reduce the prescription that had applied since 1989 and to give teachers much more flexibility to exercise their professional judgement in planning and delivering lessons that were connected, relevant, enjoyable and supported pupils in achieving their full educational potential.

52. There is, for all Key Stages from Foundation to Key Stage 4, statutory minimum content which must be covered in school. Beyond that schools have much greater freedom in what they cover and when it is covered. At Key Stage 4, the statutory minimum content is reduced still further, although schools must offer pupils a range of courses leading to recognised qualifications.

53. The revised curriculum also has a particular focus on the core cross-curricular skills (CCS) of Communication (literacy); Using Mathematics (numeracy); and Using ICT and whole curriculum skills focusing on “Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities” and referred to as the *other skills*.

Primary Schools

54. In primary schools, the curriculum includes Religious Education and six Areas of Learning:

1. Language and Literacy;
2. Mathematics and Numeracy;
3. The Arts;
4. The World Around Us;
5. Personal Development and Mutual Understanding; and
6. Physical Education.

55. Though these study topics have been laid out in six discrete areas, teachers are encouraged to be flexible in selection and to integrate learning across the six areas.

56. Standards of pupil competency in Literacy and Numeracy are assessed through Communication and Using Mathematics. The CCS describe the confidence and ability to apply skills in a range of meaningful contexts. New Levels of Progression have been agreed for all three cross-curricular skills, written in the form of “can do” statements and designed to map the skills that pupils are expected to demonstrate by the end of each Key Stage (Key Stage 1 and 2 in primary, and on into Key Stage 3 in post-primary). New assessment arrangements designed to measure pupils’ progress in each of the cross-curricular skills are being implemented with effect from the 2012/13 school year (See Chapter 6 for more details).

Post-primary Schools

57. Post primary education consists of 5 years of compulsory education (from year 8 to 12) and a further 2 years if students wish to remain in school to pursue post GCSE / level 2 courses to Level 3. As in the primary phase, post-primary students have a legal entitlement to a common curriculum.

58. At Key Stage 3 (Years 8-10), the statutory curriculum is the same across all post-primary schools and includes Religious Education and the CCS and other skills referred to above. It also includes the following Areas of Learning:

1. Language and Literacy;
2. Mathematics and Numeracy;

3. Modern Languages;
4. The Arts;
5. Environment and Society;
6. Science and Technology;
7. Learning for Life and Work; and
8. Physical Education.

59. At Key Stage 4 (Years 11-12), pupils are entitled to access a broad and balanced curriculum to meet their needs, interests and aspirations, no matter which type of school they attend or its geographical location. Courses offered must have clear progression pathways to further or higher education, employment or training. The KS4 curriculum must include religious education; physical education and the statutory content of the *Learning for Life and Work* Area of Learning and also must include the CCS and other skills.

60. Pupils must have access to, but do not necessarily have to take, a qualification in each of the eight Areas of Learning. The Department expects that all pupils will follow a GCSE course in Mathematics and English unless there are exceptional and justifiable reasons why this would not be appropriate. While studying a science subject after the age of 14 is not compulsory, in recent years, particular effort has also been made to promote the benefits of STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths)-related subjects and to encourage their uptake.

The Entitlement Framework

61. The Entitlement Framework, which is being introduced on a phased basis, has been statutory since September 2013 when access to a minimum number of courses, a third of which must be applied and a third general, must be offered in every grant-aided post primary schools. At Key Stage 4 the minimum number of courses will be 18 in 2013, rising to 21 in 2014, and finally to 24 by 2015. Post 16 the offer must be 21 courses in 2013, rising to 24 in 2014, then 27 by 2015.

GCSE / A Level Attainment

62. Success criteria, based on GCSE/level 2 achievements, are normally applied for entry into post-16 courses (either A levels or other equivalent Level 3 qualifications). Students will normally select up to three or four subjects according to the results at GCSE or equivalent. For those who elect to continue their education, results in 'A' level or equivalent qualifications will determine entry into further or higher education colleges and universities for the training of undergraduate degrees, or first degrees, including

teacher training courses. Further studies lead to post graduate qualifications at masters and doctorate levels, and at a higher level in preparation for a qualification to a professional body. Choices of progression route must be underpinned with access to high quality careers education advice and guidance to ensure the most appropriate route to success.

63. The educational standards achieved by school leavers have improved over the last five years. Fifty per cent of pupils now leave school with 3 or more A*-E grades at GCE (advanced) level or equivalent qualifications (level 3 qualifications); and 62.0% with at least 5 grade A*-C passes at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level or equivalent level qualifications, including GCSEs in English and maths (level 2 qualifications). In 2006, the equivalent figures were 40% and 53% respectively. The proportion of students leaving school with no formal qualifications has been reduced from 27% in 1980 to 2% in 2012.

Special Educational Needs

64. The statutory responsibility for securing provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) rests with both schools, and the 5 Education and Library Boards (ELBs) which are responsible under special education legislation for identifying, assessing and, in appropriate cases, making provision for children with SEN in their areas.

65. The primary legislation is the Education (NI) Order 1996 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005, (SEND0) which place the statutory responsibility for securing provision for pupils with SEN with the ELBs and the Boards of Governors of schools. Together with the Education (Special Educational Needs) Regulations (NI) 2005, the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of SEN (CoP) and the Supplement to the Code these form what is referred to as the SEN Framework.

66. The CoP sets out a 5-stage approach to the process, with stages 1-3 being school-based stages. Some children may move between stages as their needs are met. Some children will have their needs met locally by their own school. Some children's needs will be so great that they require specialist intervention through the completion of a Statement of Special Educational Needs by the ELB. Stage 4 is the formal assessment process and Stage 5 is the issue of a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

67. SEN provision is matched to the individual needs of the child. Provision may be made in special schools, designed, for example, for children with particular needs, such as, Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD); in learning support centres attached to mainstream schools or in mainstream classes themselves. It may consist of home or hospital tuition, pre-school support or placement outside the north of Ireland.

68. Inclusion of children with SEN into mainstream settings is a key element of DE policy, recognising that there should be a continuum of provision to meet a diversity of need. The continuum of provision will therefore include placements of children in mainstream classes, learning support centres attached to mainstream schools, in special schools within the grant-aided sector and also in a small number of independent schools.

69. The SEN Framework also gives parents the right to appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal about Board decisions on SEN provision. This includes the description in a statement of SEN of the child's SEN, the provision that a Board intends to put in place to meet the child's educational needs and the type of school the Board considers appropriate for the child.

70. Academic outcomes for SEN pupils in mainstream schools have improved significantly over the past five years. The percentage of SEN pupils leaving schools with five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C and with two or more A-levels at grades A-E have more than doubled over the past five years.

71. The Chief Inspector's Report for the period 2010-2012 indicates that achievements and standards in special schools have improved during the reporting period. School leavers, in particular, are achieving good or better levels of accreditation as a result of the higher profile which schools have given to this area within their school development planning.

72. The prevalence of SEN has increased in recent years with the most recent school census recording 20.9% of the school population as having SEN of which 93% are in mainstream schools or learning support centres attached to mainstream schools. Children with a statement of special educational needs accounts for 4.4% of the school population of which 69.6% are in mainstream schools and learning support centres.

73. As a result of a review of the current SEN policy and supporting SEN framework the Executive agreed to the Minister's final policy proposals for a revised special educational needs and inclusion framework and the preparation of the required implementing legislation, including the drafting of a Special Educational Needs Bill. The change to the existing framework will provide a less bureaucratic and more streamlined process and represents a more equitable framework in which all children with SEN should be able to get the support they need, in a timely manner.

74. Positioned within the raising standards agenda of Every School a Good School (ESaGS), the intention of the revised policy is to:

- ensure the child is placed firmly at the centre of the process for identification, assessment, provision and review;
- maintain an inclusive ethos within schools;

- ensure the special education support needs of all children are met in school and ELBs/ESA;
- reduce bureaucracy and delays;
- build the capacity of all schools to address SEN;
- put a clear focus on learning and outcomes for pupils with SEN ensuring that the views of parents and pupils are heard.

75. On current timescales the new policy and framework will be implemented during the 2014/15 school year with a 5 year transitional period.

Chapter 2: The framework for evaluation and assessment

Current approach

76. The Department of Education's vision for the future⁸ is of an education system that is recognised internationally for the quality of its teaching and learning and for the achievements of its young people and of an education service that has at its centre a focus on the needs of children and young people. Put simply, it wants to see "every young person achieving to his or her full potential at each stage of his or her development". In this context, assessment is seen as positive and empowering, used to inform and improve teaching and learning and to address underachievement. Importantly it also records achievement.

77. The Education Minister has set out and is implementing a programme of policies aimed at raising standards, closing the achievement gap and delivering improved outcomes for all. This programme includes the embedding of a revised curriculum, the development of new policies in relation to Special Needs, teacher education and Early Years; and the implementation of new approaches to raising standards, including through his Department's key policy for school improvement "Every School a Good School" (ESaGS) and strategy to improve outcomes in literacy and numeracy "Count, Read; Succeed". Assessment has a key role to play both in helping schools to improve outcomes for pupils and in ensuring that the education system is held accountable for the outcomes it delivers.

78. Assessment is considered at system level; school level; and individual pupil level.

Overview of assessment

Level	Type of assessment	Purpose	Main Audience
Individual pupil	Diagnostic/ Formative	To determine pupil's capacity at or near the start of the school year and to some degree throughout the year in order to inform teaching and learning during that year	Pupil Parent Teacher

⁸ Corporate Plan for Education 2012-2015, Department of Education, November 2012

Level	Type of assessment	Purpose	Main Audience
	Summative⁹	To measure outcomes achieved by pupil at end of school year	
Class	Summative	To measure, at class level, the outcomes achieved at the end of the school year, allowing for comparisons from class to class, between groups of learners and from year to year	Parents Teachers Principal and Governors
School	Summative Qualitative	To demonstrate the outcomes achieved by the relevant year group within the school, allowing for comparisons from school to school and year to year	Parents School School managing authorities Inspectorate
System	Summative Chief Inspector's Report (CIR) Qualitative	To account, at system level, for the outcomes achieved and progress made against published targets Overview / System check	School managing authorities Inspectorate Department of Education Minister Assembly Taxpayers and the public

Context

79. At system level assessment, through summative examination and Key Stage assessment data or through inspection evidence from the ETI, gives parents, government and taxpayers information on the standards our schools are achieving, in

⁹ Of course summative assessment arguably incorporates an element of formative analysis because as well as measuring progress/achievement it points up areas to be addressed/improved/strengthened in the following school year(s)

return for the significant amount of public money invested in them. Assessment helps to identify what has worked well and identify where improvements are needed.

80. The Department collates and publishes summative end of Key Stage assessment results and the inspection findings of the Education and Training Inspectorate (for example, School Inspection Reports, Survey Reports and the Chief Inspector's Report) are available to parents and published on the web.

81. There is also an increasing focus beyond local assessment data and international benchmarking surveys have taken on increasing importance. The most recent PISA¹⁰ survey evidence shows a decline in reading and maths from significantly above the OECD average in 2000 and 2003, to average in 2006 and 2009. The results from the recent Trends in International Maths and Science Study (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) show however that primary school pupils are performing significantly above the international average in both literacy and numeracy.

82. At school level, school improvement policy is based on self-evaluation by schools, leading to action to improve outcomes for their pupils. Within schools, assessment is integral to the work of teachers. They assess pupils to check whether they have mastered a topic or if they have reached the expected standard. This is part of assessment of learning.

83. With the revised curriculum, and the use of computer-based diagnostic assessment in reading and maths in our primary schools, there is an increasing policy focus on assessment for learning.

84. Assessment is not seen as an end in itself; current policy emphasises that it should be used to inform the teaching and learning opportunities teachers provide for their pupils, and to identify when a child is underachieving – so that action can be taken to support that pupil.

85. There is also an increasing recognition of the importance of parents as key partners in the education process; they can exert a powerful influence on the achievement of their child and on the performance of the school as a whole. A key element of the effort to engage parents is the recognition of the need to inform them. Assessment and exam results give parents information about how their child is doing at school, including how they compare to their peers. In September 2012 the Education Minister launched an advertising campaign aimed at informing and engaging parents, in particular those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, to become more involved in their child's education.

86. While the provision of a regulated transfer test for pupils transferring to post-primary school ended in 2008 (for the transfer of pupils in 2009), the continued use of unregulated tests by some post-primary schools has led to a continued focus on the effects of selection at system level.

¹⁰ Please note that this report predates the publication of the PISA 2012 Report on 3rd December 2013.

Implementation

87. As detailed in Chapter 6, the 2012/13 school year saw the introduction of a new approach to the assessment of key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. New levels of progression have been agreed which focus on “can-do” statements in literacy, numeracy and ICT. This new approach is fundamental to the Department’s raising standards agenda. The importance of the new arrangements commanding the confidence of parents, teachers and the wider system is recognised and the arrangements were themselves developed with input from teacher representatives. Assessment will be teacher-led but with supporting moderation arrangements. This recognises the primacy and professionalism of teachers as those best able to assess the progress of their pupils while providing the necessary consistency and rigour. A teacher’s professional judgement is seen as a valid form of assessment and the new arrangements place this judgement at their centre.

88. Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement¹¹ which was published in April 2009 is based on a vision of schools as self-improving communities of good practice. School self-evaluation and self-improvement (with support, and where necessary, challenge) are at the heart of the policy. The belief is that schools themselves, through honest and open engagement in self-evaluation, using effectively the data available to them, are best placed to identify and implement changes that lead to improvements for pupils. There is a particular focus on achievements in literacy and numeracy. Count, read: succeed – A Strategy to Improve Outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy¹² was published in March 2011. The aims of the strategy are to support teachers and school leaders in their work to raise overall levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy among young people and to narrow the current gaps in educational outcomes. The strategy includes milestone and long-term targets for improving outcomes in literacy and numeracy.

89. Every School a Good School emphasises that school improvement is first and foremost the responsibility of the school. It is based on the premise that schools themselves are best placed to identify areas for improvement and to implement changes that can bring about better outcomes for pupils. Self-evaluation leading to sustained self-improvement is therefore at the core of the school improvement policy. Effective self-evaluation, and the actions that flow from it, should deliver improved educational outcomes and experiences for all pupils. Self-evaluation must be an integral part of the school development planning process with the resulting actions and targets captured in School Development Plans (SDPs).

