



Department of
Education

www.deni.gov.uk

AN ROINN
Oideachais

MÁNNYSTRIE O
Lear



Education & Training

RESEARCH BRIEFING

ISSN 1366-803X

RB 3/2008

February 2008

LITERACY AND NUMERACY OF PUPILS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

GOOD PRACTICE IN LITERACY AND NUMERACY IN BRITISH AND IRISH CITIES

Key Findings

- ◆ The empirical evidence shows that there are clusters of underperformance, firstly in schools in Belfast, and, secondly, in the controlled sector. Care should be taken however in drawing conclusions from these high-level patterns as the factors impacting on attainment are complex and interactive.

- ◆ Respondents suggested that the reasons for the ‘long tail’ of underachievement in Northern Ireland included:
 - A lack of parental involvement in their children’s education;
 - A perceived lack of value placed on education in certain areas, particularly deprived Protestant areas and a shortage of positive role models;
 - The impact of 30 years of civil unrest;
 - A decline in the readiness for schooling of pupils entering primary school;
 - A lack of baseline data on young children, hindering early intervention;
 - The transition between primary and post-primary schools is problematic; and
 - A lack of strategic direction and consistency of approach at the system level.

- ◆ Measures to improve boys’ performance were identified at the individual level, the pedagogical level, the school level and at a system-wide level. These include:
 - Mentoring;
 - Target-setting and more personalised learning;
 - Introducing greater variety in teaching styles and activities;
 - Creating an ethos of high expectations and aspirations throughout the school;
 - Using data effectively to identify areas of difficulty;
 - Developing appropriate professional development for teachers; and
 - Disseminating good practice.

- ◆ Respondents also raised concerns about:
 - The weight given to teaching literacy and numeracy in Initial Teacher Training (ITT), particularly for those planning to teach in post-primary schools;
 - The level of support for special educational needs;
 - Resources for literacy and numeracy (including the layout of school buildings); and
 - The need for strong strategic leadership across the sector.

- ◆ Effective schools and school systems are characterised by:
 - Strong leadership and strategic vision;
 - A focus on learning and development for all staff;
 - Close linkages with parents and the wider community;
 - An emphasis on personalised learning, tailored to the needs of the individual pupil;
 - Creativity and making learning fun;
 - Collaboration with other schools, particularly at transition stages; and
 - The effective use of data.

INTRODUCTION

1. In 2006, the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) published a report entitled *Improving Literacy and Numeracy in Schools*, which was followed by a report of the same title by the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee. The NIAO report stated that, despite substantial investments by the Department of Education (DE) in literacy and numeracy particularly since 1998¹ substantial literacy and numeracy challenges remain in Northern Ireland.
2. The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) highlighted differing attainment levels between girls and boys and between pupils from different religious or community backgrounds. Another recommendation made by the Committee related to the importance of benchmarking attainment in Northern Ireland, and specifically Belfast, against educational outcomes in other relevant cities.
3. Similar concerns were reflected in the recently published Chief Inspector's Report 2004-06 which, while recognising the high performance of Northern Ireland pupils at the top end of the scale, stated that there are still too many young people leaving school with insufficient skills in literacy and numeracy.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

4. In response to this evidence, and particularly the PAC Report, the Department of Education commissioned PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) to undertake two research studies into a number of the issues raised. This research briefing presents the findings of both studies:
 - ◆ Literacy and Numeracy of Pupils in Northern Ireland; and
 - ◆ Good Practice in Literacy and Numeracy in British and Irish Cities where the Level of Social Deprivation is Comparable to, or Worse Than, Belfast.

¹ The Strategy for the Promotion of Literacy and Numeracy in Primary and Secondary Schools was published by DENI in 1998.

5. The aims of the first study were to consider the outcomes in literacy and numeracy at school-level, explore the international literature on boys' underachievement and examine the differences between high and low performing schools. The aim of the second study was to inform the Department about measures which are working successfully in delivering better literacy and numeracy outcomes in comparator cities elsewhere in Great Britain and Ireland.

MAIN FINDINGS

6. In an analysis of school performance in English and Maths² in Northern Ireland by location and sector, there was evidence that there are some clusters of underperformance in schools in Belfast and in the controlled sector. However, while our analysis identified specific issues in regard to some schools in the controlled sector, it should be remembered that the factors impacting on attainment are complex and interactive (including socio-economic context and gender) and that generalisation is therefore difficult.
7. Respondents thought that reasons for the 'long tail' of underachievement in Northern Ireland included:
 - ◆ A lack of parental involvement in their children's education;
 - ◆ A perceived lack of value placed on education in certain areas, particularly deprived Protestant areas;
 - ◆ A shortage of positive role models;
 - ◆ The impact of 'The Troubles';
 - ◆ A decline in the readiness for schooling of pupils entering primary school in recent years (e.g. in terms of behaviour, linguistic development etc);

² At Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3 and GCSE.

