

NATIONAL STATISTICS QUALITY REVIEW OF SCHOOL STATISTICS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

REPORT

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1. COVERAGE OF THE REVIEW AND KEY CONCLUSIONS

1.1 This review considers the quality, as defined in the National Statistics Code of Practice and the related Protocols, of those school statistics for Northern Ireland produced by the Department of Education in Northern Ireland which are classified as National Statistics. It focuses in particular, but not exclusively, on the key statistics presented in the Statistical Press Releases listed below:

- Enrolments at grant-aided primary and post-primary schools: basic statistics
- Children in funded pre-school education, and enrolments at special, hospital and independent schools: basic statistics
- Enrolments at schools and in funded pre-school education
- Pupil: teacher ratios in grant-aided schools
- Qualifications and destinations of Northern Ireland school leavers

1.2 These statistics come from the School Census, the School Leavers' Survey and the collection of data about numbers of teachers. These collections are described in more detail in chapter 3. The review also covers:

- The more detailed statistics produced from the same sources
- The possibility that users require further statistics with the quality characteristics of National Statistics.

Statistics of pupil performance – apart from the qualifications of leavers - are not covered.

1.3 A description of the relevant statistical outputs is included in chapter 4.

1.4 In considering the quality of the statistics account is taken of each of the dimensions identified for both the European Statistical System and the National Statistics Quality Strategy. These are:

Relevance	Accuracy	Timeliness
Accessibility	Comparability	Coherence
Completeness		

1.5 The conclusions of the review are presented in Chapter 7. They may be very briefly summarised as:

- There is a strong case for a wide ranging review – involving all relevant partners – of the needs for data and statistics about schools, and how they can best be produced; failing that a number of lesser reviews should be conducted and consultation increased
- The Statistical Press Releases and the content of the web site should be significantly improved (and in most cases extended) to provide a greater range of useful statistical tables, and support (by information about the surveys and the ad hoc analysis service, and by access to statistics and data) the exploitation of the data
- The Statistical Press Releases should, in general, be produced more quickly – some actions are identified, including more efficient validation, which should contribute to this.

2. USER REQUIREMENTS

2.1 This summary of user requirements for school statistics for Northern Ireland reflects discussions with a number of users and written contributions, mostly in response to a questionnaire issued by the review, from a larger number. Those consulted are listed in Annex C.

Use of the Statistics for School Funding

2.2 A key use (which determines the use of a reference date in October and the priority given to some census data over other) of much of the census data is the determination, by DE (via ELBs and more directly for voluntary grammar and GMI schools and for specific funds) and the ELBs, of the level of funding for each grant aided school. The relevant specific items of census data on pupil numbers are:

- Age and stage
- Free school meal entitlement
- Class size (this is used for an earmarked budget rather than main stream funding)
- Parental receipt of Income Support or Income-Based JSA

- English is an additional language and pupil has significant difficulty with English (by full time and part time pupils for nurseries)
- SEN (not used at present but may be used in future; the detailed classification by SEN type is not likely to be used)
- Children of service personnel and travelling families

The number of travellers' and forces' children in a school can change markedly over a short period of time – there might therefore be advantage if more frequent data could be readily and efficiently available; however ad hoc funding arrangements have been able to deal satisfactorily with such situations. The funding process requires census data to be available no later than early December.

2.3 While the funding period straddles two academic years the funding methodology does not use the projected pupil numbers collected by the census because experience has shown that these can be unreliable and their use led to a need to include a claw back of over funding from some schools in the next year's funding calculations. It should also be noted that the projected pupil numbers collected from schools are not used in the Department's projections of pupil numbers to which some external users drew the review's attention.

2.4 An upcoming issue is how the funding of schools, and of FE colleges, should reflect the situation where a single young person receives part of their education through a school and part through an FE college, or some other organisation. This may involve a student pursuing different qualifications through different institutions, or pursuing different strands of work aimed at a single qualification through different institutions. Those responsible for

school funding have not yet thought through the nature of the data that will be required in this context. There are also other contexts – e.g. consideration of post 14 curriculum and any development of policy about the relative roles of schools and colleges; and the monitoring of the extent and nature of school/college collaboration - in which statistics about such learning would be valuable.

Other Uses of the Statistics

2.5 The funding process does not use data on teacher numbers, classroom assistant numbers (though there has been funding support for increase in their numbers) or leavers (though any move to funding success – as is currently done for FE colleges – would introduce a need for such data).

2.6 There is a wide range of other uses to which the data – from all three sources - are put in addition to the central use for determining funding. These are summarised below in paragraphs 2.7 to 2.11 and 2.19.

2.7 Some of the census data are used in the monitoring of three of DE's targets.

- The Department's aim is to provide a year of free pre-school education for every child whose parents wish it; the eligible population is proxied by Year 1 enrolments from the school census.
- The Department aims that by 2007 70 per cent of pupils in the most disadvantaged primary schools should achieve level 4 or above in Key Stage 2 English and Maths. The relevant schools are identified using school census data as the 25% of schools with the highest free school meal entitlement.
- The Department aims that by 2007 no more than 6 percent of year 12 pupils in the most disadvantaged post-primary schools should achieve no GCSEs. The relevant schools are identified using school census data as the 25% of schools with the highest free school meal entitlement.

2.8 All the data are available for use, and most – probably all - the variables have been used (both within and without DE) in

- Developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policy and strategy
- Monitoring trends in individual variables and the relationships between variables
- Bidding for funding
- Resource allocation
- Undertaking research
- Preparing and undertaking inspections
- Ensuring compliance with standards (e.g. approved enrolment and admission numbers)
- Identifying schools, or areas, for specific policy initiatives or advice and support; e.g. schools with excessive surplus places or with particular strengths or weaknesses

- Planning ELB service provision and the rationalisation of school provision.

The National Statistics data are often used in conjunction with other data outside the scope of this review.

2.9 A small majority of secondary schools and a clear minority of primary and nursery schools use the statistics – most often to compare themselves with other schools. The only request for additional school statistics mentioned by a large number of schools was for absence data for primary schools.

2.10 All the data and statistics are, of course, available for responding to PQs and other ad hoc queries from within and without the department; including from the press. Users have expressed widespread praise for the service provided by DE statisticians in response to such queries. An analysis of the types of queries dealt with in 2004 is at Annex F.

2.11 An important emerging need is the three-year plan being developed for the education sector. The data needs for this have not yet been specified in detail.

User Requests for Additional or Improved Statistics

2.12 Users identified a number of ways in which the statistics could valuably be extended or improved.

2.13 Among the deficiencies identified by a policy review of SEN were; specifically

- The omission of pupils in PRUs or EOTAS
- Lack of identification of the primary need for pupils with multiple SEN
- Extent of pupils in special units attached to mainstream schools for part day/specific activities
- Omission in SEN numbers of those not identified as SEN by the October census date; this is also reflected in the use for inspections of data collected at the time
- Non recording of the age at which pupil first placed on SEN register

This led the user concerned to suggest an SEN survey, probably in the last term of the year, reflecting – inter alia - the National Performance Framework for SEN being devised by DfES. It was also noted that Statistics and Research Branch are involved in the steering of work to define SEN categories more clearly – this should lead to more accurate and consistent information in ELB systems. Another user noted that data to attempt an adequate representation of the situation in respect of SEN required collation of data from ELBs, Special Education Branch and Statistics and Research Branch and that even if this could be achieved knowledge gaps would remain.

- 2.14 Also in the context of Special Education the needs for improved co-ordination of the production, and management, of statistics by different agencies and for an annual review of what statistics are required were emphasised. Specific additional statistics which users requested included:
- Assistants of different types employed at different stages of the Code of Practice
 - Percentage of pupils in receipt of different types of support at different stages of the SEN code
 - Pupils leaving special education with externally validated qualifications
 - The educational performance of pupils receiving, or awaiting, speech therapy. This was given as an example of a need for statistics linking educational and health or social services data.
- 2.15 Other user concerns, relating to current or emerging user needs, about the census data included:
- The inability to derive statistics based on individual pupil monitoring (linked of course to both the non availability of a UPN and the need for value added measures)
 - The desirability of statistics tracking pupil flows from primary to secondary by type, management type and ELB area of both exporting and importing school
 - The desirability of statistics for other reference dates: e.g.
 - Early census date can lead to incomplete picture of number of reception children admitted over year
 - SEN Statistics for younger – especially pre-school – children can be misleading as children’s needs are continually identified through the year
 - The lack of individual pupil data, and the statistical analyses such data could support, for primary schools
- 2.16 Specific additional statistics requested included:
- Statistics on subjects being studied (as distinct from exams entered) by pupils; including
 - Information on vocational and academic qualifications being studied for
 - The range of subjects available to sixth form pupils. (Some information on subjects studied is collected by the census but it is not validated and is of poor quality.)
 - Study group sizes
 The importance of such statistics has been increased by the introduction of a Curriculum Entitlement
 - Post primary class sizes; including specifically for years 13 and 14
 - Exclusions, suspensions and attendance; this was mentioned by a substantial proportion of responding users one of whom mentioned that following a recent Audit Office study some proactive monitoring will be required; for primary the need for attendance by free school meal entitlement was specifically mentioned

- Disabled – as opposed to SEN – pupils
- Identification, for use in the assessment of social deprivation, of pupils whose parents receive some benefits/credits not covered by the present question.
- Length of pre school sessions
- Attendance of pre school children in all forms of pre school in previous year
- Number of days voluntary/private pre-schools were open in the previous school year
- Split of pupils from outside NI between those from rest of Ireland and those from elsewhere
- Utilisation of accommodation
- Age mix of classes

2.17 Users of the data about teachers identified the following concerns, in addition to the probability that the use of a different survey method for some schools would lead to non-comparable statistics. The lack of statistics on:

- Class contact
- Teacher vacancies; including by subject
- Teacher qualifications/specialist subject
- Job shared teacher posts
- Subjects teachers are teaching and the relationship to the level of their subject qualification
- Non teaching staff; notably classroom assistants
- The allocation of management points to teachers; potentially giving an insight into the management style and structure of schools; also user interest in gender balance
- Progression of teachers - including principals and vice principals – up the pay scales
- Teachers in pre school centres (ETI have to obtain data separately)
- Employment of substitute teachers
- The amount of teaching by principals

2.18 The Teacher Demand Model uses data about teachers covering a wider range of variables than is collected for National Statistics purposes.

