

IMPROVING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

COUNTRY BACKGROUND REPORT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

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¹ The terms ‘headteacher’ and ‘principal’ are used interchangeably throughout the Report. Technically the correct term as embodied in the Terms and Conditions of Service of 1987 is ‘principal’. The standards against which ‘principals’ operate are described as the ‘National Standards for Headteachers’, Northern Ireland Edition.

1. NATIONAL CONTEXT (Northern Ireland)

1.1 Introduction

By definition Northern Ireland is an integral part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The history of Northern Ireland during the past four decades has created new and profound challenges for its government, whether through direct rule or devolution, as well as exacerbating many of those problems that existed prior to this period of civil unrest.

1.1.1 In the Belfast Agreement (1998), in order to create effective government of Northern Ireland, it was agreed that:

“The Executive Committee will seek to agree each year, and review as necessary, a programme incorporating an agreed budget linked to policies and programmes, subject to approval by the Assembly, after scrutiny in Assembly Committee, on a cross-community basis.”

1.1.2 After widespread discussion, the Northern Ireland assembly endorsed, on 6 March 2001, a Programme, which covered the years from 2001 to 2005. It provided a strategic overview of the Northern Ireland Executive’s work and demonstrated how policies and programmes, delivered by different departments and agencies, could be best combined to achieve the Executive’s agreed priorities. The Programme and the Budget were closely linked: with the Programme’s priorities driving the Executive’s decisions on the allocation of financial resources. The Programme for Government was reviewed and updated annually.

1.1.3 The Executive’s vision of a peaceful, cohesive, inclusive, prosperous, stable and fair society, was founded on the *“achievement of reconciliation, tolerance, and mutual trust, and the protection and vindication of the human rights of all.”*

1.1.4 The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland suspended the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Executive with effect from midnight on 14 October, 2002. Since then the Secretary of State, assisted by his team of Northern Ireland Office Ministers, has assumed responsibility for the direction and control of the Northern Ireland Departments.

1.1.5 The system of education has become increasingly differentiated from that of England and Wales, or of Scotland. The Department of Education for Northern Ireland is responsible for the central administration of all aspects of education and services related to schooling in Northern Ireland. Its primary statutory duty is to promote the education of the people of Northern Ireland and to ensure the effective implementation of education policy.

1.2 The Current Economic and Social Climate

1.2.1 At the time of the last census (2001) there were 1.7 million people living in Northern Ireland [NI]. The population is relatively young [with 22% of the population aged under 15, compared to 19% in GB and 22% in the Republic of Ireland [ROI]. In 2005 the NI birth rate at 12.9 births per 1,000 population is the highest in the UK [England 12.2 per 1,000, Scotland 10.7 per 1,000 and Wales 11.0 per 1,000, while the ROI level is 14.8 per 1,000]. The birth rate is falling however and the population level is expected to peak at 1.8 million in the late 2020s. In the past, NI’s fast growing population has been considered a constraint upon economic growth because of the pressures that this labour supply placed on the local labour market resulting in higher unemployment rates and greater inactivity rates. This influence is likely to change in the coming years. The population is expected to continue rising, until at least 2026, resulting in a population younger than most other industrial countries

1.3 The Northern Ireland Economy

1.3.1 While the local economy had grown steadily since the early 1990s, there has been only marginal convergence with the UK average. The last decade has seen a significant expansion of employment, although much of this is in lower skilled service sectors. In common with many other parts of the UK, there are significant weaknesses arising from the decline of a high value-added manufacturing sector and the relatively low level of growth in new tradable services. The result of these weaknesses is that there is a substantial gap in productivity by comparison with the UK average. The public sector is a more dominant feature of the economy than elsewhere in the UK (32 per cent of the NI workforce is employed in the public sector compared to the UK average of 22 per cent). This has been very important in providing stability during difficult times in the past, largely by insulating the local economy from the full rigours of global economic swings. The Government needs to ensure that its interventions in the local economy help to promote wealth creation and employment in sustainable private sector activity.

1.3.2 Fundamental to economic development is action in relation to skills for young people and those already of working age. The change programme initiated following the Review of Post-Primary Education is designed to address the weaknesses in the education system that result from the present post-primary arrangements and in particular academic selection at age 11 in schools. There is a need for improved arrangements to address, in particular, the education and training curriculum for 14-19 year olds, and to tackle issues of the low esteem given to vocational provision and of under-achievement and the consequences for social exclusion.

1.3.3 The key aims and objectives in supporting economic growth are:

- to strengthen the skills base in the Northern Ireland workforce, seeking to address the major problems of low levels of qualifications and of economic inactivity;
- to promote innovation/ research and development;
- to develop greater entrepreneurship; and
- to improve infrastructure

1.4 Society and Community

1.4.1 The community divisions and tensions at the heart of the political difficulties in Northern Ireland have very important long-term consequences for communities, social attitudes, quality of life and prospects for the future. Many aspects of social division will remain intractable as long as the political impasse remains. However, in the foreseeable future the Government's social policies need to provide a strategic framework to address at least some of the symptoms of the difficulties as well as attempting to address some of the root causes. In this context, the framework of the Government's approach to the broad themes of social exclusion, poverty and welfare as applied to the rest of the UK have some particular features in the regional context. As in other UK regions, addressing child poverty is a key issue. The benefit system is operated on a parity basis, and while Northern Ireland no longer has the highest levels of unemployment in the UK, it has a very significant level of those economically inactive and entitled to incapacity benefit. While there have been many examples of progress in recent years, there are particular challenges in applying these policies in a context where it is necessary to contribute to the rebuilding of communities that have been ravaged by decades of civil unrest.

1.4.2 Many of the features of urban and rural multiple deprivation are not dissimilar to problem areas elsewhere in the UK, but the features of sectarianism, racism and paramilitary influence give rise to some distinct and very difficult issues. The total population affected by deprivation throughout Northern Ireland is approximately 289,000 – an average of one person in 6. The *Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy* launched in 2003 provides a vehicle to tackle a range of these issues in the 32 most deprived areas of Northern Ireland. The publication in 2005 of *'A Shared Future'* is a key step in setting out the Government's aim to

establish over time a shared society based on partnership, equality and mutual respect. Division in Northern Ireland is costly in terms of both social and public resources. *'A Shared Future'* will provide the framework for addressing the human and economic cost of division and for shaping public policy, practices and institutions to enable trust and good relations to grow. In the realm of education, A Shared future calls for:

- promoting sharing in all levels of education and encouraging integrated education – in its widest sense;
- developing opportunities for shared and inter-cultural education at all levels;
- ensuring that schools through their policies, structure and curricula consciously prepare pupils for life in a diverse and inter-cultural world; and
- encouraging understanding of the complexity of our history.

1.4.3 The established policies and commitments to targeting social need and promoting equality of opportunity permeate all aspects of social and economic policy. There is a central principle of fair treatment – but against a deep-seated background of distrust, it is vital that the impact of policies and interventions on key sectors of society are considered and are seen to have been considered. It is also vital that the impacts of social and economic policy are such that they improve the lives and livelihoods of those who are in poverty or most at risk of poverty and social exclusion. This involves focusing effort and resources on the most vulnerable groups in society including, for example, people with disabilities, children living in poverty and lone parents. It means removing the barriers they face to fully participating in the social and economic life of the community. This requires coordinated action in areas such as employment, health and education.

1.5 Education as a Government Priority for Northern Ireland

In PISA 2003 (a major international study of 16 year-olds) only three OECD countries did significantly better than NI in reading, six did significantly better than NI in mathematics, and two did significantly better than NI in science.

In 2004/05, 61% of pupils in the final year of compulsory education achieved 5+ GCSEs A*-C or equivalent.

In 2004/05, 62% of pupils in the final year of compulsory education achieved GCSE A*-C in English, and 58% achieved GCSE A*-C in maths.

A summary of the achievements of pupils at each school in public examinations is available on the Department of Education's website.

1.5.1 In the ranking of government priorities, Education is second only to Health Education Reform is focused on the introduction of a revised modern curriculum and ensuring that all school pupils can achieve their full potential through access to the Entitlement Framework and the ending of academic selection. There are very substantial cost pressures on the service; most notably from pay pressures and the need for improved special education provision. As in the Health Service there is a major restructuring proposed for education administration, to ensure significant improvements in the effectiveness and efficiency of the system through the Review of Public Administration. The relative importance of Education within government priorities is shown in Table 1.

Table 1**CURRENT EXPENDITURE**

	Outturn	Plans			
	2004-05 £m	2005-06 £m	2006-07 £m %	2007-08 £m %	
Agriculture and Rural Development	230.6	255.7	233.3 -8.8	229.3 -1.7	
Culture, Arts and Leisure	85.7	99.5	102.7 3.3	104.9 2.1	
Education	1,481.4	1,566.8	1,632.8 4.2	1,695.7 3.0	
Employment and Learning	617.2	646.4	687.4 6.3	715.5 4.1	
Enterprise, Trade and Investment	204.5	199.9	199.8 -0.1	219.8 10.0	
Finance and Personnel	164.4	205.9	211.7 2.8	189.1 -10.7	
Health, Social Services and Public Safety	3,105.4	3,340.3	3,591.9 7.5	3,820.3 6.4	
Environment	123.7	133.3	126.6 -5.1	131.8 4.1	
Regional Development	335.2	375.5	382.3 1.8	435.2 13.8	
Social Development	454.7	510.2	516.8 1.3	522.7 1.1	
Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister	58.9	70.8	74.8 5.7	73.9 -1.3	
Northern Ireland Assembly	32.0	47.6	47.6 -	47.6 -	
Other Departments	11.7	17.4	19.0 2.2	19.2 1.1	
Total Planned Spend	6,905.4	7,469.3	7,826.7 4.8	8,205.0 4.8	

Note: In relation to the above expenditure figures for Education, details on the number of pupils attending educational establishments in Northern Ireland are set out in paragraph 2.5.

1.6 Priorities within Education and Training

1.6.1 Investing in Education and Skills

Education and training at all levels have a central role in the administration's programme, not only for their social impact, but also as major engines of the economy. They are crucial to the policy of targeting of social need [TSN], with its particular focus on increasing employability and tackling unemployment. The basic right to education helps to create new opportunities for the individual and promotes personal and community development.

1.6.2 Raising standards

The education system faces a series of complex challenges. Many of our young people achieve at the highest level, comparing favourably with other developed nations. However, too many young people, primarily from disadvantaged backgrounds, leave school with low or inadequate qualifications. Many pupils find the curriculum uninteresting, leading to disengagement and underachievement. Functional literacy and numeracy are essential for any economy, but one in five of the working age population of Northern Ireland have problems with these skills. The challenge is to continue to raise overall educational standards while ensuring that this gap in achievement is reduced.

1.6.3 Schools' Estate

The current schools' estate (2005-2006) has over 53,000 surplus places and the number is set to rise to over 80,000 during the next 10 years if action is not taken. This would threaten the viability of many existing schools. In addition, many schools are in poor condition, with facilities unsuited to the needs of a modern education system. The impact of demographic decline and the poor condition of many existing school buildings is compounded by the high number of different school types in Northern Ireland. This range of choice in schooling is also reflected in the complex administration arrangements for education and comes at a high price. The challenge is to provide a fit for purpose schools' estate, appropriately sized and located and providing modern facilities.

On 4 December 2006, Sir George Bain and his team published the Independent Strategic Review of Education. Their recommendations lay the foundation for a radical new future for Northern Ireland's education system, based on sharing and learning together, with quality education at its heart. One of the central recommendations of the Review is that the education system should move quickly to a system of area based planning, to address the problems of over-provision and lack of co-ordination created by the current system. The Review explained clearly that Northern Ireland has too many schools and that the guiding principle in any school rationalisation should be the quality of education provided by the school. Government has accepted all of the recommendations set out in the Report which can be accessed on the Department of Education's website.

1.6.4 Early Years Provision

Early Years are vital years for children and their parents in providing appropriate opportunities for personal, social and physical development and enabling children to start school as confident young learners. In Northern Ireland, Early Years services include all play, care and learning experiences for children (aged 0-4) provided in either Voluntary, Community, Statutory or Home based settings, under a range of programmes. The policy responsibility for all Early Years services has only recently (from November 2006) been transferred under one lead Department (up to then the policy responsibility for Early Years was with the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety, with the Pre-school Expansion Programme resting with the Department of Education). With the Department of Education now leading this policy area they will develop a new Early Years Strategy which will bring Sure Start, pre-school and the home child care agendas together in a cohesive way to support the integration of service delivery.

This move along with the new arrangements arising from the Review of Public Administration and the appointment of a Director of Children's Services will provide more coordinated services in this area.

1.6.5 Special Educational Needs and Inclusion

There is government recognition that it must ensure that young people who require particular help receive the support they need and that it must provide appropriate forms of education for those with special educational needs. The number of children with statements of Special Educational Need continues to grow year on year (with an increase of over a third over the period 2000-2005). Current arrangements, including the nature of support and the way in which it is provided, are currently being reviewed.

1.6.6 The World of Work

While Northern Ireland has been enjoying a period of economic growth, this must be balanced against economic activity rates among the lowest in the UK, relatively low skill levels in the workforce, and the need to close the productivity gap with the rest of the UK. The education service will continue to play a key role in addressing this situation, including focusing on skills for work in the local and global economy, enterprise and entrepreneurship. There is a need to produce the large number of well educated and highly skilled people the economy is going to need – a workforce able to compete with the best in the world. This will help to ensure that the education sector contributes to the achievement of the Economic Vision for Northern Ireland, set out by the Government and its main economic partner bodies: i.e.

'Northern Ireland as a high value-added, highly skilled, innovative and enterprising economy which enables us to compete globally leading to greater wealth-creation and better opportunities for all'.

The challenge is to provide young people with the knowledge and skills they need to live, work and learn in a global society and who as a result develop to their full potential.

1.7 Major Education Reforms

To address these challenges the education sector is taking forward a very significant programme of reforms.

1.7.1 Curriculum Reform

The Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) has recently undertaken a major review of the curriculum. The revised arrangements will provide for a more skills based curriculum and will include specific provision for issues such as Personal Development (including Health Education) Citizenship, Employability and Information and Communications Technology. The new curriculum will be slimmer in content, whilst still ensuring that the educational fundamentals are well covered. It will place greater emphasis on key skills and on Learning for Life and Work. With reduced prescription of content, there will be greater flexibility for schools to tailor their curriculum to meet the needs of their pupils. The necessary legislation to implement the revised curriculum will be in place by September 2006 and the new curriculum will be phased in from September 2007 to allow schools adequate time to plan for and implement the changes effectively.

1.7.2 New Post-Primary Arrangements (e2s Entitled to Succeed)

New post-primary arrangements are being introduced to give pupils access to a wider range of courses and subjects that will meet their varying needs and abilities and enable them to reach their full potential.

1.7.3 Transfer Arrangements

The transfer tests will be held for the last time in autumn 2008 for pupils transferring to post-primary schools in September 2009. However, the Northern Ireland (St Andrews Agreement) Act 2006 has amended the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 to provide that a restored Assembly will have the opportunity to vote on the issue of academic selection if devolution is restored by 28 March 2007. It will be a matter for a restored Assembly to decide the form of transfer, including whether the arrangements will be selective or non-selective. If the Assembly is not restored by 28 March 2007, academic selection will end and future transfer arrangements will be based on informed parental and pupil choice.

1.7.4 Pupil Profile

The Pupil Profile will provide a holistic picture of a child's progress, aptitudes and interests throughout their education. It has been piloted in a number of schools over the past two years. The Pupil Profile will be implemented for Year 5 pupils in 2007/08 and subsequently phased in for other year groups.

1.7.5 Specialist Schools

On 14 March 2006, the Minister of Education announced Northern Ireland's first 12 specialist schools. Specialist schools will identify and build on their particular curricular strengths and, by sharing good practice, secure whole-school development and contribute to the development of good leadership in schools. Requiring schools to take forward a community dimension, i.e. with other schools, Further Education Colleges, business, and the wider community, will help them move from the current environment, characterised by competition, to one of co-operation and collaboration.

1.7.6 Entitlement Framework

The Curriculum Entitlement Framework will guarantee all pupils greater choice and flexibility by providing them with access to a wide range of learning opportunities suited to their needs, aptitudes and interests, irrespective of where they live or the school they attend. Schools will have to offer pupils access to a minimum of 24 courses at Key Stage 4 and 27 at post-16, and at least one third of these courses should be general and at least one third applied. Individual pupils will decide upon the number and blend of courses they will follow. Ensuring access for all to the entitlement framework will involve greater cooperation and collaboration between schools and with the Further Education (FE) sector. Collaboration arrangements will be developed at a local level to meet local needs, will be flexible and may change over time. Schools will retain their autonomy.

1.8 Priority Funding Packages

Three new funding packages in the Draft Priorities and Budget, 2006-2008 will be delivered in an integrated way through joined up working between government departments. The overall objective of the *Children and Young Peoples Funding Package* is to reduce underachievement and improve the life chances of children and young people by enhancing their educational development and fostering their

health, well-being and social inclusion through the integrated delivery of the support and services necessary to ensure that every child has the best start in life. The funding was announced under three separate announcements: Voluntary and Community Sector projects totalling £14.6 million over 2 years; £26 million over 2 years made available as a result of the Chancellor's Budget; and £61.7 million over 2 years divided into 6 themes, one theme of which is "extended schools" where the aim is to widen the role of schools and allow them to become true centres of their community. Priority is being given to schools with highest incidence of disadvantage and, in line with government policy the resources have been delegated to schools which means that each school can make its own assessment of priorities in line with what their communities and pupils need. The resources are being used to support implementation of the Ten Year Children Strategy through breakfast clubs, after school provision and improved inter-agency working. The package will also support additional counselling, speech and language therapy and educational psychology for schools.

1.9 Early Years

(See also 1.6.4) The transfer of Early Years policy lead to the Department of Education signals Government's intention to provide an integrated approach to policy and service delivery for children. A more joined-up delivery of early years services should provide both better outcomes for children and parents and better value for the public purse. The aim of the Early Years Strategy will be to ensure a solid framework is in place for early childhood to prepare children for life at school (whilst not formalising education for very young children).

1.10 ICT

There has been significant investment in the ICT infrastructure through the Classroom 2000 (C2k) programme ensuring that NI schools, covering primary, post-primary and special schools will have advanced facilities – including Broadband and internet access – that match any part of the UK. The Empowering Schools Strategy developed in partnership by the education sector sets out a vision for transforming learning, teaching and leadership through education and technology change in the coming years. The new curriculum will ensure that ICT is embedded in all subjects as an integral element of teaching, learning and assessment, thereby ensuring that young people are well prepared for life and work in the information economy of the 21st Century.

1.11 Special Educational Needs and Inclusion

The new Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (SENDO), came into effect in Northern Ireland from September 2005. The order strengthens the right of children with SEN to be educated in mainstream schools where their parents wish it and the interests of other children can be protected. Special schools will continue to play a vital role in supporting pupils with significant and complex needs. The Department of Education commenced a review of Special Education and Inclusion in April 2006. The aim of the review is to bring forward comprehensive and cost effective recommendations having particular regard to continuity and quality of provision; equality of access; consistency of assessment and provision; delivery and funding and accountability mechanisms; value for money; affordability; and monitoring arrangements. It is hoped to complete the review by late 2006 for implementation by 2007, subject to the legislative timetable.

1.12 Teacher Education Review

The Department of Education (DE) and the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) are jointly undertaking a major review of teacher education, and the provision necessary to ensure that the profession is best placed to cope with the changes facing the education sector in the coming years. The Review covers all aspects of teacher education throughout a teacher's career, from the intake of new student teachers and the structure and content of their courses, through their induction and early professional development to the continuing professional development they will need to be able to meet the challenges of educational change and further their professional skills. It seeks to develop clearly defined and coherent career paths for;

- those who wish to devote their professional life to classroom teaching, including those who wish to engage in leadership and management training for curriculum leaders and staff managers; and,
- school principals and aspiring principals.

1.13 Education and Skills Authority

A new Education and Skills Authority will be established to focus on the operational delivery of educational services. It will also be involved in the strategic planning of the schools' estate and ensuring delivery of the 14 to 19 curriculum. The Department of Education will continue to be responsible for education policy and strategy. Some of the operational functions currently performed by the Department of Education will transfer to the new Authority. The Authority will bring together all the direct support functions currently undertaken by the Education and Library Boards, CCEA and the Regional Training Unit. It will also have responsibility for front-line and related functions currently undertaken by the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education and Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta. The Authority will be the sole employing authority for teachers and support staff which will result in greater coherence and consistency. A new Education Advisory Forum will be established which will provide a direct link between education sectors and the Department. A Director of Children's Services will also be appointed to co-ordinate the Authority's responsibilities for children.

1.14 Targets and outcomes for the Education System

These are:-

1.14.1 To promote improvement in educational attainment so that:

- By 2008, 80 per cent of primary pupils achieve level 4 or above in Key Stage 2 in English and 83 per cent in Maths (compared to 76% and 78% Maths in 2002-03);
- By 2008, 63 per cent of year 12 pupils obtain 5 or more GCSEs (or equivalent) at grades A* to C (compared to 59% in 2002-03); and
- By 2008, 60 per cent of year 14 pupils achieve 3+ A levels at grades A to C (or equivalent) (compared to 56% in 2002-03).

1.14.2 To reduce differentials in educational attainment so that:

- By 2008, 70 per cent of pupils in the most disadvantaged primary schools, achieve level 4 or above in Key Stage 2 in English and in Maths. (compared to 63% in English and 67% in Maths in 2002-03)
- By 2008, 83 per cent of year 12 pupils in secondary schools obtain 5 or more GCSEs at grades A* to G (or equivalent) compared to 80% in 2002-03.
- By 2008, 94 per cent of year 12 pupils gaining GCSEs at A* to G (or equivalent) in the most disadvantaged post-primary schools compared to 89% in 2002-03.

1.15 Efficiency

1.15.1 The Department of Education has identified a number of key areas to achieve the efficiencies target of £120 million by 2007-08, of which £63.6 million will release resources for investment in front-line services. Efficiencies already identified and implemented since 2004, include: measures to improve procurement arrangements; better manage teacher sickness absence; target initiatives more effectively; constrain administration costs; reduce transport costs; and improve the management of infrastructure budgets. The improved use of resources has been promoted through the development of shared services. Funding has been made available to the Education and Library Boards for this purpose and to assist measures to re-shape the schools' estate in light of changing demographic patterns and educational need.

1.15.2 The nature of the school system in Northern Ireland leads to resources being thinly spread and the geographical distribution of population, combined with the community divisions, means that there is a much larger proportion of small schools than in the rest of the UK. With falling school rolls (there are over 50,000 empty places), it is necessary to consider rationalisation of provision, including an examination of 'parallel schooling' structures, which add to the costs of educational provision.

The Bain Report summarises the problem thus: *‘The diversity of school type, the selective system of education, the existence of single sex schools, and the substantially rural nature of Northern Ireland largely explain both the relatively large number of schools that exist and the sizeable proportion of small schools. Although the range of provision is explained, and indeed justified, by the principle of parental choice, the inefficiencies manifest in the system need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.’*

2. THE SCHOOL SYSTEM AND TEACHING WORKFORCE

2.1 An Overview of the Administrative Structure²

2.1.1 In Northern Ireland, compulsory school age begins at the age of 4 and continues until the age of 16. This ensures that every pupil in Northern Ireland receives at least 12 years of education [7 in primary education – Key Stage 1 = Years 1 – 4; Key Stage 2 = Years 5 – 7; and 5 in secondary education – Key Stage 3 = Years 8 – 10; and Key Stage 4 = Years 11 – 12]. The structure of the education system in Northern Ireland is complex, with 11 statutory bodies and a range of other voluntary bodies involved in the management and administration of the system. These include:

The Department of Education for Northern Ireland
The Department for Employment and Learning
The Education and Library Boards

- *Belfast Education and Library Board*
- *North-Eastern Education and Library Board*
- *South-Eastern Education and Library Board*
- *Southern Education and Library Board*
- *Western Education and Library Board*

The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
The Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment
The Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards
The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland.
The Youth Council for Northern Ireland.

2.1.2 There are also a number of voluntary bodies which play a significant role in the administration of the education system, including:

The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education.
The Transferor Representatives' Council, which brings together representatives of the Transferor Churches (Church of Ireland, Presbyterian Church and Methodist Church).
The Governing Bodies Association, which represents the voluntary grammar schools.
Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (The Council for Irish-medium Education)

2.2 The Structure of the School System in Northern Ireland

2.2.1 Schools that are funded by the state in Northern Ireland are known as grant-aided schools. The structure of the school system in Northern Ireland is uniquely complex with the main types of school management at present being:

i Controlled

Controlled schools are managed by the ELBs through Boards of Governors. Primary and secondary school Boards of Governors consist of representatives of transferors (mainly the Protestant Churches) along with representatives of parents, teachers and the ELBs. Nursery, grammar and special school Boards of Governors consist of representatives of the latter 3 categories.

Within the controlled sector there is a small but growing number of controlled integrated schools.

² This is dealt with in detail in Chapter 3 of the Bain Report.

**ii Voluntary:
(Maintained)** Managed by Boards of Governors that consist of members nominated by trustees (mainly Roman Catholic), along with representatives of parents, teachers and the ELBs.

The Department of Education has a statutory duty to ‘encourage and facilitate’ Irish-medium education under the *Education (Northern Ireland) Order* 1998, and has established a promotional body Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (The Council for Irish-medium Education), and an Irish-medium Trust Fund ‘Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta’ to promote and support the strategic development of the sector.

**iii Voluntary:
(Non-Maintained)** Mainly voluntary grammar schools managed by Boards of Governors which consist of persons appointed as provided in each school’s scheme of management along with representatives of parents and teachers and, in some cases, members appointed by the Department or the ELBs. Voluntary Grammar Schools have been funded directly by the Department . However, it is proposed under the Review of Public Administration that responsibility for funding moves to the new Education and Skills Authority.

**iv Grant
Maintained
Integrated
Schools** In recent years a number of grant-maintained integrated schools have been established at primary level and post-primary levels. Such schools were funded directly by the Department but, under the 1998 Education Order, responsibility has passed to the ELBs.

2.2.2 In addition, post-primary education retains largely a selective system with pupils going to grammar schools or secondary schools according to academic ability, determined by a Transfer Test [administered during the final year of primary school]. The system also includes both single-sex and co-educational schools. The post-primary system in Northern Ireland has been subject to major review over the past 5 years.