¹¹ <http://www.deni.gov.uk/esags - a policy for school improvement april 2009.pdf>

¹²

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/count read succeed a strategy to improve outcomes in literacy and numeracy.pdf>

90. The SDP is a school's strategic plan for improvement. It should bring together, in a clear and simple way, the school's priorities, the main actions it will take to raise standards, the resources dedicated to these, and the key outcomes and targets it intends to achieve.

91. Article 13(3) of the 1998 Education Order places a duty on Boards of Governors, through the scheme of management, to prepare, and periodically revise, a SDP. In doing so, Boards of Governors are required to consult the principal and consider any guidance provided by the Department, the Education & Library Boards, and, in the case of Catholic maintained schools, CCMS, and also any inspection findings.

92. The Education (School Development Planning) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010¹³ set out the detailed requirements relating to the preparation of SDPs and the matters they should include. The Regulations apply to all SDPs prepared after 24 January 2011. Guidance on School Development Planning has been prepared to support schools in working through the process of self-evaluation and development planning¹⁴.

93. Count, read: succeed (para 4.15 - 4.18) emphasises that pedagogical decisions are a matter for teaching professionals, and emphasises that teachers must be free to use a range of teaching strategies to meet the needs of every child.

94. In policy terms, the Department has stressed that there is no 'silver bullet' for teaching reading and developing literacy, and indeed numeracy, and there is a danger that over-emphasis on a single approach could lead to the under-use of other options that might help the widest possible spectrum of pupils.

95. The educational standards achieved by school leavers have improved over the last five years. Fifty per cent of pupils now leave school with 3 or more A*-E grades at A (advanced) level or equivalent qualifications (level 3 qualifications); and 62% with at least 5 grade A*-C passes at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level or equivalent level qualifications, including GCSEs in English and maths (level 2 qualifications). The proportion of students leaving school with no formal qualifications has been reduced from 27% in 1980 to 2% in 2012. Comparisons with other OECD countries via PISA¹⁵ show that in the north of Ireland 15 year olds perform above average in science, and at the OECD average in literacy and mathematics.

96. Results from the recent Trends in International Maths and Science Study (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) show that primary school pupils are performing significantly above the international average in both literacy and numeracy.

¹³ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2010/395/contents/made>

¹⁴ [ESaGS School Development Planning 2010 Guidance - English Version PDF 1.9MB](#)

¹⁵ Please note that this report predates the publication of the PISA 2012 Report on 3rd December 2013

97. While aspects of the revised assessment arrangements were piloted prior to implementation, the Department has in recent years focussed less on “initiatives” related to school improvement. The principal reason for this has been that, in many cases, previous work had led to the unintended consequence of implying that improvement in literacy and numeracy was some form of add on to the curriculum, not at the core of teaching and learning.

98. A SEN CPD Literacy Project (Stranmillis and St Mary’s University Colleges) is being delivered to primary schools over 3 years. The aim of the project is to deliver whole school training to enhance the skills of teachers in reading writing and spelling. It will enable schools to identify and meet the needs of the wider group of children at risk of milder long term difficulties.

Chapter 3: System Evaluation

Overall framework for system evaluation

Programme for Government

99. *Building a Better Future - The Programme for Government (PfG) 2011 – 2015* highlights the key goals and actions the Executive will take to drive forward the priority areas of growing the economy and tackling disadvantage. The PfG includes a key commitment, relating to the performance of the education system, specifically:

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Increase the overall proportion of young people who achieve at least 5 GCSEs at A* - C or equivalent including GCSEs in Maths and English by the time they leave school. (DE)	61%	63%	66%
Including: Increase the proportion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who achieve at least 5 GCSEs at A*- C or equivalent including GCSEs in Maths and English (DE)	42%	45%	49%

Department's Corporate Plan

100. The Department's corporate plan¹⁶ sets out its key priorities and objectives during the period from 2012 to 2015. The corporate plan outlines the strategic direction for the Department and the wider education service and is supported by more detailed annual business plans which will be developed at the start of each year by the Department and by its arm's length bodies (ALBs). These mirror the long-term targets which the Minister has set for achievement by 2020, with interim milestones, most recently reviewed and increased in Count, read: succeed. These are detailed in Annex B.

101. The corporate plan identifies five corporate goals - two overarching goals and three enabling goals – that support the Department's vision for education and the wider

¹⁶ http://www.deni.gov.uk/de_corporate_plan_2012_english.pdf

vision for economic and community growth that is captured in the Executive's Programme for Government.

102. The two overarching goals are:

1. **Raising standards for all** – through high quality teaching and learning, ensuring that all young people enjoy and do well in their education and that their progress is assessed and their attainment recognised, including through qualifications.
2. **Closing the performance gap, increasing access and equality** – addressing the underachievement that exists in our education system; ensuring that young people who face barriers or are at risk of social exclusion are supported to achieve to their full potential; and ensuring that our education service is planned effectively on an area basis to provide pupils with full access to the curriculum and Entitlement Framework.

103. The three enabling goals reflect the three priority areas through which the Department will work to achieve the overarching goals. They are:

1. **Developing the education workforce** – recognising the particular professional role of teachers and school leaders in delivering an effective curriculum and raising standards and also the important role of other education professionals and those who support them.
2. **Improving the learning environment** – making sure that strategic investment supports the delivery of the area plans; that the premises in which young people learn are safe, fit for purpose and conducive to learning; and that the environment provides opportunities for sharing and for building a more cohesive society.
3. **Transforming the governance and management of education** – ensuring that the arrangements for governing and managing education here are modern, accountable and child-centred and that education services are delivered efficiently and effectively in support of schools.

Departmental Policies

104. Every School A Good School (ESaGS) was launched in April 2009 and sets out the Department's overarching approach to raising standards and tackling underachievement in all our schools. The policy reflects the fact that schools themselves, through open and honest self-evaluation, are best placed to identify and implement changes that will bring about improved outcomes for their pupils. The policy is intended to support school leaders and teachers in their work to address any barriers to learning that pupils may face and to improve outcomes for all pupils.

105. A central element of the policy is schools' self evaluation and the use of system level data for benchmarking purposes. Long term targets are set out in the Department's strategy to improve outcomes in literacy and numeracy "Count, read: succeed" which

was published in March 2011, The strategy aims to raise overall standards in literacy and numeracy and to close the gaps in achievement between the highest and lowest achieving pupils and schools, between the most and least disadvantaged and between boys and girls.

106. These targets are set at system level to encourage the raising of standards across all schools and to measure school performance. At Key Stages 1 to 3, targets are set in relation to the expected Levels (see para 247 p60). At Key Stage 4, the main measure of performance used is achievement of at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including English and Mathematics. This measure equates to what is known as a “Level 2” qualification which is the level recognised as necessary for young people to progress into further and/or higher education and into employment and to function effectively in life and at work. Performance at this level contributes to a wider economic target focused on increasing the proportion of the workforce that is qualified at or above Level 2. The target for 2020 has been set at 70%.

107. Reflecting the overarching goal of ‘closing the gap, increasing access and equality’, system targets are set for the percentage of students entitled to Free School Meals – the indicator used to determine social deprivation - expected to achieve 5 GCSEs A*-C passes. This is currently 34.1% (target is 65% by 2020).

Evidence used in system evaluation

Public Examinations

108. On an annual basis the Department collects public examination data at subject, pupil and school level. Subject level information is currently procured from RM Data Solutions. Pupil level data is collected by the Department via the School leavers’ Survey - an annual exercise to collect and validate the qualifications and destinations of school leavers in the north of Ireland. School level information is also collected by the Department in the Summary Annual Examinations Results; this relates to all the results achieved by pupils in the year 12 cohort (the final year of compulsory education) and all the results achieved by pupils in the final year of an A level or equivalent level of study in the school – generally these will be pupils in the year 14 cohort. These data collections are processed and analysed by NISRA statisticians and published as National Statistics.

Key Stage Assessments

109. Legislation requires schools to monitor pupils’ progress against the areas of learning and other skills in the revised curriculum and the cross-curricular skills of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT and to report the outcomes to parents at least on an annual basis¹⁷. Schools are also required to report outcomes via

¹⁷ See annex C for details of Foundation Stage to Key Stage 3 requirements.

CCEA to the Department in relation to pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3.

Comparative Data issues

110. Comparability studies¹⁸ have shown that it is likely that the new Levels of Progression (see Chapter 6 for more details) will be more demanding than the previous levels of attainment and therefore outcomes may appear to dip in initial years. It is also likely that, when any new system of assessment is introduced, outcomes will fluctuate in initial years until the new standards and processes are embedded.

111. Schools are required, by law, to set targets in their school development plans in the first term of the new school year and they use the previous year's data when target setting. Schools assessing pupils using the revised Levels of Progression (LoPs) in Communication and Using Mathematics in the first years of implementation will not be able to use the benchmarking data previously available, possibly not until at least one full year's figures are available (in 2013/14 at the earliest for Communication and Using Mathematics). Schools are therefore expected to use their professional experience and judgement to set realistic and challenging targets for their pupils.

112. The need to explain this clearly and carefully to parents, pupils and the system as a whole has been identified and DE is engaging with CCEA to ensure that this communication takes place. The Department has indicated to schools that it recognises that the potential variance of outcomes against targets in the first years of implementation may be wider than in previous years and has assured them that DE, the ETI, the ELBs and CCMS will take this into account when monitoring performance against their targets.

ETI - Chief Inspector's Report

113. Biennially the Chief Inspector of schools produces a report that considers the education system as a whole, with the most recent being published in October 2012¹⁹. This assessed the performance of the system drawing on the evidence found from schools that had been inspected during the previous two years against three key themes: Achieving Value; Learning Skills; and Transforming Communities.

114. Overall, the Chief Inspector states in the 2012 Report that the education system provides good value, but with too much variation. Key Findings from the Report can be summarised as follows:

Positives

- 42% of primary schools inspected are very good or outstanding.

¹⁸ *Assessment, Moderation And System Check*, CCEA July 2009

¹⁹ [The Chief Inspector's Report - 2010-2012 | Education and Training Inspectorate](#)

- A high proportion of teaching and learning is good or better in primary and special schools.
- The increasing proportion of school leavers achieving 5+ GCSEs A*-C (or equivalent) (2010/11 = 73%).
- 80% of achievements and standards in the pre-schools inspected were good or better.
- Over 80% of primary school leavers achieved at the expected level in both English (82%) and maths (83%).
- Through the school improvement policy more robust action is being taken to follow up on inspection reports and ensure schools receive the support they require to address areas for improvement and achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils.
- 81% of schools have improved by at least one performance level in follow up inspections.
- In 82% of primary schools and just over 76% of post primary schools, lessons observed were evaluated as good or better

Areas for Improvement

- There is a need to improve outcomes in literacy and numeracy at KS2 and GCSE English and mathematics, particularly for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Improvement in the quality of leadership and management is required across the phases (in around 39% of post-primary schools and 22% of primary schools inspected the standard was evaluated as not good enough).
- Leadership development is fragmented and does not respond quickly or effectively enough to the changing needs of our education system.
- There is a need to improve the effectiveness of boards of governors in 20% of primary schools and 34% of post-primary schools.
- Transitional arrangements for children and young people between key stages needs a stronger focus to ensure no regression.
- Post-primary schools are not as successful in exiting formal intervention as their primary counterparts.
- Use of ICT needs improvement in 50% of post-primary schools inspected.
- Greater need to encourage all parents and carers to recognise the importance of their child's education and attendance at school (Education Works Campaign).
- Stronger focus needed on the contribution of education to economic growth.

Inspection Reports

115. A range of inspection types is employed to inspect schools; these inspections fall into three main strands:

- individual school inspections,
- area inspections,

- thematic evaluations.

Inspection reports on individual schools are published on the web. Additionally, the ETI publishes a wide range of survey reports which also inform policy development and policy evaluation; support for schools; and practice in schools. Recent examples of such reports include:

- “Journeys to Inclusion” – a report on good practice in special schools (<http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/support-material/support-material-special-education/special-schools-journeys-to-inclusion>)
- “ETI Evaluation of the use of virtual Learning Environments in Northern Ireland” (<http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/surveys-evaluations/surveys-evaluations-primary/surveys-evaluations-primary-2010/report-of-a-follow-up-evaluation-of-the-use-and-impact-of-learning-environments-in-schools-and-in-the-wider-education-service>) and
- “ETI Reviews of the Implementation of the Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum” (<http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/surveys-evaluations/surveys-evaluations-special-education/surveys-evaluations-special-education-2010/a-follow-up-evaluation-of-the-implementation-of-the-revised-curriculum-in-primary-special-and-post-primary-schools>)

International Research Evidence - PISA²⁰

116. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) provides international benchmarks in reading, mathematics and science. DE has participated in each round of PISA since 2000. Comparisons with other OECD countries via PISA 2009 show that our 15 year olds perform above average in science, and at the OECD average in literacy and mathematics, a decline in reading and maths from significantly above the OECD average in 2000 and 2003.

117. More detail on the 2009 PISA findings can be found here: http://www.deni.gov.uk/rb3_2010.pdf

International Evidence - TIMSS and PIRLS

118. In 2011 for the first time, pupils in P6 (9-10 year olds) were assessed against their international counterparts as part of two studies - the Trends in International Maths and Science Study (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).

²⁰ Please note that this report predates the publication of the PISA 2012 Report on 3rd December 2013
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119. The results show that primary school pupils are performing significantly above the international average in both literacy, where our pupils are ranked 5th out of 45 countries surveyed and numeracy, where they are ranked 6th out of 50 surveyed. In science, our pupils were ranked 21st, also scoring significantly above the international average.

120. The results also show that 19% of children in reading and 24% in mathematics are performing at the advanced international benchmark – the highest level possible. This compares with international averages of 8% and 4% respectively.

121. More detail on these findings can be found on the international research page of the Department's website at http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/facts-and-figures-new/32_statistics_and_research-research_pg/international_research/pirls_timss.htm

Educational Research

122. The Department has a research budget which is used to fund a range of studies which provide information about the education system. Examples include research on attendance, the extent of pupil bullying, effective pre-school provision and literacy and numeracy in schools. More detail on these and other studies are available on the research page of the Department's website: http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/facts-and-figures-new/32_statistics_and_research-research_pg.htm

Using System Evaluation Results

123. The system evaluation results are used to provide the public, the Executive and taxpayers with information about the education standards being achieved in return for the public investment. Progress is monitored against the system targets published in the Programme for Government and departmental policy documents as set out above.