2.19 Specific reported uses of the Leavers Survey data included:

- Assessment, in policy review, of performance of SEN pupils
- Assessment of school performance in different communities or settings
- One of the main sources used in responding to the press
- Performance comparison, in the context of inspection – including area inspections - and of the post primary review, between schools and between schools and FE colleges
- Monitoring performance of the school system

2.20 Deficiencies, in addition to the failure of the survey in a recent year, noted in the Leavers Survey include:

- The possibility that schools might inflate performance
- No statistics about numbers leaving with/without GCSE English and Maths
- No analysis by type – vocational/academic – of qualification
- Should perhaps have average points score
- Incomplete account has been taken in the past of ‘other’ qualifications outside GCSE/AS/A-L; leading to an overstatement of numbers leaving with no qualifications
- Lack of statistics about all – rather than highest – qualifications
- The non coverage of special schools

2.21 A range of the census and teacher statistics is used, by DfES, in the production of UK statistics. There are a number of topics – including those listed below – for which there is a demand for UK statistics which cannot be met because the relevant comparable statistics are not provided for Northern Ireland (and in some cases also for one or more of the other countries of the UK):

- ICT in schools
- Pupil absence and exclusion
- Support staff

2.22 More general areas for potential improvement to all three surveys identified by users included:

- Earlier availability of statistics
- The more up to date statistics that could be produced if data were collected more frequently than annually.
- Access to micro data (i.e. school level and anonymised pupil level) for analysis
- Access to statistical tables in a format – e.g. EXCEL – suitable for downloading for further analysis
- The publication of more education statistics in NINIS.

There was a widespread belief that the first two of these should be achievable using EDI. The third is seen as important if there is to be any independent assessment of school education at a time of change including in the school population and curriculum and if robust, reliable and independent statistics are to be available to support policy debates.

Other User Issues

2.23 A number of user concerns – not included above – reflected a lack of understanding that particular analyses could be provided from the surveys. These have been referred to Statistics and Research Branch.

- 2.24 Many of the user requests – reflecting current or emerging needs - for more statistics made in response to the review questionnaire fall outside the limited scope of this review. These include user needs for statistics on:
- Education attainment including value added and including statistics for individual schools and for various types of school and/or pupil – of importance in determining where and in what way interventions are required and in providing information for use in assessing competing claims
 - The contribution of education to pupils’ personal development, team working abilities, contribution to society etc
 - The cost of educating year 13 and 14 pupils
 - Qualifications of those starting sixth form
 - Tracking pupils’ progress after they leave school – e.g. what do they achieve in FE
 - Extent of governor training
 - Public, parental and pupil views on education
 - Youth centres and AEP centres (considerable improvement needed on the presently available statistics)
 - Availability of transport
 - The state of school buildings

Other needs raised by users included:

- Earlier projections for use in policy monitoring and development; this was linked with the concerns about the quality of the Department’s projections of pupil numbers
- More co-ordinated use of a range of sources to produce better population (including in particular international migration) estimates and projections – both national and local
- A more considered specification of the department’s data needs
- Standardisation of data transferred from primary to secondary schools
- Earlier availability, via Bath, of exam and assessment results
- Greater comparability between exam results statistics for Northern Ireland and England
- Analysis of the implications of the statistics for the viability of the present number of schools in some areas
- The development of standard classifications of deprivation, and of urban/rural, and the production of statistics using those classifications
- The desirability of more Health and Social Services statistics, and of statistics for Health Trusts, in NINIS
- A more developed basis for benchmarking schools against similar schools
- Development of an adequate picture of schools covering, e.g., funding, staffing, accommodation, attendance, performance
- Access to data maintained by the psychology and educational welfare service

2.25 The issue of projections is perhaps worth a little expansion. A number of schools and other users raised this. Unfortunately the questionnaires we used resulted in it not always being totally clear whether the respondents were concerned with the projected numbers for next year which the schools return as part of the census or the projections calculated by DE statisticians. It would however seem that it was generally the latter – for which, though it is out of scope for this review, it may be noted that there were concerns (already well known to Statistics and Research Branch) about the quality, and some demand for projections to be produced for smaller areas.

2.26 In the case of the projections provided by schools in the census; given

- The judgement (see 2.3) that these projections are not of a quality to be of use for funding purposes
- The judgement of DE statisticians that their use in the calculation of the statistical projections would not improve the quality of those projections
- The differences between the aggregate of these projections and the eventual actual number of pupils (the school projections for post primary schools for 2004/5 in the 2003/4 census were 1.15% above the figures reported in the 2004/5 census)

consideration might validly be given to dropping this item from the census.

2.27 Other sources of statistics, mostly the responsibility of ELBs, identified by users included:

- School budget and expenditure data from LMS Budget and Outturn Statements
- Basic Information for primary schools collected by ETI
- ETI annual pre-school survey
- ETI, with assistance from Statistics and Research Branch, ad hoc surveys of schools to provide information for major reports
- ELB data on pupils referred for non-attendance, expulsion, suspension
- ELB data on referrals for statementing/ type of disability/ age/ level of disability
- Principal reports to ELBs for special schools and units
- ELB statistics about number and cost of vandalism incidents
- ELB data on Education Psychologists' waiting lists
- ELB data on non teaching complements
- Occasional survey of numbers of temporary classrooms
- Teacher absence rates
- Statutory assessment statistics

This is not intended to be in any sense a complete list; it was not a purpose of the review to survey the full range of data and statistics about schools. However it does demonstrate that - even leaving aside the major area of exam and performance test results – the National Statistics account for only a fraction of the necessary and available statistics about schools.

- 2.28 It was noted that ELBs, with C2K, are developing a system – known as the e-schools project - from which useful data may be more readily obtained than at present. This is intended to develop and maintain a data warehouse which would give the education service access to much of the data in schools’ (C2K) information management systems. Data mining and analytic tools would also be part of the system
- 2.29 The great majority of users in DE and ETI, except two who weren’t aware of any mechanism and one who expressed a need to introduce an annual review of what statistics were needed about special education, were content with the means they have to influence decisions about what the particular surveys being reviewed should collect. Those few external users who responded to the relevant question were – to differing degrees – critical of the lack of any structure to seek external users views. Rather more surprisingly, there appears to be very little consultation – about who should collect what and how access to each others data should be developed – between Statistics and Research Branch and ELBs. The ELB responses to this review expressed clear wishes for increased liaison – for example “awareness raising forums would be valuable”; “there is a need for opportunities (at worst annually) for DE and ELBs to influence what each other collects and ensure ELB can fully exploit the DE data”; “there would be benefit to all concerned if some form of Data/Statistics User Forum be established, comprising of key bodies e.g. DE, Boards, etc, to meet on a regular basis to discuss needs and a collective approach to data sharing and exchange”. An ELB also made the point that – in both directions between the ELB and DE duplicatory requests for one another’s data are made and a more structured approach to sharing data would be more effective and efficient.
- 2.30 User responses included compliments, and virtually no criticisms, of the ad hoc analysis service provided by Statistics and Research Branch. However some doubt is cast on the effectiveness of that service by the fact that in addition to the desired additions to the statistics summarised above users identified others which can in fact be provided. These have been referred by the review to the relevant statisticians. The desire of some users to have direct access to micro data to perform their own analyses (see 2.22) is also relevant here.
- 2.31 Two users expressed some concern about comparability with statistics for England and Wales. However DfES, who use the statistics in preparing statistics for the UK, did not indicate any such difficulties in respect of the statistics covered by this review.

3 METHODS AND BURDEN ON DATA SUPPLIERS

3.1 This chapter describes the methods used for each of the three surveys in turn and then presents the evidence collected by the review on the scale of the burden the surveys impose on schools.

Census Methods

3.2 The census takes two fundamentally different forms for different types of school. Pre-school centres, nurseries, primary schools (including preparatory departments of grammar schools), hospital schools, and independent schools make paper returns giving aggregate data. Secondary and grammar schools provide data about individual pupils using EDI via Classroom 2000; in addition they supply aggregate paper returns relating to pupils for whom English is an additional language, pupils not domiciled in NI, pupils in Irish-Medium units, and pupils in care. Special schools have the option of using paper returns or EDI. It is intended that the collection of individual pupil data using EDI will be extended to primary schools, and the remaining special schools, as from the 2005 or 2006 census (there are no plans to extend it to nurseries and pre school centres). It is also intended that the data items currently collected in aggregate on supplementary paper forms will be collected as part of the individual pupil EDI record. This will provide a richer data set for analytic purposes and – from what the review heard from DE, C2K and schools – will make the census operation more efficient in schools.

3.3 The data items covered include:

- Enrolments, of school pupils and children in funded pre-school education, classified by
 - School, and pre-school provision, type and management type; and
 - Age (date of birth)
 - Gender
 - Entitlement to free school meals
 - Whether they are “Looked After”
 - Class size and year group composition
 - Whether parents are in receipt of Income Support or Income-Based JSA
 - Religion
 - Ethnicity
 - Whether English is an additional language and they have significant difficulties with the English language; if so what is the first language
 - Special Educational Needs (SEN) – stated or not and by age and type of SEN
 - Whether children of service personnel, travelling families, and those not domiciled in Northern Ireland.

