



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS
MÄNNYSTRIE O LEAR



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

RESEARCH BRIEFING

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FUNDED RESEARCH 2002/03

1. This Research Briefing provides information on projects commenced in 2002/03 funded by the Department of Education. Details of funded projects from previous years which were still in progress at the start of the year are also provided.
2. The purpose of this Briefing is to provide clear and succinct summaries of the research projects funded by the Department of Education to ensure that policy makers and administrators in the education services, teachers, academics and other interested parties are aware of research both in progress and recently completed.
3. The findings of research commissioned by the Department of Education are disseminated:-
 - a. Through the publication of research reports as part of the Department of Education Research Report Series.
 - b. Through publication of summaries of the findings of projects as part of the Department of Education Research Briefing Series.
4. Please note that the dates given for uncompleted projects refer to when the draft final report is due to be received by the Department of Education. Projects

can be affected by delays. Actual publication of reports tends to occur about 6 months after the draft final report is received.

5. Copies of Department of Education research publications may be obtained from the address on the back of this Briefing.

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SECTION A: PROJECTS COMMENCED IN 2002/03

- Project Title:** EVALUATING THE POTENTIAL FOR VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS (VLEs)
Research Body: Graduate School of Education, Queen's University Belfast, and C2K
Start Date: September 2002 **Cost:** £61,270
Final Report: Due December 2003

Brief Description of Project

The project is using a Virtual Learning Environment to deliver an aspect of the Citizenship curriculum, namely the Human Rights of Young Adults. Through the exploration of creative approaches to learning, and the participation in an online environment, teachers will develop teaching strategies to help engage pupils in an interactive way.

- Project Title:** THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS IN IRISH-MEDIUM SCHOOLS: MODELS OF GOOD PRACTICE AND AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT
Research Body: St Mary's University College
Start Date: October 2002 **Cost:** £19,551
Final Report: Due June 2003

Brief Description of Project

The purpose of this research is to establish the extent of professional development opportunities made available for teachers and principals in the Irish-medium sector, and to ascertain their future needs regarding training and development.

**3. Project Title: LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES:
COVERAGE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PROVISION IN
NORTHERN IRELAND (0-36 MONTHS)**

Research Body: Stranmillis University College

Start Date: October 2002 Cost: £9,867 (part-funding)

Final Report: Draft received March 2003

Brief Description of Project

Language programmes for the 0-3 age-group are diverse, ranging from formal intervention by a Speech and Language therapist to parenting programmes with language development activities embedded within them. This project seeks to document existing provision, and identify effectiveness criteria.

**4. Project Title: INVESTIGATING THE ROLE OF YOUTH WORK IN
PROVIDING INFORMAL EDUCATION**

Research Body: University of Ulster and Queen's University Belfast

Start Date: October 2002 Cost: £10,000

Final Report: Due October 2003

Brief Description of Project

This project aims to articulate what informal education means within the youth service and to highlight good practice within this sector.

5. **Project Title:** INVESTIGATING WHETHER THERE IS A SHORTFALL IN THE RECRUITMENT OF TEACHERS IN ANY SUBJECT AREAS IN POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Research Body: Stranmillis University College

Start Date: January 2003 **Cost:** £15,500

Final Report: Due September 2003

Brief Description of Project

This project is investigating whether there is a shortfall in the recruitment of teachers in any subject areas in post-primary schools in Northern Ireland. It also seeks to identify the extent to which teachers are teaching subjects for which they are not qualified. The main aim is to identify subjects that currently, or may in the near future, present schools with staffing difficulties.

6. **Project Title:** NORTHERN IRELAND CURRICULUM COHORT STUDY: EXTENSION TO POST-16

Research Body: National Foundation for Educational Research

Start Date: January 2003 **Cost:** £52,412 (part-funding)

Final Report: Due December 2003

Brief Description of Project

This phase of the cohort study aims to document and compare the contrasting post-compulsory destinations of the 2,500 young people who have been tracked since the age of 11; explore young people's perceptions of the curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4 in the light of their post-compulsory experiences; and examine the efficacy of 16-19 education from the learner's perspective and experience.

SECTION B: PROJECTS IN PROGRESS AT THE START OF 2002/03

1. Project Title: SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN): PARENTAL SURVEY

Research Body: University of Ulster at Coleraine

Start Date: September 2001 Cost: £24,439

Final Report: Received March 2003

Brief Description of Project

The aim of this project was to conduct a survey of the parents of children with statements of special educational needs, to ascertain whether the process met their children's needs; parental expectations of the process; and parental attitudes towards inclusion in mainstream schooling.