124. System evaluation results are used to inform policy development. Policy officials work very closely with professional statisticians to undertake further analyses of the available data sets. This more detailed analysis of the performance of pupils and schools is undertaken to take account of pupil characteristics, such as entitlement to free school meals, and of school characteristics, such as school management type, or whether or not the school operates academic selection. This analysis enables the identification of areas requiring further policy interventions, or programmes that are producing improved outcomes for pupils.

125. The system evaluation results were used to inform the development of the Department's raising standards agenda and the Minister's key school improvement policy, Every School a Good School. Local and international evidence, inspection evidence and the Chief Inspector's Report provide a compelling case for a policy of raising standards. The ongoing monitoring of the system evaluation results allows policies to be adjusted based on robust evidence of the rate of progress. For example

the targets set in Every School a Good School were revised upwards in Count, read: succeed, based on the progress made to date. Additional challenges have been identified and action instigated to address them, for example to increase the attainment of pupils entitled to free school meals. This process of ongoing monitoring of the performance of the system will need to continue as the Department works towards achieving the Minister's long term targets for 2020.

126. System evaluation results are used by the Executive to hold the Department to account. Accountability is then cascaded by the Department through annual reporting and monitoring by the managing authorities for the outcomes achieved by the schools for which they are responsible.

Stakeholder views

127. A number of stakeholders would express concern that the Department measures success by the numbers of pupils achieving GCSEs at A* - C and that this is a very narrow focus. They would also consider that the Department is not taking account of the context in which schools are operating and would call for a measure of contextual value added to be developed.

128. The Department uses free school meal entitlement (FSME) as a proxy for deprivation because it relates to an individual, it is current, it is highly correlated with the multiple deprivation measure and it is available annually as part of the school census return. The Department's use of FSME as a proxy for deprivation has been questioned on the grounds that it is perceived to be too crude a measure of deprivation and that the benefits related criteria for FSME do not fully reflect deprivation.

Chapter 4: School Assessment

Current Practices

129. The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) provides inspection services for the Department of Education and also for two other government departments (the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL). In addition, ETI is invited to inspect the education services provided by the agricultural colleges funded by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (DARD). ETI also participates in the inspection of the education services provided in prisons which is conducted with the Criminal Justice Inspection (CJI) and provides inspection services for the United Kingdom Border Agency (Home Office) in relation to the accreditation of English language colleges.

130. The ETI gives an objective professional evaluation, based on the findings of inspection, of the achievements and standards attained by the pupils (including those attained in public examinations), the quality of the provision for learning and the quality of the leadership and management. The legal basis for the Inspectorate's work is set out in The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 (Articles 102 and 102A). The purpose of inspection is to help to promote the highest possible standards of learning and teaching and to provide information to the Departments about the quality of education and training being offered. The Inspectorate's core objectives and the principles, values and standards to which it adheres are set out below:

Objectives

- To promote openness and transparency in all of the work undertaken.
- To ensure that all those who are inspected are aware of the processes, protocols, standards and performance indicators adopted by the Education and Training Inspectorate.
- To ensure that no organisation is uncertain about the nature and purpose of inspection.

Principles, Values and Standards

- Recognition that the key priority must be the interests and well-being of the learners, in terms of the quality of education and training which they experience, and the outcomes they achieve.
- Objectivity and consistency in making evaluations, honesty in communicating findings, and openness in ensuring that evaluations reflect accurately the organisation's achievements.
- Concern for accuracy, and reliance, in the main, on first-hand evidence based on observation.

- Fairness in dealing with individuals and groups.
- Sensitivity to the circumstances of the organisation, and tact and courtesy towards all with whom the inspector(s) come(s) into professional contact.
- Minimising stress by ensuring that queries are answered promptly and concerns dealt with within a measurable timescale.
- Sensitivity to the effect on others of evaluations and reports, but without compromising the principles, values and standards set out above.

131. The ETI is a 'unitary' inspectorate and inspects statutory education and training provision: from early years provision, primary schools, post-primary schools, special schools, further education and work-based learning institutions, youth organisations and higher education teacher training/education providers. It also inspects non-statutory pre-school and youth settings. Inspectors are recruited competitively from amongst senior and experienced educators and trainers in all of these sectors.

132. The Inspectorate's evaluation of the quality of provision and outcomes is informed by its experience of practice across a wide range of organisations.

133. The work of ETI is independently and externally evaluated every year by the Northern Ireland Research and Statistics Agency (NISRA) through questionnaires and interviews with teachers and trainers in the educational and training organisations which have been inspected. The feedback, which is generally largely positive, leads to improvement in processes. The ETI has been awarded the Customer Service Excellence Standard for the last eight years. The work of ETI is also subject to scrutiny by the Education Committee of the Assembly.

134. As well as evaluating a school through inspection, the ETI has long recognised that the greatest chance for sustained improvement occurs when an organisation has established a positive culture and commitment to self evaluation and professional growth. A self-evaluative organisation uses all the evidence available, including the outcome of external evaluation through inspection, to reach a realistic view of itself and then to find ways of building on strengths and addressing areas for improvement. The ETI, over a number of years and in all phases has published a series of documents to help organisations evaluate their own work, recognise the strengths and identify and develop the areas for improvement.

135. The ETI places considerable emphasis on the importance of self-evaluation as an element in school and college improvement. Over many years the Inspectorate has produced a range of literature designed to assist self-evaluation at whole-school and subject level ("Evaluating Schools" and "Evaluating English", etc. "Improving English", etc. "The Reflective Teacher").

136. All schools are encouraged to undertake self-evaluation for improvement as part of the process of their own school development planning. Prior to an inspection, schools are encouraged to ensure that some form of self-evaluation on the quality of the provision, standards and outcomes and leadership and management is available in

advance of the inspection. This is in line with one of the Principles of Inspection, in the document 'Inspecting for Improvement – Developing a Customer Focused Approach'²¹.

137. All inspectors make use of the guidelines which underpin the indicators for subjects or for whole-school aspects to aid the process of inspection and to ensure consistency. These indicators are accompanied by features of what may be considered as good practice; these are further illustrated with more detailed guidance. These guidance documents are reviewed and updated regularly through subject panels, staff information and staff development programmes. Common approaches are in place for a number of important areas such as child protection, and set conclusions must be used for all inspection activity.

138. Senior staff in schools, normally principals, vice-principals or senior teachers, are recruited by public advertisement and interview to join a pool of Associate Assessors (AA) who can then be invited to join inspection teams for individual inspections. An AA will not normally be involved in more than 2 inspections per year. These teachers receive training from the ETI; they are introduced to the Inspectorate's procedures and performance indicators and participate in inspections as team members (see also para 155 p 41).

The Inspection Process

139. Inspection is referenced to a set of quality indicators (*Together Towards Improvement*), first established nine years ago and now tailored to each phase of education, organised under five main questions. ETI involved schools and practitioners to develop the indicators in *Together Towards Improvement*²², which is promoted for use in self-evaluation for improvement and made available to all schools. This handbook has become an important tool in the promotion of self-evaluation.

140. The time taken for the inspection process varies depending on the nature of the organisation being inspected; the size of the inspection team is determined both by the nature of the inspection and the size of the organisation being inspected.

141. The information below outlines the various forms of inspection and the time allocated for the process. The five key questions are:

1. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting learners?

²¹ *Inspecting for improvement: Developing a customer focused approach* (Office of Public Services Reform, July 2003)

²² <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement.htm>

2. How effective are teaching, training, learning and assessment?
3. How well do the learning experiences, programmes and activities meet the needs of the learners and the wider community?
4. How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?
5. How well do learners develop and achieve?

142. Inspection is based on first hand evidence including lesson observations and the views of parents, teaching and non-teaching staff through confidential questionnaires. Inspectors also meet with representatives of the school's Board of Governors, key members of staff and groups of pupils. The context of the school is taken into account as are the results of public examinations (where appropriate) and, internal assessment outcomes.

143. The inspection outcome is an overall performance level for the school. There are six performance levels outstanding, very good, good, satisfactory, inadequate and unsatisfactory. Where the provision is found to be satisfactory or below the school will have a follow-up inspection.

144. As identified in Together Towards Improvement, ETI:

- Observes learning and teaching;
- Forms judgements about the quality of relationships throughout the school;
- Assesses whether the aims, content of courses and conduct of lessons are appropriate for the pupils, and whether there is a good match between the activities and the needs, interests and abilities of the pupils;
- Examines and evaluates the quality of the school development plan;
- Evaluates the school's arrangements for pastoral care and safeguarding, and the promotion of health and well-being of pupils and staff; Examines samples of the pupils' written work;
- Evaluates the effectiveness of the school's organisation, leadership and management;
- Forms judgments about the nature, condition and appropriateness of the accommodation and resources.

145. A range of inspection types is employed to inspect schools; these inspections fall into three main strands:

- individual school inspections,
- area inspections,
- thematic evaluations.

146. The ETI has developed models of inspection for pre-school, primary and post primary schools. Inspection reports are published on the website www.eti.gov.uk

147. ETI evaluates and reports on the school's internal evaluation including how effectively it is used to manage and advance self-improvement of the quality of its provision. While the process varies sector by sector, the principles of self-evaluation for improvement remain consistent across all sectors and phases.

Primary School Inspections:

148. There are two main forms of inspection in the primary sector – focused and short.

149. A focused inspection focuses on particular areas of provision; a short inspection inspects achievements and standards, quality of provision for learning and leadership and management across the school²³. In a focused inspection the notification period is four working weeks²⁴. The Reporting Inspector (RI) makes contact with the school as soon as possible after the issue of the notification letter.

150. The inspection team will include where possible the District Inspector (DI) for the school. This initial contact is followed soon after, in most cases, by a pre-inspection visit to the school. During this visit the process of the inspection is discussed with the staff of the school. Agreement is reached on the documentation that will be supplied by the school to the inspection team in advance of the inspection and on the first day of the inspection.

151. Another important element of the inspection process is the opportunity provided for the parents, teachers and support staff to complete confidential questionnaires on aspects of the school's provision relating to the leadership and management, pastoral and curricular provision of the school and the arrangements for safeguarding. Once the inspection begins (for example a 5 day inspection) the inspection team, the size of which will depend on the number of teachers, will spend three days evidence gathering in the school, usually Monday – Wednesday. The moderation meeting will take place on Thursday and the team will report back orally to the senior management of the school and a representative of the Board of Governors on the Friday of the same week.

152. During their time in the school the inspection team visits lessons to observe learning and teaching first-hand; interviews pupils regarding pastoral and safeguarding issues; discusses with pupils (in class) the work they are doing in order to ascertain what they know, can do and understand; looks at any of the pupils' performance and assessment data held by the school and scrutinises the pupils' work in the exercise books. Discussions are also held with key members of the staff. Once the oral report has been given the RI completes the written report and submits it for final editing before passing it to the administrative staff in Inspectorate Support Branch (ISB) for processing. The school receives a pre-publication copy for factual accuracy check prior to the report being issued on the ETI web-site within six weeks of the inspection.

²³ Since September 2013 there is one approach to primary inspection with the differentiation being between low risk/small schools (2 days) and higher risk/larger schools (5 days).

²⁴ In September 2013 notification of inspection was reduced to 2 weeks.

153. A short inspection is conducted in small primary schools (usually those with fewer than seven teachers) or in those deemed to be low risk. This risk will have been gauged through a number of district visits conducted by the DI and from any relevant data that may be held by the school and/or DE. The notification period is two working weeks but the process of inspection is similar to a 5 day inspection with the exception that the inspection team is only in the school for two days and the oral report back is given at the end of the second day. In addition, there may not be a pre-inspection visit.

154. Many of ETI's inspection teams will also have an Associate Assessor (AA) joining them. AAs are serving senior members of staff (in the school sectors this is at principal or Vice-principal level) who join the inspection team for that inspection only. They normally give four days of their time for this task.

155. The aim of the deployment is twofold. Firstly, the AA brings current management experience to the inspection process and the presence in the team of someone coming directly from the school context adds a dimension which can help to develop the Inspectorate's awareness of the current perspective of schools. Secondly they will take back to their organisation a better understanding of the evaluative process with the expectation that they will incorporate some of ETI's evaluative techniques into their own organisations self-evaluative procedures and bring back good practice and the ability to build capacity in their own school.

Post-primary and special school Inspections

156. The pre-inspection arrangements for the schools in the post-primary and special schools sectors are similar to those in the 5 day inspection in the primary sector. The time spent by the inspection team is similar i.e. Monday-Wednesday in the school evidence gathering, the moderation meeting on Thursday with the aim of reporting back on the Friday. In general the RI is supported by the deputy RI and together they explore issues associated with leadership and management and whole-school standards and outcomes. Two additional members of the team focus on cross cutting themes such as pastoral care and safeguarding, the provision for supporting pupils with special educational needs and careers education advice, information and guidance. Two or three subject departments are also inspected in detail by subject specialists²⁵. The inspectors are equipped with benchmarking data which is made available year on year to schools. This often serves as a useful basis for discussion.

Survey and District Visits

157. In addition to these formal inspection activities there are a number of other visits made to school settings which, whilst ETI does not necessarily count as inspections those who receive the visits often do. One example of such a visit has already been mentioned above – the District Visit. Each inspector is allocated a number of

²⁵ The post-primary inspection model has been revised and since September 2013; there is a greater focus on a holistic evaluation of the school.

schools/educational settings located within a geographical area for which s/he takes district responsibility. These district duties involve making incidental visits to the organisation to discuss with the management general or specific issues. This helps to give the DI local intelligence of the school and its context. In most cases the district visit will also involve some class observations – this again, provides the DI with information relating to the quality of learning and teaching. All of this information is useful in determining the risk level of the school and in providing information for DE e.g. for preparing briefings for Ministerial visits.

158. Another key type of inspection visit is the survey visit. In this instance the inspection process is not focused specifically on the provision within an individual setting but the visit is providing evidence to make judgements on wider issues. The resulting report either comments on the outworking of government initiatives or helps to inform the development of future policy.