- Number of schools, and pre school providers with funded places, by type and management type
- Projected numbers of pupils
- Previous education experience of pupils in year 1

The details of the data items collected vary between school types with, for example less information about pupils, but overall a broader range of information, being collected from independent schools; and very limited information from hospital schools. Copies of the relevant questionnaires are available from Ivor.Graham@deni.gov.uk.

- 3.4 The census reference date is the Friday of the first full working week in October (though reception pupils admitted up to the end of the month are included) with a response date a week after census date. The use of an October reference date (rather than the January date used in England) and the short time allowed for response reflects the need for data to be available as early as possible for use in calculating school funding.
- 3.5 The priority given to the provision of data for funding purposes is also reflected in the fact that validation of the data for pre-schools, special, hospital and independent schools is deferred until January.
- 3.6 For the EDI data, the validation process begins with internal completeness and consistency checks within the C2K system before the data are transmitted. When the data are received in the Department further checks - including comparisons with the data for the same school for the previous year, and checking that returns are received for all schools – are undertaken. Data from the paper returns are checked for consistency within and between tables (the inclusion of some such checks in the paper returns themselves reduces the numbers of queries raised at this stage). In addition, ELBs review (at school not pupil level) the data items to be used in calculating school funding. Any queries raised by the Department’s checking and by the ELBs review are resolved between the school and Statistics Branch. Queries are raised with around half of all schools but these are almost always of a simple nature and readily resolved through brief phone discussions between Statistics and Research Branch and the school concerned.
- 3.7 The first publication of National Statistics from the census is in a Statistical Press Release in early December (8th in each of 2003 and 2004) giving, only, numbers of pupils in primary schools, preparatory departments, primary schools, secondary (non grammar) schools and grammar schools and classified between reception; year 1-7; and year 8-14. At this point enrolments data and provisional data for the other necessary variables are provided, for these classes of school, to those responsible for determining school funding. An ad hoc analysis service using these provisional data as well as the data underpinning the published statistics is provided from this date though Statistics and Research Branch seeks users’ co-operation in giving priority to their completion of the validation of the full census data.

- 3.8 The next publication of National Statistics from the census occurs in February (24th in 2004; 22nd in 2005) when numbers of pupils in pre-school education (in schools and funded places in other centres), and in special, hospital and independent schools are published. By this time the validation of the full range of census data is expected to be complete and the ad hoc analysis service therefore uses final data.
- 3.9 The third publication occurs a couple of months later (e.g. 27 April 2004) and presents some more detailed analysis of the statistics.

Methods of Collecting Teachers Data for use in Calculating PTRs

3.10 The census is used to collect data on teachers (data for each teacher – and the principal - recording full/part time, date of birth, qualifications, date of appointment and previous teaching experience) in independent schools. Teacher data is not collected from pre-school centres.

3.11 For other schools, apart from Grammar Schools, data are collected by sending the school details of each teacher which the Teachers' Payroll and Pensions System (TPPS) shows as working at the school and asking the school to confirm or correct these details and add any missing teachers. It should be noted that no data are collected for substitute and peripatetic teachers (any teachers identified as such on the TPPS are excluded from the records sent to schools and schools are instructed to ensure that such teachers are not included in the lists they return). The details extracted from the TPPS are listed below and those sent to schools for confirmation or correction are marked **:

- Teachers reference number**
- Name**
- Date of birth
- Gender
- School reference number**
- Type of teacher**
 - Permanent full time
 - 1/365th
 - Temporary full time
 - Part-time
 - Pro rata
- Pay scale (fulltime and 1/365th only)
- Hours worked (part time and pro rata only)**
- Days worked (temporary only)

3.12 From the current year the following variables, extracted from TPPS but not checked with schools, will be included in the teachers survey data set.

- Grade of teacher
- Receipt of allowances
- Receipt of reorganisation code (identifies teachers who have safeguarded salaries where schools have reorganised)
- Qualifications (but not first degree subject nor class of degree)

Separate from the teachers survey, consideration is being given to obtaining data on teacher retirement and absence.

3.13 Previously statistics for these schools were taken direct from the teachers' payroll system. Experience has shown the importance to the quality of the statistics of asking schools to correct the payroll data and thus:

- Ensuring that the correct teachers are counted; in particular ensuring that all substitutes are excluded
- Identifying the inaccuracy of the previous assumption that all temporary teachers – filling a vacancy pending the appointment of a permanent teacher -would be full time
- Quantifying the effect on PTR of that false assumption.

3.14 The statistics collected in this way are based on an end November reference week. The data extracted from the payroll system are validation checked (notably to ensure that no teacher is recorded as working more than full time nor as more than one type) by Statistics and Research Branch and queries resolved with Teachers Branch and the IT Unit responsible for the payroll system. Following this check the lists were sent to schools, requesting a response within 2 weeks, on 20 April 2004; this process has been speeded up in the current year and lists were due to be issued in mid March.

3.15 School level data are checked against the figures for the previous year for plausibility. Statistics and Research Branch check with Teachers Branch and the IT Unit responsible for TPPS those amendments made by schools to individual teacher data which cannot be explained as changes in teaching staff which had occurred by the reference week but had not had time to be changed on TPPS when the list was extracted from the system (checks are made e.g. where the school notes that a teacher missing from the list had been at the school for a year, or one included in the list had retired a year or more ago). While in the majority of cases the school information has been proved correct, the reference week is being given more prominence in the documentation sent to schools this year. This together with the bedding in of the data validation arrangements is expected to make this validation process more efficient this year and allow a publication date for the Press Release, described in chapter 4, earlier than the 24 June achieved last year. Following publication of the Press Release an ad hoc analysis service is available: this uses individual teacher data but only in ways which do not result in the release of data about any individual teachers. Statistics for individual schools are provided on request.

3.16 This method has not been used for Voluntary Grammar Schools because they use their own payroll systems and the data for teachers in these schools on the pensions element of TPPS is incomplete and inaccurate. In practice all Grammar Schools have been asked to provide aggregate data (using a mid October reference week) recording the numbers of teachers in each of the types listed in 3.11 above (but with part-time and pro-rata combined as a single type) and the total hours worked by the part-time and pro-rata teachers. From this year those Grammar Schools covered by TPPS will be asked for data in the way described at 3.11 above. For Voluntary

Grammar Schools an attempt will be made – either by simply requesting details of each of their teachers from the schools or by using the limited information from the pensions element of TPPS in the same way as the TPPS data are used for other schools (but expecting a substantially larger number of corrections to be supplied by the schools) – to obtain individual teacher data. This will delay the production of results for Grammar Schools (which have previously been available, but not used, earlier than those for other schools) but is expected to improve the quality of the statistics (and, importantly, together with the development described in 3.12 should improve the quality of the teacher data available for modelling purposes).

Leavers Survey Methods

3.17 The Leavers Survey covers only post primary schools – excluding special and independent schools, though consideration is being given to including special schools - and provides information on the qualifications and destinations of those leaving the school system. The qualifications achieved by each pupil are collected as part of the census; these data were however not covered in this review’s consideration of the census as their only use for National Statistics purposes is in the production of leavers’ statistics. The Leavers Survey separately, and later, collects (using the C2K EDI system) the destinations of those leaving the school.

3.18 Schools, working with Careers Advisers from DEL, obtain from their year 12 leavers a statement of their destination. A letter requesting this information for all leavers is sent to post primary schools at the beginning of November seeking the data by mid November. In practice it is expected that almost all schools will return the data by the end of the autumn term.

3.19 The data items collected for each leaver, including those leaving to go to other schools, emigrate etc. as well as those leaving at the end of their school career, are:

- Admission number
- Year Group
- Boarder or not
- Disability classification
- Date of admission to the school
- Date of birth
- Date of leaving
- Home language
- Ethnicity
- Free school meal entitlement
- Gender
- Destination
- New student (i.e. identification of students who joined and left the school in the same year)
- Postcode
- Religion
- Special unit indicator

- Statemented indicator
- Traveller indicator

3.20 The individual leavers records are matched to their examinations data records which in principle carry, for each pupil, details of each qualification achieved. At this point apparent inconsistencies – e.g. destinations inconsistent with pupil’s qualifications or age, or over many unknown destinations – are identified, queried with the school and the data corrected as necessary. It is not practical to validate the destinations data in more detail than this. It is also not practical to validate the subjects of qualifications or to ensure that all qualifications – i.e. those not relevant to the determination of the leaver’s highest qualification – are in fact recorded; this prevents the use of these data for any analysis of leavers’ qualifications other than the level of their highest qualification; as part of the validation of highest qualification all examples of pupils with no recorded qualification are explicitly checked with the school. Most of the data is validated, and where necessary revised, by the end of March and complete validation is achieved in April.

3.21 The National Statistics Press Release based on these data is published in June, and local statistics are released in NINIS. These publications are considered in more detail in Chapter 4.

3.22 The statistics published as National Statistics, in the Press Release and in NINIS, use only some of the data described above.

- Those leaving a school but not ending their school career are excluded.
- While the qualifications data covers all secondary qualifications the published statistics refer, for the reasons given in 3.20, only to the pupils’ highest qualifications – determined using an equivalence table defined in the Press Release.
- The only other variables used in these publications are gender, destination and postcode though the others listed above are available for ad hoc analyses and some are used in “Indicators of Social Need for Northern Ireland” (see 4.8)

3.23 Due to problems experienced by C2K with the upgrading of schools information systems and the EDI system, it was not possible to produce these statistics for 2002/3 leavers as the data could not be retrieved in time for DE to reasonably contact schools with validation queries.

The Data Provision Burden on Schools

3.24 The Department did not have evidence on the scale of the burden imposed on schools by the need to provide to the Department the data necessary to underpin these statistics. The schools consulted (see Annex C) were therefore invited to make observations on the data collection and to indicate if aspects of the process were particularly burdensome.

