



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS
MÄNNYSTRIE O LEAR



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

RESEARCH BRIEFING

ISSN 1366-803X

RB 1/2001

September 2001

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FUNDED RESEARCH 2000/01

1. This Research Briefing provides information on projects commenced in 2000/01 funded by the Department of Education. Details of funded projects from previous years which were still in progress at the start of the year are also provided.
2. The purpose of this Briefing is to provide clear and succinct summaries of the research projects funded by the Department of Education to ensure that policy makers and administrators in the education services, teachers, academics and other interested parties are aware of research both in progress and recently completed.
3. The findings of research commissioned by the Department of Education are disseminated:-
 - a. Through the publication of research reports as part of the Department of Education Research Report Series.
 - b. Through publication of summaries of the findings of projects as part of the Department of Education Research Briefing Series.
4. Please note that the dates given for uncompleted projects refer to when the draft final report is due to be received by the Department of Education. Projects can be affected by delays. Actual publication of reports tends to occur about 6 months after the draft final report is received.
5. Copies of Department of Education research publications may be obtained from the address on the back of this Briefing.

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SECTION A: PROJECTS COMMENCED IN 2000/01

1. Project Title: CAREERS PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AT KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

Research Body: BDO Stoy Hayward

Start Date: April 2000 Cost: £24,040

Final Report: Received January 2001

Brief Description of Project

The project set out to:

- ❖ quantify the current levels of careers provision within all post-primary schools;
- ❖ quantify perceived weaknesses or areas of difficulty in the present arrangements; and
- ❖ identify potentially useful ways forward.

2. Project Title: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE YOUTH SERVICE COMMUNITY RELATIONS SUPPORT SCHEME (YSCRSS)

Research Body: Capita

Start Date: June 2000 Cost: £14,625

Final Report: Received May 2001

Brief Description of Project

The Youth Service Community Relations Support Scheme (YSCRSS) provides practical opportunities for young people to gain a greater understanding of the main cultural traditions in Northern Ireland, enabling them to contribute positively to the development of community relations. The project aimed to assess the effectiveness of the scheme, with particular emphasis on the periods 1998/99 and 1999/2000.

- 3. Project Title: EFFECTIVENESS OF DIFFERENT FORMS OF INTERVENTIONS IN THE SCHOOLS AND YOUTH SECTORS: A LITERATURE REVIEW**
- Research Body: Further & Higher Education Research Unit, School of Education, University of Ulster**
- Start Date: November 2000 Cost: £9,000**
- Final Report: Draft received March 2001**

Brief Description of Project

The study aims to critically analyse a broad range of studies from a number of countries which have evidenced the effectiveness or otherwise of prevention and intervention strategies in addressing underachievement and social disadvantage in both the school and youth sectors.

- 4. Project Title: SCHOOL BULLYING: THE IMPACT ON PUPIL MARGINALISATION AND UNDERACHIEVEMENT**
- Research Body: Further & Higher Education Research Unit, School of Education, University of Ulster**
- Start Date: May 2000 Cost: £62,588**
- Final Report: Draft received January 2001**

Brief Description of Project

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

5. **Project Title:** **ATTITUDES TOWARDS EDUCATION OF SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED PARENTS AND SCHOOL CHILDREN**
- Research Body:** **Graduate School of Education, Queen's University of Belfast**
- Start Date:** **November 2000** **Cost: £4,980**
- Final Report:** **Due September 2001**

Brief Description of Project

This project reviews existing evidence on the attitudes of socially disadvantaged parents and children towards education in order to provide, as far as possible, a baseline against which to measure any attitudinal changes over time.

SECTION B: PROJECTS IN PROGRESS AT START OF 2000/01

1. **Project Title:** INVESTIGATION INTO THE APPROPRIATENESS OF CAREERS GUIDANCE TO STUDENTS' LONG-TERM OCCUPATIONAL GOALS

Research Body: Northern Ireland Hotel and Catering College

Start Date: January 1998 **Cost:** £47,139

Final Report: Draft received February 2001

Brief Description of Project

This project examined the effectiveness of careers guidance with a view to suggesting strategies which would result in fewer failures; fewer drop outs; less mis-directed talent and the widening of horizons as more options are considered seriously.