2. Project Title: COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOLS - AN INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Research Body: PricewaterhouseCoopers, in association with Education and Development

Start Date: July 2001 Cost: £12,650

Final Report: Published June 2003

Brief Description of Project

This project provided an insight into the uses, other than the education of children, to which school buildings and facilities can be put.

3. **Project Title:** BULLYING IN SCHOOLS: A NORTHERN IRELAND STUDY
- Research Body:** Further & Higher Education Research Unit, School of Education, University of Ulster
- Start Date:** May 2000 **Cost:** £62,588
- Final Report:** Published October 2002

Brief Description of Project

The study provided general information on the prevalence of bullying and the different types of bullying being experienced by pupils. The study considered the extent of pupils being bullied and bullying others; attitudes to bullies/victims; and the perceptions and attitudes of school staff to bullying.

4. **Project Title:** ATTITUDES TOWARDS EDUCATION OF SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED PARENTS AND SCHOOL CHILDREN
- Research Body:** Graduate School of Education, Queen's University Belfast
- Start Date:** November 2000 **Cost:** £4,980
- Final Report:** Due August 2003

Brief Description of Project

This project reviews existing evidence on the attitudes of socially disadvantaged parents and children towards education. The report will include material on ethnic minorities, looked after children, young mothers, persistent non-attenders and excluded pupils.

5. Project Title: AN ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE STUDENTS' SUBJECT CHOICE FOR CAREER PROGRESSION

Research Body: University of Ulster

Start Date: January 1998 Cost: £47,139

Final Report: Received October 2002

Brief Description of Project

This study involved an analysis of the existing levels of provision of careers education and guidance in the light of the most recent models of good practice, and examined the effectiveness of careers guidance.

6. Project Title: EFFECTIVE PRE-SCHOOL PROVISION IN NORTHERN IRELAND (EPPNI)

Research Body: Birkbeck College, University of London

Start Date: March 1998 Cost: £295,277 (part-funding)

Final Report: Due December 2004

Brief Description of Project

This project, also funded by DHSSPS and inter-Departmentally, parallels a similar exercise in England. The Northern Ireland study aims to identify the most effective types of pre-school provision (in terms of progress within the pre-school and subsequent progress within the first 4 years of primary school) in order to describe the characteristics which make them effective, using methods developed from previous pre-school and day care research. The results of the research should help to guide future planning of pre-school provision.

7. **Project Title:** **MULTIPLY SUSPENDED PUPILS: THEIR EDUCATIONAL CAREERS AND SUPPORT PROJECTS AVAILABLE TO THEM**
- Research Body:** **Graduate School of Education, Queen's University Belfast**
- Start Date:** **September 1997** **Cost: £42,436**
- Final Report:** **Published June 2002**

Brief Description of Project

The first two phases of the 'exclusions from school' research found that pupils who experienced multiple suspensions and those who were expelled were the groups that gave most cause for concern. This third phase of the research explored in greater depth what happened to pupils who experienced multiple suspensions, by considering whether this was the beginning of more permanent exclusion or whether these young people could manage to maintain a place in mainstream education. The research also explored the range and effectiveness of alternatives for those excluded from mainstream education.

8. **Project Title:** **OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS WHO RECEIVED AN IRISH-MEDIUM EDUCATION**
- Research Body:** **Hanna and Company**
- Start Date:** **April 1998** **Cost: £14,580**
- Final Report:** **Published April 2002**

Brief Description of Project

This project analysed the qualifications gained by pupils who had experienced Irish-medium secondary education, their destinations on leaving school, and their career choices. It collected attitudinal information from those who had an Irish-medium education, on the advantages and constraints which they felt had resulted, both in terms of their subsequent education and in other respects.

9. **Project Title:** DEVELOPING LINGUISTIC ACCURACY IN IRISH-MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOLS
- Research Body:** School of Behavioural and Communication Sciences, University of Ulster at Jordanstown
- Start Date:** September 1996 **Cost:** £15,000 (part-funding)
- Final Report:** Published October 2002

Brief Description of Project

The project aimed to contribute to good practice in the development of competence in Irish in Irish-medium Schools. It identified norms in relation to grammatical accuracy in speech and writing; identified recurring errors and determined which of these persist in the later primary years; and made recommendations for improving linguistic accuracy where appropriate.