3.25 The review was told that schools have in the past expressed concern about the bureaucratic burden placed on staff to generate statistics for DE and

that branches within DE sometimes ask them for data which they have already supplied. There was very little evidence of this - apart from a few references to having to provide similar data to ELBs and others, and having to check and correct data in one context that had already been provided in another - in the responses to this review. This may reflect the introduction of a system – Secondary Schools Information Disc (SSID) – which obtains much of the data needed by ETI by inviting the school to confirm/amend the data already held. More detail on the quoted examples of duplicate collection has been passed to DE statisticians so that they can be followed up.

3.26 There were however a number of points made by schools. These included:

Post Primary Schools

- There are sometimes problems obtaining data from feeder schools and this can cause difficulties in completing census data to time; even when the data came promptly the use of paper rather than EDI for data transfer is inefficient
- Little concern about data validation; only one school expressed concern about the time taken while another – unprompted – recognised the value to the school of having the resultant more accurate data
- A substantial majority of schools would see the cross validation of destinations and qualifications prior to the transmission of leavers survey data as more efficient than the present process which can lead to such queries being raised after a significant delay
- The overwhelming majority of schools would see the replacement of the remaining aggregate data items in the census by additional variables in the pupil record as more efficient
- Obtaining (for as much as 95% of leavers), and attempting to ensure the accuracy of, destinations data can be difficult and time consuming
- There was little complaint about the lack of consultation with schools about the surveys and changes in them though one school commented “The lack of awareness at DE level about what is happening on the ground in schools suggest DE needs to be more in touch with schools when considering changes”
- While the use of EDI was strongly supported a few schools expressed some concerns about
 - The problems that had arisen in the course of the change of the underlying software
 - Limited C2K resources for school support, including advice on the new software
 - The non user friendly of some aspects of data input (mostly in connection with the leavers survey)

Primary, Nursery and Special Schools and Pre-School Centres

- A clear majority of primary schools would welcome (and none were explicitly against) a switch to EDI provision of pupil data for the census though some emphasised the need for adequate support, and training, from C2K

- Some items were identified by some schools as time consuming and/or intrusive
 - Religion
 - Special needs
 - Numbers of nursery pupils aged 4 on reference date
 - Benefits
- As for secondary schools there was little concern about the lack of consultation with schools about changes to the surveys though some schools suggested that it would be helpful to have advice on what changes would be made in advance of the, May, enrolment period so that enrolment forms could be revised
- Validation queries after the event was mentioned by a few schools as time consuming and the desirability of developing an approach (e.g. letter, electronic, or suitable scheduling of phone calls) to raising these with schools that took full account of the teaching commitments of those who need to be contacted was raised
- Some special schools were concerned about the use of an October reference date for the census as their pupil numbers tend to grow through the year as pupils are transferred from other schools

3.27 To provide an assessment of the total size of the data collection burden imposed on schools by the three surveys, the sampled schools were asked for an estimate of the time that would be saved in the school if the surveys being reviewed were discontinued but all other data requirements remained as they are now. The averages, in person hours, reported by each type of school for each of the surveys were:

School Type	Census	Leavers	Teachers
Pre-school centre	1.8	n.a.	n.a.
Nursery	3.6	n.a.	0.4
Primary and prep	5.8	n.a.	0.8
Secondary*	31.9	13.1	4.8
Grammar	17.3	18.3	1.2
Special/Hospital	2.0	n.a.	0.6

*If an outlier is excluded the secondary school figures become 18.4; 11.8; 3.1

Hence the total burden in person (7 hour) days is estimated as

School Type	Census	Leavers	Teachers
Pre-school centre	93	n.a.	n.a.
Nursery	50	n.a.	5
Primary and prep	761	n.a.	104
Secondary*	743	305	111
Grammar	173	183	12
Special/Hospital	14	n.a.	4
TOTAL	1834	488	236

*If an outlier is excluded the secondary school figures become 428; 275; 72 and the totals become 1519; 458; and 197

3.28 The hours reported by schools vary widely. These variations are not explained by differences in the numbers of pupils in different schools and there may be scope for identifying good practice in some schools and disseminating it to all schools.

4: PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION OF STATISTICS

- 4.1 The initial and primary publication of the National Statistics is in five Statistical Press Releases.
- 4.2 Three of these present statistics derived from the census. The first, usually published in December of the relevant academic year, is entitled “Enrolments at Grant-Aided Primary and Post-Primary Schools: Basic Statistics”. The content is indeed basic, consisting of only six numbers:
- Reception pupils in Primary Schools
 - Reception pupils in Prep. Departments
 - Primary School pupils in years 1 to 7
 - Prep. Department pupils in years 1 to 7
 - Secondary Non Grammar pupils in years 8 to 14
 - Grammar pupils in years 8 to 14
- plus two sub totals (of the first four of the above numbers and the last two).
- 4.3 The second of the Statistical Press Releases presenting statistics derived from the census is issued in February, when the validation of census data has been completed, and is titled “Children in Funded Pre-School Education, and Enrolments at Special, Hospital, and Independent Schools: Basic Statistics”. This gives pupil numbers in 11 categories:
- Nursery schools: full time and part time
 - Nursery classes: full time and part time
 - Reception
 - Funded places in playgroups, day nurseries, other
 - Special schools
 - Hospital schools
 - Independent schools
- plus three sub totals.
- 4.4 The third of the Statistical Press Releases presenting statistics derived from the census is issued in April and is titled “Enrolments at Schools and in Funded Pre-School Education in Northern Ireland”. This provides a range of statistics about numbers of schools and of pupils in various categories – some of them presented as time series and some for ELB areas.
- 4.5 The PTRs are released in a Statistical Press Release in June, titled “Pupil Teacher Ratios in Grant Aided Schools in Northern Ireland”. This presents time series of PTRs for various school sectors, management types, and ELB areas. For school sectors it presents a comparison with England. In presenting the time series it explains the change of methodology and presents PTRs on both bases for 2003/4, explaining how this should be used to assess changes over time. It briefly describes the (change in) methodology and gives advice on factors to take into account in making comparisons between different areas, management types etc.

4.6 The statistics about leavers are released in a Statistical Press Release published in June and titled “Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers”. For technical reasons, related to the introduction of new information management software in schools, it was not possible to produce these statistics for 2002/3 leavers. As soon as this became clear a statement was placed on the web site, announcing that the statistics would not be published and explaining why the cancellation was necessary.

4.7 The release presents, graphically, time series of the percentages of school leavers whose highest qualifications are (a) 2+ A Levels, (b) 5+ GCSEs at A* to C, (c) No GCSEs. A second chart compares the destinations of boys and girls. Tables present, for the latest year

- Highest qualifications (in more detail than the time series graph) by (a) sex and school type, (b) school type and management type, (c) by destination
- Destination by (a) sex and school type, (b) school type and management type, (c) highest qualification

For some of these analyses similar tables are presented for the year five years prior to the latest available (by error 1997/98, rather than 1996/97, was used with the 2001/02 figures). A useful range of key points is presented in the text. The notes to editors include a description of the equivalences between vocational and academic qualifications used in determining the highest qualification. The notes also report that the number with no formal qualifications may be overstated; the footnotes to the relevant tables also record this.

4.8 Other publications include

- The Compendium of Northern Ireland Education Statistics
- The Department’s website
- The inclusion in NINIS (a web-based neighbourhood statistics service) of ward level statistics from the census and the leavers survey
- An analysis of leavers by qualifications/gender/ethnicity/free school meal entitlement in “Indicators of Social Need for Northern Ireland” published by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
- Contributions to publications by DfES and ONS covering more, or all, of the UK

4.9 Only the first two of these are within scope for this review but the others are noted as further examples of the usefulness of the statistics.

4.10 Perhaps surprisingly given its title, the Compendium of Northern Ireland Education Statistics is a single sheet document giving a time series of key indicators

4.11 The website (at [www.deni.gov.uk/facts figures](http://www.deni.gov.uk/facts_figures)) carries copies of the Statistical Press Releases, advance notice of the release dates for statistical press releases (with the publication month listed a year in advance and the actual date at least a fortnight in advance). These statistics are produced and

published in accordance with the Northern Ireland Departments' statement of compliance with the NS Protocol on Release Practices, a copy of which is also on the website. The site also carries a copy of the Compendium, and the following indicators for each ELB:

- Distribution of Controlled and Catholic Maintained Schools
- Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals
- Children in Board funded pre-school places as a percentage of the Primary Cohort
- KS1 Class Sizes
- Primary School Class Sizes
- Education Achievements
- Percentage of Statemented Pupils

While each of these apart from the Education Achievements indicators are derived directly from the National Statistics there is no indication on the web tables that these indicators have this status. In addition this site carries statistics sourced to ELBs, on pupil suspensions, expulsions and attendance.

4.12 This website also carries a link to the National Statistics website where, with considerable luck or expertise in navigating that site, one can find descriptions of the census and leavers surveys. However

- There is no such description of the arrangements for collecting the information about teachers which underpins the PTR statistics
- The description of the census does not report that data are collected for individual, post primary, pupils though that has major implications for the types of analyses that can be produced
- The list of variables collected in the census is incomplete
- The census reference period is wrongly described as the academic year

5. QUALITY ASSESSMENT

5.1 This chapter assesses the quality of the statistics by considering each of the dimensions identified for both the European Statistical System and the National Statistics Quality Strategy. These are:

- Relevance
- Accuracy
- Timeliness
- Accessibility
- Comparability
- Coherence
- Completeness

5.2 Where needs for improvement are identified these are – with one exception - taken into account in the development of recommendations elsewhere in this report. The exception is for issues surrounding accessibility for which specific proposals are developed in this chapter.