2.3 The Number of Establishments		2001/2002	2004/2005
Voluntary and Private Pre-School Education Centres =		305	365
Grant Aided Schools:			
• Nursery	=	95	99
• Primary Schools with Nursery Classes	=	141	204
• All Primary	=	902	894
• Preparatory Departments of Grammar Schools	=	22	18
• Secondary [excluding Grammar]	=	166	162
• Grammar Secondary	=	72	70
• Special	=	48	45
• Hospital Schools	=	3	3
• Independent Schools	=	27	17
• Post School			
• Institutions of Further Education	=	17	16
• University Colleges*	=	2	2
• Universities	=	2	2

* Colleges of Education became University Colleges in 1999

2.4 Number of Teachers

Teaching Population (Full time equivalents)

Total	20,747	20,198
• Nursery	194	193
• Primary	8,780	8,353
• Grammar preparatory	160	149
• Secondary (excluding Grammar)	6,698	6,527
• Grammar Secondary	4,110	4,171
• Special	803	805
All Schools*	20,747	20,198

* excludes Independent and Hospital Schools

2.4.1 Details of the composition of the teaching force in Northern Ireland as registered in March 2006 with the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) are given in **Figures 1 to 3**

Figure 1 – Composition of the NI teaching force as registered in March 2006

1.0 Number of teachers registered with GTCNI

Total: 26,151

1.1 Number of teachers registered with GTCNI by gender

Gender	Number	Percentage
Female	19,489	74.52%
Male	6,662	25.48%
Total:	26,151	100.00%

1.2 Number of teachers registered with GTCNI by age

Age Range	Number	Percentage
24 and under	907	3.47%
25 to 29	3,391	12.97%
30 to 34	3,691	14.11%
35 to 39	3,412	13.05%
40 to 44	2,678	10.24%
45 to 49	3,177	12.15%
50 to 54	4,483	17.14%
55 to 59	3,162	12.09%
60 to 64	1,101	4.21%
65 and Over	149	0.57%
Total:	26,151	100.00%

1.3 Number of teachers registered with GTCNI by age and gender

Age Range	Female	Male	Totals:
24 and under	771	136	907
25 to 29	2,736	655	3,391
30 to 34	2,937	754	3,691
35 to 39	2,638	774	3,412
40 to 44	1,958	720	2,678
45 to 49	2,315	862	3,177
50 to 54	3,176	1,307	4,483
55 to 59	2,090	1,072	3,162
60 to 64	756	345	1,101
65 and Over	112	37	149
Totals:	19,489	6,662	26,151

Note: The number of teachers registered with the GTCNI includes unemployed teachers and those retired teachers who wish to continue to be registered with GTCNI

Figure 2 Teachers with a permanent contract or a temporary contract for one year

2.0 Number of permanent contracted and one year temporary contracted teachers registered with GTCNI

Total: 19,796

2.1 Number of teachers by gender

Gender	Number	Percentage
Female	14,426	72.87%
Male	5,370	27.13%
Total:	19,796	100.00%

2.2 Number of teachers by age

Age Range	Number	Percentage
24 and under	325	1.64 %
25 to 29	2,384	12.04 %
30 to 34	3,180	16.06 %
35 to 39	2,978	15.04 %
40 to 44	2,314	11.70 %
45 to 49	2,737	13.83 %
50 to 54	3,607	18.22 %
55 to 59	1,921	9.70 %
60 to 64	336	1.70 %
65 and Over	14	0.07 %
Total:	19,796	100.00 %

2.3 Number of teachers by age and gender

Age Range	Female	Male	Totals:
24 and under	262	63	325
25 to 29	1,916	468	2,384
30 to 34	2,508	672	3,180
35 to 39	2,273	705	2,978
40 to 44	1,659	655	2,314
45 to 49	1,947	790	2,737
50 to 54	2,464	1,143	3,607
55 to 59	1,173	748	1,921
60 to 64	214	122	336
65 and Over	10	4	14
Totals:	14,426	5,370	19,796

Figure 3 Geographical distribution of teachers

2.4 Number of teachers by Education and Library Board (ELB) and gender

Gender	Belfast ELB	North Eastern ELB	South Eastern ELB	Southern ELB	Western ELB	Totals:
Female	2,677	3,150	2,922	3,128	2,549	14,426
Male	1,097	1,107	1,019	1,143	1,004	5,370
Totals:	3,774	4,257	3,941	4,271	3,553	19,796

2.5 Number of teachers by ELB and age

Age Range	Belfast ELB	North Eastern ELB	South Eastern ELB	Southern ELB	Western ELB	Totals:
24 and under	55	84	79	54	53	325
25 to 29	449	573	477	482	403	2,384
30 to 34	641	625	595	747	572	3,180
35 to 39	553	613	551	694	567	2,978
40 to 44	430	450	443	539	452	2,314
45 to 49	510	608	497	606	516	2,737
50 to 54	652	820	789	718	628	3,607
55 to 59	388	412	437	377	307	1,921
60 to 64	93	67	72	52	52	336
65 and Over	3	5	1	2	3	14
Totals:	3,774	4,257	3,941	4,271	3,553	19,796

2.5 Distribution of Student Numbers

Number of Pupils attending Educational Establishments in Northern Ireland

	2001/2002	2005/06
Voluntary and Private Pre-school Education Centres	3,957	5,633
Nursery Schools		
Full-time	3,304	3,796
Part-time	2,661	2,379
TOTAL NURSERY SCHOOLS	5,965	6,175
Primary Schools		
Nursery class pupils		
Full-time	3,225	3,978
Part-time	2,741	4,071
TOTAL NURSERY CLASS PUPILS	5,966	8,049
Primary: reception	1,963	711
Grammar preparatory: reception	27	43
TOTAL RECEPTION PUPILS	1,990	754
Primary schools (year 1 - 7)	169,700	158,665
Grammar school prep Depts. (year 1 - 7)	2,791	2,478
TOTAL YEAR 1 - 7 PUPILS	172,491	161,143
TOTAL PRIMARY PUPILS	180,447	169,946

Post Primary Schools			
Secondary (non grammar) schools		92,979	89,421
Grammar Schools		62,574	62,419
TOTAL POST PRIMARY PUPILS		155,553	151,840
Special Schools	TOTAL	4,674	4,599
Hospital Schools	TOTAL	171	296
Independent Schools	TOTAL	1,255	846
ALL SCHOOLS	GRAND TOTAL	348,065	333,702
TOTAL SCHOOLS AND PRE-EDUCATION CENTRES		352,022	339,335

Note: Independent Schools are not funded by the Department of Education.

2.6 Division of Responsibilities:

2.6.1 The Department of Education

The Department of Education is responsible for the central administration of all aspects of education and related services in Northern Ireland - excepting the higher and further education sector, responsibility for which is within the remit of the Department for Employment and Learning. The Department's main areas of responsibility are in pre-school, primary, post-primary and special education; the youth service; the promotion of community relations within and between schools; and teacher education and salaries. Its primary statutory duty is to promote the education of the people of Northern Ireland and to ensure the effective implementation of education policy. Its key functions include:

- advising ministers on the determination of education policy;
- framing legislation;
- accounting for the effectiveness of the education system;
- allocating, monitoring and accounting for resources; and
- through the Education and Training Inspectorate, evaluating and reporting on the quality of teaching and learning and teacher education.

The Department also aims to ensure that children, through participation at schools, reach the highest possible standards of educational achievement. In pre-school settings, schools and through the Youth Service. The Department also promotes personal well-being and social development, so that children gain the knowledge, skills and experience to reach their full potential as valued individuals.

A high quality education system is seen as a key driver in the development of the society and economy. Many school leavers in Northern Ireland have high levels of attainment and carry on into higher education, with participation rates matched only by Scotland. This contributes to improving competitiveness for the local economy and makes the region attractive to investors. However, the Department also recognises that too many young people leave school with low or inadequate qualifications or do not have the skills required by employers.

2.6.1.1 Strategic Framework

The Department of Education has worked with key education partners to develop a high-level Strategic Framework to help bring order to the complex planning environment.

This is organised around 4 Strategic Themes:

1. Valuing Education;
2. Fulfilling Potential;
3. Promoting Equality and Inclusion; and
4. Resourcing Education.

The Department's Strategic Plan for Education 2006-2008 was developed to provide leadership and direction to all those within the education sector by setting out a clear and agreed agenda for action informed by the planned availability of resources. The plan clearly identifies what the education sector aims to deliver to the young people of Northern Ireland. The Department and its Non Departmental Public Bodies have aligned their annual business and spending plans to the Strategic Plan, and hence to the Strategic Framework. Implementation of the plan will support the capacity of young people to learn and will produce significant benefits through enhanced educational standards - including improved literacy and numeracy for the pupil population as a whole. It will be accompanied by a particular focus on the disadvantaged and tackling the growing requirements of those with special educational needs. The implementation of a more relevant and flexible curriculum that better meets the varying needs and abilities of children, and the development of cooperation and collaboration among schools and with the further education sector, will increase the range of options open to young people and support them in reaching their full potential. This enhanced curriculum will be delivered harnessing the full potential of ICT in a modernised schools' estate.

The funding for schools will be largely distributed through the new Local Management of Schools Common Funding formula (replacing 7 previous formulae) introduced in April 2005 . This will ensure that schools of similar size and characteristics receive similar levels of funding. Special needs legislation (the SEND Order), which came into operation in September 2005, will improve access to education in schools and facilitate inclusion. In recognition of the need to ensure best possible use of all available resources there will be time-tabled action to reduce over capacity and duplication of education provision and administration. These programmes of reform will be consistent with the overall direction of the review of Public Administration. The Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland, which recognises the substantial investment needs of the education sector, will contribute to the removal of surplus places and reshape the schools' estate.

The Department of Education will contribute to the overall Government objectives on sustainable development in a number of ways. Sustainable development is one of the key themes to be developed through all parts of the planned revised curriculum at primary and post-primary level. Investment in new schools will be designed to meet the best practice in sustainable construction and waste management.

2.6.2 The Education and Training Inspectorate [ETI]

2.6.2.1 The ETI provides inspection services for three departments of government: the Department of Education, the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) and the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL). It is the Department's principal source of advice on all professional educational issues as well as on standards of educational provision throughout schools, colleges and grant-aided institutions.

2.6.2.2 The legal authority for the Inspectorate's work is set out in Article 102 and 102A, [Lay Persons] of the Education and Libraries [Northern Ireland] Order 1986, as substituted by Article 33 of the Education [Northern Ireland] Order 1996. At the time of devolution (1999), parallel powers of inspection were conferred on DEL, and DCAL in relation to certain functions for which those Departments are responsible. In the interests of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, DEL and DCAL elected to use the unified ETI for the delivery of inspection and survey services based on an agreed annual work programme and assumptions about levels of resources. These identify three main strands of responsibility:

- promoting the highest possible standards;
- inspecting, monitoring and reporting on the outcomes of education in schools and colleges - and on the nature, scope and effectiveness of the support services of the Education and Library Boards; and
- reporting the findings of inspections to the DE, DEL, DCAL (and to others who need to know).

2.6.2.3 The Inspectorate reports on the quality of provision in:

- schools;
- further education colleges;
- initial teacher training institutions;
- Higher Education Institutions,
- the support services of the education and library boards;
- the youth service;
- adult and community education where the providers receive funds from DENI; and
- training organisations where the providers receive funds from DEL and,
- sometimes in other areas in conjunction with other inspectorates (eg Criminal Justice inspectorate , Adult learning Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Agency, Health and Social Services Inspectorate)

2.6.2.4 The Inspectorate's advice and recommendations are based on its knowledge and understanding of what schools, colleges and training organisations are seeking to achieve, and of the outcomes and standards that are appropriate in different circumstances. Inspectors are expected to be familiar with a wide range of approaches to and practices in teaching/training and learning. Above all, the basis for the Inspectorate's judgements rests on what is observed and evaluated at first hand in all places where teaching and learning occur. These evaluations and knowledge are derived from a programme of regular and systematic visits and inspections.

2.6.2.5 In discharging its responsibility for promoting high standards, the Inspectorate's mode of working goes beyond evaluation and reporting and extends to providing evidence-based advice to Ministers and departments to assist in the formulation and evaluation of policy in education and training and youth . In making their formal assessments of standards and quality of outcomes, Inspectors observe the work undertaken in the classroom, workshop and workplace, have discussions with the staff concerned, and with members of their classes, examine schemes of work, assess the suitability and use of resources, and evaluate the effectiveness of the organisation, its management and its links with the community. Inspectors identify and report on strengths as well as weaknesses; they do not set out to look for faults and deficiencies, but will make critical comment where standards are lower than they ought to be.

2.6.2.6 The Inspectorate communicates its findings in a number of ways: through discussions with Ministers and with officials of DE and DEL by means of minutes, notes and papers submitted to administrative branches within these Departments , through formal written reports of inspections and surveys, through discussions with the Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards and their officers and advisers, in discussions with principals, managers, leaders, lecturers, teachers and instructors during inspections, at meetings with principals and Boards of Governors after general inspections of schools and colleges.

2.6.2.7 The Education and Library Boards are required by the 1989 Order to provide advisory and support services for the schools and colleges in their area. Given the nature of the Inspectorate's work, it is particularly important that members of the Inspectorate and the Boards' support services should know one another's views on key issues, and that schools, colleges and individual teachers should have coherent and consistent advice on such issues. It is thus vital that there should be professional exchange and sharing of

ideas among Inspectors and Board support staff, with the objective of ensuring that schools, colleges and teachers have clear, unambiguous guidance about improving practice. The Inspectorate contributes to INSET and responds to requests for consultation with other agencies.

2.6.2.8 The 1989 Order requires the Inspectorate to monitor, inspect and report on the nature, scope and effectiveness of the advisory and support services provided by the Boards. Here too it is important that the methods and procedures used by the Inspectorate should be known by those who provide the support, and that the Inspectorate should be objective and professional in its reporting. Direct observation and evaluation of particular aspects of the work of support services may be required on occasions; this evaluation is undertaken after consultation with the Boards.

2.6.3 *The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment [CCEA]*

Under the terms of the Education [Northern Ireland] Order 1989, CCEA is responsible for advising the government on the Northern Ireland Curriculum. CCEA takes the lead in designing and reviewing the curriculum. Its governing council is made up of members representing a wide cross section of those involved and interested in education in Northern Ireland [including serving teachers]. Subject and phase officers take the lead in curriculum development, frequently through the medium of working groups. Serving teachers play a prominent role in these working groups. CCEA has led the review of the Northern Ireland curriculum and has consulted widely on its emerging proposals. It also acts as an Awarding Body for GCSE and GCE examinations. Again, subject officers take the lead in the development of course specifications, however, most of the chief examiners and members of the examining teams under contract to CCEA are serving teachers.

2.6.4 *The Education and Library Boards [ELBs]*

The Education Order gives the ELBs the specific role of providing advice and support for all grant-aided schools on all aspects of the curriculum and associated matters. Each ELB has its own Curriculum, Advisory and Support Service [CASS] that is responsible for providing advice, support and curriculum resources within its own ELB area. The structure and size of the CASS teams employed by each ELB was designed initially to help schools implement the 1989 NI curriculum. This subject-specific work is now largely at an end and is being replaced by demands from schools for support for teachers on whole-school issues and other current topics (e.g. implementation of the new NI curriculum, School Improvement work, drugs education). Where appropriate, the five CASS groups work collaboratively on a regional basis. There is a Regional Training Unit which organises support and in-service on a region-wide basis, with a particular emphasis on leadership and management training. The Boards have recently produced a Strategic Framework to achieve a more collaborative approach to their CASS provision that should help to avoid unnecessary duplication of provision. The support ranges across all phases of schooling, from pre-school to Year 14 [Upper Sixth]. The staffing of CASS contains a mixture of full-time advisory staff – some on permanent contracts, others on short-term contracts or secondments. In addition, CASS calls on the services of serving teachers on a part-time basis. Towards the end of each academic year, each CASS organisation carries out an extensive consultation with schools in order to identify the schools' support/guidance needs. The CASS programmes of support are designed subsequently to address these identified needs. Over the years, the CASS service has provided many opportunities for serving teachers [from managers to beginning teachers] to participate in professional and curriculum development activities.

2.6.5 *The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI)*

2.6.5.1 GTCNI is the independent, self-regulatory body established to represent the professional interests of teachers. Established under the auspices of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, the Council has a membership of 33, the majority of whom are teachers. The Council is constituted as follows: 14 members are elected directly by the profession with a further 5 members nominated by the Northern Ireland Teaching Council. In addition, 10 members are nominated by broader interests within education including the Higher Education Institutions, Employing Authorities and other agencies. There are also 4 members appointed by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland.

2.6.5.2 The Council's current responsibilities are as follows:

- The registration of teachers;
- The development of a Code of Professional Values and Practice for the profession;
- Disciplinary functions relating to professional misconduct;
- The provision of advice to the Department of Education and Employing Authorities on:
 - ◊ The training, career development and performance management of teachers;
 - ◊ Standards of teaching;
 - ◊ Registration issues;
 - ◊ Standards of conduct for teachers; and
 - ◊ Other issues such as may be determined by the Department of Education.

2.6.5.3 As the self regulatory professional body for teachers the Council has a statutory duty to determine who should be a member of the teaching profession in Northern Ireland. In accordance with this statutory remit the Council is currently developing its regulatory processes. When fully developed, these procedures will be based on current best regulatory practice which has been established by the Government's Principles of Good Regulation (Better Regulation Task Force 2003). The taskforce identifies five characteristics for better regulation:

- *Proportionality*
- *Accountability*
- *Consistency*
- *Transparency*
- *Targeting*

In addition, all regulatory systems must be fair, effective, and affordable and enjoy a broad degree of public confidence. The Council is committed to developing a professional regulatory system which complies with all current guidelines.

2.6.6 The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools

Established under the auspices of 1989 Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order, the Council's primary purpose is the provision of an upper tier of management for the Catholic Maintained Sector with the primary objective of raising standards in Catholic Maintained Schools.

The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) is the advocate for the Catholic Maintained Schools sector in Northern Ireland. CCMS represents Trustees, schools and Governors on issues such as raising and maintaining standards, the school estate and teacher employment. As the largest employer of teachers in Northern Ireland (8500 teachers), CCMS plays a central role in supporting teachers whether through its welfare service or, for example, in working parties such as the Independent Inquiry into Teacher Pay and Conditions of Service. CCMS supports Trustees in the provision of school buildings and Governors and Principals in the effective management and control of schools. CCMS also has a wider role within the Northern Ireland education sector and contributes with education partners to policy on a wide range of issues such as curriculum review, selection, pre-school education, pastoral care and leadership.

The seminal activities of the Council are set out in Articles 142-146 and Schedule 8 of the 1989 Education Reform (NI) Order and are as follows:

- to employ all such teachers as are required on the staffs of Catholic Maintained schools;
- to advise the Department or a board on such matters relating to Catholic Maintained Schools as the Department or board may refer to the Council or as the Council may see fit;
- to promote and co-ordinate, in consultation with the Trustees of Catholic Maintained Schools, the planning of the effective provision of such schools;

- to promote the effective management and control of Catholic Maintained Schools by the Boards of Governors of such schools;
- to provide or secure, with the approval of the Department, the provision of such advice and information to the Trustees, Boards of Governors, principal and staff of Catholic Maintained Schools as appears to the Council to be appropriate in connection with the Council's duty; and
- to exercise such other functions as are conferred on it by the Education Orders.

2.6.7 *The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education*

The Department of Education has a statutory duty to 'encourage and facilitate' integrated education under the *Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1989*. The Department funds the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), a voluntary organization, set up to 'encourage and facilitate' integrated education. Today, there are 56 grant-aided integrated schools throughout Northern Ireland educating over 17,000 pupils.

2.6.8 *Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (The Council for Irish-medium Education)*

The Department of Education has a statutory duty to 'encourage and facilitate' Irish-medium education under the *Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998*, and has established a promotional body Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (The Council for Irish-medium Education) to promote and support the strategic development of the sector. There are currently 21 stand-alone Irish-medium schools and 12 Irish-medium units attached to CCMS English-medium host schools educating 3,209 pupils.

2.6.9 *Employment of Teachers*

2.6.9.1 The practical operation of all schools has increasingly become a matter for Boards of Governors. 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. Much of the above [employment, dismissal, redundancy] is determined by negotiated agreements on teachers' terms and conditions of service, employment law and other legislation relating to equality and fair employment. It is for the Boards of Governors of schools to identify their employment requirements for teachers, in order to ensure that they can teach the statutory Northern Ireland Curriculum. The devolution of much of the budget to the schools enables their managers, with advice from their regional management types, to exercise a degree of choice/judgement in the number/type of teachers they will employ. Teacher promotion is the internal business of the school's management.

2.6.9.2 Schools are accountable in that each year the Board of Governors must present an annual report to the parents. The Department of Education lays out guidelines on the contents of the report, including the requirement to publish examination and test results. Schools are also made accountable through a cycle of inspection carried out by the Education and Training Inspectorate. Schools are inspected currently once every 5 to 7 years. The Inspectorate's reports are published and each family of children/pupils in the schools receives a copy of the main findings of the inspection as of right. The Inspectorate also issues questionnaires to a sample of parents [proportion based on school size] asking for their views on aspects of the school's provision [see earlier]. Parents also have a right to contact the inspection team during an inspection in order to express their views.

2.6.10 *Supply of Teachers*

2.6.10.1 Article 67[1] of the Education and Libraries [NI] Order 1986, requires the Department of Education to make such arrangements as it considers necessary for the determination of numbers of students admitted to teacher training. The Department, with the aim of maintaining a reasonable match between the numbers being trained and the projected number of teaching vacancies, determines the level of intakes to teacher education courses annually. A statistical Teacher Demand Model, which is sensitive to changes about future wastage rates etc., informs this process. That model takes account of projected pupil

numbers, pupil/teacher ratios, course wastages, teacher wastages, re-entry rates, GB returnees [i.e. student teachers who trained in UK but who have returned to seek work in Northern Ireland] etc. Unlike England, Northern Ireland does not experience difficulties over teacher supply and recruitment. All the courses offered by Northern Ireland’s initial teacher education providers are heavily over-subscribed, with up to eight times more applications than there are places. As a result, the calibre of intake is high, with an average “A” level points score of successful applicants of about 19/20 compared to 13/14 in England.

2.6.10.2 Institutionally, the objective is to secure a diversity of high quality and cost-effective teacher education that matches the needs of schools. For the most part, Stranmillis University College and St Mary’s University College, through a 4-year BEd course, provide primary teacher training; the University of Ulster [UU] offers a one-year PGCE in Primary teaching. The education departments of Queen’s University Belfast [QUB] and UU, through a 1-year PGCE course, largely provide for the secondary teacher training. The Open University (OU) provides a part-time course directed at secondary level teaching for university graduates leading to the award of a PGCE.

In 2003-2004 over 2000 students were involved in initial teacher-education courses. In the past, most newly qualified teachers could expect to obtain permanent posts from the start of their careers. However, research shows that the proportion of permanent appointments has been declining. On the other hand, follow-up research shows that within two years most of these temporary appointments are made permanent. Recent research (2006) indicated, that although there may be some difficulties in the process of filling specialist subject posts only 1.84% of posts remain unfilled in non-grammar schools, and 1% in grammar. See Table 1

Table 1. Filled and unfilled posts by school type.

	Non-Grammar Schools		Grammar Schools		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Filled						
Permanent Full-time	2801	82	1876	83	4677	83
Permanent Part-time	467	14	294	13	761	13
Temporary Full-time	73	2	41	2	114	2
Temporary Part-time	63	2	49	2	112	2
TOTAL	3404	100	2260	100	5664	100
Unfilled						
Permanent Full-time	42	66	13	59	55	64
Permanent Part-time	7	11	5	23	12	14
Temporary Full-time	8	12	0	0	8	9
Temporary Part-time	7	11	4	18	11	13
TOTAL	64	100	22	100	86	100

Figures taken from Department of Education Research Briefing 6/2006- September 2006 ‘The Recruitment and Retention of Teachers in Post-Primary Schools in Northern Ireland.’

2.6.11 School Finance Arrangements

Under the Local Management of Schools (LMS) Scheme in Northern Ireland, introduced in 1991, the Board of Governors of every school receives a delegated budget from which they are expected to meet the on-going costs of running their school. The delegation of these budgets enables Boards of Governors to plan and use resources to maximum effect in accordance with their school's needs and priorities.

From April 2005, the Common Funding Scheme provides delegated funding to all grant-maintained schools in Northern Ireland in a way that is designed to be equitable and in addition, the Common Funding Scheme details the arrangements whereby schools can have access to centre services and resources for specified purposes.

Controlled and maintained schools are funded through the Education and Library Board in whose area the school is located while voluntary grammar schools and grant-maintained integrated schools are funded directly by the Department.

Each Education and Library Board continues to be accountable for the public resources delegated through it to individual schools. In particular it establishes and keep under review the conditions within which Boards of Governors must operate. It monitors the operation of LMS in schools, providing management information to schools and, generally, giving advice. It makes available to individual schools (and to the CCMS, in the case of Catholic maintained schools) statements, as agreed, showing financial allocations and actual school expenditure.

2.6.12 Personnel Other than Teachers Working in Schools

The Department of Education instituted the "Making a Good Start" initiative that provided funding for classroom assistants for all Primary One classes. There is evidence that, when these classroom assistants are of high quality and receive appropriate training, they make a significant contribution to the children's learning. There is a diverse range of personnel other than teachers working in schools in order to provide support for children with special educational needs. The nature of the children's special educational needs and, in particular, the content of the child's statement of special educational needs, determines the nature and extent of the support provided. In addition, schools are able to use their devolved budget to buy in additional or part-time support. Support is also provided for the teaching principals of small primary schools. The formula funding budget provides for small schools includes funding for substitute cover for one day of the week ["the principal release day"] to enable the principal to carry out/catch up on her/his management duties.

2.6.13 Organisations Involved in the Development of Teacher Policies

2.6.13.1 The Department of Education consults widely about changes affecting the profession: employers, unions and the Northern Ireland administration. In the Department, there are regular meetings between senior members of the Department and the key stakeholders. There are regular meetings between the Department and officials of Education and Library Boards and also Standing Conferences for Primary and Secondary Education (also Special Education) that involve discussions between members of the Department and representatives of the teaching unions.

Members of the Inspectorate also act as District Inspectors, with responsibility for a number of schools within a geographical district. This facilitates close links and provides a good communication channel between the schools and the Department.

2.6.13.2 There are five recognised teacher unions in Northern Ireland which together make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC). Three of the teachers' unions are organised on a national basis:

- National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)
- National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)
- Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)

while two are locally organised:

- the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) (also organised in ROI)
- the Ulster Teachers' Union (UTU) is the only wholly local union.

It is the NITC that represents teachers' interests at the Teachers' Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee (Schools). It is through this committee, on which the Employing Authorities and the Department of Education area also represented that negotiations on teachers' pay and terms and conditions of service are negotiated.

2.6.14 The Regional Training Unit (RTU)

The Regional Training Unit is the education service's Leadership and Staff College in Northern Ireland. It has a unique role (in European terms) as a developer of current and future education sector leaders. Through its School Leadership College and Staff College, the Regional Training Unit provides leadership, co-ordination and direction in the planning and delivery of professional development and training for the whole education community in Northern Ireland.

The Leadership College supports the professional development of leaders and senior managers in all schools in Northern Ireland. This includes the emergent and aspirant leader as well as serving heads and managers. With over 900 candidates on its preparation for headship programme and over 90 studying for the MBA in educational leadership - the first of its kind in the U.K. - the RTU is responsible for the largest ever investment by any sector in leadership development. Experienced leadership trainers, serving principals and recently retired headteachers and senior educationists combine with partners in Education and Library Boards, the Council for Catholic Maintained schools, the Grammar, Integrated and Irish Medium sectors, the Universities and teacher associations to provide education sector leaders in Northern Ireland with a range of development opportunities. These include extended accredited programmes on seminal issues as well as single day or residential conferences on practical issues. In 2006 nearly 2,000 teachers attended the annual Summer School covering a wide range of current and future educational issues.

2.7 Professional Development Options and Programmes for Teachers

The following options and programmes are generally available:

- Professional Development within school – supported by school management/colleagues;
- Professional Development within school – supported by ELB CASS or other outside agencies;
- The Performance Review and Staff Development (PRSD) scheme, operable since 2005; seen as being directly linked to school development planning, but underpinned by continuing professional development for teachers and principal;
- Option to select from a wide range of support/INSET provided by each of the ELBs – either on a single Board basis or on a regional basis;
- Professional development on a province wide basis – usually on aspects of management – provided by the Regional Training Unit [e.g. Professional Qualification for Headship [NI]]; and
- Postgraduate Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees provided by the HEIs.

2.8 Continuing Professional Development [CPD]

2.8.1 The Education & Library Boards' Curriculum Advisory Support Service (ELB CASS) is charged, under the provisions of the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, to provide curriculum advice and support for all teachers. This includes the provision of support to beginning teachers (Early Professional Development) and the provision of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to all other teachers. CPD in Northern Ireland covers professional development for individual teachers, school focussed professional development and professional development arising from systemic issues (e.g. arising from the implementation of new curriculum reviews or initiatives). Each ELB has an extensive range of officers, [a mix of permanent and seconded teachers and officers] – c. 60/80 per Board. Some are employed to support specific subjects or specific aspects of the curriculum. Other officers focus principally on “whole school” issues – where over the last two/three years there has been an increasing focus on school improvement issues. Each year the ELB CASS carry out an extensive consultation with the schools to identify areas which require support and then draw up an extensive programme of INSET/support to address these needs. All teachers are allocated a number of days – usually 5 - that are available to pursue professional/curriculum development matters.

2.8.2 Teachers retain considerable autonomy in selection of learning opportunities; especially in taking up CASS support and HEI based post-graduate courses. Schools and teachers are encouraged to align professional development more closely to the schools' own development plans. The recent Threshold Payment process linked the teachers' performance, including professional development, to salary increases. During inspections, the Inspectorate evaluates the effectiveness of schools' staff development processes.

2.8.3 The former non-statutory teacher appraisal scheme 'Staff Development and Performance Review' (SDPR), has been replaced by a statutory 'Performance Review and Staff Development Scheme' (PRSD). Its purposes are to:

- Enhance the quality of teaching and learning;
- Recognise the achievements of teachers;
- Support and develop teachers; and
- Disseminate good practice in and beyond the school.

2.8.4 PRSD is designed to ensure that all teachers and principals have an opportunity, as of right, to reflect regularly on their work with the help and support of other professionals. An effective review process will demonstrate a school's commitment to the development of all of its teachers to ensure increasing levels of expertise, job satisfaction and career enhancement. In this way, PRSD will be integrated into school life, linked to school development planning and to teaching and learning.

2.8.5 A Review of Teacher Education is presently underway to ensure that the profession is best placed to cope with the changes facing the Northern Ireland education sector in the coming years. The review covers all aspects of teacher education throughout a teacher's career from the intake of new student teachers through induction, EPD to the CPD they will need to meet the future challenges of educational change and to further their professional development. As part of the Teacher Education review a number of studies have been undertaken including the GTCNI's review of 'Teacher Competencies and Continuing Professional Development' (March 2005). This document and other studies can be accessed through the Department of Education's website at

http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/teachers_pg/4-teachers-teachereducationreview_pg.htm

The GTCNI's review document recommends that 27 new teacher competences should replace the existing 92 competence statements. It further proposes that the new competences 'should provide the foundation for an extended framework facilitating CPD allied to professional milestones'. It is anticipated the Review of Teacher Education will be completed in the near future.

2.8.6 The Professional Qualification for Headship (NI)(PQH(NI))

The Regional Training Unit is the lead body for the qualification in Northern Ireland. PQH(NI) is rooted in school improvement and draws on the best leadership and management practice. It signals readiness for headship but does not replace the selection process. It takes account of candidates' varying experiences of management and leadership [3 routes] and provides a baseline from which newly appointed principals can continue to develop their leadership and management abilities. It is underpinned by the National Standards for Headteachers (Northern Ireland edition August 2005). There are now 716 candidates who have gained the qualification. An additional 279 candidates are presently involved in the programme. There is already substantial evidence that graduates of PQH(NI) are moving into headships. The ETI Inspectorate carried out an evaluation of the PQH(NI) and reported favourably on its introduction and development.