Follow-up Inspections and Interim Follow-up Visits

159. All inspections are concluded with a judgment based on a six-point continuum. The six descriptors used are:

- Outstanding
- Very Good
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Inadequate
- Unsatisfactory

160. Where a school is deemed to fall into the last two of these categories it will enter a Formal Intervention Process as described in *'Every School a Good School'*. This requires the school to undertake a number of formal steps including the preparation and issuing to DE of detailed action plans on steps to be taken to address the issues identified in the inspection. The school will then be subject to detailed monitoring by ETI which includes two formal Interim Follow-up Visits (IFUVs) and the first, of at most two, Follow-up Inspections (FUI) which is conducted 12-18 months after the initial inspection. Schools in the 'satisfactory' category follow a broadly similar process, although the FUI takes place within an 18-24 month period. In both cases an FUI report issued to the school and published on the ETI Web-site.

161. ETI sees the follow-up process as a key factor in promoting improvement through inspection. In recent years ETI has published the outcomes of the follow-up inspection

activities – an analysis of which demonstrates clearly the link between the follow-up activity and improvement. For example, the table below illustrates the movement made by the organisations where follow up inspections were conducted during the last business year.

Extent of improvement in performance levels 2011-12

	Number	Remained less than satisfactory	Regressed to less than satisfactory	No change (satisfactory)	Improved one level	Improved two levels	Improved three levels
Early Years	20			3	8	8	1
Primary	36	1			20	12	3
Post-Primary	12	4		4	2	2	
Special School	2			1		1	
AEP	2			1		1	
Work-based learning	3				1	2	
Further Education	2			1	1		
Youth	6			1	3	2	
Total	83	5		11	35	28	4
		6.02%		13.25%	42.17%	33.74%	4.82%

The Inspection Cycle

162. Until September 2010, the ETI aimed to inspect each school at least once every seven years with more frequent inspection of a school being undertaken where it was deemed necessary. In September 2010, ETI introduced a more proportionate and risk-based inspection strategy whereby the need for an inspection is identified by information from school performance indicators, risk factors including the length of time since the last formal inspection and from ongoing monitoring of schools by inspectors at local level.

163. An FUI is conducted only in those schools where a number of areas for improvement have been identified by the inspection team. Those areas for improvement will include achievements and standards, learning and teaching and/or leadership and management. Consequently, in those schools where provision has been evaluated as 'satisfactory', 'inadequate' or 'unsatisfactory', a formal follow-up activity will be instigated.

164. Where safeguarding arrangements are evaluated as unsatisfactory, ETI will re-inspect this area within a period of six weeks.

165. All inspection evidence is treated confidentially and evidence unique to each individual is handled under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Communication with Stakeholders

166. Throughout the inspection process the RI communicates emerging findings with the leaders of the organisation being inspected. The RI will meet with senior staff regularly through the time the team is in the organisation to discuss a range of issues, including any concerns the organisation's staff may have with the process. Such issues are dealt with wherever possible at the point of contact. At the formal report back, opportunities are given to ask questions.

167. In the main it is beneficial to all that there are no 'surprises' in the report. Emerging findings are discussed – and amended where additional evidence is provided that would justify such amendment. At all times the organisation being inspected is provided with the opportunity, and encouragement, to provide any evidence it deems fit to support its own evaluation of the quality of its provision.

168. Once finalised, all inspection reports are published on the ETI website at www.etini.gov.uk which enables members of the public to view them. To date, ETI's website has had a total of 768,090 page views. Every two years, the Chief Inspector's Report gives details of findings from inspection and information regarding information on education and training. Details of reports being published on the ETI website are released to press agencies and via Twitter.

169. The media has the same access to inspection findings as that of the public. Schools are encouraged to liaise with their employing authority in preparing a press release on the report to afford them some control over what the media may print

170. As part of the post-inspection process the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) carries out a survey, on behalf of ETI, on the views of those inspected. This survey covers the pre-inspection arrangements, the conduct of the inspection whilst the team were in the organisation, the post-inspection process, the support/information received from the inspection support branch and the usefulness (or otherwise) of the ETI support documentation available on the website.

171. In addition, ETI holds the Customer Service Excellence Standard. The exacting assessment process for this award, which is renewed on an annual basis with a major

re-assessment every three years, includes the external assessor meeting with a range of stakeholders including principals and governors of schools who have been inspected and meetings with representative groups (e.g. principals in a specific area) to assess their views on the quality of the work of the organisation and the individuals within it.

172. The reporting inspector checks with the head of each organisation that is inspected to ensure s/he is aware of the ETI Complaints Procedure.

Other school evaluation requirements

173. Schools are also required to provide an annual report to parents on the educational and other achievements of their child, including their achievement in statutory end of key stage assessments or public examinations. Schools are also required to keep and update a formative record on the attendance and achievements of each pupil at the school (Article 24 of the 2006 Education Order). The Department last made Regulations relating to pupil records in 2007 and to pupil reporting in 2009.

174. Schools (and ELBs) are also required to make available to parents information on their curricular and other provision, admissions arrangements, and arrangements on fees, charges and grants (Article 137 of the 1989 Education Order; Article 17 of the 1997 Education Order; Article 24 of the 2006 Education Order). Boards of Governors are required to publish an annual report to parents on the steps they took during the year to fulfil their duties (Article 125 of the 1989 Order). The Department last made Regulations specifying the information which schools and ELBs are required to publish in 2003.

175. All three sets of Regulations were the subject of a recent consultation. The regulations were revised to ensure that they continue to align with the current policy agenda and took account of developments, for example the introduction of the Levels of Progression.

176. It is DE policy not to publish "league tables", although performance statistics for each school is made available on the DE website, accessible one school at a time, along with basic background information (e.g. free school meal entitlement) about the school.

177. Any release of performance information by the Department is made with a caveat to explain that schools should not be compared directly as the information does not provide a valid basis for comparing performance between schools, since it takes no account of the intakes of the schools or of any other factors that may affect pupil performance.

Chapter 5: Teacher appraisal

Current practices

Context

178. The Minister has acknowledged the importance of effective leadership and high quality teaching as central to delivering improvement. He has also recognised the need to acknowledge and develop great teachers. A number of actions have been announced including:

- To bring forward legislation to strengthen the role of the General Teaching Council as the professional body in supporting teachers and in upholding the highest professional standards.
- To support the continuing professional development of teachers through a new strategy for teacher professional development that will focus first on attracting the right people into teaching and then on how to support them as they prepare to become teachers and as they go through their professional career.
- To ensure that there is a professional support service of the highest quality – responsive to the needs of teachers; modern in its outlook; dedicated in its commitment to helping teachers help pupils.
- To ensure the development and delivery of coherent, modern, fit-for-purpose leadership programmes that reflect the challenges of the 21st century. To focus on developing leaders who lead effectively not only within their schools but beyond the school gates. Leaders who work in alliance with their peers to meet the education needs of all young people in an area.
- To have the flexibility to reward principals based not on the number of pupils in their school but on the size of the challenges they face and on their success in overcoming those challenges.
- To see more mobility in the profession – one which values a breadth of experience, including employment outside the school.

Basic career structure for teachers

179. Teachers' pay has kept broad parity with England and Wales for many years dating back to at least 1922.

180. As in England and Wales there are two distinct salary scales for teachers – the classroom teacher scale and the leadership scale. The classroom teacher scale has six spine points on the main scale and three on the upper pay scale. A beginning teacher is placed on the first point of the main salary scale (£21,588) and each year with satisfactory performance moves up one point until they reach the maximum of the scale - point six (£31,552). After completing one year on the maximum of the main salary

scale teachers can then apply for 'threshold assessment' - which is the mechanism to facilitate the movement of teachers on to point one of the upper pay scale (£34,181). Teachers can then progress up the upper pay scale, minimally every two years based on satisfactory performance, until they reach the maximum of the upper pay scale – point 3 (£36,756). Although the Upper Pay Scale (UPS) was originally intended to reward high-quality teaching, experience to date has been that almost all threshold applications are successful.

181. Classroom teachers may be awarded one of five Teaching Allowances (TA), ranging from £1,847 to £11,911 per annum on top of their basic pay, if they undertake sustained additional responsibilities primarily focused on teaching and learning. Such responsibilities must also conform to at least one of the following descriptions:-

- require the teacher to lead, manage and develop a subject or curriculum area, or to lead and manage pupil development across the curriculum;
- have an impact on the educational progress of pupils other than the teacher's assigned classes or groups of pupils;
- involve leading, developing and enhancing the teaching practice of other staff.

182. The use of the five levels of TA should reflect the size and responsibility structure of the school in keeping with the school's Salary Policy.

183. Schools can also make extra payments to teachers for recruitment and retention purposes. There are two rates of pay - either £1,197 or £2,352.

184. Teachers of special needs pupils may also receive an allowance of which there are two rates - either £2,001 or £3,954.

185. Principals and vice-principals are paid on individual ranges on the leadership salary scale, linked mainly to the size of their school. With effect from 1 September 2010 their 43-point salary spine ranges from £37,461 to £105,097 per annum. For principals, their salary is set within a seven-point individual school range. Under the Performance Review and Staff Development Scheme, Boards of Governors must set clear objectives at the start of the academic year and review them at the end and, based on fully acceptable performance, may award the principal a one point pay award. An additional point may be awarded when the Board of Governors consider the performance to be of a very high standard. The salary of Vice-principals is set within a five-point pay range and must start on a point above the highest paid classroom teacher.

Professional development

186. The Curriculum Advisory and Support Service (CASS) in each of the Education and Library Boards provides advisory and support services to all grant-aided schools and are the main providers of in-service education and training (INSET). In order to

provide such training CASS carries out an annual training needs audit of schools (including nursery schools/teachers) from which it then prepares a scheme of support. It is therefore a matter for schools to prioritise the training they require in any given year. To inform this the professional development requirements of individual teachers can be established by school leaders through the course of the annual Performance Review and Staff Development Scheme.

187. The Regional Training Unit (RTU) is an integral part of the ELBs' CASS. It was established in 1990 to:

- provide those elements of the ELBs' training programmes which can most effectively be undertaken on a regional basis;
- undertake responsibility for the long-term management training of principals and senior staff of schools; and,
- provide training for school governors and for ELBs' staff and its members.

188. In the future it is envisaged that a new single school development service, will facilitate and commission professional development pathways for all teachers regardless of the sector/phase in which they are employed.

189. A central principle in the design of that service will be the facilitation of collegiality and peer support. It will help create more opportunities and space for teachers to work together in sharing practices and research, developing and evaluating lesson plans and building consensus on what constitutes good teaching practice.

The “teacher tutor”

190. The Teacher Education Partnership Handbook draws together in one place guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the various teacher education partners (schools, education and library boards and higher education institutions) and of student teachers, beginning teachers, teacher-tutors and others with a role in the three main stages of early teacher education – initial teacher education, induction, and early professional development.

191. The Teacher Tutor plays a vital role in supporting Beginning Teachers within the school context. They have general responsibility for the placement and care of the student teacher in the school and/or the class teacher(s) who work most often with individual student teachers. As experienced practitioners, Teacher Tutors are able to draw on their own knowledge, skills and experience to help beginning teachers progress through the Induction/Early Professional Development stage of their careers and to acquire confidence and competence in their turn.

192. Their responsibilities include:

- regular meetings with the beginning teacher to discuss issues/development needs
- drawing up action plans
- assisting planning
- providing support
- arranging classroom observations
- reviewing progress & reflecting on teaching

Qualifications requirements for principals

193. There are no requirements in terms of specific qualifications other than that applicants for Principal posts must be fully qualified teachers. Employing Authorities may set their own criteria for appointment to individual Principal posts.

194. Professional Qualification for Headship (PQH)²⁶ is not mandatory here; however, those appointed to headships without the qualification are expected to enrol and complete the qualification in due course.

Contractual status of teachers and principals

195. The Employing Authority of teaching staff in controlled schools is the ELB and in Catholic maintained schools it is the CCMS. The Employer in both cases is the Board of Governors (BoG). In grant-maintained integrated schools and voluntary grammar schools, the BoG is both the employing authority and the employer.

196. Whilst the Employing Authority holds the contract of employment, the day to day management of schools such as the determination of staff complements, discipline, supervision and dismissal of staff is delegated to the Board of Governors.

197. Schools are advised that they should recruit to vacancies on a permanent basis unless the vacancy is clearly of a temporary nature.

Teachers' competence framework

198. The teacher competence model underpins all 3 stages of teacher education and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) In 2007, the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) revised the competences and published them in "Teaching: the Reflective Profession"

²⁶ PQH is an accredited course for those aspiring to headship. It seeks to equip future head teachers with the skills, abilities and knowledge they require to lead schools successfully.

199. This document sets out the 27 competences which student teachers and qualified teachers develop throughout their careers under 3 areas of professional practice:

1. Professional Values and Practices;
2. Professional Knowledge and Understanding;
3. Professional Skills and Application in Assessment.

200. Each competence has also been delineated by way of phase exemplars, across each phase of teacher education:

- initial teacher education
- induction
- early professional development
- continuing professional development, collaborative practice and school improvement

201. The Council's Code of Values and Professional Practice has also been included as an integral element of the competence model. The Competences are also set out in the Teacher Education Partnership Handbook and will be subject to review, from time to time, by the Council

Teacher Appraisal

202. Teacher appraisal is carried out through the Performance Review and Staff Development Scheme (PRSD) which was introduced in schools with effect from 1 September 2005. The review process is closely linked to the School Development Plan²⁷ (SDP) and provides a continuous and systematic process to support principals, vice principals and teachers with their professional development and career planning.

203. The PRSD scheme provides an opportunity to identify the training/support and development needs of teachers and to ensure that those needs are reflected in the SDP and that corresponding opportunities for development are made available to the principal, vice-principal and teachers in the school.

204. The three key aims of the PRSD scheme are to:

- Enhance the quality of education;
- Recognise the contribution of teachers to achieving the aims of the SDP and help them to identify ways of enhancing their skills and performance; and

²⁷ The school development plan (SDP) is a strategic plan for improvement. It should bring together in a clear and simple way the school's priorities, the main measures it will take to raise standards, the resources dedicated to these and the key outcomes and targets it intends to achieve. It will set out the overall "roadmap" for the three years ahead, with a focus on the school's key priorities and action plans. It should be a living document that all members will use as a reference point in evaluating, developing and improving their work.