Relevance

5.3 The information received by the review from users, summarised in chapter 2, confirms the usefulness, for school funding and a wide range of other purposes, of the data collected and statistics produced with the possible exception, considered elsewhere in this report, of the projected pupil numbers.

5.4 However the fact that all the statistics produced are used is an incomplete test of relevance; one should also consider other aspects of whether the statistics meet the relevant needs of users. In this context users also identified the following issues which are also considered elsewhere in the report:

- Some potentially useful extensions to, or added detail in, the data
- A need for some increase in consultation – including about what should be collected – with users in DE and ETI
- Inadequate consultation with ELBs
- A lack of consultation with external users

Improvements in consultation with, in particular, ELBs should improve not only relevance but also the efficiency of overall (as distinct from NS alone) data collection from schools, and the exploitation of that data.

Accuracy

5.5 The National Statistics Quality Strategy requires that quality measures should be systematically reported, alongside results, in a manner which enables users to judge the suitability of the statistics for their application.

5.6 As all the data considered in this review is collected from all relevant schools quality measures of the sample size and response rate type are not relevant. The data requests sent to schools emphasise the importance of schools returning accurate data. Furthermore the data used in funding calculations is subject to audit and each individual school can expect to have its data audited at about three year intervals. The request that schools check the TPPS data for

individual teachers has produced data of a better quality than was previously available either from the TPPS alone or from aggregate returns from schools.

5.7 A few quality issues have been raised in the review; specifically doubts about the accuracy of some of the destinations data and concern that – particularly for SEN pupils and pupil numbers in Special Schools – the October reference date for the census may not always give a representative picture. These are considered elsewhere in the report.

Timeliness

5.8 In respect of all three surveys a number of users expressed a need for timelier results. There was a widespread belief that this should be achieved using EDI.

5.9 National Statistics standards require that statistics are published as promptly as possible. This is not currently being achieved in two respects

- The gap between completion of the validation of census data in February and the publication of the Statistical Press Release carrying more than minimal statistics in (late) April is not satisfactory
- The similar gap, from April to June, for the Leavers Survey is similarly not satisfactory

Accessibility

Hard Copy Publications

5.10 Under this heading we first consider the Statistical Press Releases described in Chapter 4.

5.11 The December release of census-based statistics can be described as minimalist. A reader could easily be forgiven for believing that it was released not to provide useful information but to fulfil a bureaucratic commitment to “equality of access” as required by the National Statistics Code of Practice; in this case that statistics would be published at the same time as they are available for use within the Department for work on school funding. However the release fails even on that ground as provisional statistics on other variables, such as pupils entitled to free school meals, are made available for work on school funding at the same time but are not mentioned (still less presented) in the release.

5.12 The content of this release should be reviewed with consideration being given, inter alia, to

- Presenting time series – both tabular and graphical - of the key statistics.
- Showing the scale, in terms of pupils, of the limitation on the coverage of the figures (this might be conveniently be done by presenting a full coverage time series table with “not yet available” symbols for the relevant entries for the latest year).

- Including in the table the figures (which the notes to editors record as available but not included) for pupils in nursery schools and approved nursery classes – again using a “not yet available” symbol so that the time series gives an impression of the scale of the exclusions.
- Depending on an analysis of the scale in recent years of the difference (believed by Statistics and Research Branch to be small) between the provisional and final statistics for the other variables for which data and statistics are made available for Departmental use, either presenting (again as a time series) the provisional statistics or including in the notes to editors a specific reference to their availability. The present non-specific statement “Requests for further information should be addressed to...” does not suffice.
- Either expanding the description of the census in the notes to editors to identify the range of variables covered or providing specific web and postal sources for such a description.

5.13 The text of the second census press release begins “The purpose of this statistical press release is to present total enrolments from the school census”. However it does not do this (covering in total only some 27,000 pupils) and any user trying to obtain a total figure by adding figures from the first release has to be careful to avoid double counting those pupils who are included in both releases. Also as all the data are fully validated at this stage there is no valid reason for the press release publication of more detailed statistics from the census to be delayed till the third release about two months later.

5.14 The content of this release should be reviewed with consideration being given, inter alia, to

- Presenting full coverage statistics (and so satisfying the stated purpose of the release) rather than statistics for only a selection of types of school and pupil
- Presenting time series of key statistics – taking account of the views expressed to this review in determining which series are key
- Either expanding the description of the census in the notes to editors to identify the range of variables which it covers (and the degree of cross analysis which is possible for secondary and primary schools) or providing specific web and postal sources for such a description
- Providing explicit web and postal sources for standard additional tables, with a description of the nature of those tables
- Specifically advertising the ad hoc analysis service; the present non-specific statement “Requests for further information should be addressed to...” does not suffice.

5.15 With a revision to the second release along the lines described above, including in particular its use to advertise standard additional tables, there will be no need for a third release. Statistics and Research Branch may however wish to consider the production of a Bulletin or Volume of more detailed tables – possibly priced and possibly also carrying statistics from the other two NS sources. They may also wish to extend the arrangements for agreeing with

specific customers arrangements for routinely providing tables of specific interest to those customers. If it were decided to retain a third release its content should be reviewed with consideration being given, inter alia, to

- The relevant points from those made above on the previous two releases
- Changing/extending the range of tables taking account of the points made to this review by users
- In the text consistently using both numbers and percentages in making temporal comparisons – at present some comparisons use numbers, some use percentages and some use both.

5.16 The PTR Statistical Press Release presents the PTRs clearly and with useful time series and classifications by school type and area. In presenting the figures for 2004/05 the explanation of the use of statistics on different bases in assessing time series will need to be amended as the year for which figures are presented on both methodologies will no longer be the last year for which statistics are available. The release does not adequately advertise the availability of an ad hoc analysis service (which can, e.g. call on variables not included in the press release tables, and provide figures for individual schools or groups of schools defined in ways not used in the release) – there is nothing beyond “For more details about any of the statistics in this Press Release, please contact...”. A fuller description of what can be done – including what variables are held about each teacher - and a specific reference to the ability to produce ad hoc analyses, should be added. The release should also provide specific postal and web sources of a full description of the data source.

5.17 Consideration might usefully be given to increasing the time series available in the Leavers Statistical Press Release and to presenting statistics based on a wider range of the variables available in the survey. As with the other releases, there is no description of the range of ad hoc analyses that can be provided nor any reference to such a service beyond “For more details about any of the information in this Press Release please contact...” nor any reference to a full description of the survey. A fuller description of what can be done, a specific reference to the ability to produce ad hoc analyses, and a reference to specific postal and web sources of a full description of the survey should be added.

5.18 The arrangements for pre announcing publication dates for, issuing these statistical press releases, and restricting pre publication access to the statistics are compliant with the National Statistics Protocol and specifically with the Compliance Statement by Northern Ireland Departments and the Northern Ireland Office which is available at www.deni.gov.uk/facts_figures which also carries the forward schedule of the statistical press releases.

5.19 Neither the comments received from users (who were not specifically asked about this publication) nor my own reading of it, lead me to recommend changes to the Compendium of Northern Ireland Education Statistics. However consideration might usefully be given to the production of a more extensive publication giving a range of the more detailed analyses that the sources can support. One approach to this could be to see if the wider

publicity – recommended elsewhere in this chapter – given to the range of analyses that would be possible provides evidence that some types of analysis would be of use to a significant range of users and if so to base the design of a publication on those analyses. Consideration would also need to be given to whether such a publication should be solely web based or should also be available as a hard copy volume.

Other Means of Providing Access to the Statistics

- 5.20 The web site is frankly disappointing. It does not carry:
- A description of the sources; nor a user friendly link to such descriptions as exist on the NS web site
 - A description of the types of analysis, including individual school figures, which they could support
 - Any supplementary tables in greater detail than those in the Statistical Press Releases; apart from the ELB indicators which are not identified as National Statistics
 - Any advertisement of an ad hoc analysis facility
 - Statistical tables in a format which can be readily downloaded for further editing or analysis
- 5.21 All of these deficiencies should be addressed in the interests of full exploitation of the data and addressing user needs. This might in part be done by improving the source descriptions (and adding one for the teacher data) on the NS website and providing direct links (including from the advertisement of ad hoc analysis facilities) to those descriptions from the DE site. It is important that the source descriptions make clear what variables can be analysed and whether the unit of analysis (as distinct from the minimum unit for which results can be provided) is the individual pupil or teacher, or the school. The source descriptions could also be a useful resource in ensuring that users can readily be made aware of any features of the data which could affect their interpretation. Another user suggested that advice on disabled access, how to obtain (e.g. Large Print or Braille) versions, or versions in other languages, should be added.
- 5.22 The review was informed that consideration is being given to including further census based statistical tables on the web site. This should be actively progressed, for all three sources, taking account of the points made to this review by users. The more detailed tables should be available on the site immediately the Press Release carrying key summary statistics is released and the site should include a user-friendly means of finding tables on specific topics. Consideration might also be given to researching the market for a hard copy volume of tables – generally of a more detailed nature than most of those in the Statistical Press Releases.
- 5.23 Users were in general complimentary about the ad hoc service. However some users were unaware of the range of analyses that could be provided and wrongly believed that analyses which they would find valuable could not be produced. (The review drew specific examples of this to the attention of Statistics and Research Branch.) Also several of the schools who

responded to the review's questionnaire were unaware that individual school statistics, and statistics for groups of similar schools – which they would wish to use as comparators for their own school – could be provided. A number of other users would welcome access to micro data so they could undertake their own analyses.