2.8.7 The Inspectorate evaluates the quality of support provided by the ELB CASS. For example, it recently carried out a quality assurance inspection of the support provided by CASS for the schools in the School Support Programme [SSP]. Previously it carried out an inspection of the INSET provided by CASS. Further, the Inspectorate has recently completed an inspection of the RTU PQH(NI) programme. The ELB CASS are being encouraged, increasingly, to engage in more rigorous self-evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of their services.

2.9 Recruiting, selecting and assigning teachers

2.9.1 Recruitment and Selection of Teachers:

Teacher recruitment remains buoyant in Northern Ireland. The main concerns relate to the areas where there appear to be emerging shortages: sciences, in particular, physics; design and technology; mathematics and, perhaps home economics. The review of the Northern Ireland curriculum, with its emphasis on development of core skills, is expected to have implications on the training and deployment of teachers.

The employing authorities that include not only the ELBs and CCMS but also the individual Boards of Governors in the Voluntary Grammar and Grant Maintained Integrated sectors recruit teachers. Vacancies are determined by the Boards of Governors of the schools, depending on their assessments of current and future curricular needs and in light of their need to ensure that levels of expenditure are contained within the total resources available to the school. Applicants are invited by public advertisement. Successful candidates are selected through a process of written application [that may lead to shortlisting] followed by interview by the Board of Governors. There is no formal probationary period for teachers in Northern Ireland. Once student teachers complete their initial teacher education successfully, they are deemed eligible to teach.

2.9.2 For information on how recently qualified teachers typically obtain their first teaching post – see earlier data (2.6.10). As this data show, teachers are employed on a variety of terms – permanent, one-year temporary, short-term temporary, part-time, short-term contract. Responsibility for changing the nature of these terms rests with the Boards of Governors of the schools.

2.9.3 The range and number of initiatives in education, for example, those aimed at school improvement, have increased the need for the professional development of teachers. This often requires the teachers to participate in out-of-classroom courses and seminars. In many schools, the absence of teachers on such courses was the main reason for the employment of substitute cover. The ELB CASS have sought to minimise the disruption to teaching and learning due to the absence of permanent teachers, by organising a greater proportion of INSET within schools or during out-of-school hours. Recently, there has been an increasing emphasis on the use of residential conferences and the use of ICT, including managed Virtual Learning Environments (VLE), for professional development.

2.10 Data on Teachers Leaving the Profession

2.10.1 Just over four in ten [43.3%] of teachers surveyed in the Teachers' Health and Well-Being Survey (2002), had, at some time in their career to date, thought of leaving the teaching profession to the extent that they had actually sought alternative employment. A higher proportion of teaching principals and heads of department had looked for alternative employment compared to the other teaching grades. Those who had thought about leaving the teaching profession were asked what other areas of employment they had considered.

- 42.6% had considered a job outside the education sector
- 24.3% considered staying in education but looking for a non-teaching job
- 21.2% had looked for another job with no definite sector in mind

All teachers were asked where they saw themselves in five years time.

- 53.5% expected to still be in teaching
- 29.1% expected to be no longer teaching

Of this latter group,

- 23% expect to be retired, medically or otherwise
- 6.1% expect to be in a different profession

2.10.2 It has not been possible to break down these statistics into age, extent of teaching experience and teaching areas. The data suggests that slightly more teachers leave schools in the catholic maintained sector than in the controlled sector. At secondary level, more teachers leave non-selective schools than the grammar schools, where the numbers leaving are very small.

2.10.3 In some instances, teachers are seconded from their school to work for ELBs or other such organisations. Secondments tend to last from one to three years. Seconded teachers are released from their school with the agreement of the Board of Governors and are paid by the organisation to which they are seconded. Without being able to quantify it, there is anecdotal evidence that Boards of Governors are increasingly reluctant to release teachers – especially experienced and skilled teachers – on secondment. The schools will quote the importance given to school performance and hence the need for the school to have its best teachers in post. Teachers in Northern Ireland do not have any right to sabbaticals as part of their contract. There are a small number of schemes that enable teachers – usually members of management or, in some instances, careers teachers – to spend short periods of time with industrial/commercial businesses.

2.11 Evaluation of Teachers

2.11.1 It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors of the schools to evaluate their teachers' performance. Processes and criteria vary from school to school. All schools now must use the previously described PRSD process to monitor and review teachers' performance.

2.11.2 When a school identifies an ineffective teacher, it has a number of options available to assist this teacher to improve. It is the duty of the school to provide a structured programme of support for the teacher [and agreed by the teacher]. The school can provide internal support, for example by assigning an experienced member of staff to work with the teacher on a regular basis; the school can provide additional time for support activities. In some instances, the school arranges, either through the ELB, CCMS or other management contacts, to place the weak teacher in another school to work, for a short time, with a skilled

and experienced practitioner. Schools frequently seek help from the ELB CASS, e.g. arranging for a support officer to visit the school to work with the teacher on specific aspects of her/his work.

Alternatively, the school can arrange for the teacher to work “off-site” with the support officer. In more extreme instances, where the school’s support has not resulted in improvement, or where the teacher involved has not participated in the support programme, the Board of Governors will consider invoking the Unsatisfactory Teachers Procedure.

2.11.3 During an ETI inspection where the work of an individual teacher is found to be unsatisfactory the teacher concerned is given spoken feedback and advice in relation to his/her work; and this is followed by a written report to the teacher, the employing authority and the teacher’s union. The Inspectorate report will indicate areas of weakness but will not make recommendations about the action to be taken. It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors, acting on the advice of the Principal (where the unsatisfactory teacher is not the Principal) and in consultation with the Employing Authority, to initiate such action by way of support and re-training as it deems appropriate. This should be managed in the context of the agreed Unsatisfactory Teachers’ procedure. Unsatisfactory work, whether in teaching or school management which is identified in the course of an inspection should already be apparent to the school, and action to address the needs of the teacher should already have been invoked. Where the quality of teaching remains unsatisfactory the teacher’s future employment is a matter for the Board of Governors to determine in accordance with the Unsatisfactory Teachers Procedure.

2.12 Promotion and career diversification (recognising and rewarding teachers’ performance)

2.12.1 Matters of promotion and career diversification are the responsibility of individual schools’ management. The process of promotion usually involves the advertisement of the post – either internally within the school or externally through the press. The principal and a committee of the Board of Governors will then interview the applicants. There are a wide variety of opportunities for promotion within schools – though the size of the school can play a key part in how many of these are available to individual teachers. Teachers can secure one of five levels of Teaching Allowance which are awarded for duties not required of all classroom teachers, that are focused primarily on teaching and learning, and require the exercise of a teacher’s professional skills and judgement. Teachers securing a Teaching Allowance will assume responsibilities that either require the them to lead, manage and develop a subject or curriculum area, 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, or involve leading, developing and enhancing the teaching practice of other staff.’

The opportunities available will depend on the decisions/priorities set by each school’s management committee – who will also determine the range and extent of financial remuneration available for the promoted posts. The PQH(NI) is providing a route to promotion to a growing number of teachers who have ambitions to become principals. Anecdotally, the opportunities for promotion in grammar schools tend to arise more slowly due to the stable nature of the teaching staff. Similarly, there are many small primary schools in Northern Ireland where opportunities for paid promotion are limited . In recent years, teachers have been able to diversify through joining inspection teams in the role of Associate Assessors. These teachers contribute to the inspection process through their particular experience and expertise.

2.12.2 Teachers can gain public acclaim for their work through the Northern Ireland Teacher of the Year Award – the entrants are nominated and undergo an evaluation process leading up to the Award.

2.13 Structure of teachers’ salary scales

2.13.1 Teachers’ pay and conditions of service in Northern Ireland have traditionally maintained a contextualised parity with the situation in GB. However, in Northern Ireland, matters relating to teachers’ pay and conditions are negotiated through the Teacher Negotiating Committee (TNC), which is made up of representatives of the employing authorities, the teaching unions and the Department of Education.

2.13.2 When teachers' pay structure in England and Wales changed from 1 September 2000 to include an upper pay scale, a new leadership salary spine and the introduction of a performance management scheme to support teachers' professional development in line with the priorities within their school development plans, agreement on the same package was not agreed in Northern Ireland. Although agreement was reached on a similar pay structure to England and Wales the teacher unions opposed the proposed performance management arrangements with its link to pay progression.

2.13.3 As a result of this impasse an independent inquiry into teachers' pay and conditions was established. The Inquiry team had among its terms of reference a requirement to take into account parity and equivalence with pay levels for teachers in England and Wales and that there should be a clear and demonstrable link between additional pay and revised conditions and working practices, which met the need for modernisation and higher standards. The Inquiry presented its Report in three stages –

- (a) Interim Report – 'Principal and Vice Principal Pay' published in November 2002 and accepted by the Teacher Negotiating Committee
- (b) Final Report Part 1 – 'Parity, Performance and Progression' published in June 2003 and accepted by the Teacher Negotiating Committee which resulted in the implementation of the Performance Review and Staff Development scheme (PRSD) from September 2005.
- (c) Final Report Part 2 – 'Improving Conditions, Raising Standards and Negotiating Arrangements' published in February 2004 and which focuses on teacher workload and reducing the bureaucratic burden by delegating low-level administrative tasks to ancillary staff and freeing up teachers' time for professional activities. The Teacher Negotiating Committee is currently considering this report.

2.13.4 Pay Scales

Leadership Group – Principals and Vice Principals are paid on a 43 point leadership spine which is banded into eight school Principal Groups with overlapping ranges of spine points, linked mainly to the size of the school. Principals are set a seven point Individual School Range (ISR) within the ranges of points available within the appropriate school Principal Group and the Principal must be paid within this ISR. A five point pay range for each vice-principal is set and must be positioned between the bottom of the principal's ISR and the salary of the highest paid classroom teacher.

Members of the Leadership Group do not have automatic salary progression. Decisions on pay progression must be taken in association with the outcome of the annual review performance, taking into account the PRSD review statement. Boards of Governors may award one point for performance of sustained high quality, but in cases where there has been very high quality of performance, one additional point may be awarded. However, no more than two points may be awarded in the course of a single review.

Classroom Teachers – Classroom teachers have two scales on which they are paid, a main scale and an upper pay scale. There are six incremental points on the main scale and on commencement of teaching a teacher is normally placed on point one. Progression is annual and having progressed to point six a teacher is eligible to apply for threshold progression and placement on point one of the upper pay scale. There are three points on the upper pay scale with progression being subject to two consecutive successful reviews, taking into account the PRSD review statement. A minimum of one point can be awarded every two years.

There are also additional allowances that a teacher may secure – Teaching Allowance (one of five levels), Recruitment and Retention Allowance (one of two levels) and Special Educational Needs Allowance (one of two levels)

2.14 Current Practices to Mitigate Teaching Workloads

2.14.1 Teachers' Health and Well-Being: The Northern Ireland Teachers' Health and Well-Being Survey (2002) findings indicate that teachers, in general, see themselves as healthy. This is validated by their body mass index, exercise, alcohol intake, smoking and diet. There is room for improvement to meet the Government's health guidelines for healthy eating and exercise, particularly for those in posts with responsibilities additional to teaching. The main causes of stress reported by teachers are: having too much

work to do, too much administration and after school hours schoolwork. The survey indicated that added responsibility might be increasing teachers' perceptions of job related stress. About half of the survey respondents found their jobs moderately stressful or below, while half very or extremely stressful. Job satisfaction was generally good with 60% of respondents stating that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs. Again, there were particular groups with lower levels of job satisfaction linked to stress. In relation to the workplace, the survey showed that 17% of the respondents had experienced physical abuse and 38% verbal abuse. About two thirds of respondents were satisfied with their physical working environment and one third do not consider it to be good. The top three areas that the latter consider need improvement are: internal working temperature, sanitary conveniences and room dimensions/space.

2.14.2 These were all causes of stress for at least 90% of teachers in all grades, but less for teachers without responsibility points. Respondents were asked to rank the top three causes of unwanted stress in their job and 27% rated both

- “having too much work to do” and
- “too much administration/paperwork”

in the top three causes of unwanted stress.

2.14.3 Generally speaking, in comparison with findings from other public and private sector organisations within the UK and from the Northern Ireland Civil Service, teachers perceived themselves less able to cope [39%] than respondents from elsewhere.

39.1% of teachers agreed that they could cope with the stress of the job	[Civil Servants = 66.5%]
33.7% neither agreed nor disagree	[Civil Servants = 22.9%]
27.7% disagreed that they could cope with the stresses of the job	[Civil Servants = 10.7%]

2.14.4 Responsibility for Teacher Health and Wellbeing rests with teachers' employers. As a result of the Teachers' Health and Well-being Survey the employing authorities established a high level group to develop a health and well-being strategy. The employing authorities and the teacher unions are actively considering this groups' report through the Teacher Negotiating Committee. The employing authorities have undertaken to examine how existing counselling services can be centralised and to work with Teachers' Side to address the strategic development of welfare services. This will be important work in anticipation of the new Education and Skills Authority assuming responsibility for the welfare of the schools workforce in 2008.

3. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

3.1 Definitions of School Leadership

3.1.1 In official terms ‘School Leadership’ is defined as a ‘Leadership Group’ that currently consists of principals and vice-principals. Those holding these posts are held to be distinct from other ‘classroom’ teachers both in terms of salary structure and in terms of statutory conditions of service.

3.1.2 The conditions of service for all teachers are statutorily defined in the Teachers’ (Terms and Conditions of Employment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1987. Three categories of teachers are defined by them i.e. ‘principal’, ‘vice-principal’, ‘qualified teacher’. The actual terms and conditions attached to these posts have remained largely unchanged since 1987.

3.1.3 Schedule 1 of the Teachers’ (Terms and Conditions of Employment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1987 outlines the *General Functions* and *Professional Duties* of Principals. Subject to general accountability to the employing authority, or Board of Governors, ‘the principal shall be responsible for the internal organisation, management and control of the school’ and is expected to offer it leadership.

Leadership and management duties that derive from this position can be summarised as:

- formulating the overall aims and objective of the school and policies for their implementation;
- in the case of the school principal, being ultimately responsible and accountable for the quality of provision within the school and the standards achieved by pupils;
- school development planning and target setting and monitoring progress;
- participating in the appointment of staff;
- deploying and managing all staff and allocating particular duties to them;
- maintaining relationships with organisations representing teachers and other staff;
- determining, organizing and implementing an appropriate curriculum;
- reviewing the work and organisation of the school;
- evaluating the standards of teaching and learning and ensuring that proper standards of professional performance are established and maintained;
- providing information about staff where this is relevant to their future employment;
- participating in any scheme of staff development and performance review;
- ensuring that all staff have access to advice and training appropriate to their needs;
- ensuring the progress of pupils is monitored and recorded;
- determining and implementing a policy for pastoral care; determining measures for promoting self-discipline of pupils and ensuring regard for authority, and having responsibility for good order and behaviour;
- giving parents regular information about the curriculum, the progress of their children and other matters about the school to promote common understanding of its aims;
- promoting effective relationships with persons and bodies outside the school;
- advising and assisting the Board of Governors in the exercise of their functions;
- liaising with other schools and other educational establishments;
- allocating, controlling and accounting for financial and material resources of the school;
- arranging for the security and effective supervision of buildings and grounds;
- arranging for the discharge of his/her functions at any time when absent;
- participating as appropriate in the teaching of pupils.

3.1.4 Schedule 2 defines the leadership and management role of the vice-principal very narrowly as:

- assisting the principal in managing the school or such a part of it as may be determined by the principal;
- undertaking any professional duty of the principal, which may be delegated to him/her by the principal
- undertaking in the absence of the principal, to the extent required by him/her or the employing authority, the professional duties of the principal.

In practice in many schools some or all aspects of the functions of the principal have been delegated with the approval of the Board of Governors to one or more vice-principal. This is particularly true in regard to the expected 'management' roles of the principal, but often extends to aspects of 'leadership' roles. The extent to which this occurs may, however, be limited by the particular scheme of management of the employing authority for the school.

3.1.5 A Research Briefing (4/97) for the Department of Education showed that the introduction of the Local Management of Schools (LMS) in 1991, which provided for delegation of financial and managerial responsibilities to Boards of Governors, had led to less centralised management structures and the devolution of responsibilities to middle managers in schools.

'Typically, school principals now spend a greater proportion of their time on management issues and, as a result, their role is no longer simply that of the leading professional within the school. In this management role school principals are generally supported by a senior management team (SMT) comprising the vice-principal(s) and senior teachers. As a group, the SMT tends to focus on strategic and financial issues. The SMT is frequently supported by a middle management group and much of the detail of issues relating to the curriculum is dealt with at this level. Members of SMTs are involved in curriculum issues, but this tends to be via individual involvement with middle management groups. Thus, in general, the introduction of LMS has led to a less centralised management structure, and in some cases this has been facilitated by the abolition of a vice-principal level post and the disposal of responsibilities to middle managers. This has been seen to be beneficial, not only in terms of creating an effective management structure, but also in terms of providing greater opportunities for career progression for teachers.'

The Briefing suggested that management structures still tended to be more centralised in the grammar school sector, as this sector had been less affected by the introduction of LMS.

There has subsequently been considerable development of the leadership roles of 'middle managers', in particular those which focus on strategic, curricular and pastoral areas. The leadership roles within schools often evolved in response to various initiatives or requirements set out by central government. The position of these newly identified leaders within a school had been underpinned by the power of Boards of Governors to award a teacher with 'management' allowance points above the normal salary scale. The Board of Governors may provide additional Teaching Allowances to teachers who take on responsibilities that either require the them to lead, manage and develop a subject or curriculum area, 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, or involve leading, developing and enhancing the teaching practice of other staff.

3.1.6 In the context of the complexities of the Northern Ireland education system, and the challenges that are now faced by our schools, leadership has therefore become more broadly defined. The view is that the enormity and complexity of the job of school leader cannot be overstated. *'It is both lowly and lofty. On any given day the school leaders can be dealing with a bruised knee or a bruised ego, a broken window or a broken home, a rusty pipe or a rusty member of staff'*. It is accepted in all sectors that the principal as the 'heroic leader' cannot single-handedly lead and manage in the increasingly complex and changing nature of a school's provision and practice. The prescriptive landscape of the 1990s, largely fashioned by the 1989 Education Act, has been replaced by an early 21st Century landscape which provides school leaders with greater flexibility than ever before to shape the future of their organisations. The Reform of Public Administration (RPA) to take effect in 2008 will even more radically change relationships and the context in which school leadership operates.

3.2 The Changing Demands on School Leaders

Section 1 of this Report outlines the social and economic problems, the political uncertainties, and the attendant implications for the education system, that form the context in which schools in Northern Ireland operate. The demands on its school leaders are complex and challenging. The society from which schools draw their pupils is emerging from almost forty years of conflict, exacerbated by high levels of poverty, deprivation, poor standards of health and health care and considerable underachievement by many passing through the school system.

There is an unrelenting pressure for change and increasing expectations of schools to be major agents for societal and economic improvements

3.2.1 The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, which was approved by Parliament in summer 2006, provides the legislative framework for a number of important reforms including the revised statutory curriculum and aspects of the new arrangements for post-primary education, including the curricular Entitlement Framework, and powers to introduce new admissions arrangements. Although the Government's clear view is that abolishing academic selection would be in the best interests of education and the economy in Northern Ireland, it has accepted that the final decision on this matter should rest with local political parties provided there is an early restoration of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The 2006 Order includes the abolition of academic selection, but made it subject to a vote in the Northern Ireland Assembly if the Assembly is restored by 26 March 2007. Following political discussions in October 2006, the Parliament approved a Bill providing for the deadline for the restoration of the Assembly to enable it to vote on banning academic selection was amended to 28 March 2007. If the Assembly is restored by that date, it will have to agree new admission arrangements and decide whether they will be selective or non-selective. If it is not restored by then, the ban on academic selection will come into force immediately to take effect for admissions after 31 July 2010. Until decisions are taken there is uncertainty about the future shape of post-primary provision.

3.2.2 Secondary schools must provide a revised curriculum for pupils post 14 which includes the provision of courses as specified by the 'Entitlement Framework'. This aims to guarantee all pupils greater choice and flexibility by providing them with access to a wide range of learning opportunities suited to their needs, aptitudes and interests, irrespective of where they live or the school they attend. Schools will have to offer pupils access to a minimum of 24 courses at Key Stage 4 and 27 at post-16, and at least one third of these courses should be general and at least one third applied. Individual pupils will decide upon the number and blend of courses they will follow. The Curriculum Entitlement Framework complements the revised curriculum which will be introduced on a phased basis from 2006.

3.2.3 Recent developments impact on school leaders. The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (SENDI) came into operation in September 2005. The new law increases the rights of children with special educational needs to attend mainstream schools and introduces disability discrimination laws for the whole education system for the first time. New duties have been placed on schools and their employing authorities to continually improve accessibility of the school building, curriculum and information to pupils with disabilities and to make these plans available for inspection. Child Protection issues have been to the forefront in schools' provision since 1999 when detailed guidance on a school's responsibilities was issued by the Department of Education (Pastoral Care in Schools – Child Protection). In 2006 there has been a recommendation that all staff, paid or unpaid, in a school should be subject to a criminal background check to ensure suitability to have access to children.

3.2.4 Education is already making a considerable contribution to community regeneration and well-being by improving the life chances and aspirations of young people. It is one of the key themes of Government's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (2003) aimed at tackling deprivation and disadvantage in urban areas. The 'Extended School' model, in which schools offer a range of activities such as Breakfast Clubs and After School Clubs through a combination of voluntary effort, school funds and resources raised from grant making organisations, is now being funded in over one-third of schools by the Department of Education through the 'Children and Young People Funding Package'. The best programmes include working closely with families and statutory and voluntary agencies to improve the quality of life for children and young people in disadvantaged areas. Those leaders in schools identified by the Department of Education and invited to be involved in the programme have additional leadership and management pressures. In the case of Extended Schools, the government wishes to see the establishment of the school as the hub of its local community. It is envisaged as an organisation which should engage proactively with neighbouring schools, and with statutory,

voluntary and community sector organisations operating in the local community. With all efforts concentrated on meeting the needs of the pupils in the school and the wider community.

3.2.5 In such changes in response to government legislation and initiatives the school leader has become part of multi-agency provision with accompanying high levels of public expectation and accountability.

3.2.6 School leaders are expected to further a number of other high priority initiatives promoted by government.

3.2.6.1 The Classroom 2000 project (C2K) is a significant part of the Education Technology Strategy for NI. Established in 1998, C2k is a 10-year government programme for major investment in delivering high quality, sustainable ICT services to all schools, teachers and pupils in Northern Ireland. It is the largest, single e-learning project in the world, involving over 1200 schools, over 330,000 pupils and c20,000 teachers.

Grant-aided schools receive, at no cost to themselves, a core entitlement, based on pupil numbers, including:

- an infrastructure of 40,000+ networked computers connected to the Internet and linked to legacy systems;
- access to a wide range of content and services to support the Northern Ireland Curriculum and the professional development of teachers;
- an integrated suite of services for school administration and management;
- the connection of schools' networks into a single education network across Northern Ireland, with tools to facilitate the development of online teaching and learning.

The effective development of this system to enhance the management of schools and provide resources for more effective and learning has become a major responsibility for school leaders. They have been responsible for rapid improvements in personal ICT competence and its promotion among all staff. They are expected to use ICT widely in administration, and embed it into learning and teaching.

3.2.6.2 The introduction of the Performance Review and Staff Development scheme (PRSD) reviews the principal's performance in a more structured and formal way than previously. Boards of Governors are required to determine the extent that the principal's vision, leadership and sense of direction for the school has brought about success, or led to significant improvement in the following areas:

Pupil Progress	securing effective teaching and learning
Leadership	strategic leadership and direction
	development of own personal knowledge, understanding and performance
	relationship with stakeholders
Management	sound planning and problem solving
	securing and managing resources
	managing and developing staff
	monitoring and evaluation

3.2.7 The schools' system in Northern Ireland is experiencing a major reduction in its pupil population, a decline forecast to continue well into the future. Currently, the school's estate has more than 50,000 surplus places and the number is expected to rise to more than 80,000 over the next ten years if action is not taken. On 4 December 2006, Sir George Bain and his team published the Independent Strategic Review of Education. Their recommendations lay the foundation for a radical new future for Northern Ireland's education system, based on sharing and learning together, with quality education at its heart. One of the central recommendations of the

Review is that the education system should move quickly to a system of area based planning, to address the problems of over-provision and lack of co-ordination created by the current system. The Review explained clearly that Northern Ireland has too many schools and that the guiding principle in any school rationalisation should be the quality of education provided by the school.

The rationalisation of the schools' estate and the changing education landscape in Northern Ireland (and in a particular the challenges facing the education system arising from the Government's policy and strategic framework for good relations in Northern Ireland "A Shared Future") there will no doubt be not only a reduction in the number of school leaders but also many challenges for the current and future leaders of schools

School leaders believe their role is made more complicated by aspects of the present system. For example Government initiatives and new legislation are seen as increasing the bureaucratic burden. The multi-layered administration of schools may involve reporting to and being accountable to several different stakeholders, who may have competing interests. For example, the principal of a small controlled primary school may have a teaching responsibility with minimal clerical support for reporting to parents, the Board of Governors, the Education and Library Board, and ultimately to the Department of Education. For its part, the Department points to the increased investment in education over recent years and emphasises that schools may choose whether to invest resources in more teaching staff or in non-teaching staff. School principals have been asked to identify areas where there is unnecessary bureaucracy but have been unable to do so.

Schools with falling rolls, and therefore declining budgets, can find it challenging to adequately staff and deliver curriculum in ways that ensure the highest quality of learning and teaching. Some principals see present working arrangements as too inflexible to allow school leaders to act authoritatively or be creative and risk-taking.

Other aspects of the actual and perceived demands on school leaders are dealt with in Section 5 of this Report

3.3 The Governance of Schools

3.3.1 In 1979 the Report of the Working Party on the Management of Schools in Northern Ireland (the Astin Report) reached the conclusion that *'a Board of Governors is desirable as a local focus and forum for all groups which have a major and direct interest in the life, character and well-being of the individual school; as a channel of influence for such interests; and as a balance against over-centralisation. Such a body, with local knowledge and direct acquaintance with the school, is needed as a bridge between the school itself and its local community, and as a means of communication, interpretation and advocacy between the school – including not only its professional aspects but the local interests in it – and the Education and Library Board and the Department of Education'*. The Report justified the maintenance of Boards of Governors and emphasised their significant role in the local management of schools.

The membership of Boards of Governors stipulated under the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 gave people in the community, such as transferors (on the controlled side), trustees (on the maintained side) and parents, the opportunity to become involved in the running of their local school and to have a meaningful role in the education service. Subsequent Orders, especially the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989, (Statutory Instrument 1989 No. 2406 (N.I. 20), have increased greatly the powers and responsibility of Boards of Governors. Governors are required to make important decisions with regard to the policies and running of the school, and to account for their stewardship of managing the school by way of the Annual Report of the Board of Governors.

3.3.2 The governing body in a school with a delegated budget is legally responsible for the strategic direction of the school. The governing body has the powers and the duty to:

- conduct the school in such a way as to promote high standards;
- set appropriate statutory targets for pupil achievement;
- decide the broad strategic direction for the school;
- decide how to spend and monitor the school's delegated budget;

- ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced and fulfils statutory requirements;
- report on national curriculum and examination results;
- determine staffing levels, the pay policy and teachers' pay within the conditions laid down in the relevant Department of Education's pay determination and in accordance with the appropriate Employing Authority guidance.;
- establish a performance management policy and review the performance of the principal;
- be involved in the appointment of the principal and members of the leadership group according to the scheme of management. It may delegate the appointment of other members of staff to the principal working with a sub-committee but should ratify appointments;
- regulate staff conduct and discipline, though it should delegate the first stage of discipline and capability and limit its involvement to appeals panels; and
- draw up an action plan after an inspection.

3.3.3 The governing body occupies a boundary position between the internal operation of the school and the community in which it is situated. Its composition is not accidental. All the main stakeholders from both outside and inside the school are meant to have a voice. The professional educators are represented by the principal and staff governors; parents are a well-represented, key stakeholder group, as is the ELB/CCMS (as appropriate) and there are governors nominated by the Department of Education. It has come to be understood that Principals and other school leaders appreciate, and need, the support and insight that an enthusiastic and informed governing body can bring to their roles. Managing and giving a strategic direction to the school should be derived from a professional partnership between Governors and Principal.

3.3.4 According to the school type and scheme of management, governors may represent some of the following interests.

(n.b. the Table indicates the number of governors in schools in one Education and Library Board (ELB). In other ELBs the total number of governors in a school may be doubled or trebled but the proportions of representation are fixed.

	Controlled			Maintained		Grant Maintained Integrated
	Primary Secondary	Nursery Special Grammar	Integrated	Nursery Primary Special	With 100% Capital Funding	
DENI	-	2	4	-	1	4
Foundation Governors	-	-	-	-	-	6
Parents	2	2	4	1	1	4
ELB	2	3	4	2	2	-
Teachers	1	1	2	1	1	2
Transferors	4	-	-	-	-	-
Trustees	-	-	-	6	4	-
Principal	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total Voting Members	9	8	14	10	9	16

Foundation Governors (Grant Maintained Integrated Schools) – At least one third shall, at the time of their appointment, be parents of pupils attending the school.

