

REPORT ON ELRC STUDY TOUR TO ENGLAND AND IRELAND: OCTOBER 2008

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1. Introduction

In 2005, the ELRC prepared a proposal for utilizing its budgetary allocation for the period 2005 to 2008. A number of key policy development areas were identified to enable educators to enhance education quality, including improved career opportunities, performance rewards, incentives, social support and counselling services, retraining educators in mathematics and science and improving human resource management capacity. In reviewing current policies and practices, it became apparent that local solutions and innovations were inadequate and that there was a need to capitalise on international experience and expertise to give fresh impetus to engaging on the issues to be addressed. As a result, it was agreed that a series of study visits would be undertaken, to amongst others, England and Ireland.

The need for the study visits were also underlined by the ELRC agreement on the Framework for the Establishment of an Occupational Specific Dispensation (OSD) for Educators and notably the ELRC/HSRC studies on Educator Workload in South Africa.

The study tour to England and Ireland was undertaken by a joint delegation of the Employer and Unions. In both countries there were meetings with Government Departments and Unions. This document reports on the impressions of the group and the key findings with respect to, inter alia, teacher salaries, quality assurance, teacher education, further education, and vital institutional arrangements and mechanisms in both countries.

2. England

2.1 Introduction: the Education System

In England the following Government Departments and Unions were visited:

- Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS);
- Learning Skills Council
- Training and Development Agency for Schools
- National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) – also known as “The Teachers’ Union”; and National Union for Educators (NUT)

2.1.1 The English Education System

Up to the beginning of 2007, public education was being governed by a single department. In 2007, with the appointment of Gordon Brown as Prime Minister (PM), one of the first things that he did was to split the current education department into three,

namely the (a) Department for Children, Schools and Families, (b) the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and (c) the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (DBERR).

At local level, the local authorities take responsibility for implementing policy for public education and state schools. There is also a strong tradition of independent schooling.

In 2007, the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, launched the 'Children's Plan' - a long term vision to improve schools and a step-change in the way parents and families are supported to deal with the new challenges faced by young people in the 21st century.

The plan was established to identify the need to adapt to the world that is changing rapidly, presenting new and exciting opportunities, but also risks and challenges. New technology and the internet offered countless exciting opportunities, but the bewildering pace of change leaves many parents nervous and poses various challenges.

The creation of the DCSF, and this Children's Plan, is the Government's response to these challenges. The plan sets out the commitments for how Government is going to ensure that by 2020, England is not just a good place to be a child but the best place in the world to grow up.

The Government believes that this plan will herald a radical change in the range of positive activities for young people and a revolution in the way parents are involved in the education of their children.

Schooling in England is compulsory between ages of 5 and 16. However, current government proposals are to continue with some form of education or training to age 18. The entitlement is also applicable from the age of 3 years. The Government is even considering reducing the entitlement to the age of 2 years.

Primary education is normally conducted through Infant and Junior schools or a combined Primary School. Below are the key stages of Primary education:

- Foundation Stage (in a pre-school / childcare environment)
- Full-time Foundation Stage 2 (in an Infant or Primary school)
- Key stage 1: Years 1 -2 (in an Infant, First or Primary school)
- Key stage 2: Years 3 - 6 (in Junior, Middle or Primary school)

Secondary education in England normally takes place in secondary schools, which cover the two secondary key stages namely:

- Key stage 3: Years 7 – 9

- Key stage 4: Years 10 – 11 (end of compulsory education)

Many secondary schools make provision for post-compulsory study to include years 12 and 13.

The maximum class size is 30 students per class. However, each school can also appoint additional teachers based on its budget.

Teachers work 1265 hours per annum over 190 days. They are required to be at school for 6 hours and 24 minutes that including 5 hours contact time. Teaching Assistants were introduced in 2000 in order to free teachers up to concentrate on more teaching time.

Further education is from the ages of 17 to 18 years of age.

Children are required to remain in education until the age of 18 years. Even though they may leave school at the age of 16, they are required to remain in some type of formal education. For example the company that they are working for is also regarded as a training ground and should put mechanisms in place to train them until the age of 18 years. From the age of 19, they become the responsibility of the local authorities.

Where families are poor and children cannot afford to remain in education, the Government pays them an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) of up to £30 per week. They also receive a bonus of up to £50 should they complete their course. Initially, they were paid the grant to only be in school. However, since 2006, the grant was linked to results.

2.2 Teacher Salaries

Each school receives a budget from the Government based on the number of learners at a school. The Governance Structure of a school recruits and selects teachers. In other words the governance structure can determine the number of teachers it wishes to employ. Schools advertise individually and compete with one another for the best teachers.

Classroom teachers start on the ‘main pay scale’ (Table 1). Teachers working in inner or outer London are are paid on separate pay scales, which reflect the higher cost of working and living in London and surrounding areas. Teachers usually start on M1. But if they have other teaching experience they may start higher up the scale. Schools may also award discretionary points for other relevant experience. Each school’s pay policy explains how these points are awarded.

The salary scales from September 2008 for teachers in England and Wales (outside London) are set out in Table 1.

Table 1: UK Teacher Pay Scales – September 2008

Spine Point	Annual salary in pounds sterling
M1	20 627
M2	22 259
M3	24 048
M4	25 898
M5	27 939
M6	30 148
Threshold – Upper Pay Range	
1	32 660
2	33 870
3	35 121

The starting salary depends on the number of ‘spine points’ allocated by the school governing body on the following grounds:

- **Qualifications:** there are no longer any extra points given for qualifications. The minimum starting point for new entrants is therefore M1.
- **Experience:** The relevant body has discretion to award additional points on the main pay scale for years of relevant experience other than teaching experience, which attract mandatory experience points. This may include teaching in independent schools, or in schools in Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or overseas, or non-teaching experience, whether paid or not, which the relevant body considers of value to the performance of the teacher’s duties. The relevant body can decide what should count as relevant experience in this context, and how many such points to award. Each case should be considered on its merits. Once awarded, experience points, whether originally mandatory or discretionary, may not be taken away, regardless of whether the teacher remains in the same school or obtains a post in another school. No teacher can be paid more than five points for experience.

Before local management of schools, local authorities (LAs) had standard formulae to calculate the discretionary increments for experience other than as a teacher. This usually took the form of one increment for each three years of service which were deemed to be relevant to teaching. In some cases, for example, where industrial experience was particularly relevant to the post in which the teacher was appointed, the teacher could be awarded one increment for each year of service.

It is now for the governing body to determine whether to award discretionary

experience points, and if so, in what circumstances and at what level discretion will be exercised.

Discretionary additional payments: Governing bodies and LAs may whatever payment they see fit to a teacher for:

- a) continuing professional development undertaken outside the school day;
- b) activities relating to the provision of initial teacher training (ITT) as part of the ordinary conduct of the school; and
- c) participation in out-of-school learning activities.

The relevant pay policy sets out the criteria by which the governing body determines the nature and level of such payments. There is no requirement on the part of teachers for them to undertake any of the above activities outside the school day and that to do so is the choice of the individual, not the school, governing body, or LA. Similarly, teachers who undertake school-based ITT activities do so on a voluntary basis, unless s/he is an Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) for whom this is a professional duty.

Salary rises: Teachers receive a salary rise when pay scales and allowances are updated. In addition, each September, teachers who are not already at the top of the main scale move to the next point on the scale subject to satisfactory performance – but they may advance by two points, in total, if their performance is excellent.

Upper pay scale: Qualified teachers who reach the top of the main pay scale may apply to be assessed against the post-threshold standards. If they meet the standards, they cross the “threshold” to the first point on the upper pay scale. The threshold provides an opportunity for good classroom teachers to progress to a higher salary range. Teachers on the upper pay scale receive the usual salary rise when the pay scales are updated. However, progression on the upper pay scale is performance based. Governing bodies make the decisions on progression, based on recommendations from heads. Teachers will not normally move through the upper pay scale more frequently than every two years.