- Identify the professional needs and necessary resources to support teachers in their professional development and career progression.

205. The scheme comprises the review of the work of the principal by two governors and the review of each member of staff by the principal or by a teacher reviewer appointed by the principal. At the start of the review cycle, the reviewers of the principal, the principal and the external adviser will meet to agree objectives for the year ahead and to review objectives for the year just ended. The objectives of the principal should reflect the school development plan and the personal and career development of the principal.

206. There should be a minimum of three objectives agreed between the reviewer and the principal. However, if the reviewers and the principal cannot agree on objectives it is the responsibility of the reviewers to set them. The role of an external adviser is to provide professional advice and support rather than to determine objectives; this is the responsibility of the reviewers. A reviewee is entitled to record in writing his/her comments in such circumstances.

207. The review entails three stages in the annual cycle:

- an initial meeting at which the reviewer and reviewee establish the three objectives for the incoming year. For each teacher, the three objectives cover the areas of professional practice, pupil and curriculum development and the personal and professional development of the teacher. The objectives for principals include leadership and management, pupil and curriculum development and personal and professional development of the principal. In both cases the objectives relate to the SDP;
- the collection of information relevant to the review and the progress made towards the objectives (this includes classroom and/or task observations); and
- a review discussion following which the Review Statement is agreed (this sets down the outcomes of the review; it also includes an Annex that records the identified training and development needs for the reviewee).

208. The BoG has the responsibility of preparing and publishing a Performance Review Policy, which reflects the SDP. The Principal, or nominee, acts as the PRSD co-ordinator to oversee the implementation of the scheme. The two reviewers from the BoG are assisted by an External Advisor who is nominated by the employing authority for the school, who is then trained and accredited by the RTU. It is also the duty of the BoG to ensure that training and development needs that are identified through PRSD are reflected in the SDP and that corresponding opportunities for professional development are made available to all teaching staff.

Teacher appraisal procedures

209. The components of the review process are the same for principals and teachers regardless of the type of school they are employed in and include three stages:-

- Planning and preparation – at the beginning of the cycle a reviewee and reviewer(s) meet to agree and record objectives for the year ahead, reflect on possible outcomes and agree how best to keep progress under review during the year
- Monitoring - will also include observation of the reviewee in his/her work situation through classroom or task observation
- Review discussion at the end of the review cycle. The reviewer(s) and the reviewee will establish the reviewee's performance against agreed objectives and identify any personal and professional development needs in relation to the agreed objectives. They will also agree an action plan and objectives for the incoming year.

Competencies to appraise teachers and to use appraisal results

210. The Employing Authorities have responsibility to put in place procedures and processes to monitor and evaluate the operation and effectiveness of the scheme.

211. Working in partnership with the Department of Education, Employing Authorities and recognised Teacher Unions, RTU provided system wide training to all school leaders, representative governors and education system officers. Head teachers were trained by RTU and provided with comprehensive workbooks and materials to deliver in-house training to all teachers in their schools.

212. While this was a one-off training day, PRSD is included in the RTU training programme for all newly appointed principals. Principals also have access to external advisers. The role of the external adviser is to provide advice to principal reviewers on the setting of performance objectives for the principal and to support them in the process of reviewing performance at the end of the review cycle. The external advisers are also available to assist governor reviewers to agree the criteria that will be used to determine the extent to which the objectives for each review have been achieved. They can assist in evaluating the extent to which the objectives have been achieved. They are also available to review the overall performance of the principal and identify any personal or professional training or development needs arising.

213. All external advisors are required to attend Re-accreditation Workshops every year which include updates on the PRSD Scheme and documentation as well as current

education initiatives to ensure they have knowledge and competence to advise and guide principals and governor reviewers at the review meeting. Successful completion of the re-accreditation ensures that the external adviser remains on the RTU Select List and can therefore be allocated to schools.

214. The Principal Review process also includes the use of PRSD External Advisers, employed and deployed by the school Employing Authority. They are trained and accredited by the RTU prior to deployment. Also, there is a mechanism for annual reaccreditation, by RTU, for continued deployment of external advisers. This is coordinated through the regional PRSD External Advisers Coordinating Group

215. School leadership is tasked with ensuring that PRSD is fully functional within their school; that there is a school policy for PRSD approved by the school BoG; and that it is fully implemented and linked to the SDP and key strategic priorities within the school.

Using teacher appraisal results

216. Information from review statements is used to promote the personal and professional development of all staff. Relevant information from review statements is taken into account in making decisions and advising those responsible for taking decisions or making recommendations about performance or pay progression.

217. The PRSD process may occasionally identify issues of concern about a teacher's performance. In situations where this arises, a programme of support and development is provided and the performance review process ceases. This includes, where appropriate, the Curriculum Advisory and Support Services of the Education and Library Boards and Higher Education Institutes or other bodies that provide training and development in the school. In cases where the unsatisfactory work procedure is invoked there is no pay progression.

218. The *Procedure for Supporting Effective Teaching and the Procedure for Supporting Effective Leadership* has been in place since June 2013. These Procedures were drawn up jointly by teachers' employing authorities and DE in consultation with teaching unions. The purpose of these Procedures is to assist Boards of Governors and employing authorities to adopt a consistent approach in instances where the work of a principal/teacher is giving cause for concern and all informal measures have been exhausted.

219. Where there are concerns regarding a teacher's work, the principal, where appropriate, and in consultation with the employing authority, arranges a support programme designed to address those aspects of the work which have been deemed

unsatisfactory. The length, format and intensity of this programme depends upon the nature and seriousness of the weakness(es) in the teacher's work.

220. The programme of support is drawn up in consultation with the teacher concerned, implemented within a specified time frame, normally within 26 working weeks, and monitored by the Principal over a period to be determined by the prevailing circumstances.

221. This process applies to all teachers including vice principals. In cases of concern regarding a principal's work, the support programme is arranged and monitored by the Board of Governors in consultation with the employing authority.

Implementation of teacher appraisal

222. In a review in early 2007 of the implementation of the PRSD scheme by the ETI nearly all schools surveyed at the time (31 schools across all 5 ELBs) reported that the scheme was considered to be beneficial in focusing staff on their training needs and on the importance of continuing professional development (CPD). Schools also need to ensure that the operation of the scheme fully reflects the priorities identified in their SDP. In addition, the PRSD scheme was reported as providing good focus for school improvement through the dissemination of effective teaching strategies within and across departments, key stages, subject areas and schools.

223. The Review of the PRSD Scheme in October 2009 incorporated feedback from the following:-

- previous working group meetings between both sides of the Teachers Negotiating Committee (TNC);
- PRSD Co-ordinators Group meetings;
- Quality assurance questionnaires and feedback;
- desktop reviews of External Advisors;
- documentation returns to Employing Authorities;
- RTU re-accreditation workshops;
- Principals and Governors.

224. Feedback was generally positive, suggesting that the Scheme is well embedded in schools and used to improve schools and develop staff. It was agreed, however, that more work was required to meet the training and development needs identified through PRSD.

225. The Scheme is presently under review in conjunction with the recognised Teachers' Unions.

Teacher Training

Initial Teacher Education

226. Courses of initial teacher education (ITE) are offered at five higher education institutions (HEIs). Stranmillis College and St Mary's University College cater mainly for the primary sector through their Bachelor of Education (BEd) courses while Queen's University, Belfast, the University of Ulster and the Open University²⁸ cater for the post-primary sector through their Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses.

227. BEd courses are of 4 years' duration, involving professional tuition, and academic study in one or more specialist subjects. BEd courses normally consist of academic studies, professional tuition and classroom-based teaching practice. Assessment of BEd students falls into two categories: academic and college-based assessment; and school-based assessment.

College-based assessment

228. College-based assessment is directly concerned with the students' academic and professional development and learning and is directly related to preparation for practical, classroom-based practice. Assessment tasks are aimed at preparing students to have a sufficiently developed degree of understanding and competence to enable them to work in classroom settings during the School Experience element of the programme.

School-based assessment

229. The BEd degree is a professional teaching degree in which classroom practice and the development of teaching skills have a central role. School Experience is therefore an integral part of the course. The programme is competence based and each year as students gain experience and confidence, there is an increased expectation of what skills and competences they are able to apply in the classroom. Each year group has a different focus, and over the course of study students will have the opportunity to teach children of varying ages, in a range of different contexts.

230. Whilst on school placements, students are visited on at least two occasions by College staff who observe their teaching in the classroom and consult with the school partners on the student teacher's suitability for teaching.

²⁸ The Open University is withdrawing its PGCE provision with effect from March 2014.

231. PGCE courses are of 1 year's duration and are available to students who have completed a 3 or 4 year Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree. The aim of a PGCE course is to prepare students to teach their chosen subject area and also to examine a range of educational issues that are important to all teachers eg Classroom management, Special Needs Education, Assessment, Information, Communication Technology, Learning theory and styles of learning.

232. The course combines University based tuition, consisting of taught sessions and directed independent study, with teaching practice in schools. During each teaching practice a school tutor, university tutor and subject teacher observe the student in the classroom to provide help and support.

Induction

233. On successful completion of an ITE course, teachers are granted "eligibility to teach" status and are eligible for registration with the General Teaching Council for NI (GTCNI). A newly qualified teacher must undertake an induction programme, normally lasting one year.

234. The CASS service in each ELB provides a programme of centre and school-based professional support for beginning teachers in the Induction stage. This is aimed at helping beginning teachers address the personal needs and targets identified in their career-entry profiles (CEP) and to prepare a personal action plan which is a foundation for Early Professional Development. The CEP is a professional document designed to profile the strengths and developmental needs of the beginning teacher. It will be discussed with the school principal and or teacher-tutor and updated as appropriate. The Board of Governors of the school confirms, on the recommendation of the school principal, when the teacher has completed Induction and may commence Early Professional Development. A record of completion of Induction is held by the GTCNI.

Early Professional Development (EPD)

235. All teachers who have successfully completed Induction are required to take part in EPD, usually of two years' duration. The aims of the EPD programme are to assist the beginning teacher to develop, expand and consolidate their capability as a reflective practitioner and to develop personal competences. Support is provided by colleagues and the teacher-tutor in the school and CASS. It is the school's responsibility to quality assure the EPD process.

236. When the beginning teacher and teacher-tutor are satisfied that all criteria for EPD have been met and the work is authentic, they will seek formal endorsement from the school principal. The school Board of Governors will confirm completion, on the

recommendation of the principal and on sight of the teacher's final reflection, produced at the end of EPD.

Strategy for Teacher Professional Development

237. DE is developing a strategy for the future direction of Teacher Professional Development. It is likely that the strategy will focus on the following 5 Key Priorities:

- i. Setting the Right Pathway;
- ii. Attracting and Retaining the Right People;
- iii. Getting the Right Training throughout a teacher's career;
- iv. Strengthening Accountability; and
- v. Building Leadership Capacity.

Chapter 6: Student assessment

Current practices

Overall framework for student assessment

238. The key focus of statutory assessment arrangements in support of the revised curriculum (and the introduction of diagnostic assessment in primary schools) is on supporting teachers' essential role in assessment for and of learning, to recognise and affirm the professional judgement of teachers, the arrangements are intended to balance requirements at the following levels.

- **At Pupil level:** this is an integral part of the work of a teacher. This includes both assessment of learning, for example checking that a pupil has reached the expected standard, and assessment for learning, where assessment is used to inform teaching and learning, to identify where a pupil is underachieving, for example, so that action can be taken to support that pupil.
- **At School level:** allows school leaders to assess the performance of their schools, identify gaps and areas for development. Schools can benchmark themselves against others in similar circumstances using system data and can set targets and deliver actions to drive school improvement. This idea is at the heart of the Department's school improvement policy.
- **At System level:** giving parents, taxpayers and government information on the standards schools are achieving in return for the public money being invested in them. It allows the identification of what is working well and where improvement is needed.

239. The Department has stressed that assessment is not an end in itself; it should be used to inform the teaching and learning opportunities teachers provide for their pupils, and to identify when a child is underachieving – so that action can be taken to support that pupil. New arrangements implemented from September 2012 also aim to address existing concerns around consistency of teachers' judgements within and between schools, particularly when assessment information is being used at system level as an indicator of performance.

Statutory Assessment

240. Legislation requires schools to monitor pupils' progress against the areas of learning and "other skills" in the revised curriculum and the cross-curricular skills of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT and to report the outcomes to

parents at least on an annual basis²⁹. Schools are also required to report outcomes via CCEA to the Department in relation to pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and to report examination outcomes at Key Stage 4 and post-16. In addition, primary schools are required to use Computer-based assessment of pupils in Years 4-7 for diagnostic assessment purposes (although this is not a mandatory requirement in the 2013/14 school year).

Assessment of Pupils

241. The assessment of pupil progress in the areas of learning and other skills aspects of the curriculum remain delegated to schools and information on pupil progress is not collected centrally. CCEA provides advice and exemplars of good practice and this allows schools and teachers a high degree of flexibility and allows them to exercise their professional judgement. Schools can assess pupils' performance and use this information to inform teaching and learning and, at the end of a school year, report on progress to parents.

System Performance using Cross-Curricular Skills

242. When it comes to the assessment of the cross-curricular skills (CCS)³⁰ that young people need to develop in order to do well at school and successfully enter the world of work, a different approach is taken. The central focus, as with all assessment, is on informing teaching and learning to improve outcomes for pupils and on informing engagement with parents. However, at three key points in a child's compulsory schooling (at the end of Key Stage 1 (age 8); Key Stage 2 (age 11 - the point at which children transfer to post-primary school); and Key Stage 3 (age 14) this assessment information is also collected centrally and is used also as a performance indicator at system level. This reflects the central importance of literacy and numeracy and the place that such data can have in informing policy; benchmarking performance; and accounting for progress.

243. Partly because of a past lack of confidence among teachers and schools about the consistency of approach to assessing pupils at these critical stages in their compulsory education but also because of this dual use of assessment information, the Department has recognised that a fully delegated assessment model is not ideal – there will be differences, real or perceived, in how individual schools and teachers interpret assessment. While teachers carry out assessment with a huge degree of professionalism, this approach can raise issues in relation to consistency and therefore confidence in the findings when looked at across a range of schools or from a system perspective³¹. Accordingly, new arrangements, introduced from the 2012/13 school

²⁹ See annex C for details

³⁰ see Annex D for more detail

³¹ CCEA consultation Report January 2011 -

http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/key_stages_1_and_2/assessment/assessment_and_moderation_report_jan_2011.pdf

year have been designed to provide additional reassurance in relation to consistency while at the same time keeping teachers at the centre of the process. These new arrangements apply only to assessment of the cross-curricular skills at the end of the three Key Stages referred to above.