10. **Project Title:** NORTHERN IRELAND CURRICULUM COHORT STUDY
- Research Body:** National Foundation for Educational Research
- Start Date:** June 1998 **Cost:** £87,449 (part-funding)
- Final Report:** Published April 2002

Brief Description of Project

This study investigated primary pupils' perspectives and experiences of the curriculum, following them through into secondary education. The project offered policy makers and teachers a valuable and wide-ranging source of information with which to review the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

11. **Project Title:** PROGRAMME FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSESSMENT (PISA) 2000
- Research Body:** Office for National Statistics (ONS), & Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA)
- Start Date:** April 1998 **Cost:** £198,451 (NI study)
- Final Report:** Basic results published December 2001, full report published June 2002

Brief Description of Project

This study formed part of an international exercise to develop and implement a strategy for producing student outcome indicators in reading, maths and science. The age group was 15-16 year olds. The main focus of PISA 2000 was on reading. The study was carried out in 32 countries using standardised methodology to give internationally comparable results.

12. **Project Title:** THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION OF STUDY SUPPORT AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
- Research Body:** Education Extra
- Start Date:** January 2002 **Cost:** £44,300
- Final Report:** Received April 2003

Brief Description of Project

The aim of this project was to present an overview of the effect that study support provision (i.e. Out of School Hours Activities) has had in schools. It gathered information (data and views) from those responsible in schools for the delivery of the study support initiative, and also from pupils and parents.

13. **Project Title:** A STUDY INTO POTENTIAL MODELS FOR THE SUCCESSFUL TEACHING OF PERSONAL EDUCATION
- Research Body:** Graduate School of Education, Queen's University Belfast
- Start Date:** February 2002 **Cost:** £20,618
- Final Report:** Draft received March 2003

Brief Description of Project

The project is an in-depth study of current best practice in the delivery of Personal and Social Education to KS3 pupils in five post-primary schools with a view to suggested models for the development of, support of, and training for, effective classroom practice.

14. **Project Title:** COMPUTERISED ASSESSMENTS UNITS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS
- Research Body:** Queen's University Belfast
- Start Date:** January 2002 **Cost:** £8,500 (part-funding)
- Final Report:** Received April 2003

Brief Description of Project

This research aimed to establish if computerised assessments with built-in prompts could be used to assist in the assessment of pupils with special educational needs.

15. **Project Title:** NORTHERN IRELAND CURRICULUM COHORT STUDY: AN EXTENSION TO KEY STAGE 4
- Research Body:** National Foundation for Educational Research
- Start Date:** March 2001 **Cost:** £92,329 (part-funding)
- Final Report:** Received March 2003

Brief Description of Project

This extension of the project to Year 12 continued to address the overall aim of the cohort study, namely 'to provide evidence of the impact of the curriculum as a total package from the perspective of the learner'. The context of Key Stage 4 included pupils' choice of subjects, the lead up to public examinations and the presence of coursework in the curriculum.

16. **Project Title:** A STUDY OF THE INTEGRATION OF TRAVELLER CHILDREN INTO MAINSTREAM SECONDARY SCHOOLS
- Research Body:** St Mary's University College
- Start Date:** February 2002 **Cost:** £22,515
- Final Report:** Due June 2003

Brief Description of Project

This research sets out to explore the experience of Traveller children in mainstream secondary schools in West Belfast and more widely across Northern Ireland. The report will suggest possibilities for future action relating to enhancing the integration and social inclusion of Traveller children at post-primary level.

- 17. Project Title: SUSTAINABLE THINKING CLASSROOMS**
- Research Body: Queen's University Belfast**
- Start Date: April 2001 Cost: £40,500 (part-funding)**
- Final Report: Due December 2003**

Brief Description of Project

This study is being primarily funded by the ESRC. Its main aim is to develop and evaluate methodologies for teaching thinking across the school curriculum and to devise teacher support strategies for sustainable thinking classrooms.

- 18. Project Title: PROGRAMME FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSESSMENT (PISA) 2003**
- Research Body: Office for National Statistics (ONS), & Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA)**
- Start Date: April 2001 Cost: £250,000 (NI study)**
- Final Report: Initial results due by early 2005**

Brief Description of Project

This study forms part of an international exercise to produce student outcome indicators in reading, maths and science on a regular basis. It follows a similar study in 2000. The age group is 15-16 year olds. The main focus of PISA 2003 is on maths. The study is being carried out using standardised methodology to give internationally comparable results.

19. **Project Title:** REDUCING THE BUREAUCRATIC BURDEN ON SCHOOLS
- Research Body:** Graduate School of Education, Queen's University Belfast
- Start Date:** June 2000 **Cost:** £19,100
- Final Report:** Published June 2002

Brief Description of Project

The aims of the research were to examine the impact of the Department's Circular 1998/33, and to ascertain what still needed to be done to reduce administrative demands on schools.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESEARCH BRIEFINGS (2000 TO DATE)

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

PURPOSE OF DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESEARCH BRIEFINGS

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

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