Other payments: Classroom teachers who take on a significant responsibility that is not required of others, may be awarded a Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) payment. Schools can also make extra payments or offer other benefits to teachers for recruitment and retention purposes and can decide the amounts themselves. These may be awarded for a fixed period not exceeding three years. In exceptional cases awards for retention purposes may be renewed.

Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs) have their own 18 point pay spine. Each AST is paid within a five point range which is based primarily on the nature of the work to be undertaken, the scale of the challenges to be tackled, the professional competencies required and any other recruitment considerations. ASTs receive an increase when the pay scales are updated and may also be awarded one or two pay points each September for high quality performance. The AST grade offers excellent classroom teachers the opportunity to continue teaching and use their skills to enhance the performance of other

teachers both within their school and others within the locality. The pay spine reflects the fact that the grade is an alternative career path to taking up a leadership or management post.

Excellent teachers: Excellent teachers have a set salary. ETs must have been on U3 for a minimum of 2 years when they take up post. Although there are similarities between ETs and ASTs, ETs use and share their skills in classroom teaching for the benefit of professional development of other teachers within their school. ASTs disseminate good practice to schools other than their own, by working in other schools.

Leadership group: Head teachers and other school leaders are paid on the 43-point leadership spine which extends from about 35 000 pounds in 2007 to 98 000 pounds. Heads' pay is normally related to school group size, but governing bodies may pay more where necessary to recruit and retain head teachers of the most challenging and largest schools. Deputies and assistant heads are paid on a five point range below that of the head teacher and above the pay of the highest paid classroom teacher. Members of the leadership group all receive an increase when the pay scales are updated, but may also be awarded one or two pay points in September each year, provided their performance is of high quality.

Pay progression: Under the revised performance management regulations, which came into force in September 2007, there is no change to the arrangements for pay progression. Annual increments continue to apply as set out in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) for classroom teachers on the main scale. Therefore reviewers do not need to make a recommendation in support of an annual increment. The only exception to this is where the reviewer, in accordance with the school's pay policy, is considering a discretionary additional point (e.g. double jumping) where provided for in the STPCD.

Performance-related pay: All performance related pay recommendations are based on a review of overall performance. Reviewers will only need to make a performance-related pay recommendation where the reviewee is on: (a) the pay scale for post-threshold teachers; (b) the pay spine for members of the Leadership Group; or (c) the pay spine for Advanced Skills Teachers. Reviewers' pay recommendations are passed to the head teacher as part of the planning and review statement and the head teachers passes the pay recommendation on to the governing body.

Unqualified teachers: Unqualified teachers are paid on a ten point scale. The governing body decides where on the scale an unqualified teacher should start, and may also pay an additional allowance on top of this. Trainee teachers following an employment-based route to qualified teacher status may be paid on the qualified or unqualified teachers' pay scale.

Discretionary recruitment incentives: Governing bodies and LAs may make such payments or provide other financial assistance, support or benefits to a teacher as they consider necessary as an incentive for the recruitment of new teachers and the retention in

their service of existing teachers. A recruitment incentive that consists of periodic payments can only be paid for a maximum of three years and cannot be renewed.

2.3 Quality Assurance

The government body responsible for quality assurance in England is Ofsted – the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills. Ofsted was established by the Education and Inspections Act and is the non-ministerial government department of “Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Schools in England” (HMCI). This body inspects and regulates care for children and young people, and inspects education and training for learners of all ages.

Ofsted reports directly to Parliament instead of government ministries, thus ensuring impartial information and findings.

Ofsted strives to promote service improvement, ensuring that services focus on the interests of the users, that services are efficient, effective and promote value for the taxpayers’ money.

Hundreds of inspections and regulatory visits are conducted each week. Findings are then published on its website for all to see.

The current system of inspection (since September 2005) is that of short notice inspections. Under this system, the senior leadership of each school is required to complete a Self Evaluation Form (SEF) on a continual basis, which requires them to be aware of strengths and areas for development. Inspections take place every three years with a key focus on how well the school is managed, and what processes are in place to ensure standards of teaching and learning improve. A school’s performance is judged by the accuracy of self-evaluation combined with evidence and strategic policies for development and improvement.

A school could be placed under special measures if it is judged as “inadequate” in one or more areas and if the inspectors have decided it does not have the capacity to improve without additional help. Schools placed into special measures receive extensive support from local authorities, additional funding and resources and frequent re-appraisal from Ofsted until the school is no longer deemed to be failing. Furthermore, the senior managers and teaching staff can be dismissed and an appointed executive committee may replace the school governors. Schools which are failing but where inspectors consider there is capacity to improve are given a “Notice to Improve”.

Performance Management Policies within schools also ensure quality education. The Government has published new performance management regulations for schools. These regulations require school governing bodies to establish performance management policies and classroom observation protocols and to review them annually. Head Teachers can either themselves conduct performance management reviews of their teacher colleagues or delegate this responsibility to identified teachers who will conduct performance reviews of other teachers. For Head Teachers, the school governing bodies have been designated as reviewers.

Each school governing body must consult all teachers within its school and seek to agree on a performance management policy with the recognised trade unions, having regard to the consultation with all teachers. The performance management policy must contain the school's classroom observation protocol.

In practice, it will be Head Teachers who consult all teachers in schools and seek to reach agreement with recognised trade unions. Further, it is Head Teachers who formulate draft performance management policies and present them to governing bodies for approval.

It is required that Performance Management Policies contain the following:

- Results the policy is intended to achieve and how these will be measured;
- Outlining how the school's arrangements for school teacher performance management link with those for school improvement, school self-evaluation and school development training;
- How the school will seek to achieve consistency of treatment and fairness between those teachers with similar experience or levels of responsibility;
- The timing of the cycle;
- A classroom observation protocol (Some unions have even developed classroom observation protocols to assist schools);
- Provision for performance management training to be made available as the need arises;
- The arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the policy; and
- Specifics on any ancillary or supplementary procedures necessary for the operational performance management of teachers at the school.

The new performance management regulations for schools were published in 2002. Revised regulations came into effect on 1 September 2007. In summary, they require school governing bodies to establish performance management policies and classroom observation protocols and to review them annually. As part of this requirement, Head Teachers can conduct performance management reviews of their teachers themselves or delegate this to other identified teachers (reviewees). For Head Teachers, school governing bodies have been designated as reviewers. Each school's governing body must consult all teachers and unions in the school to agree on a performance management policy. The policy must include classroom observation protocol. Performance management is much the same as in South Africa. Teachers were evaluated annually from 2002. Key features of this process include the following:

- The aim is to establish a professional conversation between educator and observer (viewer and the reviewee).
- It is linked to salary progression.
- At least 3 hours of classroom observation per annum.
- Final decision lies with governing body.
- Principal is the observer of all teachers unless he delegates.

- Observer is responsible for the whole process.
- Enough time must be made available for observing so that it aids the observer in the proper execution of his task.
- Each school has its own performance policy, compiled by the governing body and staff of that school.
- Although here are approximately 10 aims, it is acceptable if you only meet the requirements of 3 to qualify for progression.

Once assessed, a teacher will move to the upper pay structure of performance related pay, i.e. U1, U 2, U3. This is based on a one year cycle. Assessment is not perceived to be a punitive instrument. It is the only source of evidence linked to pay progression. The reviewer makes a recommendation and the Head Teacher may not amend the recommendation. However, the final decision lies with the governing body. Classroom observation is undertaken by inspectors and officials.

2.4 Further Education

There are close to 400 further education colleges with about five million learners catering for all levels of education, including degree courses, ranging from reading and writing, all skills including nursing, hospitality, travel, horticulture, mechanics, construction and design.

Sponsorship of the further education service, including general further education colleges and training providers, rests with the Department of Innovation, Universities, and Skills (DIUS). The Skills Funding Agency is responsible for delivering key elements, such as taking account of the overall goals for the service and supporting strategies for meeting those goals. It maintains oversight of the pattern and range of institutions, their performance and viability, covering their work with both young people and adults.

