

## **PART 1**

### **EDUCATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

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- 1.1 Introduction
- The nature of the curriculum and the methods of organising secondary education are constantly debated. Until the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 the curriculum in secondary schools had been the responsibility of school managers but since 1989 its framework and content have been prescribed. It includes six compulsory areas of study, religious education and various educational themes which are so organised as to provide all pupils with a balanced range of subjects. This is in line with the aims of the 11-16 Programme of Curricular Review and Development and other educational initiatives which were a feature of the 1980s. This handbook provides advice and guidance on the planning and design of secondary school premises and the standards to which they should conform. It deals with the site, the buildings, circulation space, and playing facilities – all matters which influence the learning environment within which the curriculum is delivered.
- 1.2 Educational Environment
- The learning environment of the school is more than simply the premises. It includes the organisation and arrangement of resources and the opportunities for learning within the classroom, the school, the immediate surroundings and the local community. The learning environment should be designed to motivate pupils to learn through contact with areas of special interest, examples of pupils' and teachers' work and work from the local and wider community. The good learning environment will have been structured and organised not only to attract and hold the attention of pupils but to provide opportunities and encouragement for them to learn actively through and in it. In this planned setting pupils can search for information, can practise skills and techniques and can carry out personal and teacher-planned tasks. Whichever way the school is planned, care should be taken to ensure that it contributes to the effectiveness of teaching and learning at all stages.