5.24 Improving the website as proposed above would go some way towards addressing this but other actions would also be valuable in ensuring that the data is genuinely accessible for exploitation for users to whom it could be valuable. Action could include

- Preparing a “What we could do for you” note for schools describing the types of statistics and analyses that could be provided; a first draft for development in consultation with school representatives could be partly based on the relevant school responses to this review
- A similar, pro-active, step to further increase users' knowledge of what can be provided from the statistics. In this context I endorse the opinion expressed by one user that “Statistics and Research Branch might usefully give periodic presentations to groups of managers explaining what information is available” though I would not limit any such initiative to
 - Users within the department;
 - Presentations alone, to the exclusion of a written document
- Providing, perhaps via the website, ready access – in a format convenient for further analysis – to
 - Individual school data
 - Anonymised pupil data

In all of this it would, of course, need to be explicit that analyses and statistics which risked disclosing data about an individual pupil would not be made available.

Comparability

5.25 No significant specific non comparability of these National Statistics with the equivalent statistics for the rest of the UK were identified. Any further development of the National Statistics, and any wider review of school statistics, should take full account of the desirability of such comparability.

Coherence and completeness

5.26 These aspects of quality cannot be properly assessed in a review limited to the relatively small number of National Statistics; they should be considered for the full range of School Statistics for Northern Ireland. Two comments are however appropriate. First, I see no reason why a much higher proportion of the school statistics for Northern Ireland should not be produced and disseminated as National Statistics. Indeed as is argued in the early part of Chapter 7 to do this, and so to consider statistical needs and how best to meet them in the round, would improve the coherence, completeness, quality and efficiency of the full range of statistics. Second, the unmet user requirements described in chapter 2 suggest some lack of completeness.

6. COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL STATISTICS QUALITY MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL

6.1 This chapter assesses these statistics in relation to the National Statistics Principles of Quality Management. These are listed in the National Statistics Protocol on Quality Management and can be abbreviated as:

- Effective management of statistics provision
- Thorough review, at least every five years, of key outputs
- Provision of statistics which meet users' needs within available resources
- Regular publication of quality measures
- Continual evaluation
- Use of standard practices
- Professional selection of sources, methods and procedures
- Full documentation of processes and methods.

Effective management

6.2 The action plans used for these three surveys, while simple and not using a standard formal project planning procedure, are adequate for the routine operation of the surveys. However I saw no evidence of any plan covering the forward consideration of emerging data needs and the interaction between the development of school information systems and statistical development and production. The development of a plan in this area could have benefits including:

- The earlier identification and more formal addressing of risks outside those associated with the routine survey operation; e.g. IT issues with the potential to affect the production of statistics – the difficulties with the 2002/3 Leavers Survey provide an example
- Ensuring that IT developments pay appropriate and specific attention to statistical needs – e.g. it would appear that systems for use when a student receives input from more than one institution (e.g. a school, and an FE college or an employer) are being developed with, rightly, the needs of the student and the providers in mind but without specific attention to statistical needs
- Specific consideration of whether and how the IT might be developed to improve the quality or efficiency of the statistics – the scope for validation of leavers data before it is transmitted is an example
- Ensuring that developments elsewhere – notably the development of the CBDS, by DfES, and of related software – reflect specific NI interests and are appropriately exploited in NI
- More active involvement of statisticians in development of processes for schools to ensure the accuracy of data in their systems

6.3 Similarly a more explicit approach to planning the development of school statistics more broadly, and the place of NS within the broader picture could have benefits, including:

- Earlier consideration, jointly by a wide enough range of parties, of the specification of, and the approach to meeting the, needs for relatively complex developments – e.g. the data and statistics required when a student receives input from more than one institution
- Formal consideration of the efficiency and quality implications of the collection of different statistics by different organisations
- Consideration of the extension of NS quality standards and status to a wider range of statistics

6.4 Turning more specifically to the surveys which are the subject of this review, and aside from project management:

- The staff involved appear to be adequately trained for their roles
- Fuller documentation of the validation processes and results could lead to improved efficiency of the validation process
- The costs – in DE and schools – of producing the statistics are not unreasonably high
- Standard definitions – e.g. of ethnicity – are used where appropriate
- In the absence of information about the quality of data in school information systems (see the last bullet of 6.2 above) and given the use of 100% data there is little that can be said about the accuracy of the statistics though the points at 5.7 are relevant.

Key Output Review

6.5 This current review meets the formal requirements of this principle of the protocol. However fuller continual opportunities for input from non-DE users and from schools would be consistent with the spirit.

Meeting User Needs

6.6 The point in the previous paragraph is relevant here and the involvement of schools in assessing the likely costs of any possible development would be of importance in ensuring that only reasonable resources were used. Those statistics designated as National Statistics form only a fraction of the statistics used by key users and a fraction, though a larger one, of those for which government statisticians have responsibility. In addition the points made elsewhere in this report about the content and presentation of Press Releases and the website and about the advertising of the analysis service are important to the meeting of this principle.

Publication of Quality Measures

- 6.7 Publication of this review, of a resulting action plan and reports on progress against that plan will address the need for accessible information about quality in the broader sense. Information about accuracy is addressed in 5.5 to 5.7 above.
- 6.8 The preparation of fuller descriptions of methodology (see 5.21) and the inclusion in Statistical Press Releases and on the web site of references to those descriptions would provide appropriate routine publication of information on quality.
- 6.9 The inclusion in the survey descriptions, the press releases, and as footnotes to relevant tables of appropriate references to the quality points mentioned at 5.7 would draw them to the attention of users.

Continual Evaluation

- 6.10 The proposals elsewhere for more consultation, and for more formal monitoring of the effect of validations, would address the need for fuller continual evaluation.

Use of Standard Practices

- 6.11 This is covered at 5.25

Professional selection of sources, methods and procedures

- 6.12 These responsibilities - for the three surveys and the resultant statistics - rest, as they should, with the Department's statisticians. The taking of a broader perspective and fuller consultation processes, as proposed in the early paragraphs of chapter 7, would increase the professionalism and transparency of the decisions taken

Documentation of methods

- 6.13 The descriptions of the surveys, and the need to improve those descriptions, are considered in the accessibility section of chapter 5. In addition to the points made there it would be desirable for the descriptions to include some description of the validation procedures adopted.

7 RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

7.1 Paragraphs 7.10 to 7.23 consider improvements specific to the present National Statistics and their presentation. However it is clear, in part from the comments received from users, that a wider perspective is also needed. Many of the respondents did not confine their responses to detailed points on the National Statistics, and nor should the review nor any resultant action plan.

7.2 It is perhaps out of scope for this review to endorse the view of one user that, “I feel that there is a need to conduct a fundamental review of the management information required for DE to deliver on its business”, or of another “DE do not know enough about, or publish the rationale for, their data requirements”. However the review has found plentiful evidence of a need for a fundamental review of the information required from, and about, schools and how best that information might be obtained and presented. This evidence includes:

- Perceived inadequacies in the data available about SEN, and the need to obtain and link data from several sources to produce the best limited picture that can be achieved
- The lack of any detailed consideration of the data needs resulting from the increasing numbers of pupils receiving learning input from more than one institution; and the apparent risk that the data needs for funding in this context may be considered in isolation from needs for other purposes
- The lack of any adequate consultation with ELBs about who should collect what, and how data can best be shared
- The lack of any evidence of serious consideration of the
 - Cost to schools
 - Effect on data quality
 - Limitations on the exploitability of dataof the collection and management of data (or indeed specification of data needs) by different branches and organisations. In this context I fully endorse the view expressed by one user that “Where data collection is left to branches without the input of professional statisticians there is a serious risk of flaws in data collection and/or interpretation.”
- The wide range of unsatisfied needs not strictly relevant to the present NS reported in 2.24

7.3 The overall picture gleaned by the review of school data and statistics as a whole – as distinct from the narrowly defined National Statistics – is of an unmanaged system with a lack of planning or co-ordination.

7.4 A fundamental review – perhaps segmented into suitable subject areas – of data needs (for administrative, policy, statistical, and inspection – and any other – purposes) and how they should best be met would be very desirable. Such a review would need to recognise that some needs (e.g. those for developing funding arrangements for students learning at both a school and an FE college, and for monitoring effectiveness of such arrangements and

developing policy in this context) will be complex to define and will require input from some areas without a direct interest in school policy. It should also recognise (against the present pattern of virtually no consultation with schools about changes to the three surveys used in deriving National Statistics) the benefits – in terms of proper consideration of the basic measurement of the data by the institutions involved, the development of the institutions’ information management systems to efficiently handle such data, and the relationship between the data collected centrally for statistical and other purposes and the data need by schools for their own purposes – of involving representatives of schools in such a review. Thus a review should be established and should involve representatives, from DE, ETI, ELBs and DEL, of

- Those responsible for funding
- Those concerned with post 14 curriculum in schools and colleges
- Other policy users of school data; including those responsible for the three year plan for the education sector
- Statistics and Research Branch
- Schools and Colleges
- Classroom 2000

This review should be charged with specifying

- The necessary data
- The necessary developments to data systems and business processes in schools and in the centre
- Appropriate arrangements for continual review.

It should also consult officials in DfES who are responsible for the development of

- Data for those receiving education from more than one institution
- Specification of the “Common Basic Data Set”
- IT systems, and business processes, to support the efficient use of Common Basic Data by schools and by the centre.

In such consultation the NI representatives should look both to learn from the English experience and to contribute to DfES thinking from their own experience. To involve external users those who responded to this review should, as a minimum, be invited to make an input to this fundamental review.

7.5 Such a review should not be confined to those statistics which are, or are likely to be, designated as National Statistics: this distinction is not helpful in identifying the range of statistics, and data, necessary for policy and other purposes. Among examples of the limitations imposed by consideration of National Statistics alone one could include

- The, to my mind totally reasonable, inability of many of those contributing to the review to focus only on that subset of statistics
- The exclusion from the National Statistics teachers survey of peripatetic and substitute teachers – because they are not relevant to the National Statistics which is the PTR – despite the clear policy interest in this aspect of teacher supply
- The additional hurdle it places in the way of extending the benefits of NS status to a wider range of statistics

- The risk, e.g. for the data on attendance, suspensions and expulsions that separate consideration of specific data needs as they arise will lead to inefficient approaches to data collection and limitations on the richness of the resulting data.
- Some duplication of collection

7.6 Such a review should, inter alia, consider which statistics would appropriately be designated National Statistics – and benefit from the standards and independence this would give thus, inter alia, addressing a user expressed concern about the non availability of analyses of some school statistics not classified as National Statistics. The review should have a prior expectation that the eventual coverage of National Statistics would be broader than at present and should take full account of the desirability of UK comparability (2.31).