The Skills Funding Agency is responsible for managing the performance of FE colleges and providers. The system is increasingly self-regulating, as funding follows choices made by customers, but the SFA is responsible for intervening where performance does not meet the nationally agreed minimum standards. A framework for such intervention has already been established, and in such a situation the SFA is responsible for deciding the appropriate course of action.

FE colleges are autonomous, and responsible for developing their own strategy to respond to government priorities and other demands. This is likely to lead to the structure and composition of FE provision evolving as a result of strategic decisions taken by colleges and changing demand. The Skills Funding Agency maintains an overview of the developing institutional pattern, supports colleges as they respond to change, and ensures such changes take relevant interests into account.

Since 2001 Further Education (FE) in England has been funded through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the largest government agency funding education provision. The LSC has a budget of some £13 billion and is organised on a regional basis through around 47 local councils. The LSC has a particular mission to improve and expand further education provision, particularly in skills-based vocational provision in FE colleges. Recent government-driven LSC and Department for Education and Skills policies, such as Success for All and the Skills Strategy, articulate this vision.

Colleges in England that are regarded as part of the FE sector include:

- General FE and tertiary colleges;
- Sixth form colleges;
- Specialist colleges (mainly colleges of agriculture and horticulture and colleges of drama and dance);
- Adult education institutes.

From September 2007, teachers working in FE in England are required to gain professional status, known as Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS). The first stage of QTLS is an initial “passport to teaching” module. The second stage is full teacher training, which would typically take up to five years to complete. The qualification covers both taught and practical skills, and also requires teachers to undertake 30 hours of continuous professional development per year. Good quality teaching is indicated by the award of the Training Quality Standard – an initiative to improve the quality of provision for vocational education, while all colleges and FE providers are subject to regular inspections by Ofsted. Lifelong Learning UK is the independent sector skills council responsible for the qualifications and standards for teachers working in FE. The trade unions for FE staff are the University and College Union and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers.

In England, further education is often seen as forming one part of a wider learning and skills sector, alongside workplace education, prison education and other types of non-school, non-university education and training. Since June 2007, the sector is overseen by the new Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, although some parts fall within the new Department for Children, Schools and Families.

2.5 Teacher Education

All teacher education takes place in universities. Minimum requirements for a qualified teacher comprise a degree plus post-graduate training.

The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) was established in 1995 to address teacher shortages in maths, science, technology and commercial subjects. The TDA provided bursaries for post-graduate students, £6000 per annum in 2000 for 20 000 post-graduate students.

A qualified educator is someone with a degree followed by post-graduate training as teacher at a university. The last teacher's training college closed in 2005. Allocations from the TDA enabled teachers training to compete, with other occupations, but money was clearly not the only driver. Educators actually want to become maths and science teachers for the love of it. Incentives were given to those graduates who wanted to become teachers. Once they completed their studies and a period of probation, another incentive was paid. However, it was found that incentives lose their impact as time goes on. Students were also trained in skills to work with parents, colleagues, all in preparation for the job. The incentives also assisted in getting teachers into schools with the greatest challenges for recruitment, for example, secondary schools like those in difficult socio-economic contexts.

As described earlier, the *Teachers Development Agency* was started in 1995 with its main target the recruitment of teachers. The TDA has control over the expenditure for teacher training at universities and monitor standards via inspections. Money is allocated to advance teacher training. Schools release teachers for 56 days pa for full time training as required at universities for updates on training. Substitute teachers are appointed. Schools are also responsible for school training programmes. They determine what training universities must deliver, they focus on quality of output.

Unqualified teachers coming from private sector can sit for exams. To become qualified, they are assessed by service provider at his discretion.

A new programme is to be launched from 2009, the *Master Education Teaching and Learning* level. A massive rollout of the program is on its way and 2500 educators are projected. The course is offered to all newly-qualified educators in England.

It was observed that there appeared to be no link to needs at schools and in/outputs at universities for teacher training. Money is allocated for whatever number of educators is enrolled for training and it appears as if there is always a fair supply of educators.

To be eligible for a training bursary, an ITT (Initial Teacher Training) trainee must meet eight criteria:

- Meet entry requirements onto post-graduate ITT course
- Not already a qualified teacher
- Not already employed in a school as teacher
- Not undertaking any other ITT training
- Be an 'eligible' student for provision of student support
- Have been notified by provider that they are eligible
- Be taking a qualifying ITT Course

- Comply with terms and conditions of the new bursary scheme

From 2009/10, Teacher Trainees will be charged for teacher training but can apply for a tuition fee loan. In the past it was free.

Recruitment premiums are paid to increase chemistry and physics specialists, incentives are provided for service providers (£ 2000) and for Modern Foreign Languages, Design and Technology, £ 1000 per student).

A new framework of professional standards for teachers came into effect on 1 September 2007. This includes standards for induction, which a newly qualified teacher is required to meet. They are expected to function fully by the end of their induction period and are subject to inspection for confirmation of their appointment.

2.6 Key Institutional Arrangements

2.6.1 Department for Children, Schools and Families

The new Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) was established to enable all children and young people to reach their full potential.

The DCSF intends building on the successes in education and children's services that have been seen over the last decade. It focuses on the significant challenges that remain – raising standards so that more children and young people reach expected levels, lifting more children out of poverty and re-engaging disaffected young people. The new structure will also allow it to respond to new challenges that will affect children and families: demographic and socio-economic change; developing technology; and increasing global competition.

In addition to its direct responsibilities, the department will lead work across Government to improve outcomes for children, including work on children's health and child poverty.

The purpose of the DCSF is to make England the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. Their aim is to:

- make children and young people happy and healthy;
- keep them safe and sound;
- give them a top class education; and
- help them stay on track.

The DCSF intends achieving this with the implementation of a Children's Plan that consist of the following:

- strengthen support for all families during the formative early years of their children's lives;

- take the next steps in achieving world class schools and an excellent education for every child;
- involve parents fully in their children's learning;
- help to make sure that young people have interesting and exciting things to do outside of school; and
- provide more places for children to play safely.

It also means a new leadership role for Children's Trusts in every area, a new role for schools as the centre of their communities, and more effective links between schools, the National Health Service (NHS) and other children's services so that together they can engage parents and tackle all the barriers to the learning, health and happiness of every child.

2.6.2 Learning and Skills Council (LSC)

The LSC was created by the Learning and Skills Act 2000 and amended by the Further Education and Training Act 2007 to 'modernise and simplify' the planning, funding and delivery of education and training for people over the age of 16 in England, other than those in universities. It began its work in April 2001.

The LSC is a non-departmental public body which began work in 2001, taking over the roles of the former Further Education Funding Council and Training and Enterprise Councils.

The LSC is responsible for planning and funding high quality education and training (further education) for everyone in England other than those in universities. There is a national office in Coventry and nine regional offices overseeing the work of the local partnership teams throughout the country.

The LSC's major tasks are to:

- raise participation and achievement by young people;
- increase adult demand for learning;
- raise skills levels for national competitiveness;
- improve the quality of education and training delivery;
- equalize opportunities through better access to learning; and
- improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the sector.

The LSC research and evaluation team manage several projects which provide the LSC and its partners with robust understanding of the skills and training needs of employers, the key future skills challenges in England, and the extent to which the provision that we fund in all areas of learning meets the needs and requirements of learners. These projects are:

- National Employer Skills Survey, commissioned by the LSC, the DIUS, and the UK Commission for Employment and Skills to provide information on the extent, causes and implications of recruitment problems, skills gaps, and training behaviour in England.
- Skills in England 2008: The Skills in England report has been published annually since 2001, and using secondary analysis synthesizes the latest research and analysis. The report is a collaborative publication undertaken with a range of key partners. This year the report will include a series of chapters on a variety of important skills issues facing the economy.
- Working Futures 2007-2017: This is an established and respected series of employment projections for the UK. The results are intended to provide a sound statistical foundation for the consideration of all those with an interest in the supply and demand of skills, including individuals, employers, education and training providers as well as the various agencies and departments of government. The results are based on the use of multi-sectoral, regional macroeconomic model, combined with occupational and replacement demand modules from secondary data.
- National Learner Satisfaction Survey 08/09: The survey of learners provides a national overview of delivery and satisfaction with education and training in England among LSC-funded learners aged 16 or over. The survey captures their perceptions on various aspects of their learning as well as establishing benchmarks against which to monitor trends in earners' levels of satisfaction. This provides invaluable insight into learners' perceptions of what is already working well and what might need to be improved so as to help the LSC and its partners understand and respond better to learners' needs.