244. From the 2012/13 school year, assessment in these areas will be via a model of moderated teacher-led assessment – a model that recognises the primacy and professionalism of teachers as those best able to assess the progress of their pupils but that provides a level of consistency and rigour that should create the conditions for greater confidence in outcomes.

245. A feature of the new arrangements in 2012/13, for example, is the sampling of assessments made by teachers to ensure that standards are applied consistently within and between schools. As the new arrangements bed-in and schools demonstrate that they are applying standards consistently and effectively, the expectation is that they will need less external moderation and, for example, they may become involved in helping other schools. Following feedback from schools in the first year of operation, the arrangements for 2013/14 have been modified to take into account a number of issues. More detail of the moderation process can be found below.

Student assessment procedures

The Levels of Progression in the Cross-Curricular Skills

246. From the 2012/13 school year, Communication and Using Mathematics (and in due course, Using ICT) are assessed with reference to new Levels of Progression (LoPs)³² which focus on skills as well as knowledge. The LoPs provide clear information for teachers, parents and young people themselves on the progress pupils are making in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. The LoPs are set out, in the form of “can do” statements, a continuum of skills that we should expect pupils to be able to demonstrate if they are to build the communication, numeracy and ICT skills needed to function effectively in life and in the world of work. The statements focus not just on knowledge but on skills and, accordingly, are more challenging than the previously used Levels of Attainment.

247. Pupil progress in the CCS is assessed annually by teachers and the information used to inform teaching & learning in school and reported to parents. At the end of each Key Stage, assessment becomes more formal (but still teacher-led). The Department has agreed “expected levels” in all three cross-curricular skills, which most children and young people are expected to be able to reach at 3 key points in their education: age 8 (level 2); age 11 (level 4); and age 14 (level 5) with a clear expectation that individual pupils should progress at least one level between each Key Stage. This allows for progression to be shown and ensures that there is a clear focus not simply on

³² See www.nicurriculum.org.uk for details of the content of the Levels.

achievement at or above the expected levels but also, importantly, on measuring the progress made by pupils bearing in mind their different starting points.

Statutory Computer Based Assessment

248. Computer-based assessment (CBA) is an additional part of the Department's wider efforts to raise outcomes in literacy and numeracy for all young people and was introduced on a phased basis in primary schools over the three school years from 2007/08. DE's literacy and numeracy strategy emphasises the importance of assessment for diagnostic purposes in helping improve outcomes for young people, and particularly in closing the gap between highest and lowest achievers. The rationale for the introduction of statutory diagnostic assessment is based on the following key factors:

- Effective use by schools of CBA data supports DE's wider strategy to raise outcomes in literacy and numeracy for all young people and, particularly, to close the gap in achievement between those pupils from the most and least disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Common CBAs offer all primary schools a consistent basis for assessment and information on outcomes. This will provide useful information for monitoring individual pupil progress and, more generally, to inform self-evaluation and effective development planning and target-setting.
- An adaptive computer-based assessment can adjust the sequence or difficulty of questions presented in line with the pupil's ability. This means that if a pupil answers several questions incorrectly, the application will adapt by presenting questions that are easier – thus allowing a pupil to show what s/he can do, not what s/he can't, and also preventing the situation where a child is faced with a long list of questions that s/he can't answer.
- CBAs provide teachers with information for parents on their child's strengths and any areas for improvement, as a basis for helping parents contribute to and support their child's education.
- CBAs allow greater flexibility in assessment than paper based methods and minimise the impact of marking on teacher workloads.
- A common tool used by all schools allows the outcomes to be standardised against the population here.

Benefits

249. Statutory CBA applies to Year 4 to Year 7 pupils (the mid to upper age groups of the primary phase of education i.e. ages 7-11). Assessments are carried out in the autumn term and their outcomes are intended to help teachers plan their teaching during the school year to meet the needs of their pupils. The information available from autumn term assessments should also provide schools with a useful opportunity to explain to parents, in the first term of the school year, their child's strengths and any

areas for improvement, as well as the actions the school intends to take to address these. Autumn term meetings with parents also provide an opportunity for schools to help parents understand what they can do to support their child's learning.

Data is not collected or collated centrally

250. While use of data from such assessments has obvious attractions at system level (principally as performance indicators for literacy and numeracy), it was decided that creating the perception that this was a high stakes test could undermine the role of the assessment tool in helping to inform teaching and learning. In such a circumstance it would be inevitable that teachers, sometimes with the best of intentions, would be tempted to "teach to the test" risking distortion of the curriculum rather than its effective delivery. For this reason data from CBAs is not collected or collated centrally. In this way, CBA supports assessment for learning rather than of learning.

Previous Assessment - InCAS

251. InCAS (Interactive Computerised Assessment System) was the CBA tool used by schools since 2007/08. Under the terms of the original agreement, however, the contract for InCAS could not be extended beyond the 2011-12 school year. DE commissioned the procurement of an assessment tool for use in schools from the 2012/13 school year and this process identified two new providers for separate Literacy and Numeracy assessments.

New Assessments

252. The introduction of two new assessments, the Northern Ireland Literacy Assessment and the Northern Ireland Numeracy Assessment (NILA and NINA) has presented significant challenges, particularly in terms of training. In addition, a number of schools reported serious difficulties in the operation of the new assessments in the autumn 2012 term.

253. While changes in assessment practice also present challenges of continuity and making direct comparisons in performance in different assessments, the diagnostic nature of CBA remains central. Nonetheless, since the making of the 2007 CBA regulations, the policy agenda of the Department has moved forward considerably. Statutory diagnostic CBA must now be seen in the context of a range of policies, principally:

- Count, read; succeed
- ESAGS
- SEN Review

254. In addition, many schools' use of assessment data (including the use of commercially available assessments) for diagnostic purposes has increased in scale and sophistication (see below). The Department is currently reviewing the CBA legislation and policy to determine if, in the current policy context, it continues to support the Department's wider objectives, particularly with reference to raising standards in literacy and numeracy.

255. The Review will aim to identify a range of options (medium and short term) in relation to statutory CBA, covering:

- Policy
- Legislation
- Procurement.

One of the first recommendations flowing from the consultation associated with the Review was that the NILA and NINA assessments should be available on a voluntary basis in 2013, to allow for testing of technical and operational improvements in a less "high stakes" situation. This was accepted by the Minister and a pilot took place in autumn 2013 with the participation of around 180 schools.

Use of Commercial assessments

256. CBA data, along with information from ongoing teacher assessment and end of Key Stage assessment outcomes, provides a range of evidence and information for teachers to use to inform teaching and learning, monitoring pupils' progress at class and individual level and to build on and develop strengths and to tackle areas for improvement. In addition, a number of schools use commercially produced assessments. Many primary schools use standardised tests to monitor progress made by pupils year on year, for example, and some post-primary schools use commercial tests when a new cohort of pupils joins the school to establish a baseline against which later performance of this cohort, and hence the progress they have made - the value added by the school - may be judged.

257. There is, however, a commonly expressed view among teachers and school principals that the range of standardised tests available and their administration have become a significant burden. The Department has taken the view that schools are free to use other assessment tools if they find this useful. However, while such tests can inform teachers' professional judgement, they are never in themselves a replacement for it.

258. Standardised tests can be used to show attainment and progress at a variety of levels, namely, individual pupil level, class level, year group level, key stage and whole school levels. The Departmental view has been that within these tests certain precautions need to be taken, primarily not to take a given standardised test outcome as infallible, particularly when they are not specifically standardised to the population in the

north of Ireland. Another danger is with schools teaching to the test or using them to excess.

259. However, schools remain free to use other assessment tools if they find this useful and the decision to use them is entirely a matter of professional judgement for individual schools and teachers and it is deemed inappropriate for the Department to decide which assessments a school uses, other than the ones required by statute. It is intended that the new assessment arrangements (including statutory CBA) will command a level of confidence that will reduce the need for schools to administer separate commercially provided tests, though schools will continue to use a range of assessment practice to support teachers' judgement and build the most accurate picture possible of a child's achievements.

Assessment Arrangements prior to 2012/13 school year

260. Prior to the introduction of the revised arrangements, assessment at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 was made against the existing Levels of Attainment descriptions for Language and Literacy (English - and/or Irish as appropriate in Irish medium schools and units) and Mathematics and Numeracy (Mathematics). While these levels pre-date the current curriculum, they cover most of the knowledge that pupils are expected to develop in these two fundamental areas. They operated to ensure that there was no gap in arrangements for formal assessment (and reporting of assessment outcomes) of progress in literacy and numeracy.

261. At the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 (Years 4, 7 and 10), teachers assessed and reported on children's literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers made judgements on their pupils' achievement in these skills based on the existing Levels of Attainment by reviewing the work that the child had produced over a period of time leading up to the end of the key stage. Schools reported to parents the level their child had achieved in these areas and on the overall school performance. Schools also sent the information to CCEA and DE and published school outcomes in the school prospectus.

262. Children in Year 10 could also sit Key Stage 3 tests in English, Maths and Science. These tests were optional (decisions about whether a school used these tests are made by the school). The tests were set and marked by CCEA.

263. Primary schools could also choose to use external materials (assessment units) provided by CCEA to help them make their judgements and primary schools could also have their judgements externally moderated by CCEA. This latter part was phased out in 2011/12 to focus on the introduction of the new arrangements.

Summary of the operation of statutory assessment in the 2012/13 School Year

Teacher assessment of pupils' work

264. From 2012/13, teachers assess each pupil in each component part of Communication (Talking and Listening/Reading/Writing) and Using Mathematics (the Requirements for the skill as well as the related Knowledge and Understanding). Pupils in Irish-medium post-primary schools and units are also assessed in each component part of Communication in Irish (Listening, Understanding and Talking/Reading/Writing).

265. Having assessed the pupils in these component parts of the Cross-Curricular Skills, teachers use this information to decide the level that has been achieved by each pupil in each skill at the end of the key stage.

266. In order to make a summative judgement that a pupil has achieved a level, the teacher must establish that the pupil has demonstrated competence across the breadth of requirements for the Cross-Curricular Skill and in most of the criteria relating to the level at which he/she is judged to be working. When judging the level achieved by a pupil at the end of a Key Stage, teachers are advised to select the level that best describes a pupil's work, based on the pupil's knowledge, understanding and skills. To arrive at a rounded judgement of the level that a pupil has attained, teachers should form judgements, based on the pupil's performance as a whole, across a range of work. Teachers' assessments of their pupils will be transferred electronically from schools to CCEA.

267. Teachers have been advised by CCEA that the LoPs are intended to build progressively on the knowledge, understanding and skills of lower levels. Skills outlined at a lower level should, therefore, be considered to have been subsumed within the higher level.

Moderation

268. The purpose of moderation is to provide confirmation to schools and other partners in education that the standards which schools are applying in assessing their pupils' work are appropriate. Moderation for the Levels of Progression will include elements of Quality Assurance and Quality Control processes, providing mechanisms to validate teacher-based judgements by:

- Ensuring there is a planned, whole-school approach to interaction between all relevant staff so that each teacher understands the system-wide standards that are to be applied;
- Increasing teacher confidence in using assessment processes effectively;
- Verifying that schools are applying internally agreed standards; and
- Providing additional support and intervention for schools not demonstrating consistency and/or accuracy of judgements.

269. Portfolios of pupils' work will be an important aspect of this, containing samples of work that are representative of the standards indicated.

270. It was intended that, from 2012/13, for end of Key Stage 3 assessments (2013/14 for Key Stage 1 to 2), schools would participate in moderation within a three year rolling programme.

271. In March of the 2012/13 school year, participating schools were required to submit a complete list of their Year 10 pupils and the levels that they intend to award to each of them in each of the Cross-Curricular Skills. Using this list, CCEA randomly selected those Year 10 pupils for whom portfolios must be submitted. Schools were then informed as to:

- the pupils whose work should be submitted; and
- the date by which the pupil portfolios must be available for collection.

272. Each pupil portfolio was required to illustrate work at a specific level and should contain pieces of work which colleagues agree to be typical of the pupil working at that level. Each school was informed of the number of pupil portfolios to be submitted by that school. The number of portfolios was based on a random stratified sample. Schools were asked to submit between ten and seventeen pupil portfolios depending on the number of end of key stage pupils being assessed.

Pupil Portfolios for the CCS

273. All of the portfolios were reviewed by moderators and feedback sent to each school. Feedback was written and indicated either that the work in the portfolio illustrates a standard which is in line with other schools or that some adjustment of outcomes was needed. If it was considered that the feedback would be more effectively given through a moderator's visit, a visit would be arranged.

274. Where a school's standards were not verified by CCEA, the school was responsible for making adjustments to outcomes based on the feedback from CCEA. Schools were expected to take account of the feedback, to amend standards within the school accordingly and to submit adjusted outcomes to CCEA by the end of the school year. CCEA would then confirm that the school has submitted adjusted outcomes and keep a record of adjustments made. Schools would then be subject to re-moderation in that skill in the following year.

Summary of Moderation Arrangements in 2013/14

274. As requested by the Minister, a CCEA programme of research and evaluation for the new arrangements took place across the 2012/13 academic year for the primary and post-primary sectors. The programme of research included school-principal events at the end of the school year, jointly hosted by CCEA and DE. CCEA reported a number of common messages, including:

- the pace of implementation;
- the submission date for Levels was too early;
- timescales were too tight / unrealistic; and
- the arrangements created a heavier/unmanageable workload.

275. While there are some positive aspects to take from the feedback from schools (the value to teachers of internal standardisation for example), the feedback overall was very negative. As a result, revised, 2-stage, moderation arrangements were introduced.

276. From 2013/14, schools will continue to assess and report on Communication and Using Mathematics against the Levels. In response to requests from schools, the mandatory assessment and moderation of Using ICT against the Levels will be deferred for at least a year, although schools wishing to report using the Levels and/or avail of standards verification will be given the option to do so. This will ensure that schools are supported in their implementation of Using ICT in 2013/14.