2. **Project Title:** EFFECTIVE PROVISION OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Research Body: University of Wales, Cardiff

Start Date: March 1998 **Cost:** £177,975 (part-funding)

Final Report: Due March 2003

Brief Description of Project

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

3. **Project Title:** FOLLOW-UP SURVEY OF RECENTLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS
- Research Body:** School of Education, QUB
- Start Date:** June 1997 **Cost:** £9,992
- Final Report:** Published August 2000

Brief Description of Project

This project repeated a previous study, and involved contacting teachers who qualified in 1995 to ascertain their employment status over the intervening period.

4. **Project Title:** MULTIPLY SUSPENDED PUPILS: THEIR EDUCATIONAL CAREERS AND SUPPORT PROJECTS AVAILABLE TO THEM
- Research Body:** School of Education, QUB
- Start Date:** September 1997 **Cost:** £42,436
- Final Report:** Received April 2001

Brief Description of Project

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

5. **Project Title:** NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS IMMERSSED IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE: A LITERATURE REVIEW
- Research Body:** Graduate School of Education, QUB and St Mary's College of Education, Belfast
- Start Date:** September 1998 **Cost:** £5,000
- Final Report:** Published September 2000

Brief Description of Project

This review focused on how children from an English-speaking background in a predominantly English-speaking country, who are immersed in another language, perform at school relative to other children educated in English. Attainment at both primary and secondary levels was explored.

6. **Project Title:** OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS WHO RECEIVE IRISH-MEDIUM EDUCATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND
- Research Body:** Hanna and Company
- Start Date:** April 1998 **Cost:** £14,580
- Final Report:** Received November 2000

Brief Description of Project

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

7. **Project Title:** THE DEVELOPMENT OF LINGUISTIC ACCURACY IN IRISH-MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOLS
- Research Body:** School of Behavioural and Communication Sciences, University of Ulster at Jordanstown
- Start Date:** September 1996 **Cost:** £15,000 (part-funding)
- Final Report:** Received May 2001

Brief Description of Project

The project aims to contribute to good practice in the development of competence in Irish in Irish-medium Schools. It will identify norms in relation to grammatical accuracy in speech and writing; identify recurring errors and determine which of these persist in the later primary years; and devise and evaluate strategies for improving linguistic accuracy where appropriate.

8. **Project Title:** THE DEVELOPMENT OF BASELINE AND VALUE-ADDED MEASURES FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION/RSSI
- Research Body:** Institute of Education, University of London
- Start Date:** August 1996 **Cost:** £171,225
- Final Report:** Draft received December 2000

Brief Description of Project

The project will provide an analysis of agreed baseline assessments in the primary and secondary schools participating in the Raising School Standards Initiative (RSSI). It will also provide a value-added analysis of the baseline and outcome assessments relating to these schools.

- 9. Project Title: RURAL DAY-CARE ACTION RESEARCH**
- Research Body: Northern Ireland Pre-School Playgroups Association (NIPPA), in partnership with National Children's Bureau**
- Start Date: January 1997 Cost: £10,000 (part-funding)**
- Final Report: Published February 2001**

Brief Description of Project

This cross border action research took place in 6 locations in border areas. The project was managed by a multi-agency steering group.

- 10. Project Title: FROM PRE-SCHOOL TO SCHOOL: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**
- Research Body: NICER, Applied Research Unit, School of Education, QUB**
- Start Date: March 1996 Cost: £5,000**
- Final Report: Published September 2000**

Brief Description of Project

A systematic review of pre-school education focusing upon the age range 3-6 in order to inform practice and provide a basis for further research. The review gathered evidence and examined theories on the effectiveness of the different types of educational experience before the statutory age including nursery schools, playgroups, early admission to reception and other classes in primary schools. Particular attention was paid to evidence on the effects of pre-school education on language development and pre-literacy skills and whether enrolment in pre-school education is related to social background factors.