Governors nominated by DENI – These are people asked by the Department of Education to serve as governors because of their interest in education in general and in the particular school.

Parent Governors – are elected by the parent body. They must have a child attending the school at the time of election. They can complete their period of office even if their child leaves the school in the meantime.

Governors nominated by ELB – could be either:

- a) a Board Member i.e. one of the thirty-five members of the ELB, or
- b) a Board Representative i.e. someone asked by the Area Board to serve as a governor because of his/her interest in education in general and in the particular school.

Teacher Governor – teaches in the school and is elected by his/her colleagues. If resigning from the school, he/she must also resign from the Board of Governors.

Transferors – nominated by those Protestant Churches (and a few other interests such as family estates and factories) which transferred their schools into a system of management/partnership with the local education authority based on specific guarantees about Religious Education and appointments of staff.

Trustees – When a Board of Governors is first constituted, the Trustee representatives are nominated by the legal trustees of the school. On all subsequent occasions, and for casual replacements, nomination is by a group called ‘nominating trustees’. The Trustees should be a parent at the time of being nominated (not elected).

Principal – a non-voting member for all meetings, except in the case of a Principal of a Catholic Maintained School who has a vote when serving on a Selection Panel of his/her Board of Governors. In the Controlled and non-Catholic Maintained sectors, but not in the Grant Maintained Integrated, the Principal usually acts as Honorary Secretary to the Board of Governors. In the Catholic Maintained sector, the Principal may, or may not, be asked so to act.

Co-opted Members – Article 122 of the 1989 Order allows for the voting members of a Board of Governors of a grant-aided school to co-opt not more than three persons from the local business community. Co-opted members do not have a vote.

It is essential that the governing body becomes the place where the different perspectives on educational improvement and standards are debated and that the corporate view is a strategic overview rather than the more detailed view of the day-to-day manager or of the classroom teacher.

3.3.5 Governance in a school with a religious or distinctive character.

The governing body of a foundation, voluntary aided or voluntary controlled school is a body corporate with exempt charitable status. A body corporate is one with a legal identity separate from its individual members. These schools automatically have charitable status.

In the voluntary aided, maintained (including the Grant Maintained Integrated Sector) and Irish Medium schools, there are foundation governors. These are appointed by the school’s founding body, church, or other body named in the school’s instrument of government. Their function is to ensure compliance with the trust deed, if there is one. In schools with a religious character, the foundation governors must preserve and develop this. It is important that the principal forms a good relationship with the foundation governors, and with the local priest, minister or leader of the faith community in the case of a school with a religious character.

In foundation schools there are normally foundation governors appointed by the school’s founding body, church or other organisation, as named in the school’s instrument of government. If the school has a religious character the foundation governors must preserve and develop this, and ensure compliance with any trust deed. If the school has no foundation or equivalent body, it has partnership governors appointed by the governing body after a nominations process.

The most recent reconstitution of Board of Governors took place in 2005-2006.

3.4 Roles and responsibilities in School Leadership resulting from governance structures

3.4.1 These roles are directly related to the schemes of management in effect in each of the categories of schools outlined in section 2.2.1.

3.4.2 In the Voluntary Grammar Schools there is much variety in practice derived from their historic position, which in some cases dates back to the early decades of the 17th century. The Board of Governors is both the employer and the employing authority and its chairperson will often in his/her relationship with the Principal determine the strategic direction of the school. As all of these schools are grant-aided common characteristics in the leadership structures have emerged, partly from the terms and conditions of service under which members of the school leadership group are paid. Therefore all of these schools will have Principals (synonymous in Northern Ireland with the term 'headteacher') and one or more Vice-Principals. The issues for the school leaders are similar to those in all grant-aided schools but with the additional factor of direct control of finances and the problems of managing often extensive school estate.

3.4.3 In schools controlled by the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) school leadership occupies the middle ground between the ELB and the Board of Governors. The ELB retains responsibility for initial budget allocation and monitoring, providing curriculum advice and in-service support, Children's Services, Buildings/Maintenance, and Human Resources. In these areas the Principal, who has been selected by a Teaching Appointments Committee of the ELB, will work directly with the ELB. As employing authorities the ELBs have strongly encouraged 'a levelling of leadership' in the distribution of leadership roles in controlled schools.

3.4.4 In the Voluntary Maintained Catholic (Maintained) Sector, schools are managed by Boards of Governors that consist of members nominated by trustees (mainly Roman Catholic), along with representatives of parents, teachers and the ELBs. The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), established by the 1989 Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order, has a primary purpose of providing an upper tier of management for the Catholic Maintained Sector with the objective of raising standards in these schools. CCMS is the employer of teachers in Catholic Maintained Schools. It has been active in promoting leadership believing it to be 'at the centre of continuous improvement' and advocates distribution of leadership in a future context of maximum autonomy for its schools characterised by collaboration not competition.

3.4.5 The majority of schools that teach through the medium of Irish are also included in the Voluntary Maintained sector. While the Council for Irish-medium education has a promotional role the Board of Governors of each Irish medium school is the employer and the employing authority.

3.4.6 In recent years a number of grant-maintained integrated schools have been established at primary level and post-primary levels. Such schools are funded directly by the Department. The Board of Governors is both the employer and employing authority

3.4.7 It can be seen that the ethos and culture of these schools varies considerably. In the exemplars given a school leader might be expected by the employing body, as well as fulfilling the statutory and generic roles as outlined in sections 3.1 - 3.3, to give particular prominence to academic excellence, or Catholic values, or the Irish language, or integrated education, or a combination of these priorities. In addition '*school ethos, defined as the observed practices of school members, often departs considerably from school ethos defined as those values and beliefs which the school officially supports*' (Donnelly in 'Differences in Schools: a question of ethos?') (1999).

3.4.8 Leaders in Northern Ireland's 45 Special Schools, i.e those for children with special education needs (SEN), have a particular role. They operate within a Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs and also a Supplement to the Code of Practice, effective from 1 September 2005, which was produced as result of SENDO. Schools, Boards and health and social services authorities must

consider the advice given in the Code of Practice when deciding what they should do for children with special educational needs. Thus the accountability of the school leaders in a Special School to various stakeholders is both widespread and set at a high level.

3.4.9 In smaller schools, especially those with a teaching Principal, greater teamwork may be required to deliver all required roles and responsibilities. Principals in these schools believe that this is often at personal cost to staff.

3.5 School Governors and the leadership of schools

3.5.1 Articles 13(3) and 90(3) of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 require Boards of Governors to prepare and maintain a school development plan for their school. The legislation places a duty on the Board of Governors to prepare and from time to time revise the school development plan. While Governors may choose to delegate the preparation of the plan to the Principal, it is the Board of Governors that must formally approve the plan and in doing so their formal approval should be minuted. Where the Board of Governors prefers to undertake the preparation of the plan, they must consult with the Principal. The Board of Governors must also approve formally any subsequent revisions to the plan. The School Development Plan is primarily a working document for use by the school. It will be based on the school's analysis of current levels of performance, its assessment of how current trends and future factors may impact on the school and set out priorities and targets for improvement for the period ahead.

3.5.2 The Department of Education in undertaking a review of school governance in Northern Ireland with the purpose of 'Promoting Better School Governance in the Interests of the Learners' asked the ETI for support and evidence-based advice in order to inform its deliberations and recommendations on policy. The ETI's report of a survey entitled, Report on 'Promoting Better School Governance in the Interests of the Learners' issued in 2006, was based on the collation of the views of the governors of some 50 primary and post-primary schools, about their perceived roles and responsibilities.

3.5.3 These perceptions have a major effect in the distribution of responsibilities between themselves acting as a corporate Board of Governors and the school's leaders, especially the Principal.

In those areas of a school's practice and provision where there is a need for clear leadership and good management the governors' perceptions were as follows:

- They were clear on procedures and the business relating to appointments, promotions and redundancies.
- Almost all governors reported that they discussed and ratified relevant policies relating to Pastoral Care and Child Protection issues, including discipline and drugs awareness.
- All Boards of Governors are aware of the delegated budget arrangements under the LMS procedures and many have set up finance sub-committees to deal with these. The extent to which income and expenditure are monitored varies. Almost all governors rely on the Principal to provide details of the school budget. Many governors referred to the difficulty of working to an imprecise budget due to falling or fluctuating enrolments.
- Almost all Boards of Governors are aware that there are set procedures to deal with Open Enrolment, Admissions, Retentions, Suspensions and Expulsions, and generally rely on the Principal to provide guidance as appropriate.
- While almost all governors report that they are aware of the existence of school policies, both curricular and general, a large majority state that the policies tend to be presented to them by the Principal and ratified after a general discussion on the content. One chairperson stated: 'we have sight of the policy before signing it off'. A small number of Boards of Governors stated that they are not mere 'rubber-stampers', but do have input into policies – usually presented to them at draft stage – and then they ratify formally after any amendments are made. Some Boards of Governors have formed a curriculum sub-committee to evaluate whole school policies and guidance.
- In almost all schools, governors are not familiar with benchmarking against schools of comparable size or free school meals (FSM), and with the exception of a very small number of schools, they are not involved in the setting or monitoring of targets.

- There is little evidence to show that Boards of Governors are involved in, or aware of their school's programme for improvement. A majority of governors have been made aware by the Principal of the SDP but they are not involved in devising it; only a small number scrutinise and monitor the progress of the relevant action plans. One Board of Governors stated that they persuaded the Principal to make the SDP less ambitious.
- While there is an increasing use of assessment data for management purposes in schools, very few governors are informed about benchmarking trends. They lack knowledge as to whether their school is maintaining and evaluating its performance against recognised benchmarked data.
- Governors were consistently unaware of the internal assessment processes such as standardised scores, but had some awareness of the school's reporting arrangements.
- Governors were also unaware of the processes (where they existed) used by the schools to self-evaluate provision and standards of achievement.

3.5.3 *Major conclusions in the Report were:*

- A majority of Boards of Governors are aware of external examination outcomes, but very few are directly involved in comparing benchmarked data and in setting targets. There is very little awareness of the processes used by schools to monitor pupils' progress, and only in a small number of schools is there an understanding of and involvement in the school's strategy for improvement.
- If Boards of Governors are to embrace important areas related to teaching and learning, standards and outcomes, improvement and self-evaluation, they are, generally, insufficiently equipped as yet to do so.
- Governors will require comprehensive training in these specific areas to give them the necessary skills, knowledge and confidence to demonstrate good governance in the core business of the school, that is in improving provision and raising standards of achievement for learners.

'Almost all governors make reference to the good working relationships and mutual respect that exist between them and the Principal, and, appropriately, they see this as a critical, necessary condition for effective governance. Many also appreciate that there needs to be openness, honest debate and sharing of important information and knowledge among all those involved in a school; they undertake, with confidence and success, the well-established roles, such as appointments, property management and links with parents. The area of financial management is less secure, with only a minority of governors involved in overseeing expenditure and income on an ongoing basis. While most Boards of Governors ratify school policies and at times the SDP, only a small minority discuss and amend the original documents and monitor their implementation.'

3.5.4 Based on the survey of some 50 schools, Boards of Governors delegate, either formally or informally, very many aspects of a school's provision to the Principal or other senior School Leaders. This places the School Leaders in positions of enormous influence, 'de facto' if not 'de jure', in determining what happens currently in most schools and also in developing the strategies by which individual schools will move forward into a preferred future.

3.6 Organisation and leadership structures within schools.

3.6.1 Apart from the designation of Principals and Vice-Principals, who may act together as a Senior Management or Leadership Team, as outlined in 3.1 above, there is no other officially recognised tier of leadership. The term 'middle manager' is often used to describe those classroom teachers with a recognised responsibility in certain aspects of a school's practice who may lead other teachers in discharging these responsibilities. The actual distribution of these leadership roles is the function of the Board of Governors as advised by the Principal.

3.6.2 In practice in Post-Primary schools the roles are usually related to the organisation and delivery of the curriculum and in pastoral provision. In large schools heads of departments, and more rarely heads of faculties, may be responsible for the work of up to 20 or more other teachers. Pastoral roles have become increasingly important and heads of junior, middle or upper school exist. A more common pastoral role is as head of a year group working with individual class tutors/form teachers.

3.6.3 In Primary Schools leadership, apart from that given by the Principal or the SMT, is often distributed to Key Stage Co-ordinators, to teachers with responsibility for promoting literacy and numeracy, and to Subject/Theme Co-ordinators. In small Primary Schools multiple roles in leadership may be exercised by one teacher.

3.6.4 In the context of Child Protection every school must appoint a designated teacher whose role is to liaise with the appropriate authorities. Every grant-aided school must have a SENCO in line with the Code of Practice for Special Education Needs (SEN) which was introduced by the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996. The SENCO is a member of staff who has responsibility for coordinating SEN provision. In a small school the SENCO may be the principal.

3.7 Core competencies for School Leaders

3.7.1 There is no evidence that the core competencies required of school leaders vary to any great extent from school to school irrespective of sector or size. There are some differences in emphases as to how the roles should be discharged, according to the type of management determined by the employing authority or governing body. For example consider the relative importance of estate and financial management to the Principal of a large Voluntary Grammar School compared with the limited degree of budget management available to the Principal of a small rural Primary School.

3.7.2 The following views on what school leaders must be able to do have been expressed by representatives drawn from all educational sector interests (Killyhevlin Conference, November 2006):

- All school leaders must be able to articulate a vision of what can be achieved in their school; this must be shared with and understood by the Governing Body and all stakeholders.
- School leaders, at all levels, are required to promote the core values of the school rather than simply maintaining the 'status quo' through efficient management
- School leaders, as the lead professionals and major agents for change, must promote agreed thinking about the nature of learning and teaching and their relationship to the formal and informal curriculum. They must recognise their limitations and understand that there is already expertise within the organisation that must be fully utilised and supported.
- Senior school leaders are required to assist the development of a new concept of professionalism in their schools. They must successfully implement the performance review and the professional development of all staff, particularly through the PRSD scheme.
- School leaders must develop high level interpersonal skills to ensure that the vision for the school is implemented. They are required to demonstrate emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive, use, understand and manage emotions in themselves; in working with others in the school; and in outward relationships with a range of stakeholders and partners.
- The Principal must have the ability to manage changing relations with the governing body and as appropriate with the employing authority within the context of the Reform of Public Administration which, in the education sector, is due to become operational after April 2008.
- School leaders must distribute leadership through restructuring the school and in developing the 'leadership capacity' in individuals and in the school as an organic whole. In so doing they are challenged to turn 'followers' into 'leaders'.
- School leaders must display competency in analysis of data and use it to benchmark the quality of provision and outcomes.

3.7.3 The Indicators of Quality that are being promoted by the Education and Training Inspectorate as they evaluate the standard of leadership and management through inspection can be summarised in the following questions:

- Where is there evidence of Strategic Leadership?
- What actions do school leaders take to promote improvement?
- In what ways do Staffing and Curriculum arrangements meet the needs of pupils?
- How efficiently is Accommodation and Resources managed?
- What is the quality of the Links and External Partnerships in effect?
- Does the Financial Management of the school ensure there is Value for Money?

The view expressed by ETI is that ‘quality leadership and management is the key to school improvement’. For this to occur there must be ‘shared language, shared evaluation, shared vision and shared practice’. The competencies required of school leaders must therefore relate directly to the achievement of these objectives.

3.8 The National Standards for Headteachers (Northern Ireland) (2005)

These are widely held to provide the framework in which all the core competencies, seen as always desirable and often essential in school leaders, can be aligned. They have been derived and contextualised for Northern Ireland from the National Standards for Headteachers (England).

The six key areas of Shaping the Future, Leading Learning and Teaching, Developing Self and Working with Others, Managing the Organisation, Securing Accountability, Strengthening Community are relevant not only to the work of Principals as school leaders but also provide the context for the professional development of senior and middle managers who may aspire to headship.

The standards are ‘generic and are applicable ...irrespective of phase and type of school’. ‘They are intended to provide a framework for professional development and action and to inform, challenge and enthuse serving and aspiring headteachers’. The standards have provided a common language for school leaders and in particular the ‘Actions’ outlined in connection with each key area can be descriptive of what many school leaders, other than Principals, actually do in fulfilment of their roles.

These Standards therefore ‘have a range of uses’. For example ‘the objectives of the PRSD scheme will be informed by the Standards’. They also ‘provide guidance to all school stakeholders in what should be expected from the role of the headteacher and are also used to identify threshold levels of performance for the assessment (i.e. of school leaders at senior or middle management levels) within the Professional Qualification for Headship in Northern Ireland PQH(NI). The Standards are increasingly used by the employing authorities to provide job descriptions for school leaders. They have provided a framework for self-evaluation by Principals and other school leaders, at a personal and whole school level, through a Continuous Professional Development Record CPDR promoted by the Regional Training Unit.

The competences drawn from the National Standards that are the basis of the Final Skill Assessment for PQH(NI) are very similar to those expressed in 3.7.2. These are seen as essential, not only in the discharge of the role of headteacher but for all those who work as school leaders. These are described as being evident in:

Analysing information

Seeking out information from appropriate sources when necessary.

Identifying the significant content of available information.

Identifying links, patterns and underlying issues.

Making judgements

Making appropriate decisions based on clear principles and the weight of available evidence.

Thinking broadly and creatively to solve problems.

Keeping a focus on what matters most.

Balancing short-term and long-term implications.

Leading others

Securing acceptance of ideas.

Influencing, challenging, motivating and working with others to achieve agreed ends.

Recognising and developing the potential in others.

Organising

Prioritising, reconciling demands and managing time.

Creating and implementing clear and appropriate plans for action.

Delegating appropriately.

Relating to others

Communicating clearly.

Listening to others and showing that you have heard.

Understanding others' points of view and taking them into account.

Treating others with respect and sensitivity.

Recognising and managing your own emotions, motivations and needs.

4 ENHANCING LEARNING AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

4.1 Issues related to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment

4.1.1. Within the Northern Ireland system of schooling there has been no differentiation by sector or type of school management in regard to any official concerns that exist about standards of teaching, learning and assessment. Nor are any variations that might exist widely reflected as concerns among parents, or indeed among the general public, as to the quality of education in Northern Ireland. The most recent ETI Chief Inspector's Report (2002-2004) stated '*The provision within education,.....is meeting well the general expectations of pupils and young people, their parents, and the community at large. For most, and notably for the able and the most able, that which is provided is particularly effective, and is admired and commented upon by many who live outside Northern Ireland. Success in public examinations is better than ever, and stronger than that in other regions of the United Kingdom*'. Issues related to the quality of teaching, learning and assessments are regarded as generic to the whole system and are collated through the Inspection process by ETI and identified in the Reports of the ETI Chief Inspector.³

4.1.2 The Report for the period 2002-2004 summarised issues for the system which can be paraphrased as follows:

- The significant changes to the primary and post-primary curricula, to be implemented from September 2006, will present teachers, managers, governors, support services ... with many challenges and opportunities. These changes must be managed in conjunction with the day-to-day running of the schools, and the maintenance of existing commitments and standards. This will require much from staff generally, and from members of senior management in particular.
- Vocational education will be developed substantially, and qualifications need to be clarified and improved through the introduction of a more coherent framework.
- The current political impasse, new economic opportunities and pressures, societal changes and greater diversity within the population of Northern Ireland as a result of inward migration, are issues affecting young people which require a considered response from the education sector. As these developments take shape schools are beginning to experience the adverse impact of demographic decline, evident in relation to falling enrolments. School leaders will, as they have done many times before, need to respond positively and to the best of their ability.
- Improvements have been made and high standards maintained but there are issues which over the years have remained impervious to remedy and improvement, and there is a need to identify other important areas where we all need to do better.
- Success in public examinations is better than ever, and stronger than that in other regions of the United Kingdom.
- We need to move beyond thinking of education as successful insofar as it helps young people do well in examinations, and we need to explore further the potential of education to motivate young people to make a positive social, economic and environmental contribution to the communities to which they belong.
- We need to do more for those young people whose needs are not well served by our educational and training systems, who experience little or no success, who see little merit in a conventional school-based education, and who leave school and training ill equipped to find, or hold down, employment.

³ A number of qualitative terms are used throughout the Chief Inspector's Report to present the findings. These terms should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all - more than 90%

Most - 75% - 90%

A majority - 50% - 74%

A significant minority - 30% - 49%

A minority - 10% - 29%

Very few/a small number - less than 10%

- There is the need for more attention to be given to certain key recurring themes and areas for improvement; including special educational needs; catering for individual difference; information and communication technology (ICT); monitoring and evaluation; and assisting young people to respond effectively to life in Northern Ireland's still troubled society. In the period from 2002 to 2004, evidence from inspection indicates that, whilst increased attention has been given to these matters, in the main, further work is required if the necessary improvements are to be made.
 - a. ICT – much has been achieved and invested since 1997 to encourage the use of ICT in our schools and colleges. Evidence from inspection suggests clearly that the quality and range of resources in classrooms have improved significantly and that ICT is highly motivational in encouraging children and young people in their learning. There is also increasing evidence of inventive and effective usage of ICT by teachers and lecturers. Inspectors report that more remains to be done to develop ICT further as an integral and creative element in the day-to-day teaching and learning across the education and training sectors.
 - b. Monitoring and evaluation - Education and training institutions are now rich in data. While there is some excellent practice across all sectors, and evidence of improvement, in the main, there is a continuing need for more effective monitoring and evaluation, and for the better use of performance data to reach a more informed view of practice and standards. Schools should continue to promote self-evaluation and self-improvement, and inspection reports should give increased emphasis to an organisation's capacity for both.
 - c. Vocational and work related education - The Department of Education's key stage (KS) 4 Flexibility Programme has done much to motivate pupils, particularly those who are unimpressed by more conventional curricular arrangements. Support for the Programme continues to grow. Currently, 117 non-selective schools are involved, some 72% of the sector. Increasing numbers of selective schools are developing vocational programmes for sixth-form pupils, and links with further education colleges. The response of the young people to the KS4 Flexibility Programme continues, in the main, to be highly positive. Nonetheless, there are challenges in an otherwise successful story. Some schools report that the attendance of pupils on the days when they are in college or training organisations, or on work placement, is better than when they are in school and subject to the standard timetable and ways of working. Inspectors report that much of the school-based work for these young people remains highly conventional in nature. Furthermore, subject teachers make insufficient links with the learning opportunities which the pupils experience when attending further education colleges, training organisations, or work placements.
- The Chief Inspector's Report provides substantial evidence to demonstrate the strengths and achievements of the Northern Ireland education system. It stresses the importance of recognising and celebrating its success. It is equally important that the areas for improvement identified in this report are addressed and remedied, not least the urgent need to improve the educational experiences of those young people who gain little from what is currently provided, and who lack appropriate qualifications and skills.

4.2 Levels of quality in teaching, learning and assessment– Indicators from Inspection ⁴

4.2.1 Primary Schools

The main strengths are:

- the positive ethos;
- the arrangements for the pastoral care of the children;
- the general quality of teaching;
- the overall quality of learning;
- the resources used to promote the children’s learning; and
- the important contribution of the ancillary staff to the work of the school.

The main areas for improvement are:

- monitoring and evaluation in a significant minority of the schools;
- the provision for special education in a minority of the schools, including insufficient monitoring of the progress made by children with special educational needs, and education plans which do not focus sufficiently on those needs;
- the quality of the provision made for the children in reception classes;
- the use of assessment information to track children’s progress over time;
- the assessment of children’s learning through play;
- supporting the needs of individual children;
- the insufficient integration of ICT into the wider curriculum; and
- curricular links between the pre-school sector and primary schools, and between primary and post-primary schools.

How effective are the schools’ procedures for monitoring and evaluation?

A majority of the schools have a generally satisfactory or better understanding of the strengths of their provision; in a significant minority, the staff are less effective in identifying areas for improvement and in planning for improvement. A majority have established satisfactory or better systems to monitor and evaluate the children’s standards of work. In the best practice, in about one-sixth of the schools inspected, the principals and senior management make good use of qualitative and quantitative data. The most effective schools use computer systems to evaluate quantitative and benchmarking data on, for example, attendance and the children’s levels of attainment. This data is analysed to monitor the children’s progress, set targets for individual children, or for whole classes, and to plan for improvement. In a significant minority of the schools, monitoring and evaluation strategies are limited in scope and effectiveness, particularly when principals and senior management teams do not have not an effective approach to whole-school development and the improvement of standards. Typically, in these schools, test data is collected but is not used well to inform planning or to improve the provision for children of differing abilities, including the more able

How effective are the procedures for assessment, recording and reporting?

In most schools, assessment, recording and reporting procedures collectively have significant strengths, or the strengths outweigh the weaknesses. In the best practice, the teachers use marking and monitoring to inform future teaching and learning. Most mark the children’s work regularly. A minority indicate clearly how the children’s work might be improved. In general, assessment information is not used sufficiently to monitor progress over time and to inform subsequent learning and teaching. Limited attention is given to

⁴ In assessing the various features of provision in a school, the Inspectorate relates its evaluations to four performance levels which may be interpreted as follows:

1. Significant strengths good (ranging to outstanding)
2. Strengths outweigh weaknesses satisfactory (ranging to good)
3. Weaknesses outweigh strengths fair (ranging to satisfactory)
4. Significant weaknesses (poor)

The comments in the text relate to these descriptors

tracking the progress of individual children within and across key stages. In contrast, in a minority of the schools, the most effective assessment involves the careful monitoring of the children's attainments through the use of data from standardised tests and through self-assessment by the children

How good are the management and leadership in Primary Schools?

In the best practice, the use of self-evaluative strategies brings about a good understanding of the school's performance and develops a sense of unity and purpose. Those with management responsibilities have a firm grasp of the strengths of the school and of the areas for improvement; roles and responsibilities are defined clearly; and action plans, linked to whole-school development plans, assist the staff to monitor, evaluate and sustain continuous improvement in the standards attained by the children. In a minority of the schools, the management and leadership are ineffective and the principals have a limited understanding of the quality of the learning and teaching. Development planning is not sufficiently specific in identifying targets for improvement, and there is an absence of effective strategies to monitor and evaluate standards.

The Boards of Governors have increasingly become involved in decision-making and overseeing the work of the schools. During their discussions with the Inspectorate, governors raised concerns, for example, in relation to their training needs in recruiting and promoting staff, child protection, and financial management.

4.2.2 Post Primary Schools

The main strengths are:

- the caring ethos in most schools, with teachers committed to the welfare of the pupils;
- the good behaviour and co-operation shown by almost all of the pupils;
- the good pastoral care in a majority of the schools;
- the improvement in the quality of teaching, most of which has significant strengths, or strengths which outweigh weaknesses;
- the general continuing improvement in the standards achieved by the pupils in GCSE and in GCE examinations;
- the improvements in the pupils' learning and experiences in English and in mathematics;
- the increased recognition by schools of the potential of ICT to improve learning and teaching, and the significant improvement in ICT resources through the C2k initiative; and
- the greater focus on self-evaluation as a strategy for improvement.

The main areas for improvement are:

- the need for all schools to comply fully with guidance on Pastoral Care in Schools and on Child Protection;
- the need to improve a minority of lessons in which the quality of teaching has more weaknesses than strengths, or has significant weaknesses;
- the provision and outcomes for pupils with special educational needs;
- the performance of low and under attaining pupils at GCSE, and the need to reverse the trend of the increasing numbers of boys who leave school with no qualifications;
- the generally inappropriate teaching in timetabled ICT classes at KS3, and the need for the further embedding of ICT across the curriculum;
- the narrow curriculum for sixth-form pupils in all schools, and in particular, the need to reverse the downward trend in the number of post-16 pupils studying modern languages, physics and mathematics;
- monitoring and evaluation in a significant minority of the schools; and, in a majority, the need to make more effective use of data analysis and benchmarking to influence classroom practice and to improve standards;
- the deficiencies in the accommodation in many post-primary schools; and
- leadership in a minority of the schools.

How good are the management and leadership in Post-Primary schools?

Inspection evidence indicates that in 34% of the schools, the leadership of the principal is good; it is satisfactory in a further 50%. In the remaining schools, the leadership is not good enough, and affects

adversely the quality of teaching and learning, the effectiveness of governance, and the morale of the teachers.

Where the principal’s leadership and management are not good enough, the staff’s ability to respond effectively to change is limited; in addition, standards often fluctuate unduly. In those schools where the standard of teaching and learning is poor in some specialist subjects, insufficient action is taken by those with management responsibilities to effect improvement. In a few instances, underachievement is tolerated over a significant period of time; the expectations of management, staff, and the pupils are too low; and insufficient attention is given to bringing about improvement.

How effective are monitoring, evaluation and self-evaluation in post-primary schools?

Teachers and senior management are aware of the importance of monitoring and evaluation in bringing about improvement in provision and outcomes. In most schools, useful strategies are being implemented to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. Increasingly, emphasis is being given to the analysis of examination results and other performance indicators and comparisons are being made with benchmarked and subject-specific data from similar schools in Northern Ireland. Despite this, only a minority of the schools use data analysis and benchmarking in a sufficiently effective manner to influence classroom practice and to improve the pupils’ standards of work. In a small number of schools, there is inadequate use of comparative data to monitor the pupils’ external examination results and whole-school standards.