The LSC also runs a Learner Support Programme that has a number of strands targeting those learners most in need of financial help, namely:

- Education Maintenance Allowance. To help learners from low income households;
- Care to Learn. To help parents with childcare costs;
- Dance and Drama Awards. To help talented individuals;
- 16-18 Discretionary Hardships. To help young learners most in need;
- Residential Schemes. To help learners who need to study away from home;
- Adult Learning Grant. To help adults on low income achieve their first levels 2/3
- Career Development Loans. Loans to help meet the cost of learning that improves career prospects;
- 20+ Childcare. To help adults with childcare costs while they learn;
- 19+ Discretionary Hardships. To help adults learners most in need;
- Residential Schemes. To help learners who need to study away from their homes; and
- Contracts and e- Delivery Team. Backroom services for learner support.

In order to track a learner and to ensure that he/she receives the required education, the LSC has implemented a connection service that tracks children in the system

LSC research also supports the development of the National Apprenticeship Service through a series of projects designed to inform the understanding of the supply and demand for apprenticeships, through:

- expanding apprenticeships in the public sector;
- identifying sectors for expansion in the number of apprenticeships; and
- demonstrating the benefits to learners of completing an apprenticeship.

The Skills Funding Agency is responsible for ensuring that the overall environment or 'trading conditions' in FE created by Government are highly supportive of upskilling to meet the nation's needs. The SFA is therefore responsible for the performance management of FE colleges.

As a key part of creating a genuinely demand-led system, the SFA will lead the development and management of the new England-wide adult advancement and careers service. It will play a vital role, with Jobcentre Plus, in boosting individual demand for skills and guiding people to the right training to meet their needs and help change their lives. The agency will, in the long term, be responsible for all programmes of financial support to help adult learners meet the additional costs of learning in FE that could otherwise prevent them from participating.

2.6.3 The Training and Development Agency (TDA)

The TDA was established since 1995. The Agency was set up to provide a focus on recruitment and training of teachers. The TDA is independent of the Government.

The TDA also provides assistance and guidance, inter alia, on the following: ways into teaching; the route to teacher training; finding a training provider; applying for teacher training; funding for teacher training; induction for newly qualified teachers; professional standards for teachers; performance management; continuing professional development guidance; returning to teaching; national occupational standards; school improvement planning; and training for support staff;

3. Ireland

3.1 Introduction: the Education System

The following Government Departments and Unions were visited:

- The Department of Education and Science
- The Teaching Council of Ireland
- The Institute of Technology
- The Teachers Union of Ireland

3.1.1 The Education System

Education has always been highly valued in Ireland. Even in historic times of great political, economic and social difficulty, the desire for education was very much in evidence. Prior to the establishment of a national system of primary education in 1831, there was already in existence a vast network of schools, the great majority of them provided by a people who had been dispossessed of their lands and who were experiencing harsh penal legislation.

Education is now regarded as a central plank in the economic, social and cultural development of Irish society. Governments and the social partners view it as strategically interlinked with national planning. There is a high level of public interest in educational issues, which has been further developed by the consultative approach adopted by the Government in the formulation of education policy. Irish pupils perform in the top sectors in international studies such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) PISA evaluations. Employers, both national and international, affirm the quality of graduates from the Irish education system.

Education in Ireland is compulsory from age 6 to 16. While there is no national provision for pre-schooling in Ireland, first level schools accept children on or after their fourth birthday.

The vast majority of schools are State funded, while privately owned "all-through" schools, catering for pupils from 4 to 12 years of age. The curriculum followed is a child-centred one and it allows for flexibility in timetabling and teaching methods.

The great majority of pupils transfer to second level school when they have completed the full first level course – generally at about 12 years of age. For registration in a second level school, students must be aged 12 on 1 January in the first year of attendance. The second level education sector comprises secondary, vocational, community and comprehensive schools.

The second level school span is predominantly a six-year cycle, taken from ages 12 to 18.

Apart from internal school tests, there are two key public examinations taken by students – the Junior Certificate (age 15/16) and the Leaving Certificate (age 17/18). These are external examinations set by the State Examinations Commission.

Third level education in Ireland is provided mainly by universities, institutes of technology and colleges of education. In addition, a number of other third level institutions provide specialist education in a number of professions such as medicine and law. Most third level education institutions are supported substantially by the State.

3.1.1.1 First Level Education (Primary)

There are over 440,000 children in first level education. Although children in Ireland are not obliged to attend school until the age of six, almost all children begin school in the September following their fourth birthday.

The general aims of first level education are:

- to enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realise his or her potential as a unique individual
- to enable the child to develop as a social being through living and co-operating with others and so contribute to the good of society
- to prepare the child for a continuum of learning.

The curriculum is divided into the following key areas:

- Language
- Mathematics
- Social, Environment and Scientific Education
- Arts Education, including Visual Arts, Music and Drama
- Physical Education
- Social, Personal and Health Education.

3.1.1.2 Second Level Education (Post-Primary)

The second level education sector comprises secondary, vocational, community and comprehensive schools. Secondary schools are privately owned and managed. The trustees of the majority of these schools are religious communities or Boards of Governors. Vocational schools are State established and are administered by Vocational Education Committees (VECs) while community and comprehensive schools are managed by Boards of Management of differing compositions.

second level education aims to provide a comprehensive, high-quality learning environment which aims to prepare individual students for higher or continuing education or for immediate entry into the workplace.

Second level education consists of a three-year Junior Cycle (lower secondary), followed by a two or three year Senior Cycle (upper secondary), depending on whether the optional Transition Year is taken. It is usual for students to commence the Junior Cycle at age 12. A State Examination, the Junior Certificate, is taken after three years.

The Senior Cycle caters for students in the 15 to 18 year age group. It has undergone significant restructuring in recent years.

During the final two years of Senior Cycle students take one of three programmes, each leading to a State Examination – the traditional Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) or the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA).

3.1.1.3 The Leaving Certificate

The long established, traditional Leaving Certificate examination is the terminal examination of post-primary education and is taken when students are typically 17 or 18 years of age.

In 2003, over 53,000 students took the Leaving Certificate Examination. The Leaving Certificate is the main basis upon which places in universities, institutes of technology and colleges of education are allocated.

3.1.1.4 Third Level Education

Traditionally the system of third level education in Ireland has comprised the university sector, the technological sector and the colleges of education, all of which are substantially funded by the State. In recent years, a number of independent private colleges have been established which offer a range of courses complementing the existing provision in the sector.

The 35 year period from 1965 to 2000 saw the number of students in third level education grow from 18,200 to almost 120,000. These rapidly growing numbers reflect increasing retention rates at second level, demographic trends and higher transfer rates into third level education.

3.1.1.5 University Sector

The seven universities in the State are autonomous, self-governing institutions. The Irish university system offers degree programmes – at Bachelor, Masters and Doctorate level – in the humanities, in the sciences (including technological and social) and in medicine.

3.1.1.6 Technological Sector

The Department of Education and Science has overall responsibility for the technological sector of third level education.

Institutions in the technological sector provide programmes of education and training in areas such as Business, Science, Engineering, Linguistics and Music to certificate, diploma and degree levels.

3.1.1.7 Colleges of Education

There are five Colleges of Education, which specialise in the training of first level teachers. They offer two courses – a three-year Bachelor of Education Degree and an eighteen-month Post Graduate Diploma.