11. Project Title: GATHERING PARENTAL VIEWS ON EDUCATION TO ASSIST THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGY & POLICY: A PILOT STUDY INTO THE USE OF FOCUS GROUPS

Research Body: BDO Stoy Hayward

Start Date: September 1998 Cost: £6,000

Final Report: Received November 2000

Brief Description of Project

This project sought to provide detailed information on the feasibility and utility of using focus group methodology to gather parental views on education to assist the development of strategy and policy.

12. Project Title: IMPROVING SCHOOLS THROUGH PURPOSEFUL LEADERSHIP

Research Body: School of Education, QUB

Start Date: January 1999 Cost: £26,900

Final Report: Received November 2000

Brief Description of Project

This project investigated the most effective ways of applying agreed academic values consistently through head teachers' leadership to the key areas of teaching and learning, as a means of improving school performance.

13. Project Title: AN INVESTIGATION DESIGNED TO IMPROVE HEALTH EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

Research Body: University of Ulster at Jordanstown

Start Date: September 1998 Cost: £44,500

Final Report: Received December 2000

Brief Description of Project

This project investigated the needs of teachers charged with providing health education as a cross-curricular theme for young persons in primary and secondary education. It provided evidence-based recommendations for curriculum policy and practice through an examination of the perceptions of teachers regarding the relevance of current policy, and their suggestions for improvement.

- 14. Project Title: NORTHERN IRELAND CURRICULUM COHORT STUDY**
- Research Body: National Foundation for Educational Research**
- Start Date: June 1998 Cost: £87,400**
- Final Report: Draft received March 2001**

Brief Description of Project

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

- 15. Project Title: UPTAKE AND USER PERCEPTION OF NON-GCSE COURSES**
- Research Body: BDO Stoy Hayward**
- Start Date: October 1998 Cost: £8,000**
- Final Report: Draft received May 2001**

Brief Description of Project

This project provides detailed information on the uptake and perceived usefulness and appropriateness of two non-GCSE courses, within the context of concerns about the level of low achievement among school leavers in Northern Ireland.

- 16. Project Title: RESEARCH ON SELECTION**
- Research Body: QUB; University of Ulster;**
BDO Stoy Hayward and Stranmillis College
- Start Date: October 1998 Cost: £99,850**
- Final Report: Published September 2000**

Brief Description of Project

This research evaluated the effects of the current secondary education selection system on:

- ❖ the education system in general;

- ❖ pupil performance at GCSE level, including identification of any differences in opportunity and performance in respect of different socio-economic groups;
- ❖ schools;
- ❖ teachers; and
- ❖ the community.

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

Brief Description of Project

This study forms part of an international exercise to develop and implement a strategy for producing student outcome indicators on a regular basis, in reading, maths and science. The age group is 15-16 year olds.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESEARCH BRIEFINGS (1997 TO DATE)

Department of Education funded research 1996/1997	RB 1/1997
A follow-up survey of teachers who qualified in 1991 and 1992	RB 2/1997
Diversification of the first foreign language: a review of the literature	RB 3/1997
An initial analysis of the impact of formula funding and local management of schools	RB 4/1997
A review of research evidence on the apparent underachievement of boys	RB 5/1997
Staying on in full-time education in Northern Ireland: an economic analysis	RB 6/1997
Science at Key Stage 4	RB 2/1998
Department of Education funded research 1997/1998	RB 3/1998
Practice in mainstream schools for children with special educational needs	RB 5/1998
An evaluation of the Craigavon 2-tier system	RB 6/1998
Northern Ireland suspension and expulsion study (1996/1997)	RB 1/1999
Supporting Newly Qualified Teachers in Post-Primary Schools	RB 2/1999
Literature review: integrated education in Northern Ireland	RB 3/1999
Department of Education funded research 1998/1999	RB 4/1999
Women in teaching: equal opportunities	RB 5/1999
Three years later: a follow-up survey of teachers who qualified in 1995	RB 1/2000
Immersion education: a literature review	RB 2/2000
From pre-school to school: a review of the research literature	RB 3/2000
The effects of the selective system of secondary education in Northern Ireland	RB 4/2000

PURPOSE OF DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESEARCH BRIEFINGS

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

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*Edited and produced by
Statistics and Research Branch, Department of Education*