7.7 A number of the statistics for which users expressed a need (including in particular KS2 information about the pupils enrolling at a secondary school which is expected to become part of the NS element of the census and to be used in calculating school funding), and a more efficient means of transferring data from school to school when a pupil transfers which a number of schools told the review was desirable (though they were not specifically asked about such issues), would be greatly facilitated by the introduction of a “Unique Pupil Number” to be used to reference all relevant data about an individual pupil throughout (at least) his or her school career. Any wide ranging review should consider the possibility of introducing such a number in Northern Ireland.

7.8 This fundamental review should be led by DE statisticians. In addition to specifying data needs (and documenting the justification of those needs) and how they might best be met such a review should provide a significant input to the e-schools project. It should continue, and extend, the current work to ensure that the e-schools project is informed by a specification of user needs; more specifically it should ensure that

- The data needs (and any emerging future needs) are taken into account in the e-schools development
- The data collection processes, for the NS surveys and others, are changed to exploit the e-schools system as soon as this is securely possible
- The need for the collection and validation of data for these surveys to be efficient from the schools’ perspective is reflected in the e-schools development.

7.9 If the Department were to reject the proposal that there should be such a fundamental review, a review focusing on

- Data requirements for developing funding arrangements for students learning at both a school and a FE college, for monitoring effectiveness of such arrangements, and for developing policy in this context (2.4)
- Data needs for the three year education plan (2.11)
- Needs for and provision of statistics on SEN (2.13, 14)

should be established. Such a review should involve representatives of all potential users of such information and all parties likely to be involved in providing the data.

- 7.10 Pending the completion of any review of the types described above, the content of the current surveys will continue to require annual consideration. While the great majority of DE and ETI users who responded to the review expressed themselves fully content with the arrangements for doing this, Statistics and Research Branch should check the comprehensiveness and timeliness of their invitation to colleagues to contribute to this (2.29). Particular attention should be given to policy areas (e.g. special education) where the needs can be expected to be evolving and to areas (e.g. the ETI annual collection of information from all pre-school centres and the examples of apparent duplication identified in schools' responses to this review) where there is an a priori possibility that the burden on schools and/or the quality of data might be improved by combination of two or more data collection processes. Consideration could be given to combining this with the presentations to users describing what can be obtained from the statistical sources (see 7.14).
- 7.11 ELBs should be far more actively involved in the ongoing review of survey content (2.29, 5.4). This again might usefully be combined with broader consultation – in particular about efficient sharing of one another's data as suggested at 7.14. As part of the liaison with ELBs, and if the fundamental review is not progressed, ongoing consideration should be given to the implications of the e-schools project for the content and collection vehicles of these surveys and to ensuring that the project takes account of the needs of National Statistics.
- 7.12 In the ongoing development of the surveys consideration should be given to the additional data items in which users expressed an interest to this review (2.13-17, 21). While it was not practicable in this review to assess the strength of the case for each suggested addition, user demand would indicate that priority might reasonably be given to absence statistics for primary schools, statistics for substitute and peripatetic teachers, and statistics for non-teacher staff. The key user importance of absence data also argues for these statistics for secondary schools to come within the ambit of National Statistics – at present they form part of the census but outside National Statistics.
- 7.13 It would be consistent with NS practice to also consult schools representatives about the ongoing development of the surveys. However the great majority of schools responding to the review have not expressed any concern about the lack of such consultation and a number have expressly said that their interests are covered by C2K who, of course, are consulted. Given the involvement of school representatives in any fundamental review, and assuming no major new subject areas are added to the surveys, it would be reasonable to continue not consulting schools about each year's changes to the surveys. If major changes are considered, or if no fundamental review is undertaken, those few schools who expressed a concern about the lack of consultation might be approached as an initial step in consulting schools.

Careful consideration should, however, be given to the possibility of giving schools (in particular nursery and primary schools) earlier advice on any changes to the census so that the schools could revise their enrolment forms where this would be the most efficient way of obtaining the information necessary to provide the new census data.

7.14 Related to the issue of consultation about content is that of user awareness (2.29-30) about what data and statistics are available. Users were uniformly complimentary about Statistics and Research Branch's service in providing ad hoc analyses and the Branch should be congratulated on this. However there were instances where users regretted the non availability of information which could in fact be made available from the surveys. While these instances have been passed to Statistics and Research Branch (who have doubtless contacted the users concerned to consider how they might best assist those users), I endorse the opinions expressed by one DE user that "Statistics and Research Branch might usefully give periodic presentations to groups of managers explaining what information is available" and by an ELB official that "there is a need for opportunities (at worst annually) for DE and ELBs to ensure ELB can fully exploit the DE data". Statistics and Research Branch should establish appropriate forums which should also consider DE exploitation of ELB data (2.27). These might be combined with improved arrangements for colleagues to influence survey content (7.10 and 7.11). Such forums might also address the identification of analyses which would increase the value of the statistics to users; in this context one could note the comment of one user "The raw statistics in themselves are fine. What is lacking is deeper, intelligent, analysis of trends to point up issues that policy makers may need to be aware of".

7.15 At a more basic level, the accessibility section of Chapter 5 proposes a considerable number of improvements to the basic presentation – in Press Releases and on the web, and perhaps in other ways – of the statistics. These include publishing more information about

- The surveys and their content
- How the statistics are published
- The types of statistics that can be produced and analyses that can be performed.

These should be pursued pro actively to encourage the proper exploitation of the data that are being collected. The web site, in the survey descriptions or in the routing to the descriptions, could usefully also invite user comments on the surveys and in particular their content.

7.16 The same section also includes important proposals relating to:

- Providing access, for user analysis, to tables, individual school data and anonymised pupil data
- Various improvements to the web site including the provision of a wider range of tables
- Including in the press releases a specific advertisement of an ad hoc analysis service
- Including in the press release a specific web reference for a description of the survey

- The production of documents describing what could be produced from the data

7.17 Users would value, and NS standards require (5.8,9), more timely statistics. To this end

- Steps already being taken to speed up some of the surveys should be actively pursued
- The gap between the completion of data validation and the publication of a full range of statistics should be minimised
- Statisticians should liaise with those responsible for the e-schools project to ensure that the need for rapid provision of accurate data on which to base these statistics is fully reflected in the project plans
- The possibility that the introduction of the e-schools system could allow the efficient collection more than once a year of those data items likely to change importantly through the year should be pursued.

7.18 Linked to the question of timeliness is that of the efficiency of the data validation process. Statistics and Research Branch should

- Work with C2K to achieve more validation prior to data transmission – the most apparent example is the cross validation of destination and highest qualification
- Seek to establish arrangements with schools for raising validation queries in a more convenient manner (3.26)
- Formally monitor the effect of each validation on the resultant statistics so as to confirm the continued need for each validation check.

7.19 Both to achieve a richer data base for analysis and to improve the census's efficiency from the schools' perspective, DE should work with C2K so that the census data currently collected in aggregate from secondary schools can be collected, by EDI, for each pupil.

7.20 It is widely accepted that the planned move to EDI, and largely individual pupil data, for the census for primary schools will be more convenient for schools and provide a richer set of data for statistical exploitation. However it is important that DE and C2K

- Keep schools informed of what is planned
- Listen to any points raised by schools
- Ensure – and demonstrate to schools - that the systems, advice and support necessary for this change are in place and tested in good time
- Ensure that schools are confident about what they have to do to operate the new approach – e.g. schools feel they have been adequately trained
- Provide adequate help desk support for schools taking account of the fact that someone who raises a query may not be available to be ring back at a time convenient to the desk.

More generally consideration should be given to the possibility (6.2) that a more formal approach to planning the interaction between IT developments and the surveys would reduce the risk to surveys and facilitate the identification of scope for improvements in efficiency.

7.21 The schools' projections of pupil numbers have proved to be of inadequate quality for use in funding, or in the production of DE's pupil projections. There is little, if any evidence of their use by others. Statistics and Research Branch should advertise – to users and schools - an intention to delete these questions unless users or schools provide strong arguments for their retention.

7.22 The review endorses the steps being taken to improve the quality of the teacher data available for calculating PTRs and for other uses – notably the Teacher Demand Model. However it is recommended that DE statisticians review their decision not to run the present aggregate system, with the reference periods synchronised, in parallel with the new system for grammar schools this year and thereby provide an assessment of the scale of any discontinuity introduced by the use of the improved data collection approach.

7.23 The only other significant concerns about data accuracy related to the Leavers Survey for which

- A number of users and schools expressed some doubt about the accuracy of the leavers data
- User requirements for analysis of leavers' qualifications could not be met because of the poor quality of the qualifications data, except that needed for calculating highest qualification.

The first of these might usefully be addressed in two ways. Useful evidence could be gained through comparison with the information from other sources such as the statistical data for Higher Education. More detailed evidence could come from a research exercise following up a sample of leavers (including some for whom the school failed to report a destination) with direct interviews. Any such research should aim to roughly quantify any errors and propose means of reducing the error. It is, of course, possible that the outcome of this research could be a judgement that the cost of reaching adequate quality are not justified by the use of the survey. Meanwhile the relevant press release might usefully mention (5.5,7; 6.9) that the quality of the data cannot be routinely confirmed and a research exercise is planned. The second might, as good quality qualifications data is of considerably wider value than for its use in this survey, be addressed through seeking to ensure that the e-schools project includes actions to ensure that good quality and sufficiently detailed qualifications data are available for all users. Consideration should also be given to the possibility of improving the quality of the qualifications data available for leavers by linking the survey's data to the qualifications data set produced by Bath University. There is a good user case for extending the Leavers Survey to Special Schools if data about a sufficiently wide range of qualifications can be collected.