The role of the Department in relation to the Colleges of Education is to ensure that the supply of teachers for first level schools is in accordance with identified needs. For second level teachers, training usually involves completing a primary degree in a university or other third level institution, and a one-year Higher Diploma in Education. There are also teacher training colleges that specialise in the training of second level home economics teachers, teachers of religion and physical education.

3.1.1.8 Further and Adult Education

The term "Further Education" embraces education and training which occurs after second level schooling but which is not part of the third level system. This includes programmes such as Post Leaving Certificate courses, the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (second chance education for the unemployed), programmes in Youth reach and Senior Traveller Training Centres for early school leavers, adult literacy and basic education, and self-funded evening adult programmes in second level schools.

3.1.1.9 Special Education for Students with Disabilities

The Education Act, 1998 sets out the responsibility of the Minister for Education and Science to ensure 'that there is made available to each person resident in the State, including a person with a disability or who has other special educational needs, support services and a level and quality of education appropriate to meeting the needs and abilities of that person'. At present, special educational provision for students with disabilities ranges from additional support in mainstream schools to specialist support in special schools. Essentially there are three models of provision. The student with a disability may be enrolled in

- a mainstream class with additional support
- a special class in a mainstream school
- a special school which

3.1.1.10 Promoting Science and Technology in Education

As Ireland develops as a knowledge-based economy, a key challenge for education is to develop the necessary mix of creativity and skills to respond to the needs of a changing labour market. Research, development and innovation are critical elements in achieving and maintaining economic competitiveness and securing continued prosperity. The availability of an adequate number of graduates skilled in the fields of Maths, Physical Sciences, Biological Sciences, Technology and Engineering will be a critical factor in supporting this strategy.

For Ireland, future economic growth relies on the ability to attract and retain higher value activities and higher skills with an emphasis on research, design and innovation.

This involves moving from technology based development to innovation based development which is less vulnerable to competition from lower cost economies.

The report on the Education System in Ireland will focus on combined learning in the meetings with the above-mentioned bodies and will provide interesting figures and statistics on the learning institutions and educators.

3.1.2 The Administrative Framework for Education

3.1.2.1 The Minister for Education & Science

The Minister for Education and Science, who is a member of the Government and responsible to the Irish Parliament has specific responsibility for education policy issues ranging from pre-school education, through first level, second level, third level, adult and further education.

3.1.2.2 The Department of Education & Science

At the head of the Department is the Secretary General, who acts as Chief Executive Officer. He has overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring policy and delivering outputs, and for providing policy advice to the Minister and Government. In managing the Department, the Secretary General is assisted by the Management Advisory Committee representing the most senior officials in the Department.

3.1.2.3 The Legislative Framework

Many aspects of the administration of the Irish education system are centralised in the Department of Education and Science. The Department sets the general regulations for

the recognition of schools, prescribes curricula and establishes regulations for the management, resourcing and staffing of schools, and negotiates teachers' salary scales.

The Education Act of 1998 ensures formal provision for the education “of every person in the State, including any person with a disability or who has other special educational needs”. The Act governs "primary, post-primary, adult and continuing education and vocational education and training". It sets out the functions and responsibilities of all key partners in the schooling system. It seeks the establishment of Boards of Management for all schools. It requires schools to engage in the preparation of school plans. Schools are required to promote parent associations. Accountability procedures are laid down. Attention is paid to the rights of parents and pupils. The Act also includes statutory provision for the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and it sets out roles for the regional Education Centres. The majority of schools are privately owned and managed institutions, which, although funded by the State, enjoy a large degree of autonomy

3.1.2.4 Partnerships

Changes in education policy and practice in recent years have been characterised increasingly by an intensive process of consultation between the Department and the partners (parents, teacher representative organisations, Boards of Management) in education. The overall aim of this partnership approach is to have broad agreement on major areas of development in the education system.

3.1.2.5 Regional Offices

Many aspects of the administration of the Irish education system are centralised in the Department of Education & Science. The concept of the Regional Offices emerged from two concerns – the need to make the Department more accessible to the public and the need to free the Department from excessive preoccupation with details of the operation of the education system.

The Regional Offices will facilitate a two-way information flow between the educational users in the regions and the Department as well as promoting networking between the different educational partners.

3.2 Teacher Salaries

Teachers are paid on a “Common Basic Scale”. This is an incremental scale – a teacher progresses to the next point on the scale on the basis of satisfactory service. In effect this means that all teachers receive one increment annually. In addition there are allowances for qualifications for other factors. The scale is 25 points and qualified teachers start at

point 2 or 3. Credit is given for part-time teaching experience or other relevant experience.

The scale consists of 25 points and qualified teachers start at point 2 or 3. Credit is given for part-time teaching experience or other relevant experience such as industry.

Merit pay is opposed by the unions because of the following:

- difficulty in measuring teaching quality;
- concerns about fairness of application of measurement; and
- divisiveness among staff.

How is teacher performance evaluated? If there are perceived difficulties these are identified in the first instance by the Principal and an improvement plan is prepared. Before any disciplinary action is taken there must be an independent evaluation by an Inspector of the Department of Education and Science. Before dismissal for inefficiency or incompetence there is an appeal process.

Allowances are paid for rural science teachers; teaching through Irish; island allowances; special allowances for teachers in Comprehensive schools; and teachers with 35 years service.

Promotion to “Posts of Responsibility” is available in four categories, namely:

1. Special Duties Teacher – a teacher within the particular school receives additional duties from an agreed list;
2. Assistant Principal – a teacher within a particular school receives additional duties from an agreed list;
3. Deputy Principal – this post is open for competition;
4. Principal – this post is open to competition.

The Special Duties Teacher as well as the Assistant Principal will receive additional allowances. These posts are advertised by way of closed competition within the particular school and these teachers must render services to these specific posts for 22 hours a week. The Deputy Principal and Principal posts are advertised openly. The salary for these posts depends on the number of teachers at the school. Seniority plays a role for promotion to these posts.

Teachers / Lecturers at the third level progress through 6 levels namely:

- Assistant Lecturer;
- Lecturer;
- Lecturer (Structures);
- Senior Lecturer 1;
- Senior Lecturer 2 – Head of Department;
- Senior Lecturer 3 – Head of School

An Assistant Lecturer will progress to the grade of Lecturer automatically after achieving the required qualification (Masters Degree or equivalent) and a “merit bar” test.

Promotion to the other grades is by way of recruitment by external competition. On appointment as a teacher or lecturer, the placement on the scale depends on experience – either teaching or other relevant experience.

Pay, in practice, is not related to teacher performance. However, a teacher can lose a salary increment as a result of a disciplinary sanction.

Student performance does not have any role in the salary of a teacher. Both the Department of Education and the unions resist this.

3.3 Quality Assurance

Quality learning outcomes are vital for the achievement of active citizenship, employment and social inclusion. In Ireland, there has been a growing recognition that quality in schools is best achieved when a range of measures work together to improve learning and teaching, and where everybody involved in the education system is focused on improvement. Schools themselves take some of these measures while other initiatives, such as curriculum development and support for teacher education, are organised by the Department or other agencies. External evaluation makes a further critical contribution, while system wide evaluations, sometimes undertaken in co-operation with other countries, provide valuable data and assist in policy development.

The role of the Department’s schools Inspectorate is outlined in the Education Act, 1998. The Inspectorate is closely involved with many of the initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and learning at first and second levels. Together with the Higher Education Authority (HEA), the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) and the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC), the Department has a role in quality assurance in further and third level education.

The Irish Education system strives towards continuous school and system improvement through the following:

- National and international reporting on outcomes;
- The State Examinations Commission;
- Quality of external evaluation;
- A continuum of teacher education;
- Curriculum development and review (NCCA);
- The Teaching Council;
- Leadership Development in schools;
- Support for schools through planning and curriculum; and
- Additional supports and services to pupils.