4.3 Standards achieved – Inspection findings

Diagram A

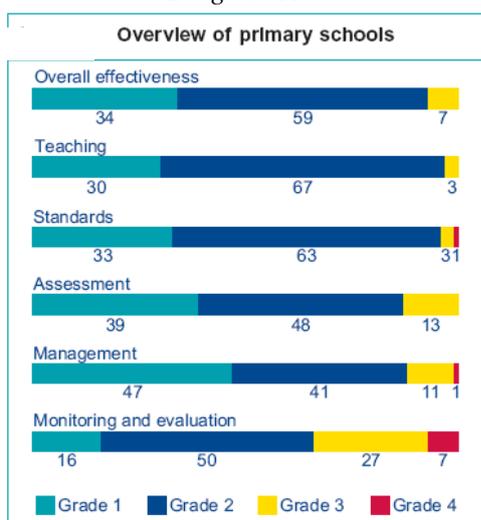
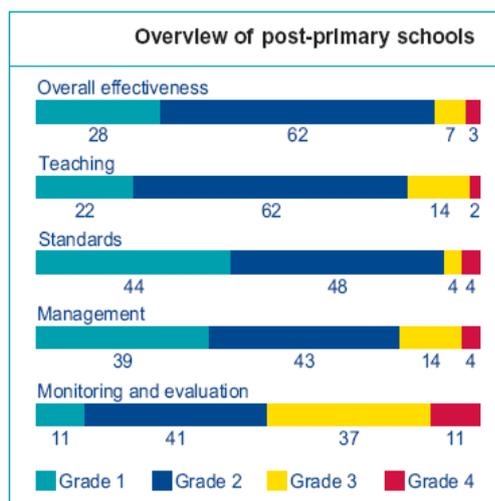


Diagram B



The diagrams give an overview of how Northern Ireland schools performed in the areas on which Inspection focused. As an example, in *Diagram B* in looking at the quality of ‘Teaching’ in post-primary schools, In 22% of lessons observed there were significant strengths; in 62% the strengths outweighed the weaknesses; in 14% of the lessons observed the weaknesses outweighed the strengths and the quality of teaching is poor in 2% of the lessons.

Diagram C

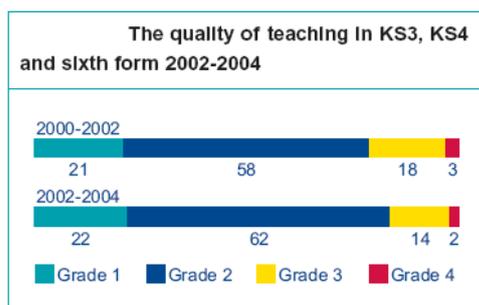


Diagram C indicates a 5% improvement in the quality of lessons in post-primary schools in the period of the last Chief Inspector’s Report (2002-2004)

4.4 Standards achieved – assessment results

Diagram D

Key Stage 2: the proportion of children in Northern Ireland achieving at least Level 4										
	English					Mathematics				
	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
NI	69%	71%	73%	74%	76%	74%	75%	76%	77%	78%
England	68%	70%	72%	73%	72%	69%	72%	74%	74%	74%

End of Key Stage 2 results, although based on teacher assessment, indicate that the achievements of Primary School children in basic literacy and numeracy were consistently been better in the period 1998-2002 than those in England; however the gap has recently narrowed significantly.

Diagram E

Key Stage 3: the proportion of pupils achieving at least Level 5					
English					
	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03
NI	68%	69%	72%	73%	72%
England	64%	64%	64%	67%	69%
Mathematics					
	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03
NI	70%	67%	69%	73%	71%
England	62%	65%	66%	67%	71%
Science					
	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03
NI	65%	67%	67%	68%	68%
England	55%	59%	66%	67%	68%

Diagram F

All Schools: attainment in GCSE						
		1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
% 5+ GCSEs A*-C	NI	56	57	57	59	59
	Eng	48	49	50	52	53
% No GCSE grades	NI	3	4	4	4	4
	Eng	6	6	5	5	5

This data excludes special, independent schools, and pupils with a statement of special educational needs.

At the end of Key Stage 3 it is only in English that there is a higher level of achievement; the results in Mathematics showing a drop in the 2002-2004 period with those in Science showing no improvement. At GCSE level the number achieving 5+ A*-C grades is markedly better than those in England. There is no improvement in the percentage of Northern Ireland pupils who leave without any GCSE grades.

4.5 School Leadership and the forming of policies for teaching, learning and assessment

The Chief Inspector's Report for 2002-2004 has indicated clearly areas in need of improvement in relation to these aspects of school practice. The role of school leadership in achieving these improvements is much less clear. The Report has the faith to believe that *'school leaders will, as they have done many times before, need to respond positively and to the best of their ability'*.

A report by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (September 2000) on 'Improving Schools through Purposeful Leadership' investigated the most effective ways of applying agreed academic values consistently through principals' leadership to the key areas of teaching and learning, as a means of improving school performance. The report found that both primary and post primary principals found administration of low importance in terms of leadership. The three elements of their work most highly valued by both primary and post primary principals were good teaching, identifying and developing the school's professional capital, and dissemination of good practice. Communication between principals and teachers largely related to curriculum issues and the administration of teachers. Staff welfare in the form of professional development, conditions of service and social support feature much less strongly in leadership dialogue.

The challenge is that the changes in curriculum *'must be managed in conjunction with the day to day running of the school and the maintenance of existing commitments and standards'*. In practice the school leadership in conjunction with the Board of Governors must successfully implement changes within a curricular framework that has been determined externally, replacing one with which they were familiar since 1989. However, it is of equal importance to note that the revised curriculum was borne out of extensive consultation with the teaching profession, among others, and provides them with the flexibility they requested. Therefore, how this curriculum is to be taught and how children will learn is largely to be decided at the level of each individual school.

All schools recognise the importance of the learning that takes place outside the bounds of the formal and timetabled curriculum. In all schools there is justifiable pride in extra-curricular provision but little analysis of what children may learn through it. Secondary schools through, for example, the provision of school intranets, encourage independent learning. Schools and their leaders have the freedom to develop their own policies on teaching and learning.

The school's leader(s) in conjunction with its governing body and in line with statutory requirements will determine all procedures for internal assessment and monitoring of pupils' work. The Chief Inspector's Report indicates that in best practice teachers use marking and monitoring to inform teaching and learning and mark work regularly. However, information from internal assessment is not used sufficiently to check progress of individual pupils over time, e.g. across the Key Stages. At secondary level data analysis against benchmarking and subject specific data from similar schools is increasingly used. It is only in a minority of cases that school leaders use this process to influence classroom practice and to improve pupils' standards of work.

The requirements for assessment at the end of Key Stages have been changed recently by the Department of Education (September 2006) in light of the impact of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, which brings in annual assessment instead of Key Stage assessment. For those schools which currently promote vocational education, and for all schools which must do so in future under the Entitlement Framework (see 1.7.6), there is uncertainty about the framework in which such courses will be assessed. At present schools offering vocational pathways must seek validation from examining bodies from outside Northern Ireland. The revised assessment arrangements are being introduced on a phased basis from 2007/08 – 2009/10 and primary school principals have already had awareness-raising conferences. The Partnership Management Board (PMB) which was established to bring together the education partners and plan a coherent implementation strategy for the revised curriculum and assessment arrangements has detailed plans for training and support in delivering the revised arrangements. This support is sequenced in

line with the phasing in timescale and began in September 2005 with Leading Learning conferences for school leaders.

The Council for Curriculum and Assessment (CCEA) provides a framework both for the implementation and assessment of the curriculum throughout schooling from Foundation Stage to GCE A level. It also undertakes a major role in forming policy. Its Corporate Plan (2005-2008) states '*CCEA will pro-actively develop advice on educational policy to positively shape the Northern Ireland educational environment*'. It '*believes that Northern Ireland's education system should be driven forward by coherent, inspired and value-adding educational policy. CCEA has a vital leadership role to play in providing policy advice that is well-informed, evidence-based and that clearly places the needs of the learners in Northern Ireland's education system at the forefront of its thinking. CCEA is committed to the creation and delivery of a curriculum that reflects the educational needs and priorities of learners, teachers and society as a whole. CCEA believes that it is essential that the curriculum, therefore, reflect a coherent and relevant combination of learning areas, skills and capabilities that is challenging and enjoyable for learners. It is also vital that the curriculum enable learners to progress onwards towards continued learning and that it prepares them for their roles in the economy and society at large (CCEA 2005)*'. It is noteworthy that CCEA adopts a pro-active position not just as the creator of the curriculum but also in its delivery.

The expected and statutory role of school leaders is to work within this curricular provision, which taken as a whole can be described as 'The revised Northern Ireland Curriculum'.

4.6 School accountability and pupil learning

4.6.1 In each school the immediate responsibility for academic and financial performance falls to the Board of Governors, but the Board of Governors of controlled and maintained schools will also be accountable to the education and library board and, in the case of Catholic Maintained Schools to the CCMS. Controlled and maintained schools are funded through the Education and Library Board in whose area the school is located while voluntary grammar schools and grant-maintained integrated schools are funded directly by the Department of Education. Voluntary Grammar (VG) and Grant-Maintained Integrated (GMI) schools (which are funded directly by the Department of Education) must comply with ; and that financial and management controls are in place in schools which are appropriate and sufficient to safeguard public funds and ensure value for money.

4.6.2 Apart from accountability to these funding bodies, schools are responsible to parents and their pupils to provide an education in line with the current statutory requirements, for example in matters relating to the curriculum, behaviour, pastoral care and child protection. The Principal as the lead professional has the statutory duty 'where this is appropriate to consult with ...the staff of the school'. As school leader he/she has an accountability 'to make arrangements for parents to be given regular information about the curriculum, the progress of their children and other matters affecting the school'. Such information is usually given to parents in two annual reports and on general school matters through an Annual Report of the Board of Governors as required through the school's scheme of management. This must contain a financial statement indicating how the school's delegated budget was used, and describe measures taken to strengthen links with the community as well as outline the arrangements made for special educational needs and disabled pupils. The Report must state the measures taken to ensure the security of pupils, staff and the premises. Additional information on school activities and successes is often given in a principal's verbal report during distribution of prizes or awards and increasingly is provided through school internet websites.

4.6.3 The most important external source of evidence on the quality of the school's provision and practice is through Inspection by the ETI. In relation to any inspection of the school the Board of Governors must convene a meeting with the Reporting Inspector, and, if relevant, any other member of the Inspection Team, before the inspection to make the Board of Governors' views about the school known to the Inspection Team. After each inspection of the school, the Board of Governors must provide the parents of all registered pupils at the school with a summary of the general inspection report or the full report of the focused inspection which shall be prepared by the Department. Within 3 months of receiving the

Inspection Report it must prepare its response to the Report 'which shall set out the action which the Board of Governors intends to take'. It must discuss the inspection and the Governors' response to it in the Annual Report.

4.6.4 In these processes school leaders are held accountable on a regular basis both internally to the Board of Governors and externally to the Department of Education and as appropriate the Education and Library board and CCMS. It is from school leaders that the Board of Governors will draw information for its Annual Report. The principal through the PRSD scheme (see 3.2.6.2) must account for Pupil Progress, and their Leadership and Management of the school; and salary placement and progression will be based on this review. The quality of their leadership and management is also now a focal point in any Inspection of the School.

4.7 Curriculum implementation and development

4.7.1 The instituted processes for monitoring curriculum development and implementation have historically been undertaken by the Inspectorate of the Department of Education. For example after the introduction of the current Northern Ireland Curriculum on a phased basis between 1990 and 1996 a significant report entitled 'An Evaluation of the Implementation of the NI Curriculum in Post-Primary Schools' was issued in 1999.

The report was based on evidence from 45 schools gathered by the District Inspectors during planned district visits to the schools. During these visits, inspectors held discussions with principals, other school leaders (members of the senior management team), teachers and pupils; they observed 241 lessons in a range of subjects and examined curriculum documentation and samples of the pupils' work. A key aim was to encourage and enable schools to monitor and evaluate aspects of their own work thus contributing to the raising of standards and to the dissemination of a culture of quality assurance and critical self-evaluation. In coming to a view about the curricular provision, the inspectors considered a range of factors, including:

- i. the schools' curriculum policies and how they were determined,*
- ii. the curriculum as timetabled by schools, including its breadth and balance,*
- iii. the inclusion of the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, (NIC)*
- iv. any differences in the curriculum provided to take account of the pupils' abilities or gender,*
- v. the extent to which the educational themes were integrated within the curriculum, and*
- vi. the provision and uptake of extra-curricular activities.*

In addition, the inspectors evaluated the quality of the pupils' experiences, and how schools monitored and evaluated their own provision and planned for curricular development. The schools' views of their own provision and of the NIC framework were also explored. Nearly all schools had a written curriculum policy or other relevant documentation. A minority of policies was under, or in need of, review; a small number of them pre-dated the introduction of the NIC (1990) and did not take into account its requirements.

4.7.2 In a significant minority of schools⁵, there was widespread consultation with the teaching staff in drawing up the curriculum documentation. In the majority of schools the policies were largely determined by the school leaders, viz the principal, the SMT, or a group of teachers with a particular responsibility for curriculum matters, with little or no involvement of other staff. It was held that the majority of schools need to improve this aspect of their consultation arrangements. The contribution of governors to the curriculum policies varied widely. Governors played an active role in drawing up the curriculum policy in a minority of schools. In some schools, the Board of Governors had been informed about, and contributed to the ratification of, curriculum policies. In a few schools, governors, in default of their statutory role, made little or no contribution to curriculum policy.

4.7.3 The majority of the schools had given considerable thought to decisions about their curriculum framework and organisation. This was seen-, for example, in the extent of the debate about curriculum issues, the work of curriculum groups, the regularity and effectiveness of review, the use of curriculum audits, the action flowing from discussion, the coherence of the resulting curriculum, or the detail of the

⁵ For definition of terms used in Reports by the Education and Training Inspectorate see footnote 2 at 4.1.1

school development plan. A significant minority of other schools showed less comprehensive or strategic thinking.

4.7.4 The schools organised their teaching groups in a great variety of ways. The majority used combinations of methods. Just fewer than half the schools visited, linked their decisions about teaching groups to the range in the ability of the pupils in the school. Bands, sets and streams were used to help to narrow the range of the ability of the pupils within teaching groups, and to aid teachers in catering for the pupils' differing needs. A minority of schools stated their rationale for the provision of activities beyond the timetabled day: the reasons given included the desire to reflect the school ethos, to extend the pupils' learning experiences, or to help to consolidate or develop the pupils' personal and social skills. The extra-curricular activities offered by the schools varied from very few to an extensive list; the majority offered a wide range, with one school listing 45 activities. Only a small number of schools reported that the introduction of the NIC had reduced the scope of extracurricular activity. One school indicated that it had lengthened its school day to accommodate the statutory curriculum. A minority of schools reported that they needed, and were using, time beyond the timetabled day to teach the curriculum which they wanted to provide for their pupils, such as taught programmes for GCSE Additional Mathematics, drama or physical education. A minority of schools provided after-school or evening sessions for study, homework or revision. The school leaders in the majority of schools were well aware of the implications of the initiatives on literacy, numeracy and ICT for teaching and learning in their schools. In a minority of schools literacy and numeracy co-ordinators had been appointed with a clear working brief and all the staff had discussed how best to promote literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum.

4.7.5 In a summary of how the NIC had been implemented the Inspectorate concluded

- i. The majority of schools needed to involve the teaching staff and governors more closely in drawing up their curriculum policies or other relevant documentation.
- ii. In their curriculum and monitoring and evaluation policies, or other related documentation, schools needed to give more guidance on the teaching and learning strategies to be used to translate aims into practice.
- iii. A small number of schools failed to provide all of the requirements of the NIC for all of the pupils in KS4.
- iv. A significant minority of schools needed to ensure a balanced curriculum for all pupils; certain pupils spend about 30-40% of their curriculum time in KS4 in one area of study, markedly so in the science and technology area of study in grammar schools.
- v. There needed to be a greater emphasis on the development of the following important skills for pupils:
thinking and reasoning skills;
oral and written communication skills;
initiative and independence; and
personal and inter-personal skills.
- vi. More schools needed to make more use of the CLASS ICT system, not just to analyse examination results, but also to carry out a systematic monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the curriculum, and, in the light of the information gained, to modify or adjust the curriculum provided.
- viii. Principals and senior managers needed to ensure that all teachers: know the implications of the recent initiatives on literacy, numeracy and ICT for their work; and consider any consequent changes needed in teaching and learning.

4.7.6 There is an acknowledgement that the curriculum developments since 1990 had brought important benefits to the pupils in relation to the curriculum, particularly in terms of equality of access. For example, the identification of compulsory contributory subjects, within an area of study framework, has ensured that the breadth of curriculum experienced by the pupils is no longer left to chance; subjects such as home economics and technology which previously were offered on a single-sex basis are now equally accessible to boys and girls alike; in contrast to the position where some schools offered no science at all, and had not the facilities to do so, all schools now offered a balanced science programme to their pupils, and had the capacity to do so; the study of a modern language at KS3 and 4 is an integral part of the curriculum, and gains had been made too, to enriching the core curriculum through the provision for the educational themes.

At the same time ETI acknowledge that *'clearly, these developments have posed challenges to teachers as individuals, and even a degree of upheaval to schools as organisations: new subjects, or/and the need to give broader access to them, have led, in some schools, to teachers of certain subjects being re-trained and redeployed, and to timetabling reviews and re-organisation, for example; refurbishment work, or conversions of classrooms and, at times, additional building work, to suit the demands of the changed curriculum, have posed temporary logistical problems for schools; in addition, there have been other significant changes to which the teaching profession has had to respond, in relation, for instance, to assessment, and recording and reporting the progress of individual pupils, and to issues linked to pastoral care.'*

As early as 1999, just 3 years after the full implementation of the NIC, developed from the 1989 Education Order, with all of the attendant changes to the school system and the requirements for new leadership roles to implement these changes, the ETI Report considers the necessity of further change. *'The findings of this survey are intended not only to help to inform deliberations about the future curriculum, but, in the shorter term to inform also all those who can influence, for the better, the quality of the experiences and the standards of achievement of the pupils in our schools today.'* *'Throughout this shifting educational environment, teachers have worked hard to bring about improvements in the interests of the pupils. Already many are engaging vigorously and positively in renewed educational debate as to the continuing appropriateness or otherwise of certain features of the NIC in the context of the new century, and CCEA is currently undertaking the preparatory work for a curriculum review'.*

4.7.7 Since 1998 CCEA has been involved in a lengthy process of curriculum review and revision. Following a major series of conferences and a monitoring programme in schools CCEA advised the then Minister, in February 1999, that there should be a fundamental review of the curriculum. CCEA was granted permission and resources. Five years and three major consultations later the Minister had agreed by 2004 to the proposed changes in both primary and post-primary schools. The changes agreed included:

- more flexibility for schools to decide what is best for their pupils;
- more emphasis on developing children's thinking skills, and their ability to solve problems and handle information;
- making personal social and health education a legal requirement;
- adding education about citizenship and employability to the curriculum;
- making sure that the connections between what is taught in different subjects are clearly visible where previously they have often been hidden; and
- moving from assessment at intervals to assessment on an ongoing basis which updates the Pupil Profile and which assists the learning process.

The implementation process is already getting underway. A Programme Management Board, involving CCEA, the Education and Library Boards, RTU and other partners, has been set up to ensure "joined-up thinking" on the roll-out of the changes. That process will take at least 5 years, and it is not expected that full implementation will take place before 2010. A major step forward has been taken in the introduction of The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 which became law on 19 July 2006. The Order provides the broad legislative framework to implement the revised statutory curriculum.

4.8 Teachers and teaching

4.8.1 Under their terms and conditions of service the professional duties of a principal 'shall include; participating, to such extent as may be appropriate having regard to his other duties, in the teaching of the pupils at the school, including the provision of cover for absent teachers'. In small schools, principals tend to have a timetabled teaching commitment and depending on the size of the school this can range from 1 day to 4 days. Such principals may also take on the role of co-ordinating work in subject areas or of a particular Key Stage. At secondary level some principals will take on a limited teaching role. Those school leaders who are involved in school management groups or leadership teams will almost invariably have some reduction in their timetabled commitments to enable them to fulfil their leadership roles. Vice-

Principals, for example may have no more than a half timetable in large Secondary schools, while in small Primary schools they will inevitably teach full-time.

4.9 Teacher observation, peer mentoring and coaching

4.9.1 Until recently the culture of schools in Northern Ireland had not produced significant structures that made teacher observation commonplace, or developed the practice of coaching and mentoring as an entitlement for school leaders or the teaching force as a whole. Some developments in this direction had occurred as part of the former Staff Development and Performance Scheme (SDPR). The SDPR scheme arose originally from a provision in the 1987 revision of terms and conditions to require principals, vice principals and teachers to take part in schemes for staff development and performance review. The primary objectives of the Scheme introduced in 1995, were to provide *'high quality and well planned professional support and training throughout teachers' careers, to recognise the achievement of teachers and to help them to identify ways of improving skills and performance; to help teachers having difficulties with their performance, through the provision of training and support; and to improve school management'*. The scheme specifically excluded any link to pay, promotion or discipline of teachers.⁶ A pilot scheme was initiated in 1991 which ran for four years. The central tenets, processes and procedures were trialed in a range of schools. Following these trials the formal scheme started in September 1995. The scheme was to be phased in over five years and it was envisaged that by June 2000 all principals would have completed one (two year) cycle of SDPR and all teachers would have completed year one of the review cycle. In fact in a number of schools the scheme was never implemented completely, in others there was a reluctance to spend time on a scheme which seemed to lack robustness in outcomes. An 'Interim Evaluation of the Teachers Staff Development and Performance Review Scheme in Northern Ireland' conducted by Alan Evans and Ken Jones, was published in May 1998. A further review and Report⁶ was completed in May 2000 and published in August of that year. In summary the principal recommendations were that:

- SDPR should be strengthened and integrated within the systems and structures of the school;
- SDPR should be directly linked to the school development planning process;
- Targets and objectives arising from the process should in the main relate to or emanate from SDP;
- The outcomes should be more related to teaching and learning and to school improvement strategies;
- The process should become more a two way process for supporting the professional development of the teacher while at the same time ensuring maximum benefit to the school;
- The process should be an annual one; and
- Management and training for the process should be improved.

There was a considerable level of agreement to the use of the SDPR scheme, as proposed in the Evans/Dowler recommendations, as the basis for a performance management scheme. There was not an agreement about the use of evidence to enable pay progression. When the Government introduced a new structure for pay progression of teachers in England and Wales in 2000 linked to performance review, a comparable scheme was accepted for Northern Ireland in 2004 and became operable from September 2005.

4.9.2 From September 2005 the Performance Review and Staff Development (PRSD) programme replaced SDPR as the agreed review process that all teachers are required to participate in as part of their conditions of service⁷. All teachers and principals are required to review their performance as part of the conditions of service. Many of the concepts that underpinned SDPR also underpin PRSD. The aims of both programmes are similar and the 'plan - do - review' framework is very much evident in both. The skills of planning and agreeing areas of focus and the monitoring arrangements to gather the evidence concluding with a review discussion are transferable into PRSD.

⁶ 'The follow-up to the interim evaluation of the teachers' staff development and performance review scheme in Northern Ireland' Evans and Dowler, School of Education University of Cardiff. (2000)

⁷ The details of the PRSD scheme are outlined in a number of publications issued by the Regional Training Unit. Those of greatest relevance for school leaders are a) 'Leading and Managing the Implementation of PRSD in Schools' (2005) designed as a conference workbook for principals and senior leaders and b) 'Supporting the Performance Review of the Principal' (2005) designed as a conference workbook for governor reviewers and principals. All publications can be accessed at http://www.rtuni.org/sections_Main.cfm?bizUnit_ID=8.

What distinguishes PRSD from SDPR is PRSD's linkage to the school development plan. SDPR very much concentrated on the reviewee and focused on ensuring teachers gained the benefits of a review process in the quality of their teaching. PRSD takes this emphasis on learning and teaching and connects it directly to the school development plan. An aspect of PRSD that was not part of SDPR is the inclusion of governors as reviewers of the principal and the involvement of an external adviser to advise and support these governor reviewers in the review discussion meeting.

4.9.3 As part of SDPR, which preceded the introduction of PRSD, many principals, senior teachers and teachers will have already developed the knowledge and skills of self-review, conducting meetings to agree areas of focus for the review, including task and/or classroom observation. Many schools have also developed well informed classroom observation arrangements that link into the school's self-evaluation processes, particularly the ETI *'Together towards improvement'* requirements that constitute part of the inspection processes. Classroom observation is a key part of the Induction programme and is also part of the mentoring of those teachers in their Early Professional Development Stage (EPD); for those teachers it will become a natural part of their Continuous Professional Development (CPD). It is also clear that the impact of professional development is greatest when staff not only practice/implement what they are learning over a sustained period but also draw upon peer or mentor support in reflecting upon, evaluating and refining that practice. Professional development engaged in with colleagues rather than in individual isolation tends to be more valuable and creates a culture of a learning school. It seems the philosophy underpinning PRSD in schools is largely accepted, but in practice the review is perceived in some schools as 'something else to do' and is not yet regarded as integral entitlement within CPD.

4.9.4 Lesson observation has been accepted practice over many years in schools. Until the advent of PRSD, however, it was neither required nor widespread. It was used spasmodically, particularly by the principal but also by those school leaders with subject responsibilities to ascertain the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of pupils' learning. It is now important that the principal distinguishes such lesson observations, which are part of the school's self-evaluation programme, from those which are part of the school's performance management policy and practice. Not all lesson observations need to be conducted by the principal or senior staff. Teachers can learn much from their colleagues' tactful evaluations during team teaching, through sharing a year-group or from reciprocal peer review.

4.9.5 The need for skills in coaching and mentoring arises naturally from principles covered in sections 4.9.3 and 4.9.4. If evidence about performance is to be clear, and if honest feedback is to be a regular feature of school life, people will want to know how to move forward and improve their performance. In this context, coaching and mentoring are essential forms of support and must become embedded in the culture and working life of the school. Mentoring is a skilled professional activity to be undertaken by school leaders when a new teacher is appointed. It is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that new teachers are guided through the practicalities of joining the school and are given active support and encouragement. They must help personally, or through the appointment of another senior school leader as mentor, with the planning and delivery of lessons, in tutorial activities and with their general development as a professional. For mentoring to be effective, the mentor must have sufficient skills and knowledge to challenge the mentee whilst supporting them to find ways to improve his or her own performance. Although there is a growing body of evidence about the value of both coaching and mentoring in the development of teachers there is no system-wide approach to supporting school leaders in undertaking roles as coaches or mentors, nor does the education system offer individual mentoring as an entitlement for the school leaders themselves.

4.10 School Leadership and the professional development of teachers

Section 2.8 outlines the varied possibilities for the CPD of teachers, in particular the relationship with the PRSD scheme. The requirement for a principal, as school leader, 'to ensure that all staff in the school have access to advice and training appropriate to their needs.' is enshrined in the principal's terms and conditions of service. Prior to the Performance Review schemes (SDPR and PRSD) this requirement was often discharged on an 'ad hoc' basis. That is the principal might assess current needs of the school, for example in relation to curriculum, assessment or pastoral care, and then identify a member of staff to

receive appropriate training. Alternatively those with particular responsibilities might become aware of useful training and development opportunities, including those leading to further qualifications, and then seek support, usually in terms of time, to allow their participation. Policies for Staff Development reflected both positions.

Performance management has become the linchpin of effective staff development. The accurate identification of staff's strengths and weaknesses in the context of school performance and improvement is the essential basis for the design of effective CPD. Key implications of this in developing a strategic CPD process are set out below:

- CPD should become part of the normal development and support processes in schools and part of the culture of an effective school;
- the PRSD cycle needs to be synchronised within the whole-school planning cycle so that whole-school issues and individual staff development and career planning, are integrated in the overall school improvement plan;
- the school's policy for PRSD must include objectives related both to pupils' progress and to the professional development of all staff; and
- the competency of team leaders and school managers to identify needs accurately, to commission development activities which influence classroom performance and to enable staff to develop realistic career plans are crucially important to the effectiveness of PRSD and CPD.

For effective CPD the role of the principal and the way that schools organise themselves is crucial. This involves having whole-school policies on teaching and learning that closely integrate professional development, PRSD and school improvement and reflect the importance of personalised learning. It means that CPD priorities are determined through a clear and open process, in which there is a balancing of school priorities against the career aspirations and development needs of individuals. It cannot be so centralised that staff do not take responsibility for their own CPD. It will require school leaders to ensure that more experienced staff take responsibility for the professional development of their colleagues and trainees, through formal and informal peer coaching, mentoring and tutoring roles and by sharing their own learning. The INSET days (formerly known as 'Baker' days) that are allocated to schools by the Department of Education need to be used effectively.

The emphases within CPD have changed in line with the increasing emphasis on the centrality in the school's work of improving the quality of learning and teaching through whole school development planning. School leaders need to know through use of all available data which staff development activities have a direct impact on learning and teaching. They need to be aware of their own professional development needs and how this is inter-related with the professional needs of all staff as they seek together to effect whole school improvement.