277. In terms of moderation, in 2013/14 Primary schools will be allocated the same skill as the previous year, but with the option to switch. Post-primary schools will be allocated the other skill, so that they're not moderated in the same skill two years running,

1. **Mid February:** Step 1 - Following internal standardisation, schools, in order to confirm their understanding of the Levels, will send CCEA evidence of pupil work representing the range of levels that they intend to award in the Skill in which they are being moderated.
2. **Easter:** CCEA will provide feedback to each school. This is designed to support schools in their subsequent application of the LoPs and so inform the awarding of level judgements for individual pupils in May.
3. Schools whose understanding of the standards cannot be confirmed at this point will be alerted to the requirement that they will be asked for pupil portfolio evidence as part of Step 2 of the moderation process.
4. Where appropriate, CCEA will seek to offer further assistance to schools which appear to have difficulty.
5. **Mid May:** All schools forward end-of-key-stage pupil Level data to CCEA.
6. **June:** Step 2 - After analysis by CCEA, schools will be requested to submit one specified pupil portfolio for each level they have awarded.
7. **Note:** This will only impact on those schools whose:
 - understanding of the Levels was unverified in Step 1; or
 - Levels submission varied from the range of Levels verified in Step 1.
8. These pupil portfolios will then be moderated by CCEA over the summer with feedback to schools in the autumn term.

Assessment at Key Stage 4 and beyond

278. At the age of 16, after completing 12 years of compulsory education (end of Key Stage 4), students take General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) and/or equivalent level examinations in the courses they have followed at KS4. Progress in the CCS is not assessed against the LoPs. Instead appropriate qualifications in English and Maths are used for Communications and Using Mathematics respectively as a proxy measure of these CCS (the details of assessment at KS4 in Using ICT are being finalised).

279. Students who return post-GCSE will normally study A levels and/or equivalent Level 3 qualifications. The outcome of assessment/examination in these subjects will help determine their future progression into further or higher education establishments; training; or employment.

280. Qualifications here and in Wales and England have traditionally been defined by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)³³, which include all general and vocational qualifications accredited from 1997. The NQF consists of Entry level to level 8 qualifications. Typically, GCSEs (grade A*–C) are level 2 and GCE A levels are level 3 (a PhD is a level 8). The LoPs have been developed to complement the Levels under the NQF and the agreed “expected levels” for pupils at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 are intended to plot the knowledge and skills pupils will need to have by the time they complete each Key Stage with a view to reaching NQF level 2 qualifications by the ends of Key Stage 4. To see a comparison of qualifications taken in across these islands, see pdf document via link below:

http://www.rewardinglearning.org.uk/docs/regulation/guidance/cross_boundaries_leaflet.pdf

281. On 1 October 2012, Minister O’Dowd commissioned CCEA to undertake a fundamental review of GCSEs and A levels following a series of claims in the media that standards were reducing year on year. The review was concluded on 30 June and the consultation is ongoing until 20 December 2013. Once he has considered the outcome of this consultation, the Minister will make his decisions on the way forward.

Competencies to assess students and to use assessment results

282. DE has been conscious of the need to ensure that the machinery of assessment supports – and does not impede – the core business of teaching and learning and the

³³ Many qualifications are being transferred to the Qualifications & Credit Framework (QCF), which uses a credit based system to recognise qualification size and gives a more flexible approach to learners' needs. The QCF operates equivalent levels to the NQF.

scope of teachers to engage in that core business. Accordingly, decisions on the operation of the new arrangements have been informed by the agreed Teacher Competence Framework³⁴ – with particular regard to competences 24-27 which focus on assessment. A key aspect of this work has been a pilot or “Shadow” year, in which a number of schools used the revised arrangements during the 2011/12 school year.

283. Until 2012/13, moderation at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 had not been statutory since 2006. This means that, prior to the introduction of the new arrangements, some primary schools may not have been moderated for up to 8 years. Teacher assessed outcomes at the end of Key Stage 3 have previously never been moderated here. There is therefore likely to be little experience in schools of the use of assurance mechanisms for teacher assessment at Key Stages 1 to 3 although post-primary teachers are likely to be experienced with carrying out teacher-assessed elements of public examinations. There is the potential for additional initial workload for schools and the system in introducing the new arrangements and ensuring that the assessment outcomes for all schools in all skills are externally verified by CCEA in as short a timeframe as possible. This element has been raised by schools as a significant issue in 2012/13 and 2013/14.

284. The years preceding the introduction of the revised arrangements³⁵, saw a comprehensive training package delivered by CCEA using a blended approach (face-to-face and online) to all schools, primary and post-primary in the operation of the new arrangements. The face to face training schedule was delivered as follows:

- Autumn 2010: Awareness raising for principals and senior managers.
- Spring 2011: Face to face training for staff with responsibility for the management and coordination of statutory assessment in schools. In post-primary schools, for example, this could be assessment coordinators, literacy/numeracy coordinators, English/Maths Heads of Department etc.
- Summer 2011 to May 2012: Detailed system-wide training in school clusters.

285. In addition, moderation arrangements for Key Stage 1 and 2 were voluntary in 2012/13, to allow the process to become embedded.

³⁴ Teaching: the Reflective Profession GTCNI
http://epublishbyus.com/the_reflective_profession/10020354#

³⁵ A similar programme of training and support ran in 12/13 for Using ICT.

Support for Quality Assurance

286. Initial capacity building was provided to schools by CCEA through online and/or face-to-face training. CCEA is also providing ongoing support and cross-phase agreement trialling along with assessment support materials and regularly updated exemplar libraries of tasks and pupil work. Teachers' professional development will also be enhanced by their role as teacher-moderators: Teachers will be recruited by and trained by CCEA to moderate schools' portfolios and provide feedback, further embedding the shared understanding of standards in the medium to longer term. The Department is also examining the option to allow schools to become accredited for quality practices and processes in assessment.

Using student assessment results

287. DE has set targets for improving assessment outcomes in literacy and numeracy by 2020, as published in *Count, read: succeed* and the draft Programme for Government 2011-2015³⁶. In addition, Boards of Governors of primary and post-primary schools are required to set targets each year to raise the standards achieved by their pupils in statutory end of key stage assessments and in public examinations. Each year, the Department issues data to support schools in their benchmarking and target-setting. Schools are then required to publish information on the achievements of registered pupils in end of key stage assessments and public examinations³⁷. Schools are required to report each year to parents on the educational and other achievements of their child, including their achievement in statutory end of key stage assessments or public examinations.

288. The Department has reviewed the measures of performance for which schools are required to set targets and the information they are required to provide to parents. Revised legislation is currently being consulted upon. It aims to take account of the range of policies now in place for raising standards in schools and ensure that these are reflected in the targets which schools are required to set and the performance indicators they are required to publish.

289. In recent years, successive policies and strategies have highlighted the need to go beyond the purely procedural in relation to data management, towards a culture where data is crucial to reviewing, planning and monitoring. Self-evaluation can only be meaningful if information is analysed in a whole-school setting. It is this enriched approach towards data analysis that can contribute to school development planning and ultimately whole-school improvement.

290. All primary and post-primary schools use the School Information Management System (SIMS) Assessment Manager software to record information on pupil

³⁶ See annex B

³⁷ Article 11 of the 1998 Education Order and Article 24 of the 2006 Education Order

performance. SIMS is an integral part of the ICT infrastructure that is provided by C2K to all schools in the north of Ireland. Giving access to a wide range of data and tools, SIMS enables schools to fulfil their statutory reporting obligations and to complete the key processes that are central to school management and administration.

291. *“Every School a Good School – a policy for improvement”*, sets out the vision for excellence in schools and is based on the belief that schools themselves, through honest and open engagement in self-evaluation supported by effective analysis of data, are best placed to bring about their own improvement. “Count, Read: Succeed - A strategy to improve Outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy” supports and reflects that thinking. Recent practice in schools has reinforced this view and many schools are now using the SIMS assessment suite to track pupil progress, to plan interventions where necessary and to review the effectiveness of those interventions.

292. Assessment provides key information that has a key role in helping schools to improve outcomes. Knowing how pupils are performing allows the school to undertake informed self-evaluation and set meaningful and challenging targets in its School Development Plan. Pupil level information also allows schools to plan improvements in individual classes, year groups and then at school level. The effective use of assessment data can enable teachers to interpret underachievement where it occurs and to make provision for other barriers to learning. This can be achieved by analysing progress and outcomes in relation to key pastoral factors such as: level of attendance, newcomer status, FSM status and SEN status.

293. The Education and Training Inspectorate inspection team does not itself measure the performance of the pupils in a quantitative way; it draws however, on information from the school’s own monitoring of the pupils’ achievement – through the normal process of continuous assessment, through the use of standardised tests in literacy and numeracy, and through the arrangements for assessment at the end of the key stages, and, in the secondary sector, results in public examinations. The Inspectorate uses bench-marking data specific to the performance of all primary schools in the north of Ireland in English and mathematics, broken down into various socio-economic and school-size categories. Similar data exists for the overall performance in external school examinations, GCSE and GCE A level. There are also data for each subject in external examinations, broken down for selective and non-selective schools.

Implementation of student assessment

The LoPs

294. Drafts of the LoPs were consulted on widely in 2008/09. The drafts which become statutory from 2012/13 reflect the feedback from this consultation.

Schools

295. During the 2011/12 school year a number of primary and post-primary schools agreed to participate in a 'Shadow Year' trial of the proposed processes for the incoming end of Key Stage assessments. The aim of the trial was to ensure that the incoming statutory assessment arrangements, and in particular moderation procedures, were fit for purpose, manageable and would build confidence throughout the school system. Within this trial, research and evaluation was conducted to track each participating school's experience through all aspects of the assessment and moderation cycle. In addition, DE and CCEA conducted widespread consultation on the operation of the arrangements in 2012/13.

296. One of the main concerns expressed³⁸ (particularly by the primary group) was the use of assessment data for benchmarking purposes and as part of the wider programme of school improvement. Several of the schools stated the assessment and moderation data is not suitable for this purpose and should only be used to benefit school management, pupils and parents. During the Shadow Year, both post-primary and primary schools agreed that random quality assurance measures should be adopted as this was seen as the best way of ensuring confidence in the assessment system and establishing trust in teacher assessed outcomes. In addition, during 2012/13 there have been widespread concerns expressed by teachers and their Unions about the bureaucratic burden associated with the operation of the moderation arrangements

Teaching Unions

297. While DE has ensured that CCEA engaged regularly with the Teaching Unions during the development of the new arrangements a number of teaching unions have raised concerns about the new moderation arrangements, primarily due to 'potential workload issues'. Industrial action impacted on training for the assessment arrangements, particularly at Primary where around 10% of schools missed scheduled training (although this was re-scheduled once the industrial action had ended). Industrial action also impacted slightly on the return of assessment data in 2011/12 and significantly on the operation of the new arrangements in 2012/13.

Policy

298. The Department's strategy *Count, read: succeed* makes clear, literacy and numeracy are at the very heart of the revised curriculum and this central role is emphasised through the cross-curricular skills of Communication and Using Mathematics.

³⁸ Research Report: Shadow Year Feedback – Staged Moderation Proposal CCEA RESEARCH & STATISTICS UNIT April 2012

299. Count, read: succeed explains that the new assessment arrangements have been designed to:

- reflect and support the central role of teachers in classrooms, helping pupils to fulfil their potential;
- provide an effective means for assessing pupil progress that will inform teaching and learning interventions and the recording of pupils' achievements;
- complement and support the key aims of the revised curriculum;
- embrace the assessment of skills, knowledge and understanding;
- have a clear and unambiguous focus on literacy and numeracy and (once it becomes statutory) on ICT;
- be straightforward, manageable and fit for purpose in a way that does not divert professional time and resources away from the core business of teaching and learning; and
- ensure there is appropriate accountability at all levels for the performance of our school system, particularly in relation to outcomes in literacy and numeracy.

300. A key aspect of the success of the new assessment arrangements will be to establish the confidence of schools and teachers at the outset. CCEA has supported the introduction of the new arrangements with comprehensive training and support material for teachers. In addition, the Minister accepted CCEA advice on the moderation arrangements on the expectation that the arrangements will evolve over time and he instructed CCEA to keep them under continuous review and to engage fully with teachers, principals and the Teaching Unions over the first years of implementation and thereafter. Following the introduction of the arrangements for 2013/14, the Minister wrote to schools to emphasise the intention to assist schools to embed the Levels while offering constructive and supportive feedback from CCEA.