The Irish have developed a system of ensuring quality in schools through a centralised Inspectorate for both the primary as well as secondary level teaching. This Inspectorate is a division of the Department of Education and Science and is a statutory remit under the Education Act of 1998.

The statutory duties of the Inspectorate include:

- to introduce and implement programmes of inspection in schools;
- to promote compliance with regulations and legislation;
- to provide an advisory role for schools as well as the Department; and
- to contribute to policy development.

The Inspectorate consists of more than 150 inspectors under a Chief Inspector and is organised into two subdivisions, namely Regional and Policy Support

There is a focus on evaluation in order to provide a review of how well schools are meeting their objectives. The Inspectorate is seen as a service provider to schools in terms of providing:

- support for leadership and management;
- critical analysis and commentary on teaching and learning and on the operation of the school in its context;
- realistic recommendations for action planning;
- a strong message about things that must be done better (where necessary); and
- findings that affirm professionalism and foster development.

The evaluation models used are Whole-School-Evaluation (WSE) and thematic / focused evaluations. In primary schools there is also a focus on looking at the performance of teachers on probation whereas in the secondary school level, there is bigger focus on subject inspection.

In terms of WSE, there are 5 areas that are evaluated namely:

- The quality of the school management;
- The quality of school planning;
- The quality of curriculum provision;
- The quality of learning and teaching; and
- The quality of support for students.

The *modus operandi* when evaluating schools to ensure that quality teaching and learning take place is to look at a school's planning documentation, assessment records and the school's Information Form. Furthermore, there are various observations of the teaching, learning and the interactions taking place with the students. There is also a discussion with all school personnel.

All evaluation reports of schools are published on the web / internet so that there is a wider audience looking at how schools perform. The implication hereof, one would think,

is that schools strive to perform at the best of its ability because the evaluation findings it receives, not only have implications for the school itself, but also for services and agencies supporting schools.

Schools and systems are supported where areas for development are identified. There is currently a Literacy and Numeracy in Disadvantaged Schools Thematic Evaluation Project running involving 12 of the 100 most disadvantaged schools (in the urban areas). The purpose of this project is to report on the quality of the provision for literacy and numeracy, to identify the school variables that impact on literacy and numeracy development and to recommend strategies and policies that can contribute to the improvement of the children's literacy and numeracy achievements.

3.4 Further Education and Training

Vocational education takes place at various levels – in schools, dedicated VEC (vocational education curriculum), FE (further education or post-school) colleges; and through adult education services; in training centres operated by the National Training Agency and other training agencies in specific remit areas such as tourism, fisheries, agriculture; and finally through an apprenticeship system – through on and off job training, the latter in training centres and Institutes of Technology for later stages.

The Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) is the national awarding body and has a key role in guiding and monitoring quality assurance of learning programmes of the various service providers. The Council was established in order to determine National Standards for Awards; validate providers' programmes; validate access, transfer and progression routes; monitor the quality of programmes & assessment processes; and make, promote and recognise awards.

The Council interacts with and monitors the following training: government agencies; Dept. of Education & Training Centres; Adult Education; Workplace Training - private and public; Institutes of Technology; Special Schools and Community Centres; E-Learning and Distance Learning

The FETAC determines policies and procedures for service providers on : communication; equality; staff recruitment and development; access, transfer and progression; programme development, delivery and review; fair and consistent assessment of learners; recording learner achievement; protection for learners; sub-contracting/procuring programme delivery; and evaluation of programmes and services

The philosophy of the Institutes of Technology is outlined as follows:

- recognise and credentialize prior learning.
- under- and post graduate programmes with strong emphasis on the needs of the workplace and the individual.

- A research ethos that recognises the role it plays in the development of both society and the individual.
- Curricula that support the philosophy by making extensive use of cooperative education, work based research projects, problem based learning, etc.
- Seamless access, transfer and progression.
- Graduates who are skilled in the application of discipline knowledge, principles and concepts; reflective practitioners in the totality of their lives effective communicators; life-long learners; and culturally and socially aware.

Key aspects of Adult and Further Education and Training Policy include the following:

- to meet the needs of young early school leavers
- second-chance education options for those who left school without qualifications
- training options for unemployed people and other recipients of welfare benefits – for labour market entrants and re-entrants
- training and education options for those in employment;
- streamlined progression pathways – into HE or employment.

The Irish system is notable for the quality and relevance of what is on offer:

- Establishment in 2001 of National Qualifications Authority; Higher Education Awards Council (HETAC); and Further Education Awards Council (FETAC)
- NQF launched in 2003 with 10 levels, levels 1-6 for further education.
- Establishment of a National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education.

The Irish National Framework of Qualifications

It has been recognized that learning does not have to end at a specific age and that people need and want to continue learning for life. To support this, a new NFQ has been developed and has been operational since 2006. The framework creates new and different opportunities for many including:

- people considering taking up education or training opportunities;
- learners already in education or training;
- teachers, tutors, and trainers involved in delivering education or training;
- organizations providing education and training; and
- employers who need clarity as to what different qualifications mean.

Until 2001 there were different awarding bodies involved in certifying programmes of education and training. All of these bodies offered opportunities for learners to get qualifications – yet it was not always clear how one award or qualification related to

another. This made it more difficult for learners to get access to a particular programme, or to transfer from one programme to another as their learning progressed. The NFQ reduces these barriers for learners.

The Qualifications Act 1999 established three new bodies, namely National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, FETAC, and HETAC. The NQA is responsible for developing the NFQ. The Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) is the awarding body for all further education and training. The Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) makes awards for learning in a range of higher education and training institutions, including the Institutes of Technology.

There are a number of other awarding bodies which make awards within the new framework:

- The Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) and the Universities which provide programmes and are awarding bodies in their own right.
- The State Examinations Commission (Department of Education & Science) awards the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate.

The NFQ comprises 10 levels and contains an initial set of 15 award types. Each level is based on specified standards of knowledge, skill and competence. A key feature of the new awards is that they will be made on the basis of 'learning outcomes', i.e. what a learner knows and can do. This is achieved by assessing the learner's abilities in the chosen award and recognizing the level and range of those abilities.

Who benefits from the framework?

Learners who:

- follow a course and get a nationally recognized qualification
- undergo training in their workplace and receive recognition
- achieve an award and use it to progress further.

Providers of education and/or training courses who want:

- all learners to have their achievement recognized nationally;
- to offer quality assured courses leading to national awards
- to create opportunities for progression in education and training

Employers who want:

- to understand and compare different types of qualifications
- to facilitate their staff in upskilling and improving their qualifications.

Further education and training in Ireland offers more opportunities than ever before and FETAC has become a unifying force for the sector. Since its foundation in 2001 FETAC has made over 100 000 quality assured awards every year to learners at all ages and

stages of learning, opening doors to new or better jobs, further education or contributing to personal development.

With over 1 300 registered centres nationwide, FETAC gives people the opportunity to gain recognition for learning in education or training centres, in the community and in the work place. There are hundreds of FETAC awards available including everything from childcare to catering, fishing to floristry, and the craft apprenticeships. All FETAC awards are quality assured, nationally and internationally recognized and form part of the NFQ.

The NFQ is a system of ten levels which incorporates qualifications for all kinds of learning, wherever it is gained. The framework brings greater clarity to the Irish education and training system, making it possible for learners, employers and providers to understand and compare different types of qualifications – nationally and internationally.

3.5 Teacher Education

For post-primary schools, teachers are trained in universities. This training entails a primary degree in a specific subject plus a one year post-graduate program. Training of primary school teachers takes place in colleges of education affiliated to a university.

There are five colleges of education specialising in the training of first level (primary) school teachers.

There are two models for teacher education, namely:

- The Consecutive Model: A University degree (3-4 years) followed by a post-graduate Diploma in Education;
- The Concurrent Model: A four-year university degree.

The Colleges provides undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Education and the Humanities, including B.Ed, BA, MA, M Ed, Graduate Diploma in Education (Primary Teaching), Graduate Diploma in Special Educational needs, and continuing professional development courses for teachers.