Increasingly, online learning is offering a flexible element in the repertoire of CPD activity. With much improved access to technology, there has been greater investment in online learning activity from not only the DENI, C2K and RTU but a range of other providers. The Principal must ensure that school facilities allow high-quality provision to be offered in a cost-effective manner and in ways that can be accessed by the user at a time which is convenient to them.

Principals, as determined by the National Standards for Headship (NI) must act as lead learners in the school and ensure that leadership development is integrated with staff development by supporting the concept of distributed leadership and establishing those processes for reflective enquiry and collaborative learning that have become an integral part of CPD. *"Principals have a pivotal role in the transmission of knowledge and skills and CPD. The extent of their understanding of the nature of knowledge and its personal, social, spiritual and economic dimensions will limit or expand the potential of the school to help people learn. Through the principal, the values espoused in the school's CPD programme give practical expression to the school's vision, values and learning objectives and help set the nature of the school culture."* (PQH(NI) Study materials Development Unit 3.4).

An area of some tension emerged in the early stages of the introduction of PQH(NI) programme. Some principals believed that teachers on their staff who, through their own scored application and interview by panels representing employing authorities, had been deemed as 'eligible' for the programme were not necessarily those whom they would have identified for leadership roles in their own schools. This attitude has all but disappeared as the contribution of candidates' work in effecting whole school improvement, irrespective of whether they had been appointed to senior leadership roles, has been recognised. When making decisions about teachers' professional development needs there is often a tension between national/regional expectations, the school's requirements and the individual teacher's perception of his/her need. There is a need for clarity within and across all aspects of teacher education throughout a teacher's career.

4.11. Policies to support leadership focused on the improvement of teaching and learning.

4.11.1 The Curriculum, Advisory and Support Services [CASS], responsible for providing advice, support and curriculum resources within each ELB area, have developed policies to support leadership in schools as it focuses on improving teaching and learning. A common view has emerged that school leadership, if it is to have a real impact on teaching and learning, must extend beyond the Principal and the Senior Management Team ie that leadership must be 'distributed'. The policy is to support and develop leadership at all levels in the school. Leadership is now held to be a function of the work of any teacher, whatever their formal status in the school might be, as they have responsibility for the work of other teachers in any aspect of school improvement.

While acknowledging that the principal has the ultimate accountability for school development, the CASS services encourage the development of team(s) to undertake such work, and stress the important role of the principal in allowing for the growth and development of each member of the team(s). In this way the capacity for leadership in individuals and in the school as a whole, can be built.

The process promoted with schools encourages the development of effective communication which wins the hearts and minds of teachers, thus building commitment for innovation and the recognition of existing good practice which can be built on. In practice it results in everyone sharing a common vision, with a common understanding of good practice and agreed aspirations for the pupils. This work is exemplified through recent RTU/CASS 'Leading Learning Conferences', in the creation of curriculum teams at post primary level, in promotion of the five stage cycle for Monitoring, Evaluation and Review at primary level.

As learning is the core business of school then it is only sensible that there should be a clear focus on its development. CASS has been working with an increasing number of schools to develop Learning / Teaching and Assessment policies – again with the emphasis on the process – the translation of ideas and ideals into practice rather than simply recording them in a policy. Schools are encouraged to believe that an inspirational policy requires an action plan to develop the practice and that a working policy can be observed in everyday practice.

It is recognised that enhancing learning requires change that needs to be managed, that change takes time and for some schools it takes more time than others. Getting school leaders to acknowledge this is often a major challenge and there is a tendency to take on too much in an unrealistic timescale. This is often due to external pressures – both real and perceived – for evidence of a successful 'end product'. For the end product to be meaningful and sustainable then keener attention needs to be paid to the process involved in attaining it. The experience of the CASS services is that in the process of achieving school improvement through the cycle of plan – do – review, it is often review that is omitted. This approach is also reflected in the roll-out of the Northern Ireland revised curriculum where teachers are being directed to look beyond their classrooms experiences to identify what works in assisting pupil learning. The focus is on the learning of every member of the school community, giving opportunities to learn from the success of others and having a rationale for the way they work.

4.11.2 The School Improvement Programme (SIP), which was launched in 1998, provides a comprehensive strategy, involving all education partners, to raise standards in schools. It has a number of separate but related strategies, including the School Support Programme (SSP). The SSP provides a period of intensive professional and financial support for improvement measures normally lasting three years, but exceptionally for five years. The programme places strong emphasis on the quality of teaching and learning, the quality of school leadership and management; and school development planning, incorporating realistic and appropriate targets for improvement. All the evidence from the former Raising School Standards Initiative confirmed that *'good teaching and effective management are crucial to the school's success and its capacity to improve. Where either is absent the school will find it difficult to offer its pupils the quality of education they deserve'*. Where ineffective principals, members of the Senior Management Team or teachers are identified, support to improve their performance will be offered through the agency of CASS and as appropriate through CCMS. Improving quality and raising standards are central to the Department of Education's overall strategy and at the heart of all of the significant changes facing the education system in Northern Ireland. The Department is presently revising its current policy on school improvement to reinforce this. The revised policy will place accountability for standards and improvements with all schools; it will promote self-evaluation; it will emphasise more effective use of data to evaluate and improve; and, it will link a formal process of improvement for schools who perform poorly to inspection outcomes. Together with a revised strategy for literacy and numeracy it heralds a major effort to drive up standards for all children.

There is clear evidence that school performance is impacted by

- the quality of teaching;
- the quality of leadership (at all levels)
- the planning and target setting framework (inc use of data); and
- by the home learning environment (the home and the community).

4.11.3 The Regional Training Unit (RTU), established in 1991, undertakes a specific responsibility for the management and leadership training needs of principals and senior staff in schools and colleges. In its policies and practice to develop high quality school leaders the issues of improved teaching and learning for pupils in schools have become central tenets. This finds visible expression in programmes such as leadership for learning, self-evaluation as a pathway to excellence and the above mentioned leading learning conferences in conjunction with CASS, accessible by every school principal. RTU's work is covered in detail in Section 6 of this Report which deals with the Training and Professional Development of School Leaders.

5. THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

5.1 The supply of School Leaders

In Northern Ireland there is not a crisis in the supply of school leaders comparable to that in Great Britain where leadership posts remain unfilled. The overall standard of the teaching profession here is high, demand for training places remains strong and it is generally accepted that those now entering teaching are of very high quality indeed. There is, however, some concern that the quality of those applying for school leadership posts here may not be of a sufficiently high standard to effect the necessary changes in the Northern Ireland system over the next decade. For example the Confederation of British Industry, Business Agenda (Northern Ireland) 2005, stated under the heading 'Getting our education system right' *'The need for change is widely recognised. ...Several key components are needed to successfully implement this transition.....the quality of school leadership and management needs to be improved.....standards (in schools) must be raised and expectations increased'*. In the Chief Inspector's Report 2002-2004 there is also concern about the quality of existing leadership in a minority of schools where *'the management and leadership are ineffective and the principals have a limited understanding of the quality of the learning and teaching. Development planning is not sufficiently specific in identifying targets for improvement, and there is an absence of effective strategies to monitor and evaluate standards.'* This concern has led to a focus on the quality of leadership and management during inspections by ETI. The need for quality in school leadership and management as a prime factor for implementation of change has also been highlighted in the Bain Report. – *'Working and planning together in new ways for the common good will require visionary and courageous leadership, persistent commitment, innovative thinking and, perhaps most of all, skill in developing relationships, managing change, and building confidence in new ways of working'*⁸.

5.2 Applications for leadership posts

The perception of representatives from educational sector interests (Killyhevlin Conference, November 2006) is that there is broadly a sufficient pool of talent to meet leadership needs in schools but there are concerns about the following:

- the declining number of applicants for leadership posts, especially for small rural primary schools.
- the under-representation of women in senior posts, especially in post-primary schools
- the attractiveness of leadership of primary schools and of teaching as a profession for men.

Provisional figures provided by the Education and Library Boards show the ratio of applicants to principal vacancies in the 2004-2006 period as follows:

ELB	Vacancies	Applications	Ratio
<i>Belfast ELB</i>	12 Primary	100	8.33
	2 Post Primary	16	8.00
<i>Western ELB</i>	22 Primary	63	2.86
	5 Post Primary	20	4.00
<i>South-Eastern ELB</i>	16 Primary	195	12.18
	4 Post Primary	20	5.00
<i>Southern ELB</i>	13 Primary	59	4.53
	7 Post Primary	35	5.00
<i>North-Eastern ELB</i>	25 Primary	248	9.92
	7 Post Primary	49	7.00
Overall Primary	88	665	7.56
Overall Post Primary	25	140	5.60

It is significant that the lowest ratio of applicants to post is for Primary Schools in the Western Board area where the number of small rural schools is highest. Conversely in the more densely populated areas of the

⁸ Bain Report (2006), Ch.2.12.

North-Eastern, South-Eastern and Belfast Boards the ratio for applications ranges from 8.33 to 12.18 for primary posts. The ratio of applicants for post-primary posts ranges from 4.00 to 8.00.

Figures provided by the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools offer a comparison between applications for principal posts in 1995-1996 and 2005-2006.

1995-1996								
	Male	Female		Male	Female	Ave applic per post		
<i>Total appointments</i>	37	24	13	<i>Total applications</i>	284	196	88	7.67
Primary	27	18	{ 11		235	166	69	8.70
Nursery	2		{		12		12	6.00
Post-Primary	8	6	2		37	30	7	4.62
2005-2006								
	41	21	20	<i>Total applications</i>	284	147	137	6.92
<i>Total appointments</i>								
Primary	34	15	19		259	129	130	7.62
Nursery	na	na	na		na	na	na	na
Post-Primary	7	6	1		25	18	7	3.57

In the Catholic Maintained sector the level of interest in becoming a principal remains relatively high in Primary schools but has decreased slightly from 8.7 to 7.62 (excluding Nursery posts) over the ten year period. This is almost identical in the Controlled sector where the ratio of applicants to posts in Primary schools is 7.56. There appears to be a marked increase overall in the number of female applicants for principal posts, particularly in primary schools.

In both sectors there is significantly less interest in Post-Primary principal posts where the overall ratio is higher in the Controlled sector (5.60) compared with the Catholic Maintained sector (3.57); but the number of posts in the sample may be too small to be significant.

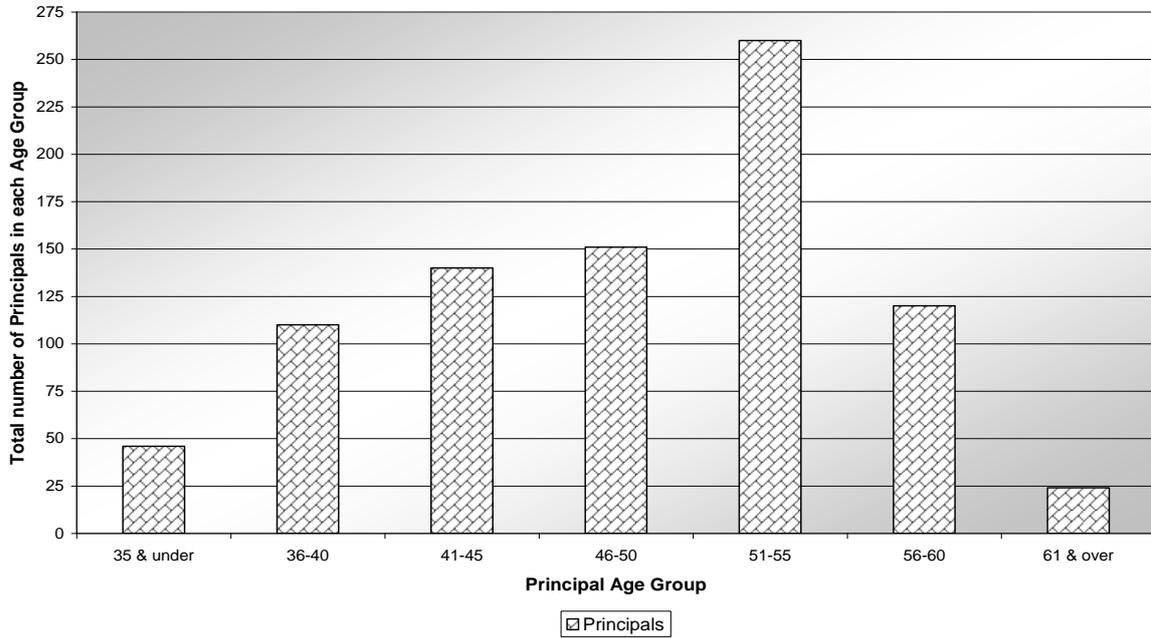
Since 1999 a significant number of potential principals have been identified as pursuing the PQH(NI) qualification. Of the 41 principals appointed in the Catholic Maintained sector in 2005-06, almost 50% have graduated in PQH(NI) or are completing the qualification. In the North-Eastern ELB of the 12 principals appointed to Primary schools in the same period 66% were PQH(NI) graduates but none of the 3 principals appointed to Post-Primary schools in 2005-2006 had the qualification..

5.3 Age profile of Principals

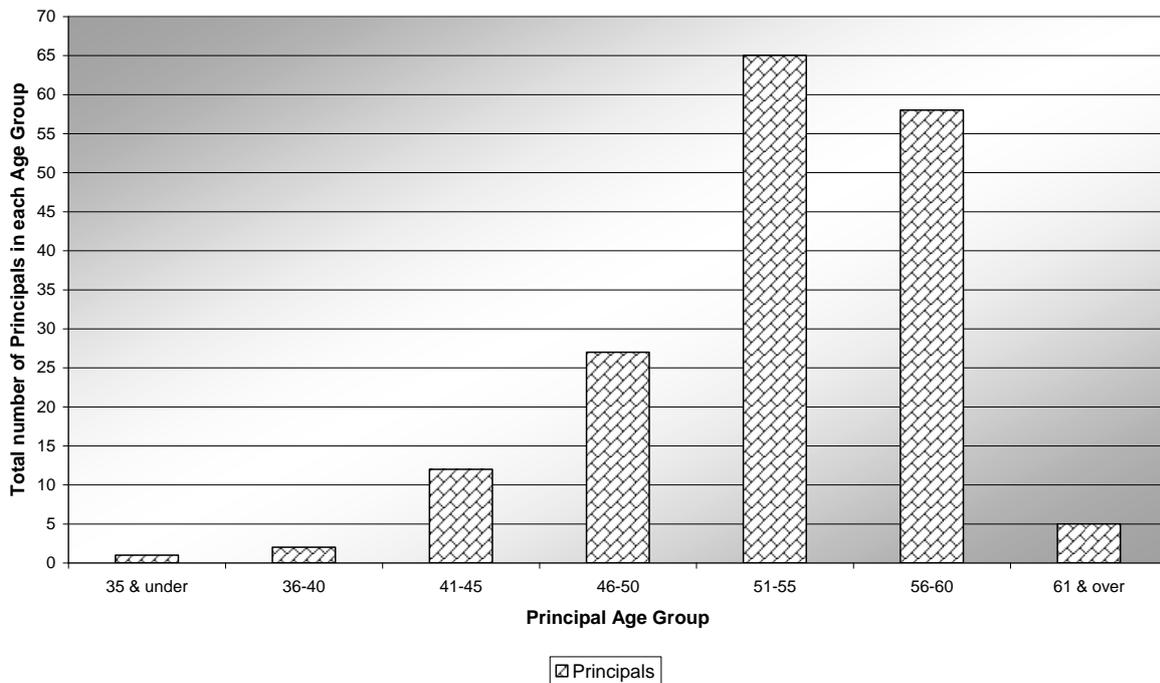
The age profile of those in principal posts indicates that there a significant number now aged over 50. By extrapolation from the charts given in 5.3.1 over 400 Primary principals and over 125 Post- Primary principals (excluding those employed in Voluntary Grammar schools) will move to retirement in the next decade. All available evidence suggests that this will be sooner rather than later. The problem for succession planning is that there is no clear indication of how long a principal will stay in post. The evidence indicates that there are fewer than 40 principals in all types of schools in Northern Ireland who have remained in post past their 60th birthday and that very few will continue in post until they reach the official retirement age of 65. Interview of a small sample of serving principals indicates that the main determinant of retirement is achieving maximum pension rights through 40 years total service or through enhancement of terms. All of those interviewed stated that they would retire before they were 65.

5.3.1

Bar Chart showing
Principal Age Groups in Primary Schools



Bar Chart showing
Principal Age Groups in Post-primary Schools (excl VGS)



5.4 Aspirations for Headship through PQH(NI)

The introduction of the Professional Qualification for Headship (Northern Ireland) (PQH(NI)) in 1999 followed steering and working group deliberations – involving all stakeholders and a formal consultation process conducted by the Department of Education which elicited unanimous support for the proposed model. It was linked to the need for improved school leadership identified in the School Improvement package launched by the Department of Education in 1998. It was based on an agreement with the National Teacher Training Agency giving rights under licence to RTU to contextualise for Northern Ireland materials being used for the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) in England and Wales but developed as an entirely separate model (see Section 6 – ‘The Training and Professional Development of School Leaders’.) It reflects Northern Ireland’s varying circumstances which include:-

- differences in scale – reflected both in the much larger proportion of small primary schools in Northern Ireland, and closer working relationships between the various education bodies, providing opportunities to pool expertise and resources;
- curricular differences – most noticeably in the implementation of the Revised NI Curriculum; and
- system differences – including the ICT systems that reflect the NI Education Technology Strategy.

The concept was that PQH(NI) would create a pool of leaders qualified to undertake headship at or above a satisfactory threshold level as measured against the National Standards for Headteachers (NI). It would become mandatory when a minimum 3:1 ratio of ‘graduates’ to principal vacancies had been achieved. This would also depend on satisfactory quotas of qualified candidates being reached for each of the employing authorities. In this way a means could be established to ensure a succession of highly qualified applicants into principal posts in all Northern Ireland schools. There has never been a need to work strictly within the originally allocated quotas. All candidates are deemed eligible for entry to PQH(NI) on the basis of their application and offered funded places into one of the three routes to achieving the qualification after interview by panels representing the various employing bodies.

The PQH(NI):

- is rooted in school improvement;
- draws on the best leadership and management practice;
- signals readiness for headship but does not replace the selection process;
- is rigorous while flexible;
- provides a baseline from which newly appointed principals can continue to develop their leadership and management abilities;
- takes account of candidates’ varying experiences of management and leadership; and
- is underpinned by the National Standards for Headteachers (NI Edition).

Applicants must have completed their Early Professional Development (EPD) stage and it is expected that those selected for PQH(NI) will have leadership and management experience in whole-school issues; that is by definition they have some experience of ‘distributed leadership’. The qualification has proved to be very popular and has attracted a total of 1787 applicants to date..

An analysis of information on over 650 candidates⁹ who had successfully completed PQH(NI) by June 2006 shows that they came from;

230 Primary Schools	out of a Northern Ireland total of 894	= 25.7%
4 Nursery Schools	out of a Northern Ireland total of 99	= 4.0%
18 Special Schools	out of a Northern Ireland total of 45	= 40.0%
92 Non-selective Secondary Schools	out of a Northern Ireland total of 162	= 56.8%
54 Grammar Schools	out of a Northern Ireland total of 70 ¹⁰	= 77.1%

⁹ This does not include those serving principals who achieved the qualification as route 3 candidates through the Professional Qualification for Headship for Serving Headteachers programme

¹⁰ School totals as for 2004-2005

In total 398 schools supported these candidates through the PQH(NI) programme representing a third of the total number of schools in the Northern Ireland system.

A comparison between the figures for those who have already graduated and the total number of those undertaking the programme is noteworthy. Of the 1787 applicants for entry to PQH(NI), 1132 candidates have been funded with 656 completing the programme by September 2006. The total candidature has been drawn from 749 different schools, although it has also included personnel from education partners such as ELBs, CCMS and CCEA.

A breakdown of the statistics for schools shows that PQH(NI) is increasingly becoming embedded into the school system as the essential route for those aspiring to headship. Anecdotal evidence suggests that it is also the preferred form of professional development for many who wish to take on other senior leadership roles in school apart from headship.

Phase	Number of funded PQH(NI) candidates	Number of schools with candidates	Average per school	Total number of schools in NI ¹¹	Percentage of total number of schools
Primary ¹²	529	491	1.07	894	55%
Secondary	289	142	2.03	162	88%
Special	59	40	1.47	45	89%
Grammar	189	71 ¹³	2.66	70	100%

The figures indicate that within the next two years the total number of graduates will have more than doubled. The qualification is not mandatory in Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, as in other regions, there is an imbalance in the proportion of women occupying senior management posts in schools. Despite the fact that women represent the majority (72%) of employed teachers, less than half of the principal appointments are female. Other statistics would indicate that women are significantly under-represented in principals' appointments in large schools. A key objective in introducing PQH(NI) was to ameliorate under-representation across a number of categories including gender, sector and phase. To date the results are encouraging with representation in PQH(NI) from females and from sectors such as small primaries; Irish Medium; integrated at least in line with the percentage statistics overall. In relation to gender, the fact that 63% of PQH(NI) candidates are female far surpasses the percentage of females currently in headship. It is important also that the model for delivering PQH(NI) does not deter applications from any identified group.

Northern Ireland has a significant number of small schools. The Bain Report states '*More than one-third of primary schools have an enrolment of fewer than 90 pupils. Approximately one-sixth of post-primary schools have an enrolment of fewer than 300 pupils and nearly two-fifths have an enrolment of fewer than 500 pupils*'. It was agreed, however, from the introduction of PQH(NI) that management skills and competencies remain the same irrespective of setting, and that differences relate more to scale and context rather than any difference of substance. Hence, a single PQH(NI) model is provided, with activities relevant to leadership in all types and sizes of school set within the programme.

5.5 The motivation of those aspiring to headship

Important information on why teachers aspire to headship in Northern Ireland schools can be drawn from their responses to the question '*Why do you want to be a headteacher?*' contained in the application for PQH(NI).

¹¹ As for 2004-2005

¹² Figure excludes Preparatory Departments of Grammar Schools (5 PQH(NI) candidates 1999-2006)

¹³ The number of grammar schools has dropped from this figure through amalgamations

A sample of responses from schools of varying types indicates that there is a firm belief that *'it would be a privilege to hold such a position'*.

At one level headship is seen as a vehicle for personal fulfilment through putting into practice deeply held beliefs about the nature of education. For example a candidate states *'I have a strong belief in the positive role that education plays in forming young people. I was attracted by the possibility of making a difference to the lives of young people'*. Another expands this seeing headship as *'increasing the opportunity to provide leadership which ultimately can affect the lives of all the young people who pass through the school.'* A similar view was *'I enjoy working with young people...and feeling I can make a difference in their lives. As headteacher I would enjoy the opportunity of influencing a greater number'*

For others the move to headship is seen as taking the next logical step to the ultimate post in the profession. A candidate stated *'I am ready for another challenge...I am confident I have the qualities required for leadership and headship'* or another view was *'I feel (from observation and some experience in leading and 'managing') I understand what being a headteacher means. I believe I could realistically meet the challenges of headship.'* A primary Vice-Principal stated *'I have learned a great deal as VP in leading and managing and feel I have the experience and skills for headship. I would like to lead a school through the exciting changes and challenges ahead'*. A secondary Acting-Principal stated *'I want the opportunity to develop and expand (my) experience of leadership'*

For the great majority the role of headship is seen to offer both personal challenge and fulfilment, and the means to make a positive impact in the lives of pupils - *'to be the driving force in pursuit of the best school and learning experience for the children and staff in my care... innovations and pursuit of excellence are what inspires me in education'*. A candidate from a grammar school stated *'I believe the role of headteacher would afford me the opportunity to influence and improve school standards with consequent benefit to pupils. (I have) the desire to make a positive contribution to young people ...effecting positive change for generations of pupils'*. The concept of being a role model as the leading professional in the school was also expressed as, *'I believe that role models play an important part in a person's development. I have aspired to be like those people who have inspired me by their professionalism, integrity, vision and vibrant leadership. I feel I can become a positive role model for young people and colleagues (and) raise the standards achieved'*.

Several candidates welcomed the possibilities for leading change - *'I have always been determined to make a difference – (as a headteacher I will be) making an even greater difference to the rich life of a school ,translating and enhancing (my) experiences with one section of the school into a whole school setting'*. In a primary school this was seen as *'I can lead and inspire a team of professional teachers and support staff providing stimulus and direction as (the school) moves forward and develops to meet the needs and interests of the children'*. In some cases there was a belief in the need to *'to take a greater degree of responsibility for leading an effective learning organisation'* or *'I believe that I have the necessary drive and energy to successfully lead a school that is a learning community'*

Within these loose categories there were numerous variations in emphases. These were derived from deeply held personal views about the nature of education and seemed in no way to be determined by factors such as size of school or pay and conditions. The statement by one candidate - *'I seek the ultimate responsibility and privilege of headship, for an effective headteacher is intrinsic to a successful school'* - may fairly summarise the general motivation of those who aspire to headship.

5.6 Factors that may detract from the attractiveness of School Leadership

Although there is not a leadership supply problem, in that all advertised posts at the level of senior leadership are filled, representatives from the various sectoral interests present at the Killyhevlin Conference (November 2006), sought to identify factors that may deter the most suitable applicants for leadership posts in schools, particularly at the level of principal and vice-principal. In general terms these representatives noted that the factors set out in subsequent paragraphs may deter the most suitable applicants:

5.6.1 There are complex challenges presented by the imminent changes in the Northern Ireland system. These have been detailed in Section 3.2 of this Report. The management of these changes and the expectation that even higher standards and a broader range of skills than ever before will be demanded of the leaders of future schools may be off-putting to many of those who now work quite successfully and confidently at lower levels of leadership and management in schools. There is also, irrespective of these changes, the continuous pressure on all schools to achieve year on year improvements in the standards achieved by pupils in all schools and that the senior managers of the school are directly accountable for this. In addition there are particular categories of schools e.g. small rural schools, schools in areas of social deprivation, schools with rapidly declining enrolments, which present added difficulties to school leaders. Leadership posts in such schools may be seen by applicants as unattractive.

5.6.2 The Changing Education Landscape affecting all schools may deter some from applying for a leadership post in a school particularly where there are concerns around its future. The administrative burden and high levels of accountability in all schools may be seen as unattractive aspects of leadership. Some schools, particularly smaller schools, stress the need for additional administrative support and believe that at times the need for careful management distracts from the possibility of offering effective leadership.

In December 2006 the Minister of Education accepted the recommendations of the Bain Report on minimum enrolments. *'The minimum (not optimal) enrolments for new primary schools, and for Years 8-12 in new post-primary schools should be (i) Primary: 140 pupils in urban areas, and 105 pupils in rural areas, and (ii) Post-primary: 500 pupils. When the enrolment in an existing school falls below the relevant level, the future of the school should be reviewed. The minimum (not optimal) enrolment for a new sixth form in an 11-18 school should be 100 pupils. When the enrolment falls below this level in an existing sixth form, the future of the sixth-form provision should be reviewed'.* The implementation of this recommendation over a period of years, together with the outworkings of other recommendations in the Bain Report and the Government's strategy "A Shared Future" will undoubtedly impact on the number of leadership posts available and this could/will give rise to concerns regarding a career move into the principalship or vice-principalship of a school with an unpredictable future.

The complexity of the change agenda makes it difficult for prospective school leaders to plan out a coherent career path. In terms of career progression for principals the representatives at Killyhevlin believe that there is need to consider:

- career progression for principals;
- systematic provision for refreshment (e.g through secondments; sabbaticals);
- how the experience in leadership and management of principals can be used for the good of the whole education system beyond headship.

5.6.3 The representatives at Killyhevlin believe that the current pay and promotion systems may be a deterrent to those at middle management level from seeking more senior leadership posts, with an insufficient differential between the pay levels of "middle management" and those in more senior leadership posts.

The latest position as outlined in the most recent Leadership Pay Guidance issued to all schools is that from September 2005 Board of Governors must determine a 7 point ISR for the principal, normally within the salary range for the principal group assigned to the school and a 5 point VP range between the salary of the highest paid teacher (which is a notional salary defined as UPS1 plus any Teaching Allowance and SEN Allowance payable) and the minimum of the ISR.

The relevant body (i.e. the employer) must plan for the financial consequences of pay progression, and must be able to demonstrate that any proposed increases are affordable and compatible with the schools projected funding for future years. Performance pay awards for all teachers are discretionary on the basis of performance and this is the first consideration in any award. Relevant bodies should agree their budgets to ensure that appropriate funding is available for performance pay progression at all levels.

5.6.4 The position of women in school leadership is considered problematic. Although there has been an increase in women applying for senior posts in schools this has not been in line with their numerical strength in the profession. The totals given by GTCNI indicate that out of a current teaching force of 19,796 there were 14,426 females (72.8%) and 5,370 (27.1%) males. In the sample figures given by CCMS for applications for principalships in 1995-96 compared with those for 2005-2006, out of the same number of applications (284) in both periods, the percentage of females had risen from 31% to 48%. The percentage of females appointed rose from 35% to 48%. Men, however, still hold the majority of leadership posts in all types of schools but encouragingly women constitute over 60% of those graduating from PQH(NI).

5.6.5 The Killyhevlin representatives believe that the current provision in the Northern Ireland system does not offer a clear middle management route into more senior leadership posts. Some applicants for entry to PQH(NI) do not aspire to headship but seek to use the programme as the best professional development opportunity available, grounded as it is in the practicalities of school improvement.

5.7 Policy options for attraction and retention of effective School Leaders

Policy options were suggested in discussion by representatives of a wide cross section of educational stakeholder groups at the Killyhevlin Conference, November 2006. They were reflected in a summary paper by John Young (RTU), December 2006 and are set out in paragraphs 5.7.1 to 5.7.3

5.7.1 The views of the stakeholders is that the role of the principal as the leader of the future school has become so challenging that it cannot be effectively discharged by one person. Thus for a school to be an effective and improving learning organisation its leadership must be in some sense 'distributed'. It has been expressed as 'what we need to do is to cultivate leadership in everybody'. If leadership becomes a more accepted part of general professionalism then schools will grow their leaders at an earlier stage in their careers. The quality of teachers coming into schools is still very high and it is believed that our young teachers lead extremely well when given the opportunity to do so. The emergence of teachers into leadership roles at early stages in their careers is not creating any major difficulties except that their work is often not reflected by their position in the hierarchy. This implies new thinking about the career pathways open to potential school leaders from the end of their Early Professional Development (EPD) stage to the point where they may enter PQH(NI) as aspirants to headship.

5.7.2 Those undertaking senior leadership need to be more fully and effectively supported and advised, especially after appointment and in the initial years in post. Consideration should be given to:

- a focus on leadership within school leaders' induction programmes, rather than on management;
- systematic support for all school leaders in their work in the induction of others and in mentoring, networking and counselling, including their own entitlement to be mentored. There are opportunities within the PRSD system for mentoring to become embedded practice in schools but the responsibility for creating such structures remains at the level of the individual school; and there is no system wide entitlement and provision; and
- a formal process of ongoing professional development of Senior school leaders.

5.7.3 Senior leadership in schools, especially at the level of principals and vice-principals could be made to appear and become more attractive in a number of ways:

- through the recognition and reward of high quality performers (beyond the National Teaching Awards system) possibly, through financial incentives, or;
- greater public acknowledgement of the importance of the role of school leadership;
- through a career structure for senior school leaders which offers some form of career progression and possibilities of diversification. This would reduce the apprehension among potential candidates for leadership posts that structural changes will affect their longer term prospects.

5.7.3.1 Senior school leaders need to be provided with the capacity and confidence to take on the effective leadership of their schools and to have as much freedom as possible in building its leadership capacity. This would require greater financial control, increased authority in making appointments and in the general management of staff. As a corollary there should be a fresh look at the whole area of the accountability of school leaders, with a much clearer understanding of what precisely they are accountable for, to whom and in what ways.

5.7.3.2 Expectations from school leaders need to be derived from consistency and coherence across the education service. There must be a shared understanding of what school leadership is and a common language developed to describe it. The National Standards for Headteachers (NI) 2005 edition provides a very useful starting point.

5.7.3.3 Prospective school leaders may be deterred by many the many challenges facing the education system in Northern Ireland. For example changes in external assessment requirements, changes in statutory curriculum, changes in reporting requirements and changes in enrolment and transfer procedures. There may be tensions between what visionary school leaders believe is appropriate for effective teaching and learning in the context of their schools and what they must respond to in terms of overall government policy.

5.7.4 *Teacher quality*

The quality of leadership generally and principalship in particular are key elements in the delivery of the Department of Education's vision 'To educate and develop the young people of Northern Ireland to the highest possible standards, providing equality of access for all'. Therefore there is a need to ensure that:

- school leadership and principalship are recognised as crucial to the delivery of the Department's vision;
- the roles and responsibilities of school leaders are clearly articulated;
- well qualified candidates put themselves forward as future leaders; and
- school leaders and principals have access to the very best professional development and support.

6. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL LEADERS

6.1 Background to training and development of School Leaders.

Issues related to the preparation of school leaders and their professional development had historically been given a low priority in the Northern Ireland system. Although the Department of Education had established in the 1980s a Centre for Educational Management, based in the University of Ulster, the emphasis was on the training needs of principals already in post. It operated on an invitational basis rather than as an entitlement for new principals and focused on issues related to good management rather than leadership. The terms and conditions of service of senior school leaders, i.e. principals and vice-principals were not been clearly defined until 1987 and subsequent to the Education Reform Order of 1989 the Education and Library Boards were required 'to secure the provision of further training for teachers'; including by implication these categories of school leaders. In 1991 the five Education and Library Boards established a Regional Training Unit to take forward common issues of training, both of teachers and Board personnel, on a regional basis. It was regarded as 'another important step on the road to the successful implementation of our education reforms'.¹⁴ Throughout the 1990s training of school leaders continue to focus on management skills. 'Improving the quality of school leadership' as envisaged narrowly in the 1998 School Improvement Programme, was to be achieved through better School Development Planning and Target Setting.

The belief that school leaders needed both adequate preparation and support in the formulation and discharge of their leadership function as well as in their management of schools became a core purpose of the Regional Training Unit after the re-constitution of its management in 1999 to include a wider range of education partners. In practice this produced an extensive range of programmes developed through its Leadership College summarised as 'training today's leaders for the schools of tomorrow'.

6.2 Pathways into School Leadership

6.2.1 There are, however, no clear pathways by which teachers move into leadership except through the PQH(NI) programme that is designed for those aspiring to headship. Entry to the programme is by application from those teachers who either wish to apply for headship, or from those who believe that PQH(NI) will enhance their professional development in discharge of their present leadership responsibilities, or affirm their status in the education system through the acquisition of an external qualification. Although the candidate's application is accompanied by a 'supporting statement', usually from their principal, there is no clear evidence that the qualification is widely used in succession planning in schools. There are also some entrants not currently working in schools who are employed in partner organisations such as the ELBs, CCMS or CCEA. There is evidence that the professional knowledge and skills that PQH(NI) graduates have acquired through the programme have been stated as desirable in the advertising of senior leadership posts, and that increasing numbers of PQH(NI) graduates have been successful in gaining appointment to headships.¹⁵ The Professional Qualification for Headship (NI) is not a mandatory requirement for those appointed to principalships in Northern Ireland. However, those without the qualification who are appointed to first time principalships are entitled to enrol and complete the qualification in due course.

6.2.2 An alternative route to headship has been through the acquisition of higher degrees, diplomas or other qualifications related to education that are provided through the higher education institutions. Until recently the employing authorities or governors of schools have often included in their personnel specifications for principal posts a requirement for good honours or higher degrees. This can be enhanced

¹⁴ Speech by Brian Mawhinney, the former Minister of Education under whom the 1989 Order had been created, at the opening of the Regional Training Unit.

¹⁵ A survey in 2004 of 356 PQH(NI) graduates from the first 5 cohorts showed that 79 had been appointed as Principals; a further 39 had been appointed to Vice-Principalships. Figures from CCMS show that approximately 50% of those appointed principal 2004-2006 had, or were completing, the qualification.

to include further professional qualifications such as Masters degrees e.g. Masters in Educational Management (M.Ed), Diplomas in Education (Dip.Ed) or in Advanced Studies in Education (DASE). An additional essential criterion has been the length of experience in other leadership posts, particularly vice-principalships and there is always a stated requirement that the applicant must hold a teaching qualification.

6.2.3 It is a requirement under employment law that grant-aided schools publicly advertise principal or vice-principal posts, except in exceptional circumstances, for example where there is the amalgamation of one or more schools. A job description that is appropriate to the sector or phase will be drawn up by the Board of Governors and a personnel specification added. The Board of Governors will draw up essential criteria to be published, and desirable criteria to be applied at shortlisting if required. In the appointment of a Principal or a Vice-Principal in Controlled and Catholic Maintained Schools the governors may be assisted by professional officers of the employing authority if required. The Board of Governors will interview applicants who meet the criteria and according to the scheme of management may either proceed to appoint or recommend a number to go before a Teaching Appointments Committee of the employing authority who will then recommend a candidate for appointment. This is invariably the practice in the appointment of principals but in recent years all schools have been given greater freedom to appoint vice-principals.

6.2.4 At the level of middle management it is common practice to advertise internally within the school any leadership posts below the level of vice-principal, unless the Board of Governors believes there is no suitable candidate among existing staff. The route for the further development of these teachers will therefore often be through the structures of each individual school. When sufficient experience of whole school issues has been gained teachers may apply successfully for entry to PQH(NI), after which wider opportunities might be available.

6.2.5 The Principal is responsible, in conjunction with the Board of Governors, for constructing leadership opportunities. These should be driven by the need to create an increased capacity for leadership within the school as much as by the need to complete particular tasks related to school improvement. In the past the length of teaching experience and of service to the school was often the single greatest determinant for appointment to leadership posts. Increasingly Boards of Governors and Principals have given leadership opportunities to younger teachers on the basis of their skills and potential. In some schools two-thirds or more of the staff are involved in the leadership of other teachers. Many will undertake short-term projects related to school development involving responsibility for the work of other teachers and a level of accountability at whole school level. If such a large percentage of teachers are willing to take on leadership roles we need to find ways to ensure that they are given the required knowledge, skills and opportunities to lead effectively. The work of GTCNI will be important in identifying and promoting a range of standards and competencies throughout a teacher's career. The individual teacher should accept that there is an obligation to engage in professional development that includes the undertaking of leadership in aspects of the school's provision and practice. In parallel there is a need to increase the awareness of the contribution that a school leader can make to the social capital of a community and to society at large. A formal recognition of this is required in a reward system that relates to the building of leadership capacity. The reward may be through accreditation rather than monetary. The skills and experience gained through what might be temporary and short-term leadership roles can contribute to a portfolio that could lead to accreditation. This in turn might qualify for entrance to PQH(NI).

6.3 Core components of leadership development programmes

If it becomes more widely accepted that it is necessary for school leadership to be distributed and developed at all levels within the school, and that its definition is not to be restricted to the roles of the principal and vice-principal as outlined in the 1987 Terms and Conditions of Service, then new forms of professional development must be determined. To a large extent this must be school-based both because of the large numbers of teachers involved and the need to align leadership activity with school improvement. This in turn makes the principal the key figure in building the leadership capacity of individual staff and of

the school as a whole. That is schools will ‘grow their own leaders’. Therefore each school must develop a coherent, widely understood and shared programme for the development of staff, including their skills in leadership as well as in their traditional role as managers. The principle of voluntarism must remain but there is a need to encourage teachers to believe they have potential in leadership.

Leadership development must facilitate ‘learning’. It must be practically based with obvious links between the teacher’s professional development and how children learn both in the classroom and through all aspects of the school’s provision and practice. Leadership development implies forward movement in a school not just the maintenance of tradition or the acceptance of present standards. That is it should assist all leaders to manage change, including the need to reflect on the development of new approaches to teaching and learning. It must be tailored to the practicalities of each individual’s context. Within the leadership programme there should be support thorough individual mentoring. The outcomes of such leadership activities and experience should be recorded in individual portfolios of evidence which can be drawn on in formal application for further training such as PQH(NI) or in application for other leadership posts.

Principals may be unsure of the knowledge requirements; professional qualities as expressed in skills, dispositions and personal capabilities; and actions needed to achieve the intended purposes in each aspect of school leadership. Many of these are generic and can be drawn from the National Standards for Headteachers (NI) and then contextualised as appropriate for the various levels at which leadership occurs.

There is a strong argument that school-based leadership programmes will have considerable impact in the context of each school’s work as it seeks to improve children’s learning and develop towards its preferred future. It may even underpin the succession planning that will be required to sustain the necessary change in each school.

6.4 The Professional Qualification for Headship (NI) (PQH(NI))

6.4.1 It can be seen from the frequent references made in this report that within the Northern Ireland system PQH(NI) has become the major route into headship, although it is not a mandatory requirement. It has been noted that it has become a preferred professional development route from middle management into senior leadership roles other than headship. It is also influential as a paradigm for effective training through a blended model that contains supported self-study, face-to-face tutoring and distance learning through a managed virtual learning environment. Its impact on the system has been considerable in the number of teachers (1132) who have completed this programme or are in process of so doing and in the number of schools (749) who have supported candidates as they have taken on leadership in a great variety of school improvement projects.

6.4.2 PQH(NI) offers clear benefits to schools with candidates on the programme. As they work towards PQH(NI) through study, school-based activities and a school improvement project they are empowered to discharge more efficiently and effectively their current professional responsibilities but also have developed in them a capacity for further and more challenging responsibilities. During PQH(NI) candidates will:-learn about new ideas and strategies and be encouraged to apply their knowledge in school, work on current school improvement priorities, gain support in fulfilling their current roles, build useful networks with colleagues in other schools and develop and practice online learning skills.

6.4.3 Supporting a PQH(NI) candidate in a school represents an investment in the professional development of that teacher. It also sends a message to existing and prospective staff about the level of support made available for their continued professional development. Further, it demonstrates a commitment to fostering the next generation of principals. PQH(NI) ensures that those candidates who achieve the qualification are thoroughly prepared for the demanding role of headship. Employers increasingly accept that those holding the qualification have met the standards required to embark upon headship. It gives aspiring heads the confidence, skills and professional knowledge needed to deliver the best for pupils, staff, parents, governors and community.

6.4.4 In the selection process at Stage One:- A Regional Panel of representatives from employing authorities under an independent chair and using national criteria consider and mark the application forms in order to determine 'eligibility' for PQH(NI). At Stage Two:- Each employing authority selects the candidates it will fund from 'eligible' candidates that work within its sector, selecting a number up to its agreed quota. Candidates at this stage are asked to make a presentation and answer questions from an agreed pool of questions which will be used by all employers' selection panels. Applicants for PQH(NI) will have their scores at stage one combined with their scores at stage two in order to determine if they will be selected for funding and which Route they will be offered. If they are unsuccessful at stage two interviews candidates remain 'eligible' for twelve months and can proceed directly to stage two of the selection process the following year. There is no self-financing option currently available within PQH(NI)

6.4.5 Routes through PQH(NI) - Candidates will follow one of three routes.

Route 1 (a two-year programme - Access followed by Development).

Candidates accepted for Route 1 will complete the Access Programme (1 year approximately) before moving on to the Development Programme. The Access Programme is designed for candidates demonstrating a relatively limited experience in whole-school issues. It is designed therefore for those with some experience of leadership at a senior level in a school, or those whose role has enabled them to gain good experience of some, but little experience of other, aspects of school leadership. The move to the Development Programme is dependent upon successful completion of all requirements.

Route 2 (a one-year programme - Development)

Candidates accepted for Route 2 will complete the Development Programme which includes a school agreement visit and School-based Assessment. Candidates can register for School-based Assessment only upon successful completion of all verification requirements. The Development Programme is designed for candidates who demonstrate sound experience of school leadership, in terms of both breadth and depth. They are likely to be working at senior management level, and may need to confirm their knowledge and skills in some areas and extend them in others.

Route 3 (a short programme)¹⁶

This is likely to be for candidates who have substantial experience of a range of aspects of school leadership, and who are able currently to assemble evidence of this and take full advantage of final stage training. When Route 3 is confirmed, the candidate will prepare for a tutor to visit his/her school for a full day to determine, by assessing the evidence assembled and presented, whether s/he is ready to proceed straight to the Final Stage.

Completion of Route 1, Route 2 or Route 3 is by a School-based Assessment and leads to Final Stage. A candidate who does not meet the standards for School-based Assessment may re-apply for this assessment.

Final Stage - Candidates must complete both aspects of the Final Stage:

(a) a two-day challenging residential programme which uses a variety of strategies to develop the skills of candidates as they focus on: school leadership; schools in the future; regional, national and international perspectives; and personal effectiveness.

(b) Final Skills Assessment: A one-day assessment to test a candidate's skills. At this stage, candidates need to show their potential to operate effectively across all key areas of headship. The assessment seeks evidence of candidates' leadership and management capabilities, as well as their ability to exercise high-level professional judgement. Candidates deemed not to have met the standards required for PQH(NI) at final stage may re-apply for this assessment. All candidates that successfully complete PQH(NI) are invited to attend a Graduation Ceremony.

¹⁶ It is this route that is the basis of the PQH for Serving Headteachers programme

6.4.6 Components of the PQH(NI) programme

The PQH(NI) has equivalence to the National Profession Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH) available in England and Wales. Its components are however different in a number of respects. In particular there is much more personal contact between the candidate and their personal tutor. The role of the candidate's personal tutor is extended through regular 'twilight' seminars that occur 8 times in the course of both Access and Development Stages. In these seminars normally two tutor groups are combined to deal with issues that are related to the 16 units within the four modules of the study materials and to the requirements of the programme, e.g. in School-based Assessment. These meetings are seen as highly valuable by the candidates. The 2005 Quality Assurance Report noted that '93% of the respondents (to a questionnaire) agreed that *'the content of the twilight seminars addressed my particular needs well'*. Candidates hold their tutors, who usually are either serving or recently retired principals, in very high esteem.

The study materials, derived from those used in the NPQH, have been contextualised for Northern Ireland and aligned to the National Standards for Headteachers (NI). Those materials used at Development Stage were rewritten for the cohort of candidates entering PQH(NI) in 2006 to take account of the changes occurring in the Northern Ireland system. The Access Stage materials are accompanied by annual updates. The materials are provided both in printed form and online as part of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The materials include extensive weblinks and references to support individualised study. Statistics produced in 2005 for a Quality Assurance Report on the PQH(NI) model showed high levels of use by candidates of the VLE provided through Blackboard.com. The Report stated, *'in the online element of PQH(NI) (there) has been the requirement for all Development Stage candidates to take part in the online discussion of each module. Personal tutors now must verify that a candidate has made at least two significant contributions to 3 out of the 4 module discussions online..., it has resulted in a high level of serious professional discussion and debate between module tutors and candidates and even among candidates themselves.'* Examples of overall usage for Development Stage Cohort 6 show how candidates availed themselves of the various components of the VLE. The area providing 'Communication Tools' was most favoured, the online Discussion Board accounting for over 99% of all 'hits', with a number of candidates visiting the discussion over 1000 times.

At an initial Induction Day candidates are introduced to the programme and the VLE, and begin an Initial Assessment of training needs that includes the completion of a psychometric inventory. On the day they meet their personal tutor who will be responsible for advising and monitoring them throughout the year. At Development Stage this is followed by a visit to the candidate's school that concludes with an Agreement among the candidate, their principal, and the personal tutor acting on behalf of RTU on how the candidate will take on leadership in an aspect of School Improvement Work that will lead to School-based Assessment.

Apart from the compulsory elements of the programme which consist of the Induction Day, the Agreement Visit, School Improvement Work leading to School-based Assessment, contributing to the online discussions, the Final Residential and Final Skills Assessment; the model is one of supported self-study. It is up to the candidate to decide the level at which they will engage with the study materials or participate in the optional elements.

One optional element is the inclusion of four days training focused on topics and skills essential to successful headship. These days are included as part of the much more widely ranging Summer School organised by RTU. The topics cover *'Governance and Headship'*, *'The Public Face of Headship'*, *'Leadership and Professional Accountability'*, *'Leadership and Developing Potential'*. For those candidates who enter PQH(NI) without aspirations to headship some of the topics are not seen as particularly relevant to their present jobs and this aspect of the PQH(NI) programme is less highly valued than the twilight seminars.

A further optional element of the PQH(NI) programme consists of visits to schools or other organisations. It is administered online through the VLE. Candidates at Development Stage have the opportunity of

visiting up to two schools and one other organisation. An indication of the standing that the PQH(NI) programme now has within the school system is the number of schools from all phases and sectors willing to host visits from candidates. The host schools offer a variety of strengths in provision and practice and those candidates who take part comment on the value of the visits in providing benchmarks against their own practice, as well as new insights and opportunities for networking with schools with similar interests.

The 2005 Quality Assurance Report on PQH(NI) concluded;

The organisation and delivery by the Regional Training Unit of the Professional Qualification for Headship (NI) programmes continues to be complex. The number of candidates continues to grow and their support, training and assessment necessitates a high degree of efficiency by the administrative staff and of professional involvement by the PQH(NI) adviser, the Project leaders and the various associates who act as tutors and assessors. That there is now a high degree of confidence about the model in the Northern Ireland education system reflects much credit upon those involved with PQH(NI).

It should be noted that the success of PQH(NI) has been affirmed in two inspections carried out by the Department of Education. It has also provided a template from which other training programmes from RTU have been developed. The experience of such a large sample of candidates in using a Virtual Learning Environment is unique in the Northern Ireland school system and this has been very influential in the introduction of similar VLEs in other RTU programmes and as a benchmark against which the Learning NI VLE for schools can be developed.

6.5 Training programmes for serving principals linked to aspects of PQH(NI).

6.5.1 The Professional Qualification for Headship (NI) for Serving Headteachers

As noted in 6.2.1 PQH(NI) is offered as an entitlement to those serving principals, in their early years of headship, who have not already gained the qualification. There is no requirement for a scored application and interview prior to entry. Participants follow Route 3 through the programme. After induction they agree with RTU on an aspect of their School Improvement Work that will provide the core evidence for School-based assessment. They have access to the study materials online and, as a separate cohort, to a VLE. There is no further tutor support nor do candidates participate in any face-to-face twilight seminars or training days. As the number of candidates in each of the four cohorts to date is relatively small, ranging from 18 to 45, networking among all the participants in each cohort is encouraged and provides a strong element of support. Attendance at a final residential seminar is compulsory. Candidates work together in small groups under surveillance of a tutor with considerable experience of headship, who will give individual feedback on the relative strengths and weaknesses in those skills areas that will be the focus of their Final Skills Assessment. This takes the form of an assessment centre involving candidates in four assessment elements in which they are observed by two or three assessors. In each element assessors look for the essential skills for successful headship i.e. 'Analysing Information', 'Making Judgements', 'Relating to Others', 'Leading Others' and 'Communication'. The Quality Assurance Report for 2005 on PQH(NI) summarised the experience of the serving principals as; *The evolution of the PQSH model has promoted the professional development of these serving principals as 'reflective practitioners'. The good practice in which they have been involved in their own schools has been confirmed through the external evaluation available through School-based Assessment and their personal professional development assessed through the rigour of Final Skills Assessment. The impact of the programme on their leadership in schools as they meet the current and anticipated challenges of new curricula and approaches to learning and teaching is yet unproven.*

6.5.2 Advancing School Leadership

In the early stages of PQH(NI), for candidates in the Limited Pilot and Cohort 1, the implications of the programme for the candidates and their schools were not clearly understood. In some schools, principals were not aware of what was required of the candidates nor of the support that candidates needed. The benefits that might come from having candidates involved in PQH(NI) were recognised gradually and not entirely until the introduction of the revised PQH(NI) model which required a school visit resulting in a

three way agreement between the candidate, the principal and RTU. As the agreement required support for the candidate in an aspect of School Improvement Work related to the school's own School Development Programme, this process of devolving responsibility for leadership in such work to the candidate has been of mutual benefit. A programme based on promoting this understanding has been offered over the past three years to principals with PQH(NI) candidates on their staff

In an introductory seminar principals are introduced to the panorama of the PQH(NI) programme. Particular emphasis is made on the elements that require their direct involvement with the candidate. Two workshops are offered on; (a) supporting the candidate in the Agreement Visit, in identifying School Improvement Work that is aligned to the school's development plan, and the requirements of School-based assessment, (b) mentoring and coaching. An option has been a further workshop providing an introduction to a VLE that is specific to those principals participating in the programme. Through the VLE they are given access to the PQH(NI) online study materials and pathways through these of relevance to serving principals are explored. The workshop is also aimed at demonstrating how a VLE may be an appropriate environment in which they can assist learning and teaching in the context of their own schools.

By the end of the programme the participants understand how they can effectively mentor and support a school colleague, or a colleague working in a school environment, who is a candidate for PQH(NI). They have a knowledge and understanding of the structure, content and materials for PQH(NI). They can use online resources to:

- keep up to date with PQH(NI) developments;
- communicate with RTU staff co-ordinating the programme;
- communicate with other participants in the programme; and
- work within a network of principals also involved in supporting PQH(NI) candidates.

6.6 Support and induction programmes for new School Leaders

All new vice-principals and principals are given entitlement to induction programmes planned jointly between the Regional Training Unit and the employing authorities and delivered through RTU's Leadership College. These are organised on a phase basis but include newly appointed senior leaders in all school sectors.

6.6.1 Primary first time vice-principals

This programme sets out to clarify the role of the vice principal and helps participants develop a clearer sense of their leadership potential. It is designed to create improvement in their schools and the support networks to support such improvement. As in any given year a large number of new vice-principals may be appointed, a number of cohorts are created based on groupings according to ELB areas. The programme is complementary to the vice-principal induction programmes provided by each ELB. Over the course of their first year in post participants are involved in three residential conferences, each lasting two days. They are expected to read and where appropriate respond to pre-conference materials and keep a learning journal throughout the period. Much of the residential experience requires sharing of experiences, opinions, insights and views with others in an atmosphere of confidentiality, openness and trust. The expected outcomes are that participants develop a fuller sense of the meaning of leadership in today's schools and a better sense of how they can become more effective in such a role, and as a result, help their own schools become more effective. They should know and understand what constitutes quality in learning and teaching, the characteristics of effective schools and key aspects of the school improvement process. The programme is based on the national standards framework and focuses on clarifying the role of the vice-principal especially in leadership, developing inter-personal skills, leading and managing staff, managing learning and teaching, managing change and effecting school improvement.

The programme employs a range of methods. There is particular emphasis on individual reflection and discussion groups, and extensive use is made of case-studies, role play and simulation exercises. Participants are expected to explore the potential of online conferencing to contribute to their professional development.

During the year professional officers of the Curriculum Advisory and Support Services or of the appropriate employing authority will follow up and support the new vice-principals in their work in schools. At the end of the induction period participants who do not already hold the qualification are encouraged to apply for entry to PQH(NI).

6.6.2 Post – Primary first time vice-principals

The programme, for those who have recently taken up post as vice-principals in post primary schools, is largely similar to that provided for Primary vice-principals. Again it has the fundamental aim of helping all those involved to become more effective as leaders in their schools so that in turn these schools become more effective for their pupils and the communities they serve. The structure and duration for both courses is identical. The expected outcomes for their learning emphasises that these new appointees should have a clearer understanding not only of their roles and responsibilities as school leaders but also of the challenges facing those leading schools now and in the near-to-medium term. They should know and understand both the differences between responsive and strategic leadership and the professional knowledge, understanding and skills each requires. They will have identified, practiced and developed the personal and interpersonal skills associated with effective leadership. They will feel more confident in themselves as school leaders and better equipped to respond to the challenges they and their schools face. They need to know and understand their particular priorities for further professional development and the ways in which their needs can best be met. Because so much depends on the context in which first-time vice-principals find themselves and their own sense of the mix of professional knowledge, understanding and skills which they bring to their new posts, the content of the programme is not determined in any detail until the first residential conference has finished. One of the main purposes of this first conference is to enable all those taking part in the programme to review, discuss and as far as possible agree on the issues and themes that they see as the most important for them. The emphasis throughout will be on the leadership role of the vice-principal and it is likely, given previous experience, that the following issues or themes will be included in the programme:

- Roles and responsibilities;
- The leadership dimension;
- The characteristics of effective leadership in schools and their implications for first-time vice-principals;
- Responsive leadership and its implications; and
- Strategic leadership and its implications.

The methodology for the programme will include:

- Individual reflection and review;
- Individual assignments;
- Paired and small group activities such as case studies and role-play;
- Short presentations;
- Small group and plenary discussions; and
- School-based projects.

As for vice-principals in the Primary phase, CASS officers follow up and support the new vice-principals in their work in schools. At the end of the induction period any participants who do not already hold the qualification are encouraged to apply for entry to PQH(NI).

6.6.3 First time Primary Principals

This programme sets out to fully explore the link between ‘leadership’ and ‘school improvement’. Participants will therefore, examine individual and organisational effectiveness, leadership and school improvement issues within their respective contexts. The programme is designed to be complementary to the principal induction programmes provided by the different ELB’s. It is delivered through 2 x 2 days residential conferences in the first year of headship and followed by a further 2 day conference in the second year. The requisites from those taking part are identical to those for the vice-principal programmes.

The main course objectives are to make participants appreciate the core purpose of headship and how it applies in their own contexts and to develop a fuller understanding of the meaning of leadership in the schools of today and tomorrow, and the demands that this will make upon schools and their senior leaders. Participants are encouraged to explore their own skills and personal qualities that they bring to their roles and to enhance these in ways that adds to their effectiveness. They will know and understand what constitutes quality in learning and teaching, the characteristics of effective schools and key aspects of the school improvement process.

Course content covers the following:

- Strategic leadership;
- Leading improvement;
- Focus on learning and teaching;
- Intrapersonal and interpersonal skills;
- Leading and managing staff; and
- Leading for quality/evaluating progress.

The methodology is similar to that of the vice-principals’ programmes using a range of techniques that demand a great deal of involvement from participants, particularly through role-play and in case studies.

The suggested post-programme opportunities through which first time principals can extend their professional development include:

- ELB Support if the school is involved in the School Improvement Programme;
- RTU Masters Programme;
- RTU Primary Senior Management Team Programme;
- Investors in People Award;
- RTU Leadership for Learning programme; and
- Quality People Management.

6.6.4 First time Post-Primary Principals

The structure and nature of this 18-month programme is similar to that for principals in the Primary phase. In 2005-2006 it has been aligned against the National Standards for Headteachers (NI) so that the first residential conference dealt with the knowledge, professional qualities and actions required from principals as they meet the demands for school improvement and ensure that the school moves forward for the benefit of its pupils. The remaining conferences have covered two further key areas of headship, these are the leading of learning and teaching, and the effective and efficient management of the organisation. In the past the issues connected with ‘threshold payments’ were covered in the first of the three conferences but the emphasis has evolved into how the PRSD scheme can be used not just in performance review but also in staff development.

In the case of first time principals at both Primary and Post-Primary level professional officers of the Curriculum Advisory and Support Services, or where appropriate of the employing authority, will follow up and support the new principals in their work in schools. At the end of the induction period participants who do not already hold the qualification are encouraged to apply for entry to the Professional Qualification for Headship for Serving Headteachers(NI).

6.6.5 Induction programmes provided by employing authorities

The Education and Library Boards and The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools provide additional induction programmes for those appointed to senior leadership posts in their schools. These give information on a range of management issues, for example in relation to governance, finance and human resources. These sometimes extend over a longer period than the first two years of headship. The support offered varies from information seminars, regular contact with a link officer, attendance at cluster groups, membership of ELB Principal groups, to participation in a mentoring programme. The extent of support is dependent both on the budget and the personnel available to the employing authorities.

6.7 Professional development programmes for School Leaders

After the supported induction phase there are numerous options for further professional development by school leaders. Unlike the induction programmes, which are part of a new principal's or vice-principal's entitlement and there is at least an expectation that they will attend, these further options are purely voluntary. The result is that the professional development of principals can be spasmodic or at least episodic, where the provision is often taken up on a 'need to know' basis. Where this attitude exists principals may become effective managers of the current and short term development in their schools but less confident in their strategic leadership.

6.7.1 Strategic and Organisational Development Programmes

Two options are available through the Regional Training Unit to those principals who wish to lead their schools through Strategic and Organisational Development programmes.

6.7.1.1 From Self Evaluation to Excellence (EFQM)

This programme is aimed at developing the schools capacity to apply a self-evaluative approach to school improvement. It is designed to develop the skills of senior leaders to use self-evaluation methodologies to review their schools. It aims to develop a culture of critical reflection and self-evaluation of school performance at a range of levels including whole school, department/stage level and subject level.

Self-evaluation methodologies using the EFQM framework are mapped against the ETI's 'Together Towards Improvement' guideline¹⁷. The programme aims to ensure schools are well placed to meet any self-evaluation/audit requirements through internal/external audit and school inspection processes.

This is an 18 month programme based on; 1 day introduction (for everyone), 2 day residential (for everyone), an evaluative report (for everyone) and 2 x 1 day conference (for those schools wishing to progress to full-accreditation).

The benefits for the school are seen as providing:

- Immediate information on school performance by using a self-evaluation approach to review;
- Monitoring and evaluation methodologies based upon international research and development;
- A continuous journey towards improvement and excellence;
- Links to other quality evaluation initiatives within the school including Investors in People, National Training Awards (NTA), school inspections and quality assurance frameworks;
- A complement to the ongoing development and support programme by ELB's and ETI on school improvement work, particularly in the self-evaluation process;

¹⁷ This document, published by the Department of Education in 2003, outlines the process that a school may use to develop a culture of self-evaluation leading to improvement. The document outlines the quality indicators used by inspectors and illustrates how a school can use these indicators to evaluate the quality of provision. The document is designed for use in primary, post-primary and special schools.

- Linking self-evaluation to school development planning and improvement; and
- An option to apply for Quality Award recognition.

The benefits for the school leaders are:

- Skills and understanding in applying a self-evaluation methodology to school improvement; and
- Designing context specific questionnaire to conduct self-evaluation at macro and micro level within the school linking outcomes of self-evaluation to school, department and individual planning processes.

6.7.1.2 *Towards a Learning School – Investors in People*

This programme is aimed at developing the school as a learning organisation with the capability to achieve and maintain Investors in People status. It is also designed to develop the skills and understanding of a school's senior and middle managers in leading and managing a genuine learning school. The programme builds upon the successful Investors in People Bridge programme. The programme benefits those schools who have started a journey to improving staff development and whose senior leaders are preparing to work towards Investors in People and or NTA status.

The course is built around a 15 month programme and consists of 7 conference days, i.e. 3 x 1 day conferences, 1 x 2 day residential. 1 day of preparation for assessment and a further one day's training in each school in response to identified need.

The course content deals with the following topics:

- The learning school;
- Understanding leadership;
- Strategic planning;
- Managing staff development;
- Managing individual development; and
- Evaluating staff development.

The outcomes for the school are:

- A clarified vision to which all staff subscribe;
- A strategic development plan based on futures thinking;
- Clear policies and agreed standards to which everyone is working;
- Staff development which is aligned with the priorities of the school and the professional needs of individuals;
- Coaching relationships which form the heart of staff development and lead to a spirit of curiosity; and
- Reflective practitioners and team who understand the impact of their own development on their own practice and the school's success.

For the school leaders there is expected improvement in the skills and understanding in:

- Leading the school in creating and living its vision;
- Planning strategically;
- Developing succinct policies based on outcome;
- Cascading the school priorities into team and individual plans;
- Identifying the learning needs and objectives of staff in relation to school priorities and professional needs;
- Coaching staff in a way which helps them to help themselves;
- Supporting reflective practitioners and teams; and
- Identifying evidence to show the positive impact of the development of staff in achieving the schools' goals/targets.

6.8 Modular programmes related to the National Standards for Headteachers (NI)

6.8.1 Since their introduction the major use of the National Standards for Headteachers (NI) in leadership development has been in their application to PQH(NI) and its linked programmes as outlined in 6.4 and 6.5 above. Increasingly, however, it is seen that they are applicable at all stages in headship, providing a benchmark against which the professional knowledge, skills and actions of all principals can be assessed both in self-evaluation and externally.

6.8.1.1 Leadership for Learning

The 'Leadership for Learning' Programme is envisaged as support in that process as it focuses directly on the key area of headship designated in the National Standards for Headteachers (NI) as 'Leading Learning and Teaching'.

This programme is designed for principals who have been in post for some time and wish to lead their schools in developing a successful learning culture leading to profound and important changes in the school to support learning. The programme is cross phase (for Primary and Post Primary Principals). It is a 12 month programme consisting of 3 modules, each based round a two day residential. Those taking part in the course are expected to attend all the conferences included in the programme, read and, where appropriate, respond to pre-conference materials sent to them from RTU and share experiences, opinions and views with other participants.

The Course Objectives are:

- To reflect on learning;
- To investigate and use interpersonal skills;
- To explore the creation of a learning culture;
- To develop self-awareness; and
- To focus attention on how teams work in schools.

By the end of the programme participants will:

- Be aware of how learning occurs and how best to support it;
- Be aware of their own learning style and practice using acquired interpersonal and intrapersonal skills;
- Be aware of how to create and or sustain a learning culture in school; and
- Be aware of how to work with others to achieve deep learning objectives.

Course Content covers the topics of 'Leading Learning', 'Creating and sustaining a learning organisation', 'Learning theory' and 'the Head as Lead Learner'. The residential seminars are supported by online discussion and learning materials.

6.8.1.2 Strengthening the Community

This programme will be introduced in 2007. It relates to the key area of headship designated in the National Standards for Headteachers (NI) as 'Strengthening the Community' and necessitating 'school leadership to commit to engaging with the internal and external school community to secure equity and entitlement'. The principles underpinning the programme are that *'Headteachers should collaborate with other schools in order to share expertise and bring positive benefits to their own and other schools. They should work collaboratively at both strategic and operational levels with parents and carers and across multiple agencies for the well-being of all children. Headteachers share responsibility for the leadership of the wider educational system and should be aware that school improvement and community development are interdependent.'* The programme is designed for principals who wish to develop a school dedicated to providing a range of services for children contributing to the development of learning.

6.8.1.3 Shaping the Future and Managing the Organisation

These key areas of the National Standards will be the basis of two pilot programmes for school leaders and will be introduced in 2007.

6.9 On Leadership

RTU's website has become an important element in the support which is offered to school leaders in Northern Ireland. It provides general information on the provision/programmes of RTU but also separate support sections on recent initiatives which RTU has been asked to take forward e.g. PRSD; the Entitlement Framework; Leadership for Learning conferences and Extended Schools and web-based support for leadership and school development through an International Perspectives section. The 'On Leadership' section adds additional resources drawn from PQH(NI) which are now available to all principals in Northern Ireland who register for online access.

The resources consist of:

(a) The study materials from PQH(NI) i.e. the 16 units based around the 4 Modules from the Development Stage. An explanation of how these materials can assist principals in relation to initiatives in the Northern Ireland system is given, for example in the diagrams 6.9.1 and 6.9.2.

6.9.1

The materials consist of 4 Modules, each module is comprised of 4 Units as follows;

Module 1 –	Strategic Direction and Development of the School
Unit 1.1	Developing a strategic educational vision
Unit 1.2	Securing commitment of others to the vision
Unit 1.3	Implementing the vision
Unit 1.4	Accountability for improvement
Module 2 –	Strategic Leadership of Learning and Teaching
Unit 2.1	Understanding the characteristics of good teaching & effective learning
Unit 2.2	Securing good teaching and effective learning
Unit 2.3	Meeting the needs of all pupils
Unit 2.4	School self-review
Module 3 –	Working Strategically with Stakeholders
Unit 3.1	Working with stakeholders
Unit 3.2	Leading and managing teams
Unit 3.3	Collaboration and community leadership
Unit 3.4	Continuing professional development
Module 4 –	Strategic Management of People and Resources
Unit 4.1	Financial management, monitoring and accountability
Unit 4.2	Managing resources, staff and accommodation
Unit 4.3	Recruitment, selection and induction of staff
Unit 4.4	Health, welfare and safety



Examples of how the materials can support the work of a principal in dealing with some of the current educational initiatives in the Northern Ireland system are shown above.



6.9.2

The study materials relate directly to key areas of a principal's work. These are defined in the National Standards for Headship (NI) as:

- **Shaping the future;**
- **Leading Learning and Teaching;**
- **Developing Self and Working with Others;**
- **Managing the Organisation;**
- **Securing Accountability;**
- **Strengthening Community.**

n.b. The National Standards for Headship (NI) can be accessed directly within this website

In each area there is a statement of; *what a principal should know about, be committed to, and be able to do*. The materials allow principals to benchmark what they do against best practice in these key areas.

For example in the context of educational initiatives you may wish to focus on improving teaching and learning.

The materials cover this in Module 2 'Strategic Leadership of Learning and Teaching'.

Unit 2.2 deals with 'Securing good teaching and effective learning' and offers 9 chapters as below.

Unit 2.2 Securing good teaching and effective learning

1. Introduction	2. The role of the headteacher Activity 1	3. Management arrangements Activity 2
4. Creating the climate for good teaching and effective learning Activity 3	5. Northern Ireland initiatives	6. Conclusion
7. Optional activities	8. Unit review	9. References

This unit covers two complementary aspects of the role of the headteacher in securing good teaching and effective learning. First, it summarises some of the management arrangements which headteachers can deploy. Second, it examines how the headteacher's style of leadership and management can model some of the characteristics of good classroom practice.

The final section of the unit considers some issues for classroom delivery using particular Government initiatives, specifically the literacy and numeracy strategies, and ICT.

To explore *"the role of the headteacher"* look at chapter 2; the sections are given below

2.1 Values, beliefs, principles and practice Activity 1	2.2 Management responsibilities	2.3 Style of headship
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Regional Training Unit - <http://www.rtuni.org>

Teachers' (terms and conditions of employment) regulations (Northern Ireland) 1987 - <http://www.deni.gov.uk/dc1987-30.pdf>

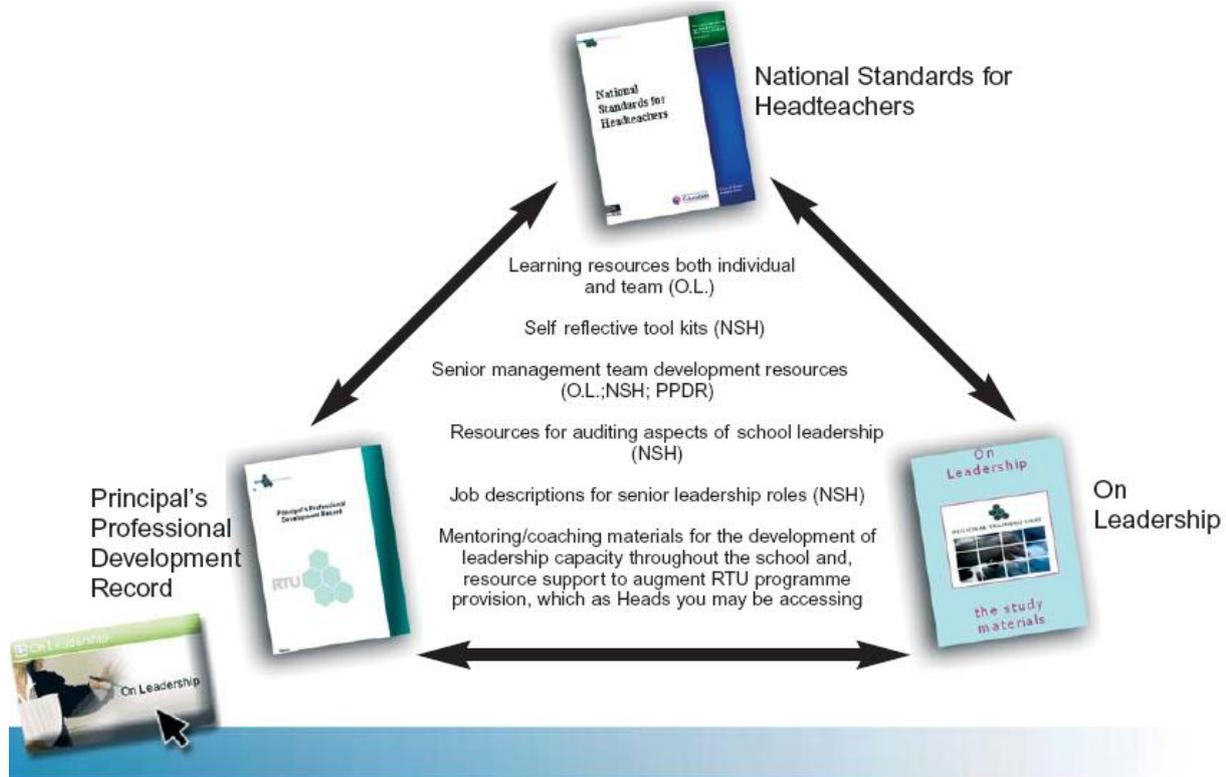


(b) Maximum benefit will be gained if the materials are used alongside two other resources which are also made available online:

- The National Standards for Headteachers (NI) template (NSH); and
- A Principal's Professional Development Record (PPDR) which is completed against the statements on the key areas of headship as outlined in the National Standards.

The interdependence of these resources is shown in diagram 6.9.3

6.9.3



The potential of using such online support for the support and development of school leaders is immense. It requires, however, considerable time and effort on the part of school leaders to explore this potential for themselves, to develop it in ways that are most appropriate to their current needs, and to give insight into aspects of what might be schools of the future.

6.10 Leadership and ICT

Leading the development of ICT within schools is recognised as a complex challenge. School leaders need to articulate and share a vision of how ICT will be effectively used to support learning, teaching and school administration. This programme gives school leaders in all types of schools a greater knowledge of leadership and management issues relevant to ICT within their school.

The course consists of a 3-day residential conference which includes school visits followed by a one-day conference. Those taking part in the course will be expected to attend all the conferences included in the programme; read and, where appropriate, respond to any pre-conference materials sent to them from RTU; be willing to share experiences, opinions, insights and views with others taking part; and particularly explore the potential of online conferencing to contribute to their professional development. For this principals should have access to the Internet. By the end of the programme they will have a greater knowledge of leadership and management issues relevant to ICT within the school. For example in understanding how their position as principal impacts on the role of ICT in school improvement and in growing ICT resources within the school. They will know and understand the added value of ICT in raising achievement of pupils within schools through improved teaching and learning, and have developed their personal ICT capability and established networks to share good practice in ICT developments.

The course content, as listed below, is dealt with by keynote speakers, workshops, online support and through school visits:

- The Northern Ireland Educational Technology Strategy;
- ICT infrastructures;
- Learning online;
- Enhancing the curriculum through ICT;
- Management Information Systems and the impact on ICT;
- Leadership and ICT;
- ICT Policies and Strategies; and
- Evaluating the effectiveness of ICT.

Suggested post-programme opportunities for further professional development of principals who have completed this course include the 'Leadership for Learning' National Standards (NI) Modular programme or a Masters degree in Educational Leadership.

6.11 Building Leadership Capacity

There is an identified need (see 4.11) for schools to develop their own leaders to allow them to meet successfully the challenges occurring in the Northern Ireland education system. In 2007 RTU will begin a 'Building Leadership Capacity' (BLC) programme to support principals as they develop the capacity for leadership in their respective schools. This builds on the existing support given through the 'Advancing School Leadership' programme to those principals who have PQH(NI) candidates. It is based on the following principles:

- leadership capacity is a key prerequisite for school effectiveness and improvement;
- principals have the primary responsibility to develop the leadership capacity in their schools;
- leadership capacity will enable the school system to work successfully within a model of maximum supported autonomy offered by the new Education and Skills Authority;
- leadership capacity refers not just to those who work as principals or vice-principals but extends throughout the school to include all with leadership roles, both formal and informal;
- BLC will provide a vehicle for addressing the development of middle leadership, where there is currently a gap in the system of advice and support;
- building leadership capacity must be informed by and ultimately support emergent models of schooling, for example, learning collaboratives, extended schools, specialist schools, clusters and federations, including multi-agency models of working; and
- RTU will engage with principals on the theme of building leadership capacity and provide resources and support.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 This report has dealt with issues relating to school leadership in a system that is both complicated and complex. It is complicated in that there are many component parts, areas of responsibility, policy and influence, that impact on current schooling and future perspectives for education. It is complex in that although the system works and is generally held to do so in a way that has produced a high level of public confidence; it has within it a number of tensions or even contradictions. To a great extent this is the product of the history of Northern Ireland during the past four decades which has created for its governments, either through direct rule or devolution, many challenges not least in developing or enhancing social and economic capital through its education system. The high priority given to education as an agency for progress has led to major programmes for change, including for example in the curriculum content and entitlement, training and provision for 14 to 19 year olds, early years education, extended schools, the transfer from primary to secondary schools, and the development of specialist and full service schools. In addition a 'Children and Young Peoples Funding Package' is seen as a way to drive forward government policy in respect of provision for children and young people.

7.2 In all of this change there is acknowledgement that good 'leadership and management' of schools is of vital importance and that none of this agenda for change, nor the achievement of government targets for educational attainment, can be implemented without it. This in turn raises a problem of definition as the terms 'leadership and management' are not synonymous although often seemingly inseparable. Despite the fact that much leadership development is predicated on a learner-centred agenda there is continued evidence of headship being interpreted within a narrow managerial paradigm. There is no well defined and common understanding of what school 'leadership' means or would entail in practice; the emphasis until recently being on the need for school leaders to be effective and efficient managers. The formal recognition of leadership as inherent in the roles of principal, vice-principal and senior management team is now seen as too narrowly focused to serve the needs of the system. There is no longer a confidence that a heroic leader can single-handedly drive forward school improvement and manage necessary changes. There is less agreement on how leadership can be distributed, or the leadership capacity in individual schools, or in the system as a whole, can be developed. The position of 'middle leaders' remains unclear and there is a need for clarity in their no targeted programme for their development towards more senior leadership roles - thus the RTU's proposals for building leadership capacity (see 6.11). A constructive approach to leadership has been developed in some schools where the great majority of teachers have undertaken leadership roles, if only in limited areas and on a short term basis.

7.3 A strength of the Northern Ireland system has traditionally been and still is the quality of its teaching workforce and the recognition that entrants to the profession are very well qualified. There is a surplus of registered and qualified teachers over the number of posts available and few posts, even in secondary specialisms, remain unfilled for long. The reports of the Education and Training Inspectorate generally affirm satisfactory or better standards of teaching and achievement in schools although there is still a significant level of underachievement which must be addressed.

School leadership and management, especially in improving standards of learning and teaching, have been identified as a particular area of focus in future inspections. The Inspectorate has given some useful indicators of quality, relating both to strategic leadership and efficient management. The National Standards for Headteachers (NI) can also provide a commonly shared understanding of the skills, professional knowledge and actions required in school leadership.

7.4 The performance of teachers and school leaders is now subject to scrutiny under the Performance Review and Staff Development Scheme. The aspects of the scheme that deal with the continuous professional development of teachers, and by implication of school leaders, need to be supported and exploited. This needs to be aligned with the competences models developed as 'professional milestones' by the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland.

7.5 An essential element in strengthening the role of the school leader at all levels is the clear identification of their professional development needs and the delivery of these, through a range of mediums including individual mentoring and coaching. School leaders should also act as mentors for others.

7.6 The data on teachers leaving the profession and on those principals likely to retire in the near future raises questions on why few teachers and fewer school leaders wish to continue in post until the official age for retirement. A possible reason is found in the differing routes to promoted posts, particularly those in senior leadership. The career structure and opportunities for advancement vary greatly from school to school and can be dependent on school type, phase, location, enrolment trends, budget restrictions and lack of salary differentials. A major drawback is that there is no system to directly link the most talented and highly skilled individuals to leadership posts at the various levels required. In general there is unevenness in upward movement through the profession to senior leadership posts.

7.7 The Northern Ireland system is changing so rapidly and extensively that what was perceived as the role of school leadership five years ago is too narrow to allow the new demands of the system to be met. Society is emerging from almost forty years of conflict, levels of poverty are high, and there is considerable underachievement by many passing through the school system. There is unrelenting pressure for change and high expectations that schools can be major agents in societal and community improvement. Education is widely regarded as the means by which our young people can exit from the cycle of deprivation and thus there is pressure on schools to ensure that each child is provided with the opportunity and quality of support necessary to achieve his or her true potential. School leaders face considerable challenges as they seek to educate and develop the young people of Northern Ireland to the highest possible standards, providing equality of access to all.

7.8 The schemes of management for schools have given extensive powers to boards of governors. It is these bodies rather than the principal who have the legal power to determine the strategic direction of schools and many of the policies for implementation. However, a proactive and strong school leadership will be key to the successful implementation of the many challenges facing the education sector and schools in particular.

7.9 There is a need to ensure that those individuals with the greatest potential seek to fill future principal posts – in order to lead and manage the schools that the future of Northern Ireland will require. There is some concern already, expressed by ETI, that in a minority of schools leadership is ineffective. The level of interest in principal posts, however, is generally adequate with overall ratios of approximately 8 per post at Primary level and approximately 4 to 5 per post at Secondary level. This, however, masks the variations by sector and area where the average may be less than 3 applicants per post. The proportion of women applying per post does not reflect the fact that they constitute almost three quarters of the teaching workforce.

The number of teachers (1132) who have undertaken the PQH(NI) programme that provides the major route into headship, is increasing, as is the number of schools providing candidates (749). For those entering PQH(NI) there is usually a high degree of motivation to enter headship and the way in which the applicants envisage their role as future leaders of our schools is often inspiring. They conceive of headship as a privilege offering the opportunity to influence positively the lives of young people.¹⁸ However, there are concerns about the attractiveness of senior leadership in schools, as voiced at the Killyhevlin Conference, that the management of the complex and imminent changes and the expectation of higher standards and a broader range of skills from senior school leaders than ever before will challenge those who can work comfortably at lower levels of management in schools. Concerns about the impact of demographic trends, the outworkings of the Bain Review, pay differentials, career progression, recognition of their value to society, work/life balance and increasing levels of

¹⁸ Those principals of long experience who act as tutors within the PQH(NI) programme also present headship as a privilege of this kind.

accountability may also deter some individuals from applying for leadership posts. High quality performers need to be recognised and rewarded, in part through the existing pay and conditions of service arrangements but also through greater public acknowledgement of the importance of the role of school leadership to society. Their career structure should offer progression with distinct possibilities for working in other areas of the education system.

7.10 An increasing priority has been given to the preparation of school leaders since 1999. There is a shift in emphasis from training focused on good management practice to ‘training today’s leaders for the schools of tomorrow’. It has become a core function of the Regional Training Unit through its Leadership College to provide programmes and courses to develop effective leaders in schools. There is no clear pathway into school leadership except through PQH(NI) which is designed for those aspiring to headship. Its marked success as a training model has also made it attractive to teachers who may not wish to enter headship but will undertake other leadership roles in schools. The traditional alternative route to headship through the acquisition of higher degrees or diplomas in education, allied to experience of leadership at particular levels, still exists. Employing bodies are increasingly aligning what they require from their school leaders against the National Standards for Headship (NI) and PQH(NI) graduates are advantaged in that they have already been deemed to meet these standards at threshold level or above.

There needs to be clear pathways into leadership from the end of the early professional development stage to the point of entry to PQH(NI). In schools where leadership is being ‘distributed’, those teachers who are willing to take on leadership roles need to be given the necessary knowledge, skills and opportunities to be effective. This process which must also involve the principals of such schools as they build the capacity for leadership should be supported and, where appropriate, formally validated. Those emerging as leaders should have opportunity for accreditation of their work, for example through a portfolio of evidence of their achievement that could provide the basis for their entry to PQH(NI).

7.11 PQH(NI) is an important model for the professional development of school leaders. It is not only a route into headship or other senior leadership posts but it contributes much to the process of school development planning and school improvement as candidates have undertaken major school-based projects that give evidence of their leadership skills. It has provided a template for other training programmes and has of itself led to the development of three related programmes for those who are already in headship. The blended nature of the programme that includes supported self-study, personal tutoring, extensive face to face training and compulsory use of an online Virtual Learning Environment, is unique to Northern Ireland. .

7.12 There is a robust suite of training programmes offered through RTU, in conjunction with partners in the CASS service and CCMS, to first time principals and vice-principals as a major part of their entitlement in the induction phase,. They are divided by phase, largely for practical and logistical reasons, in particular to allow follow-up in schools by the professional officers in the partner services. The methodology of the programmes is similar with emphasis on the core purpose of their roles and analysis of their functions in leadership. The programmes have recently become more aligned to the key areas of headship outlined in the National Standards and there is encouragement to continue professional development through a range of other options.

7.13 As senior school leaders, principals have the opportunity to involve their senior management teams or indeed the whole school in a series of Strategic and Organisational Development programmes. These can lead to external accreditation but are most useful to schools as they are involved in the necessary self-evaluation and formative processes. These obviously extend the professionalism of school leaders but are not targeted at this individual level.

7.14 A more direct approach to the on-going development of school leaders is contained in the programmes that together constitute the National Standards Modular programme. This link to the National Standards demonstrates their importance as an appropriate framework for the professional development of school leaders from the stage of aspiring to headship, through the induction period, into that of experienced headship.

There is no complacency in the Northern Ireland system that supposes that schools can meet current needs and anticipated future challenges without good leadership and management. There is however a need to distinguish what this implies for the system and what it demands from individual school leaders. Much good practice in leadership development already exists. There is undoubted quality available in the teaching workforce that needs to be channelled and attracted into school leadership. To achieve this demands a radical re-evaluation of the concept of leadership and of its importance in schools and consideration of how it can be empowered and rewarded. This must lead to a consistency in approach across the system derived from shared understanding of the key areas of leadership; these are stated already in the National Standards for Headship but will also need contextualisation for leadership at other levels. New opportunities exist through the setting up of the Education and Skills Authority for strategic long-term planning for the continued improvement of school leadership. School leaders have made an immense contribution to the education system during the periods of tension and civil strife and will continue to do so as they create and develop the schools of the future for the well-being of those who live in Northern Ireland.

8. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

BLC	Building Leadership Capacity
C2k	Classroom 2000 – a programme to provide ICT in schools
CASS	Curriculum Advisory and Support Service
CCEA	The Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment
CCMS	The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CPDR	Continuous Professional Development Record
DE	Department of Education
DHSSPS	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
e2s	Entitled to succeed – a programme of reforms to change the educational landscape
EFQM	European Foundation for Quality Management
ELB	Education and Library Board
EPD	Early Professional Development
ETI	The Education and Training Inspectorate
FE	Further Education
GCE	General Certificate for Education (Advanced level)
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GMI	Grant Maintained Integrated
GTCNI	General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
INSET	In-service Education and Training
ISR	Individual School Range – for salary placements
KS	Key Stage
LMS	The Local Management of Schools
NI	Northern Ireland
NIC	Northern Ireland Curriculum
NICIE	The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education
NPQH	The National Professional Qualification for Headship
OU	The Open University
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
PQH(NI)	The Professional Qualification for Headship [NI]
PRSD	The Performance Review and Staff Development scheme
QUB	The Queen’s University of Belfast
ROI	Republic of Ireland
RPA	Reform of Public Administration
RTU	The Regional Training Unit
SDP	School Development Plan
SDPR	Staff Development and Performance Review
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Education Needs Co-ordinator
SEND0	Special Educational Needs and Disability Order
SIP	School Improvement Programme
SMT	Senior Management Team
T&EA	Training and Employment Agency
TSN	Targeting Social Need
UK	The United Kingdom
UPS	Upper Pay Scale
UU	The University of Ulster
VG(S)	Voluntary Grammar (School)
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
VP	Vice-Principal