7.24 Statistics and Research Branch will also wish to consider the various points made by users which were out of scope for this review. (2.24).

7.25 The remainder of this chapter presents a summary list of recommendations.

Recommendation 1: There should be considerably more consultation with users – notably the major NDPBs – and some consultation with schools at least about major proposed developments. These consultations should cover

- Survey content
- Survey methodology (currently in particular the relationship with the e-schools project)
- Data sharing and the avoidance of duplication
- Liaison with the e-schools project

Ideally this consultation should take the form of a fundamental review addressing the lack of planning and co-ordination noted at 7.3 above. Such a review should be led by DE statisticians and involve a wide range of other stakeholders. It should identify all the needs for data and statistics (not confined to those currently identified as National Statistics but covering all administrative, policy, statistical, and inspection – and any other – uses of data) and specify how those needs can best be satisfied. However the review has identified a number of smaller scale reviews to be pursued if it were decided not to mount such a fundamental review.

Recommendation 2: The exploitation of the statistics should be encouraged by

- The inclusion of more statistics in the press releases
- The publication of more statistics on the web
- The publication, on the web and perhaps elsewhere, of fuller descriptions of the surveys and the types of analyses they can support
- Explicit advertisement (including in the press releases and on the web) of the ad hoc analysis service
- Production and circulation to schools and users of papers describing the types of statistics and analyses which the data can support and the types of use to which they can be put
- Meetings, possible combined with meetings to consider survey content etc, with key groups of users
- Providing, e.g. via the web, tables, individual school data and anonymised pupil data in a form which readily supports user analysis

Recommendation 3: The range of useful tables in the press releases should be extended and specific references made to the descriptions of the surveys, the availability of an ad hoc analysis service and how data can be accessed for further analysis

Recommendation 4: Statistics should be made available more quickly including by minimising the gap between data validation and publication of statistics and by taking steps with C2K and schools to improve the efficiency of data validation and correction.

Recommendation 5: Survey content should be reviewed in the light of the points made in the report with priority being given to

- Collecting at pupil level data currently collected as aggregates from post primary schools
- Considering the addition of statistics of
 - Absence for primary schools and making these statistics National Statistics for post primary
 - Substitute and peripatetic teachers
 - Non teacher staff
 - Leavers from special schools
- Consideration of the removal of projected pupil numbers

Recommendation 6: The planned introduction of EDI for the census for primary schools is welcome but careful planning and support is important.

Recommendation 7: The accuracy of destinations data should be researched and ways sought of obtaining more extensive and accurate data on qualifications for the leavers survey.

ANNEX A: DESCRIPTION OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

- A.1. The review was conducted by Denis Allnutt, acting as an independent consultant and reporting to a Steering Group chaired by the Department's Principal Statistician. The membership of this Steering Group is listed in Annex B. The review commenced on 1 November 2004 and the final report was delivered on 19 March 2005.
- A.2 The Steering Group met twice
- On 9 December to consider the proposed review plan
 - On 11 March to consider a draft report.
- A.3 The consultant:
- Agreed the methodology, including the areas to be covered by the questionnaires to users and schools, and project plan with the Steering Group
 - Consulted, face to face, by questionnaire, by phone, or by email as appropriate with
 - The producers of the statistics
 - A selection of users and potential users within and without the Department
 - A selection of schools, as providers of the data and as potential users
 - Classroom 2000
 - Reviewed the statistical publications, all other documentation available from the Department (see Annex D), and the information and opinions provided by consultees
 - Tested the emerging findings, as necessary, with selected stakeholders by phone or email
 - Provided a draft report for consideration with the Steering Group
 - Provided a final report; amending the draft report in the light of the Steering Group's comments and other input received after the preparation of the draft report.
- A.4 The ELBs, CCMS and Classroom 2000 were each invited to comment on the draft report before the 11 March meeting of the Steering Group.

ANNEX B: MEMBERSHIP OF THE STEERING GROUP

Ivor Johnston (chairman): Head of Statistics and Research Branch DE

David Beck: Inspector of Schools ETI

John Caldwell: Head of Policy Unit DE

Tony McKibben: Statistician NISRA

Denis Allnutt: Consultant

Christine Thompson (secretary): Statistics and Research Branch DE

ANNEX C: LIST OF CONSULTEES

Random samples of schools of different types were requested to complete a questionnaire, asking about their use of the statistics and the process of providing data, to provide input to the review. The response rates were:

Independent schools: 0 respondents from a sample of 6
Special and Hospital schools: 9 respondents from a sample of 18
Grammar schools: 10 respondents from a sample of 18
Other Secondary schools: 10 respondents from a sample of 19
Primary (including Prep) schools: 10 respondents from a sample of 19
Nursery schools: 11 respondents from a sample of 17
Pre-school centres: 8 respondents from a sample of 14

Relevant DE, including ETI, officials were requested to complete a questionnaire inviting their input as users of the statistics and seeking information about any separate collections of statistics from schools for which they were responsible. Responses were received from:

DE

Mark Browne
John Caldwell
Debbie Gladwell
Chris Hughes
Alan Hutton
Christine Jendoubi
Sean Johnston
Sharon Lawlor
David Mann
Kim Martin
Jacqui McLaughlin
Rose Morrow
Mary Potter
Louise Warde Hunter
Russell Welsh
David Woods

ETI

David Beck
Maureen Bennett
Tom Bratton
Ffiona Crawford
John Hunter
Paul McAlister
B Robinson
Brian Speirs
Nick Todd
Loretto Watson
Wilma Weise

The consultant also had meetings with David Beck, John Caldwell and Rose Morrow.

The Education and Library Boards and CCMS each responded to a request to complete a questionnaire inviting their input as users of the statistics and seeking information about any separate collections of statistics from schools for which they were responsible.

Contributions were invited from all those, other than schools, regularly receiving copies of the Statistical Press Releases issued by DE and an open invitation to contribute was posted on the DE and NS web sites. Contributions were received from:

Sigrid Boyd: Eurydice Unit for England, Wales and Northern Ireland
Stephen Elliott: Parental Alliance for Choice in Education Northern Ireland
Professor Tony Gallagher: Graduate School of Education, Queens University Belfast
Steve Laird
Elza Margrain: NASUWT
Dave Walton: Department for Education and Skills
The Officers of the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland

The reviewer held meetings with the following members of Statistics and Research Branch of DE and Classroom 2000 and is also grateful for their input at other stages of the review process

Statistics and Research Branch

Ivor Johnston
Ivor Graham
Michael Bennett
Jim Reid
Ann Morrow
Helen McClure
Christine Thompson
Patricia Wyers
Johanna McCaughey

Classroom 2000

Jimmy Stewart
John Logan
Paddy Maguire
Brian Wilkinson

ANNEX D: LIST OF DOCUMENTS PROVIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

In addition to the information available on the Departments website DE provided copies of:

- Statistics and Research Branch Directory
- Projected and actual enrolments in Post-primary schools in 2004/5
- Survey forms and letters to schools requesting provision of data for the National Statistics surveys
- Descriptions of survey procedures and validation processes
- Three examples of ETI Reports of Focused Inspections
- Monitoring, Evaluating and Inspecting in Secondary Schools – guidance on using schools’ information management system to provide data needed for inspections

ANNEX E: COST OF REVIEW

The explicit cost of this review was the consultant's fees and expenses of £7244.

In addition:

- The various meetings held by the consultant required about 15 hours of DE officials' time, 6 hours of C2K officials' time and 3 hours of school staff time.
- Steering group meetings required about 25 person hours of members' time.
- Responding to queries from the consultant required about 15 hours of Statistics and Research Branch officials' time
- Consultees were not asked to record the time spent in completing questionnaires; the time involved is roughly estimated as 30 hours of school staff time and 50 hours of users' time

ANNEX F: ANALYSIS OF AD HOC QUERIES DEALT WITH FROM NATIONAL STATISTICS SOURCES IN 2004

By type of inquirer

	School Census	School Leavers' Survey	Teachers/PTRs
Parliament	11	5	1
DE Senior Management	10	0	2
Other DE	133	9	5
Other Departments	36	8	1
Other Public Sector	53	11	0
School/College/University	39	1	1
Other Organisations	42	8	1
General Public	18	2	1
Total	342	44	12

By nature of inquiry¹

	Already published	More detail than published (extra variables)	Different form to published statistics	Disaggregated (spatially, including school-level)
School Census	58	177	5	112
School Leavers' Survey	9	14	1	21
Teachers/PTRs	1	2	2	8

¹ Some inquiries are counted in more than one column

ANNEX G: GLOSSARY

AEP	Alternative Education Provision
A-L	Advanced Level
AS	Advanced Subsidiary
C2K	Classroom 2000
CBDS	Common Basic Data Set
CCMS	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
DE	Department of Education
DEL	Department for Employment and Learning
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EDI	Electronic Data Interchange
ELB	Education and Library Board
EOTAS	Education otherwise than at school
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate
FE	Further Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GMI	Grant Maintained Integrated
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
JSA	Job Seeker's Allowance
KS	Key Stage
LMS	Local Management of Schools
NDPB	Non Departmental Public Body
NI	Northern Ireland
NINIS	Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency
NS	National Statistics
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
PTR	Pupil:Teacher Ratio
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SSID	Secondary Schools Information Disc
TPPS	Teachers' Payroll and Pensions System
UPN	Unique Pupil Number