The Graduate Diploma in Education (Primary Teaching) is an eighteen month full-time course enabling third level graduates to qualify as primary teachers. The Department of Education and Science makes the decision to run this course, in conjunction with the College, on a year-to-year basis. Persons who successfully complete this course may be registered by the Teaching Council as fully qualified for service in the country's primary schools

The three-year Education course aims to prepare students for their professional work as primary school teachers.

First year courses are orientated towards the earlier years and second year courses towards the later years of primary schooling. The final year is a more reflective one in which the previous work is reviewed, extended, deepened and consolidated. Each of the three years includes work in the foundation education disciplines of history, psychology, philosophy and sociology; the study of school, teaching and curriculum; and substantial periods of practical teaching in schools.

Working with teachers and children in schools is an integral part of the education course. Over three years students spend between seventeen weeks on teaching practice. In addition a number of courses involve work with children either in College or in schools.

From the beginning of their practical teaching students are encouraged to implement the child-centred primary curriculum. They are expected to evaluate and reflect on their teaching experience in school.

During all teaching practices students are supervised by College staff. Whilst in schools they teach under the guidance of the classroom teacher. Students have the choice of undertaking some of their teaching practices in all-Irish schools.

Entry requirements are the same for all teacher education programmes. Students to this profession must be in the top 15% of the Leaving Certificate (final examinations before finishing school as a learner) cohort to gain entry to the teacher education programme.

The role of the Teaching Council of Ireland is to review and accredit the programmes of teacher education (see section 3.7).

About 2 400 – 3 000 graduates apply for only 800 places on the Post-graduate Diploma in Education annually. Graduates need an honours degree. All students must complete 100 hours of teaching practice. Pedagogical studies form the basis of teacher education / training.

3.6 Teacher Development

An important focus of teacher education and development is the establishment of the In-Career Development Unit, now Teacher Education Section. In terms of infrastructure, there are 21 full-time and 9 part-time Education Centres for this purpose and a partnership approach is used in terms of its design and implementation.

In-Career Development focuses on support for curriculum change and strives towards a linkage between curriculum development, professional development support, curriculum implementation and evaluation. A range of Support Services were established in terms of specifically curriculum and programmes. The staff in these Support Services are seconded teachers. The activities run at the In-Career Development Centres are mainly

organised during school (contact) time, which unfortunately causes some disruption to schools.

There is however a new model in the process of being developed which will amalgamate the existing services. There is also a greater focus on meeting identified school needs, linking school self-review, school development planning, outcomes of evaluation and profound “bottom-up” development.

Much is done for the development of teaching as a profession through the role of the Teaching Council and codes of professional practice, standards and induction. The professional development of teachers are seen and implemented as a right as well as a personal responsibility. Comprehensive policies are in place to address and enhance teacher quality.

3.7 Teaching Council

The Teaching Council Act, 2001 promotes teaching as a profession through:

- promoting the professional development of teachers;
- maintaining and improving the quality of teaching;
- providing for the establishment of standards, policies, and procedures for the education and training of teachers and other matters relating to teachers and the teaching profession;
- providing for the registration and regulation of teachers; and
- enhancing professional standards and competence.

The TC promotes teaching as a profession through, inter alia, newsletters, information booklets, websites, promotional events (e.g. college career fairs, conferences, exhibitions), developing effective relationships with guidance counselors and careers officers, through corporate events, and media relations.

Section 7 (2) (b) of the Act requires the TC to establish, publish, review and maintain codes of professional conduct for teachers which shall include standards of teaching, knowledge, skill and competence.

The content of the codes of professional conduct include the following:

- affirming statements – based on the reality of teachers’ work;
- values
- code of professional practice, which explores the complexity of teaching; and
- a code of professional conduct – upholding standards of professional behaviour.

Section 7 (2) (c) of the Act calls for the establishment and maintenance of a register for teachers. The Register provides for the recognition of qualifications; registration and entry on a data base; registration of certificates; and annual renewal of registration.

The TC is also required to conduct or commission research on matters relevant to the objects of the Council and, as it considers appropriate to publish in such form and manner as the Council thinks fit the findings arising out of such research.

The establishment of the Register of Teachers marked the beginning of a new era for the Council and for the teaching profession. The benefits of registration include the following:

- protection of professional standards of teaching;
- promoting best practice in continuing professional development;
- promoting and supporting research related to educational matters;
- enhancing the teaching profession's reputation and status;
- influencing national policy;
- acting as a professional network; and
- representing the teaching profession on education matters.

References

1. Study tour reports by S Fakir and J P Joubert
2. Documents collected by study tour participants

Appendix: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers – Findings from the Country Background Report for Ireland, OECD, April 2003.

Ireland's Country Background Report on 'Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers' comes against a background of twelve years of unprecedented appraisal, analysis and formulation of educational policy. All aspects of the education system have been reviewed from "the cradle to the grave", within a lifelong learning paradigm. In 1991, the government identified education as a strategic force for the social, economic and cultural development of the state. Since then, a formal review of the system was conducted by the OECD, the issued two green papers and three white papers. The approach taken was a highly consultative one with all the stakeholders, the highlights of which were a National Convention on Education (1993), a National Consultative Forum on Adult Education (1996) and a National Forum on Early Childhood Education (1998). Outcomes of the process included curricular reforms of all stages of the school system, as well as a raft of major educational legislation including the Universities Act (1997), the Education Act (1998), the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), the National Qualification Authority Act (2001), the Teaching Council Act (2001). The period was also one during which Ireland experienced remarkable economic growth, well ahead of the OECD average. In the view of both international and national commentators, the quality of Ireland's education system has been a key causal factor in the socio-economic change involved.

To help sustain Ireland's position within the emerging knowledge society, a major agenda of educational change and reform has now been put in place. It is realized that the teaching force is a crucial agent for the implementation of this agenda. Traditionally, the teaching career in Ireland has enjoyed high social status and regard. In all policy documents of the nineties, the government paid generous tribute to the work of teachers, affirmed the significance of their roles and proposed a proactive series of measures in support of the teaching career. Teachers retain the confidence of the public, entry to teacher education is still highly competitive from well-qualified candidates, teacher education, both pre-service and in-service, is well regarded. Teaching is an all graduate career, with a common salary scale, and it has become more diversified in recent years. Teachers are highly unionized in Ireland, with the teacher unions projecting both a concern for professional issues as well as a traditional union approach. They have been partners in a sequence of national partnership agreements since 1987, relating to economic and social planning.

While many positive features exist, there is also a realization that it is timely to establish a more comprehensive policy approach to teacher education and to the teaching career so that they can fulfill the challenging roles which current policy and social change present. Major reviews of primary and post-primary teacher education were commissioned by the Department of Education and Science and have been presented to it in the recent past. The recommendations of these reports arise from analysis of the interface between the current extensive education reform agenda and the preparedness of the teaching profession to meet it. It is expected that these reports will pave the way for policy

initiatives in the period ahead. The first major research study on gender attitudes to the teaching profession was completed in July 2002, and it recommends a comprehensive range of policy responses. Another major research study on the provision of in-career education and training of teachers was completed in 2001, and it recommends the development of a more comprehensive strategic policy on the topic, with a stronger partnership dimension. A landmark development of the recent past was the passing of legislation in 2001 to establish a Teaching Council, giving wide-ranging responsibilities to the teaching profession on entry standards, training courses, in-service education, research and professional conduct. Thus, the elements for a developmental, rather than a serious remediation, policy drive on the teaching career are in place. problems and difficulties do exist, and the great value of this OECD research project is the stimulation it provides to diagnose and reflect on these from a policy perspective, enriched by some best practice procedures from international experience.