Annex A: Number of schools and pupils by management type 2012/1339

Primary schools	Schools	Pupils
Controlled	374	77,402
Catholic Maintained	387	76,783
Other Maintained: Irish Medium	25	2,473
Other Maintained: Other	4	389
Controlled Integrated	19	3,503
Grant Maintained Integrated	23	5,887
Grammar school preparatory depts	15	1,597
TOTAL PRIMARY	847	168,034
Post-Primary (Non-Grammar)		
Controlled	55	29,763
Catholic Maintained,	71	40,642
Other Maintained: Irish Medium	1	541
Other Maintained: Other	-	-
Controlled Integrated	5	2,612
Grant Maintained Integrated	15	9,501
TOTAL POST-PRIMARY (Non-Grammar)	147	83,059
Grammar		
Controlled	17	15,181
Voluntary		
Under Catholic Management	29	27,170
Under Other Management	22	20,248
TOTAL GRAMMAR	68	62,599
Special	40	4,653
Hospital	1	78
TOTAL	1,103	318,423

³⁹ DE 2012/13 Census data.. See www.deni.gov.uk for more detail

Annex B: Educational Outcomes Targets – 2020

Targets for improving educational outcomes in literacy and numeracy

	Actual Performance					Milestones		Long Term Target
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2011/12	2014/15	2019/20
Key Stage 2 Communication in English (% of pupils at expected level)	78.8%	80.1%	81.4%	82.4%	82.8%	83%	86%	90%+
Key Stage 2 Communication Irish (% of pupils at expected level – pupils educated through the medium of Irish)	80.7%	82.0%	83.8%	88.2%	78.7%	84%	86%	90%+
Key Stage 2 Maths (% of pupils at expected level)	80.6%	81.3%	82.5%	82.9%	83.7%	84%	86%	90%+
Key Stage 3 Communication, in English (% of pupils at expected level)	79.2%	78.9%	79.4%	79.2%	79.4%	81%	83%	85%+
Key Stage 3 Communication, in Irish (% of pupils at expected level – pupils educated through the medium of Irish)	88.1%	92.1%	98.1%	80.2%	75.8%	85%+	85%+	85%+
Key Stage 3 Maths (% of pupils at expected level)	74.1%	77.3%	76.6%	77.3%	77.3%	80%	82%	85%+

	Actual Performance					Milestones		Long Term Target
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2011/12	2014/15	2019/20
School leavers with at least 5 GCSEs A*-C (or equivalent) inc GCSEs in English and Maths	56.3%	58.4%	59.0%	59.5%	62.0%	61%	66%	70%+
School leavers with at least 5 GCSEs A*-C (or equivalent) inc GCSEs in English and Maths - Girls	62.6%	63.7%	64.7%	64.3%	67.8%	65%	70%+	70%+
School leavers with at least 5 GCSEs A*-C (or equivalent) inc GCSEs in English and Maths - Boys	50.2%	53.1%	53.4%	55.0%	56.3%	56%	62%	70%+
School leavers with at least 5 GCSEs A*-C (or equivalent) inc GCSEs in English and Maths – FSME pupils only	27.7%	29.7%	31.3%	31.7%	34.1%	39%	49%	65%+
School leavers with at least 5 GCSEs A*-C (or equivalent) inc GCSEs in Gaeilge, English and Maths – Pupils educated through the medium of Irish	Validated Gaeilge data have not been collected as part of the School Leavers Survey. A process for collecting and validating these data will be established for results in the 2009/10 academic year						To be confirmed	70%+

Source: *Count, Read: Succeed – A Strategy to improve outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy (March 2011)*

Annex C: Overview of statutory reporting and assessment requirements

Statutory Assessment and Reporting	Foundation Stage		Key Stage 1		Key Stage 2			Key Stage 3		
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10
Assessment										
Assess pupil progress in each of the Areas of Learning.	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Assess pupil progress in the Cross-Curricular Skills (CCS) of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT.	√	√								
Assess pupil progress in the CCS of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT (when introduced) against the Levels of Progression.			√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Assess pupil progress against the Levels of Progression (LoP) and report the numerical outcomes achieved.				√			√			√
Assess pupil progress in the Other Skills (Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities).	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Administer statutory computer-based assessments in the autumn term (voluntary in 2013).				√	√	√	√			
Reporting to Parents										
Report in writing the outcomes of statutory computer-based assessment and offer to meet parents to discuss by the end of the autumn term (voluntary in 2013).				√	√	√	√			
Provide an Annual Report to parents by 30 th June.	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
State LoP achieved by each pupil in each CCS in the Annual Report, which must also include a statement of the percentage of pupils in Yr4, 7 and 10 who have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attained each Level in that CCS • Attained the expected level in that CCS • Worked towards the expected Level in that CCS but had not yet attained; and • Been exempted from assessment in that CCS. 				√			√			√

Annex D: Overview of the Cross-Curricular Skills (Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT)

COMMUNICATION

Communication is central to the whole curriculum. Children should be able to communicate in order to express themselves socially, emotionally and physically, to develop as individuals, engage with others and contribute as members of society. The modes of communication include talking and listening, reading and writing. However, effective communication also includes non-verbal modes of communication, wider literacy and the use of multimedia and ICT technologies which may combine different modes.

The requirements for Communication are set out below in bold.

Across the curriculum, at a level appropriate to their ability, pupils should be enabled to develop skills in:

Talking and Listening

Pupils should be enabled to:

- listen to and take part in discussions, explanations, role plays and presentations;
- contribute comments, ask questions and respond to others' points of view;
- communicate information, ideas, opinions, feelings and imaginings, using an expanding vocabulary;
- structure their talk and speak clearly so that ideas can be understood by others;
- adapt ways of speaking to audience and situation;
- use non-verbal methods to express ideas and engage with the listener.

Reading

Pupils should be enabled to:

- read a range of texts for information, ideas and enjoyment;
- use a range of strategies to read with increasing independence;
- find, select and use information from a range of sources;
- understand and explore ideas, events and features in texts*;
- use evidence from texts to explain opinions.

Writing

Pupils should be enabled to:

- talk about, plan and edit work;
- communicate information, meaning, feelings, imaginings and ideas in a clear and organised way;
- develop, express and present ideas in a variety of forms and formats, using traditional and digital resources, for different audiences and purposes;
- write with increasing accuracy and proficiency.

USING MATHEMATICS

Using **Mathematics** is the skill of applying mathematical concepts, processes and understanding appropriately in a variety of contexts. Ideally these should be in relevant real life situations that require a mathematical dimension.

Across the curriculum, at a level appropriate to their ability, pupils should be enabled to:

- choose the appropriate materials, equipment and mathematics to use in a particular situation;
- use mathematical knowledge and concepts accurately;
- work systematically and check their work;
- use mathematics to solve problems and make decisions;
- develop methods and strategies, including mental mathematics;
- explore ideas, make and test predictions and think creatively;
- identify and collect information;
- read, interpret, organise and present information in mathematical formats;
- use mathematical understanding and language to ask and answer questions, talk about and discuss ideas and explain ways of working;
- develop financial capability;
- use ICT to solve problems and/or present their work.

USING ICT

Using Information and Communications Technology (ICT) provides powerful tools and contexts to support meaningful learning. It has the potential to transform and enrich pupils' learning experiences and environments across the curriculum. To help develop skills in **researching**, handling and communicating information children should have opportunities, using ICT, to engage in genuine research and purposeful tasks set in meaningful contexts. They should be encouraged to re-work information, present and exchange their ideas and translate their thinking into creative products and productions which show an awareness of audience and purpose.

Across the curriculum, at a level appropriate to their ability, pupils should be enabled to develop skills to:

Explore

Pupils should be enabled to:

- access and manage data and information;
- research, select, process and interpret information;
- investigate, make predictions and solve problems through interaction with electronic tools;
- understand how to keep safe and display acceptable online behaviour.

Express

Pupils should be enabled to:

- create, develop, present and publish ideas and information using a range of digital media;
- manipulate information and multimedia products using a range of assets.

Exchange

Pupils should be enabled to:

- communicate using a range of contemporary methods and tools;
- share, collaborate, exchange and develop ideas digitally.

Evaluate

Pupils should be enabled to:

- talk about, review and make improvements to work, reflecting on the process and outcome;
- consider the sources and resources used;

Exhibit

Pupils should be enabled to:

- manage and present their stored work;
- showcase their learning across the curriculum.

Annex E: List of acronyms and glossary of terms

Glossary of Commonly used Abbreviations and Terms

Abbreviation	Term	Description
AA	Associate Assessors	
BA	Bachelor of Arts	
BEEd	Bachelor of Education	
BoG	Board of Governors	The corporate Board of Governors responsible for the overall management of the school.
	Catholic Maintained	Schools owned by the Catholic Church; managed by Boards of Governors, and funded through the ELBs.
BSc	Bachelor of Science	
C2K	Classroom 2000 Project	The Classroom 2000 Project provides every grant-aided school across the north of Ireland with a modern, connected Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure.
CASS	Curriculum Advisory Support Service	A group of professional staff employed in each Education and Library Board which works in partnership with schools and other agencies to provide a support service to schools in all areas of the curriculum.
	Controlled Integrated	Controlled schools which have acquired Integrated status.
	Controlled Schools/Sector	Schools owned by the ELBs and managed through Boards of Governors
CBA	Computer Based Assessment	
CCEA	Council for the Curriculum,	The examination board in the north of Ireland. CCEA advises DE on what should be taught in

Abbreviation	Term	Description
	Examinations and Assessment	schools, and monitors the standard of qualifications and examinations in the region
CCMS	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	The Employing Authority of teachers in Catholic Maintained Schools which represents the Trustees and provides support on issues such as raising and maintaining standards, and the school estate planning in the Catholic Maintained sector in the north of Ireland.
CCS	Cross Curricular Skills	
CEP	Career Entry Profiles	
CFF	Common Funding Formula	Formula to ensure that schools with similar characteristics receive similar levels of funding regardless of the area or sector in which they are located.
CnaG	Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta	CnaG is the representative body for Irish-medium education sector in the north of Ireland. It was set up in 2000 by DE to promote, facilitate and encourage Irish-medium education.
CPD	Continuing Professional Development	The continued an on-going professional development and skills enhancement of the teaching profession.
DCAL	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure	
DE	Department of Education	
DEL	Department for Employment and Learning	
DI	District Inspector	
Education Authority		The five ELBs are the statutory Education Authorities in their respective areas.

Abbreviation	Term	Description
ELBs	Education & Library Boards	Regional education authorities, designated in law as having responsibility for the delivery of a range of education and youth services. There are 5 ELBs: Belfast, Southern, South Eastern, Western and North Eastern.
	Employing Authority	In the Controlled Sector the Employing Authority is the ELB which employs the teacher. The CCMS is the employing authority for Catholic Maintained schools. The Board of Governors are the Employing Authority for the Voluntary Grammar and Grant Maintained Integrated schools.
EPD	Early Professional Development	A phase of continuing professional development (CPD) undertaken by teachers in the early years of their career, (i.e. the second and third years of teaching).
ESA	Education and Skills Authority	<p>The body which will, when established, take over the functions currently carried out by the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • five Education and Library Boards (ELBs); • Regional Training Unit (RTU). <p>It will also be responsible for the front-line support currently undertaken by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS); • Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE); and • Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG). <p>The ESA will absorb the role of the Staff Commission, which dealt with recruitment, training and terms and conditions of employment of officers of ELBs. It will also undertake some of the functions currently performed by DE. The Youth Council will also come under the ESA, as will Youth Services administration.</p>

Abbreviation	Term	Description
ESaGS	Every School a Good School	The Department of Education's core school improvement policy
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate	A division of DE which provides inspection services and information about the quality of education, youth provision and training to the Department of Education, the Department for Employment and Learning and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure.
Foundation stage		Years 1 and 2 of primary education.
FSM	Free School Meals	Provision of free school meals based on a number of eligibility criteria.
Grant-aided schools		Schools which receive grant-aid through the ELBs or directly from DE.
GCE	General Certificate of Education - A Level	
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education	An academic qualification awarded in a specified subject.
GMI	Grant Maintained Integrated	Self-governing schools with integrated education status, funded directly by the Department of Education and managed by Boards of Governors.
GTCNI	General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland	Independent professional body for teachers, dedicated to enhancing the status of teaching and promoting standards of professional conduct and practice.
	Integrated Education	Defined in legislation as 'the education together at school of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils'.
InCAS	Interactive Computerised Assessment System	

Abbreviation	Term	Description
INSET	In service training	Provision of training and development for teachers and support staff.
ISB	Inspectorate Support Branch	
ITE	Initial Teacher Education	The initial stages of Higher Education (undergraduate and postgraduate courses) which provide a professional teaching qualification.
KS	Key Stage	The phases of education: Key Stage 1: Ages 6 - 8 Key Stage 2: Ages 8 - 11 Key Stage 3: Ages 11 - 14 Key Stage 4: Ages 14 - 16
	Maintained schools	Non Catholic Schools in private ownership, managed by Boards of Governors and funded through the ELBs. They include Irish medium Schools.
LoP	Levels of Progression	From the 2012/13 school year, Communication and Using Mathematics (and from 2013/14 Using ICT) will be assessed with reference to Levels of Progression which focus on skills as well as knowledge. The Levels of Progression (LoPs) are set out a continuum of knowledge and skills that pupils are expected to be able to demonstrate if they are to build the communication, numeracy and ICT skills needed to function effectively in life and in the world of work.
NICIE	Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education	A voluntary organisation which aims to develop, support and promote Integrated Education.
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency	
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development	An international organisation helping governments tackle the economic, social and governance challenges of a globalised

Abbreviation	Term	Description
		economy. The organisation provides a setting where governments compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practice and coordinate domestic and international policies.
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education	
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study	
PISA	Programmes for International Student Assessment	A collaborative study among the member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). It is conducted every three years and its main purpose is to assess the knowledge and skills of 15-year-olds in three broad areas of "literacy": reading, mathematics and science.
PQH	Professional Qualification for Headship	An accredited course for those aspiring to headship which is recognised as being equivalent to NPQH in England and has equal status with Welsh PQH and Scottish Qualification for Headship.
PRSD	Performance Review and Staff Development.	The procedures associated with the annual review cycle in which every principal and teacher is required to participate.
PSEEP	Pre-School Education Expansion Programme	The aim of the PSEEP is to provide one year of high-quality, funded pre-school education in the year immediately before compulsory education for every child whose parents wish it, to provide a good foundation for their future learning. It is designed as a partnership between statutory and voluntary/private sectors.
	Revised Curriculum	Statutory curriculum for all pupils of compulsory school age that prepares young people for all aspects of life and work.
RE	Religious Education	Education concerned with religion. It may refer

Abbreviation	Term	Description
RI	Reporting Inspector	to education provided by a church or religious organisation, for instruction in doctrine and faith, or for education in various aspects of religion.
RTU	Regional Training Unit	Regional Training Unit provides leadership, co-ordination and direction in the planning and delivery of professional development and training for the education community.
SDP	School Development Plan	A document setting out an individual school's priorities and targets for improvement for the period ahead based on an analysis of current levels of performance and an assessment of how current trends and future factors may impact on the school.
SEN	Special Educational Needs	Children who at any time, and for a number of reasons, experience greater difficulties in learning and progressing than their peers.
SENDO	Special Educational Needs and Disability Order	The law which increases the rights of children with special educational needs to attend mainstream schools and introduces disability discrimination laws for the whole education system.
SIMS	Schools Information Management System	A management information system designed specifically for schools to support their administration and information functions.
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths	
TA	Teaching Allowances	
TIMMS	Trends in International Maths and Science Study	
TNC	Teachers Negotiating Committee	Comprises the employing authorities/employer representatives, DE and five teachers' Trade Unions to discuss teachers' pay and conditions

Abbreviation	Term	Description
UPS	Upper Pay Scale	of service. Three-point Upper Pay Scale for Teachers with successful threshold applications.
VGS	Voluntary Grammar Schools	Self-governing schools, generally of long standing, originally established to provide an academic education at post primary level on a fee paying basis. Now funded by DE and managed by Boards of Governors.



OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes

COUNTRY BACKGROUND REPORT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND