

# DE Newsletter



## Welcome from Education Minister, Maria Eagle MP

Significant changes are taking place in education at the moment. They cover a wide range of issues, but all are designed to achieve one thing - the best outcome for all children in Northern Ireland, no matter what their abilities, where they live or where they go to school.

Achieving the best outcome for every child must be at the heart of everything we do; we must make sure that the education system will meet the needs of our young people as they make their way within modern society and into the workplace.

I have visited many schools, colleges, nurseries and youth groups over recent months, and have seen the commitment and enthusiasm of everyone working in the sector to do the best for Northern Ireland's young people.

This Government is making unprecedented levels of investment in education to help you to continue to do so; the reforms we are implementing will help ensure that this money goes further and makes an even

greater impact on the front line in children's lives, where it matters most.

This newsletter will give you an update on progress on key elements of the 'Entitled to Succeed' programme, including the revised curriculum and the current position about transfer to post-primary schools.

It also provides an update on other key issues, including the implications of the Bain Review; latest developments on the Review of Public Administration and the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority; and progress on the developments in the review of Special Educational Needs and Inclusion.

Many of the articles include web links where you can find further information on each topic.

I hope you find this newsletter useful and I wish you well as you continue to deliver for Northern Ireland's young people in 2007.

**MARIA EAGLE**  
Education Minister

### *At a glance:*

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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## ENTITLED TO SUCCEED (E2S)

### New Law

The Education (NI) Order 2006 was approved by Parliament and provides the legal basis for a number of key reforms including the revised curriculum and the Entitlement Framework.

In addition, the necessary orders have been made setting out the minimum requirements for the curriculum and assessment arrangements and the transitional requirements for pupil records. They will be available shortly on the Department of Education website.

### Revised Curriculum

The legislative framework for the revised curriculum took effect from September 2006, with the detail of the curriculum and assessment arrangements being phased in from September 2007 as follows:

Academic Year	Revised arrangements statutory for Year Groups
2007/08	1,5,8 and 11
2008/09	2,6,9 and 12
2009/10	3,4,7 and 10

The revised curriculum is less prescriptive than the current model, and gives back to schools significant flexibility to tailor teaching more fully to the needs of their pupils. There is greater emphasis on the fundamental skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT, and on learning for life and work, and employability. Assessment will be annual, with the emphasis on what has been achieved and the setting of realistic targets for future learning.

The Partnership Management Board (PMB), which manages the implementation of the new curriculum and assessment arrangements, including the Pupil Profile, is implementing a full teacher training programme, sequenced in line with the phased implementation of the revised curriculum and assessment arrangements. A series of Leading Learning assessment conferences were held during January 2007 for primary principals. Information about proposed training and other support can be found on the PMB website (see below).

The PMB issues a regular newsletter, "linked", via email and hard copy to every teacher. The next edition will issue shortly. Copies of "linked" are also available on the PMB website: <http://www.pmbni.org.uk/>.

A revised curriculum website will be established shortly by CCEA, which will contain the statutory curriculum documentation, accompanying guidance, and training and support materials.

### Pupil Profile

The Pupil Profile replaces the annual report to parents and will provide a standardised reporting format instead of the variety of formats currently used by schools. It will contain information about a child's achievements in the cross-curricular skills of communication, using mathematics and using ICT, as well as in the new statutory areas of learning of the curriculum, and will be the focus for each child's development. The Profile is neither designed nor intended to place pupils in rank order, and so cannot be used as a tool for selection.

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Manageability for teachers and the provision of relevant information for parents and pupils are two key priorities in developing the Pupil Profile at all Key Stages. Teachers will be able to complete the Pupil Profile electronically - this facility has been developed between CCEA and C2K, and takes account of the necessity for ease of use.

CCEA has been developing, testing, refining and trialling the Pupil Profile format since 2003. CCEA has also been trialling the use of computer based diagnostic tools in literacy and numeracy to support teachers and to inform their teaching. Training for teachers will be provided in the use of the ICT tools and, subsequently, in the diagnostic use of the computer based assessment data.

The Pupil Profile will be phased in as follows:

Academic Year	Pupil Profile introduced for Year Groups
2007/08	1 and 5
2008/09	2, 6, 8 and 9
2009/10	3, 4, 7, 10, 11 and 12

Further information is available at: <http://www.rewardinglearning.com/development/foundation/pupilprofile.html>

## Languages Strategy for Northern Ireland

The Minister announced a review of language learning in schools and colleges on 12 December 2006. While modern languages are not compulsory at primary school, the revised curriculum provides greater flexibility for languages to be introduced. Some primary schools have already done so and the review opens the possibility that all primary school children will have the opportunity to learn a modern language. CCEA and the Boards are also engaged in some primary language pilots.

The Department is supporting the work of the joint University of Ulster and Queen's University Belfast Subject Centre for Language, Linguistics and Area Studies. It is developing a languages strategy for Northern Ireland to promote languages as a practical competence for all young people and adults in schools and colleges. As well as encouraging the uptake of a wider range of modern languages (for example, Chinese and Japanese as well as European languages), it will also address the languages of Northern Ireland (Irish, Ulster-Scots and the languages of immigrants) and sign language. Following consultation, the Centre will present its recommendations on a strategy by March 2008.

Further information is available at: <http://www.nics.gov.uk/press/edu/061212I-edu.htm>

## Opportunities at 14-19

The Department of Education and the Department of Employment and Learning are working together to ensure that all young people have the opportunity to fulfil their potential via qualification routes, which open up opportunities to progress in learning and into employment.

Many of the key policies are already in place. In the schools sector - the E2S Programme which includes the Revised Curriculum, the Entitlement Framework, and the Specialist Schools Programme and in the FE sector - FE Means Business, the Northern Ireland Skills Strategy and Training for Success.

Work is underway to develop high quality careers education, information advice and guidance and to ensure that the ICT policy supports the effective delivery of the new arrangements.

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More information on some of these developments is provided below and on the DE website at:

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/22-postprimaryarrangements-new-arrangements\\_pg/22-ppa-key\\_areas\\_pg.htm](http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/22-postprimaryarrangements-new-arrangements_pg/22-ppa-key_areas_pg.htm)

## Entitlement Framework

The Entitlement Framework will become a statutory requirement for all schools from September 2009, and will require them to offer access to at least 24 courses at Key Stage 4 and at least 27 at post-16. Of these courses, at least one third must be general and one third applied - the remaining third will be at the school's discretion.

The following guidance has been issued in Departmental circulars:

- ❑ Circular 2005/18: Initial guidance

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/2005\\_18-entitlement\\_framework-initial\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/2005_18-entitlement_framework-initial_guidance.pdf)

- ❑ Circular 2006/20: Guidance on a number of practical implementation issues

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/22-ppa-ef\\_further\\_guidance\\_-\\_final\\_covering\\_circular\\_2006.20-2.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/22-ppa-ef_further_guidance_-_final_covering_circular_2006.20-2.pdf)

- ❑ Circular 2006/24: Guidance on the classification of courses as general or applied

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/22-circular\\_2006-24\\_approval\\_of\\_qualifications.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/22-circular_2006-24_approval_of_qualifications.pdf)

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/22-courses\\_keystage4\\_list.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/22-courses_keystage4_list.pdf)

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/22-courses\\_post\\_16\\_list.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/22-courses_post_16_list.pdf)

Circular 2006/24 is a starting point for the development of a database of classified courses which will be expanded over time on the Department's website. The circular lists a contact person if schools are unable to identify a course currently (or planned to be) on offer to pupils.

## Support for Collaborative Working

To meet the requirements of the Entitlement Framework, most schools will need to collaborate with other schools, FE Colleges or other education providers and legislation requires this to be in accordance with guidance issued by the Department of Education. Development officers have been appointed by Education and Library Boards, CCMS, NICIE and CnaG to support schools in the planning of collaborative arrangements. Contact details for these officers are included in DE Circular 2006/20:

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/22-ppa-ef\\_further\\_guidance\\_-\\_final\\_covering\\_circular\\_2006.20-2.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/22-ppa-ef_further_guidance_-_final_covering_circular_2006.20-2.pdf)

Financial support for collaborative working is currently provided through the Vocational Enhancement Programme (VEP) and a school-school collaboration programme.

Since 2004/05 VEP has been used to test different approaches to collaboration between schools, FE colleges and other providers of vocational education. In 2006/07, all 16 FE colleges, 8 training organisations, 189 schools and over 9,000 pupils are participating.

Collaboration between schools to extend the curriculum offer for pupils is increasing in scale as 'learning communities' in each area become established (with the support of the Development Officers).

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Both programmes of support will run in parallel for 2007/08, but in 2008/09 they will be merged to form a single programme of support.

Guidance and the application form for VEP funding in 2007/08 were published by the Department on 24 January 2007. Further information can be found in DE Circular 2007/03: <http://www.deni.gov.uk/circular-2007-03.pdf>

Details of the funding arrangements for school-school collaboration in 2007/08 will be published shortly.

## Specialist Schools

Specialist status builds whole school improvement by learning and applying the lessons from those areas in which the school is already strong to other areas of the curriculum. Of equal importance are the links that specialism builds with other schools in the area, further disseminating good practice and increasing collaboration. Links with local businesses and the community are also fostered, bringing a range of benefits and giving pupils new access to expertise and learning experiences.

Twelve schools have been designated as pilot Specialist Schools from September 2006 to test key aspects in the local context. Following a review and consultation on the first phase of the pilot, the second year of the pilot has been modified to establish a more explicit link to E2S aims and objectives. The application round for the second year of the pilot was announced to schools on 30 November 2006, and the closing date for receipt of applications is 30 March 2007. Schools who are successful in this round of

applications will be designated as Specialist Schools from September 2007.

The establishment of Specialist Schools will contribute significantly to improving choice for pupils and parents and raising standards for all young people.

Further information is available at: [http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/22-postprimaryarrangements-new-arrangements\\_pg/22-ppa-key\\_areas\\_pg/22-ppa-ka-ss\\_pg.htm](http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/22-postprimaryarrangements-new-arrangements_pg/22-ppa-key_areas_pg/22-ppa-ka-ss_pg.htm)

## Academic Selection and Admissions

The Government's clear view is that abolishing academic selection is in the best interests of education and the economy in Northern Ireland. However, the Government has accepted that the final decision should be taken by local politicians should there be an early restoration of the Assembly and has provided for this in the Education Order (NI) 2006.

If the Assembly is restored by 28 March 2007, 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.

In either case the new arrangements will take effect in relation to admissions after 31 July 2010, and pupils currently in P4 will be the first to transfer under them.

Consultation on regulations about new school admissions criteria will take place once the position about future arrangements has been clarified.

Further information is available on the DE website at: [http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/22-postprimaryarrangements-new-arrangements\\_pg.htm](http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/22-postprimaryarrangements-new-arrangements_pg.htm)

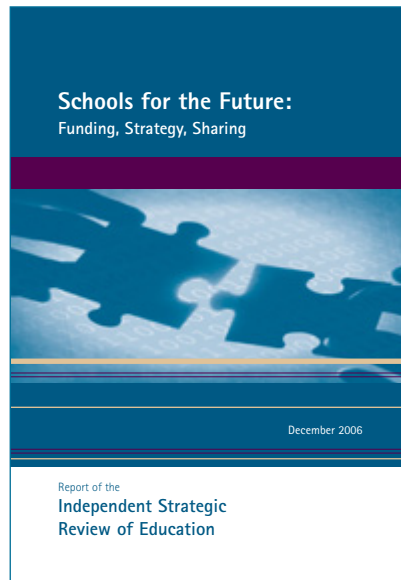
## THE BAIN REVIEW: Education Funding, Strategy & Sharing

Sir George Bain, former Vice Chancellor of Queen's University, published his Strategic Review of Education in early December. The detailed report dealt with the need for better planning of the schools' estate in the context of falling enrolments, and with encouraging cross community sharing in education.

The Government has since accepted the Review's recommendations, and Secretary of State Peter Hain pledged on 23 January 2007 to begin its immediate implementation.

This will involve the establishment of a new Shared Future Accreditation scheme to recognise collaboration between schools; an immediate move towards 'area based planning' and consultation on sustainability of schools in terms of their size. Future capital building projects will be considered in the context of area based planning, and previously

announced capital projects currently in the planning process are being reviewed to assess their consistency with the direction set out in the Bain Review.



The Department of Education will also now undertake a review of the factors that make up the Common Funding Formula to ensure that they reflect and are responsive to the main cost drivers faced by schools.

The Bain Review, the Secretary of State's speech in response to the

Review and other associated documents are all available on [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk).



## CHANGES TO EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION

Since the publication of details of how the Review of Public Administration (RPA) will impact on education administration, much work has been undertaken on the formation of the Education and Skills Authority and other elements of the reorganisation:

Gavin Boyd was appointed Chief Executive Designate of the Education and Skills Authority in December. Mr Boyd, who has been Chief Executive of CCEA since 2000, will take up the role early in the new year. As Chief Executive Designate, he will spearhead one of the UK's largest public sector organisations.



The Department has recently issued a series of policy papers setting out a number of proposals on how the new arrangements will work under the RPA. The papers are available on [http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/8-admin\\_of\\_education\\_pg/100-review-of-public-administration/100-policy-documents.htm](http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/8-admin_of_education_pg/100-review-of-public-administration/100-policy-documents.htm). These proposals are still being refined but we are keen to share current thinking and will be listening to views and comments as these proposals are finalised.

There are a number of the policy papers which will be of interest to principals, teachers and Boards of Governors. Look out for policy paper 2 which considers how the Education and Skills Authority will support schools. Governance and accountability arrangements for schools and the Education and Skills Authority can be found in paper 5. Paper 7 discusses the role and functions of the employing authority and employer.

## REVIEW OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) AND INCLUSION

The review of SEN and Inclusion, which started April 2006, is focusing on a number of key areas including:

- ❑ the arrangements for the identification and assessment of SEN;
- ❑ the nature, quality, and extent of provision and support relating to assessed needs for children with SEN;
- ❑ early intervention / pre-school SEN assessment and provision;
- ❑ capacity building for teachers, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators and adult assistance;
- ❑ the role of special schools in providing support and advice to mainstream schools and the role and expertise within Curriculum Advisory and Support Service; and
- ❑ inclusion of children and young people with SEN and/or disability in a

mainstream setting including the impact of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order.

The review team, through a number of advisory groups, has obtained invaluable contributions from teachers, SENCOs, ELB staff and also colleagues from the health and social services sector in the development of policy proposals.

### WHAT'S NEXT?

The review team will publish a document for consultation which, on present plans, will issue mid 2007.

Interested parties can notify the Review Team of views and ideas to help inform SEN and inclusion policy development by emailing: [senandinclusionreview@deni.gov.uk](mailto:senandinclusionreview@deni.gov.uk)