Ireland experiences no problems at present in attracting high level recruits to the teaching profession. However, recruitment is not without its problems. Due to changing employment patterns and conditions of work, as well as a recent increase in the primary school population, Ireland has a shortage of about 1 000 qualified primary teachers. Increases in recruitment to teacher education courses have been instituted. The current shortages may put a brake on the recommendations of a review body to extend the primary teacher education course to four years. There is also a great imbalance in the nature of recruitment between men and women candidates, with about a nine to one ratio in favour of women. Research indicates that complex causes are involved here, but it would seem that the image of primary teaching is one of involving “women’s work”. In the past, no special initiatives were undertaken, or perhaps needed, to promote the image of primary teaching, but this now requires attention. The very long incremental scale of 25 years is also regarded by some commentators as inimical to the image, particularly for males. The recent review body on primary teacher education has also urged the re-introduction of interviews as supplemental to academic achievement, for selection into teaching.

In an increasingly multi-cultural society, another problem is the lack of recruitment of trainee teachers from minority groups and immigrant groups. It has been recommended by a recent national forum on the disadvantaged that positive discrimination measures should be applied as one way of addressing the problem. While there has been an increase in mature student entry to teacher education, it is recognized that the teaching profession could be enriched by a greater influx from personnel with varied work experience. A major disincentive for such personnel at present, however, is they get no credit for such work experience, and they have to begin at the bottom of the teacher salary scale. The consultative processes, held as part of this project, and research indicates that there are shortages in a number of subject areas in post-primary schools. It is desirable that more attention be paid to this issue. The value of introducing some subject quotas on recruitment to post-primary teacher education should be explored.

There have been no expressions of public dissatisfaction or controversy with regard to existing processes of educating, developing and certifying teachers, and teacher educators

have been involved in course development and reform. Yet, it is recognized that it is desirable, periodically, to analyse, in a more comprehensive way, what is being done with a view to restructuring and modernizing in line with evolving needs and new thinking and research. Accordingly, reviews by ministerially-appointed committees on both primary and post-primary teacher education have been presented over the last two years to the Minister. While the reviews endorse both the concurrent and consecutive models which exist, they each make a series of recommendations which should guide policymakers in the years ahead. Among key priorities for policy development in educating, developing and certifying teachers are the extension of the pre-service teacher education courses, the restructuring of some course content to give a greater sense of cross curricular integration, foster a reflective practitioner approach, and provide closer links with school personnel on teaching practice.

While there has been a great expansion in the provision and variety of in-service teacher education since the early nineties, the recent reviews also urge improvements in this area, regarding the 3I's of initial teacher education, induction and in-service education as interconnected, and as vital supports for the teaching career in an era of lifelong learning. Recommendations include the establishment of a national induction system with appropriate financing for timetable provision and the support of school mentors, a more strategic policy agency which would more overtly develop a coherent partnership between all relevant agencies for INSET and more direct financial support or recognition for teachers undergoing certificated in-service courses. It is also recommended that more flexible support structures should be put in place whereby other career personnel might be attracted to teaching. Other analyses of in-service teacher education have also been conducted in 2000-01, which urge a more strategic, comprehensive, connected policy approach. These studies and the establishment of the Teaching Council early in 2004 should prove of great value in bringing about improvements to existing practice. Action on these issues would greatly enhance the teaching profession's preparedness for the challenges which lie ahead, and position it well to build for the future on the solid foundations which exist. There would be strong support among stakeholders for such policy options. Many of the issues involved have been widely discussed, and the initiatives would seem to be timely and appropriate. The main difficulty would appear to be the provision of the necessary financial resources to bring them about, rather than any sectoral opposition. There will be need to prioritize lines of action within an implementation plan, over a time period, for the teaching career.

Teachers are not assigned by a central agency to schools. The Department of Education and Science determines the number of teachers a school can employ, linked to teacher pupil ratios. However, it is the school management board or the vocational education committee, as the appointing body which makes the arrangements for appointment, and is the employer of teachers. Thus, a great deal of freedom exists for teachers and school managements regarding appointment. Despite the pattern of employment at local level by individual school managements, to date, there has not been a significant difficulty in securing teachers for schools throughout the country, whether urban or rural. The teachers' union indicates that in recent years some schools have difficulty recruiting qualified teachers, probably linked to the current shortage of such teachers. It is also

acknowledged that some schools in disadvantaged areas experience high turnover of staff. Consideration is being given for preferential recruitment of trainee teachers from disadvantaged contexts.

Both primary and post-primary teachers are required to serve a probationary year. The inspectorate evaluates the probationary experience at primary level, but at post-primary level it is more informal, with the school principal certifying the satisfactory completion of probationary service. If, following probation, a teacher secures a permanent position, then tenure follows. In the event of school amalgamation or declines in pupil population, a panel scheme exists for primary teachers, and a redeployment scheme for teachers in voluntary secondary schools which secures employment for teachers surplus to requirements, under certain conditions. Mobility of teachers within the school system is limited, partly influenced by the significance of retaining seniority in a particular school for promotion purposes. Neither does mobility exist for teachers between primary and post-primary schools.

Among areas for policy concern in the area of teacher employment are the processes for evaluation of probation at post-primary level, the difficulties for newly-qualified post-primary teachers in obtaining permanent teaching positions, up-skilling of teachers to meet the needs of pupils, better training for extra support staff introduced into the system. The issue of a satisfactory redeployment scheme for all post-primary teachers is likely to become more urgent in the light of the projected significant decline of post-primary pupil numbers.

The retention of effective teachers in schools needs to be a key policy concern in any country. International research indicates that teacher retention can be affected by an interconnected range of factors, over a career span. Ireland does not appear to have a serious problem in retaining effective teachers. Some of the factors which are operative in countries experiencing high teacher attrition rates seem to be less evident in Ireland. When a range of relevant issues such as image and profile of the job, public confidence in and affirmation of teachers' work, the quality of pre-service teacher education, the opportunities for continuing professional development, the opportunities for partnership and input to policy, the conditions of work, opportunities for diversification, worker-friendly leave arrangements, modes of teacher appointment, security of tenure, support in times of difficulty, general salary scales, scope for promotion and appraisal, they reflect a mainly positive framework regarding the teaching career. Of course, there are difficulties and problems among which are teachers' views that salaries are inadequate, the lack of teacher induction systems, the unsatisfactory condition of some school buildings, inadequate investment in teaching resources and equipment, the need to implement recommended reforms in teacher education, high teacher pupil ratios, the stress levels in some teaching contexts, the need for better management of career breaks and secondments. A particular problem, emerging from the policy of pupil integration, is the training of classroom teachers, as well as learning support assistants for the needs of pupils with disabilities.

It was stated above that Ireland does not appear to have a problem in retaining effective teachers, but it is also the case that Ireland does not know enough about the issue. In recent years, efforts have been made to build up a data base on teachers, but it is still inadequate, leaving many gaps in our knowledge of different features of teacher trends and attitudes. More precise data is needed on the qualifications of teachers, on the fit between their qualifications and their teaching duties, on the age range patterns, on the retention patterns in teaching, on the pool of former teachers, on the attitude of student teachers, on the attitudes of former teachers, on male perspectives on the teaching profession, on the needs of teachers at different stages of the teaching career, on teacher attitudes to varying forms of teacher in-service education, on the attitudes of teachers to engaging in formal teacher induction, on the views of teachers on qualification allowances, on the attitudes of teacher unions to incentives for teacher retention in difficult teaching contexts, on the views of school management groups regarding aspects of the deployment of teachers, on exploring ways to improve teacher deployment arrangements within a changing demographic scenario.

The issues relating to teacher retention are multi-faceted and impinge on almost aspects of policy on teaching career. Teachers in the era ahead will be operating in fast-changing circumstances. The future configuration of schooling is uncertain. One thing which is certain is that quality in the teaching force will be of pivotal importance. It is also clear that high quality statistical and attitudinal on the teaching profession will be essential for enlightened policy on the teaching profession in the years ahead. In Ireland, there is scope for improvement in these regards. As well as policy measures aimed at ensuring the retention of effective teachers in schools, their effectiveness also needs to be supported and sustained if teachers are to sustain a high quality, vibrant and effective school system throughout their teaching careers.