- ◆ A lack of baseline data on young children, hindering early intervention in schools;
 - ◆ The transition between pre-school and primary and between primary and post-primary schools; and
 - ◆ A lack of strategic direction and consistency of approach at the system level.
8. In the local authorities and cities identified³ as having similar levels of Free School Meals (FSM) entitlement as Belfast, social deprivation and a lack of parental involvement in their children’s education were thought to be main factors impacting on attainment. Gender was also an issue, with many respondents identifying the performance of (some) boys as an area of concern.

Boys’ performance

9. In 2006, the Northern Ireland Audit Office and House of Commons Public Accounts Committee identified boys’ performance as a key issue in Northern Ireland.^{4,5} The gender gap in educational attainment to the benefit of girls is a feature of many developed countries. Our review of the current national and international literature demonstrated that there is no single explanation for the attainment gap between boys and girls. Furthermore, while not all boys underperform, those from more deprived socio-economic backgrounds are more at risk. The most commonly cited factors include:
- ◆ Perceptions of literacy activities as ‘female’;
 - ◆ Gender stereotyping on the part of teachers;
 - ◆ The greater vulnerability of boys to poor teaching;

³ Camden, Cork, Dublin, Glasgow, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea and Liverpool.

⁴ Improving Literacy and Numeracy in Schools (NIAO, 2006)

⁵ Improving Literacy and Numeracy in Schools (Northern Ireland) (PAC, 2006)

- ◆ The greater likelihood that boys are less ready to commence formal schooling;
 - ◆ A greater proportion of learning activities which require a prolonged attention span;
 - ◆ Changing patterns of employment and higher expectations of girls;
 - ◆ Peer group cultures;
 - ◆ A greater incidence of behavioural problems such as ADD/ADHD amongst boys; and
 - ◆ A lack of male role models including fathers and male teachers.
10. Measures to improve boys' performance were identified at the individual level, the pedagogical level, the school level and at a system-wide level. These included target-setting and more personalised learning; mentoring; introducing greater variety in teaching styles and activities; creating an ethos of high expectations and aspirations throughout the school, using data effectively to identify areas of difficulty; developing appropriate professional development for teachers; and disseminating good practice through dedicated on-line resources.

The Northern Ireland Literacy and Numeracy Strategies

11. The Northern Ireland Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, introduced in 1998, were generally well received by the regional stakeholders and the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators that participated in this research. Respondents were clear, however, that 'one size does not fit all' and that teachers need to adapt the Strategies to the needs of individual pupils. Overall, the implementation of the Numeracy Strategy was thought to have been more consistent across Boards than that of the Literacy Strategy.

Training and development of teachers

12. Concerns were raised about the lack of weight given to teaching literacy and numeracy in Initial Teacher Training (ITT), particularly for those

planning to teach in post-primary schools, and whether ITT prepared teachers adequately for the classroom. Several participants suggested that there should be greater cohesion between ITT providers and the future development of the Strategies. In-service training in literacy and numeracy was viewed positively by the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators who participated in this research, particularly for the opportunities to interact with colleagues from other schools and to exchange best practice.

13. In the comparator cities, effective Continuing Professional Development was tailored to meet the needs of teachers and support staff and targeted at specific areas of need. The most effective CPD was reported to be in areas where schools and staff were offered tailored support including modelling of lessons, opportunities to observe good practice, and assistance with lesson planning and assessment over an extended period of time.

Leadership of literacy and numeracy

14. All participants in Northern Ireland emphasised the importance of strong and effective leadership of literacy and numeracy at all levels in the education system, from the Department down. This was linked to the need for a more joined-up approach to improving literacy and numeracy, particularly at the school level. Respondents emphasised the role of school leaders in creating an aspirational ethos, adopting a whole-school approach to literacy and numeracy, planning strategically for school improvement, and effectively using the data available to them to drive improvement (at a school, class and individual pupil level).
15. In the comparator cities, respondents suggested that leadership is crucial both at the local authority (LA) and at the school level to ensure that there is a constant focus on continuous improvement and that support is coherent and tailored to meet the specific needs of schools (at the LA level), and teachers and pupils (at the school level). There was a clear view that ultimate responsibility for literacy and numeracy within the school should reside in the senior leadership team.
16. Respondents in the comparator cities also highlighted the importance of understanding schools' needs through the effective use of data. Successful

local authorities and school leaders collect extensive and appropriate data and use these to provide targeted support to schools depending on their level of need. In England, the role of the School Improvement Partner as a critical friend to school leaders, informed by an evidence-based assessment of the school's performance, was viewed as particularly valuable in this respect.

Support available to schools for special educational needs

17. Respondents identified a shortage of speech therapists and other allied professionals in Northern Ireland. A lack of such specialist support was thought to impact negatively on the extent to which schools could intervene promptly when difficulties were identified. Problems were also identified in relation to assessment waiting times and the quota system for referrals. Literacy and numeracy co-ordinators also highlighted the issue of the allocation of special educational needs assistants in the classroom, suggesting that, instead of having one assistant dedicated to one child it would be more beneficial in terms of adult-child ratios if the assistant worked more closely with the teacher to support a larger number of children.

Resourcing literacy and numeracy

18. In Northern Ireland, short-term budgets were thought to limit the extent to which schools could plan strategically for improvement. Concerns were also raised that the current system provides perverse incentives for failure with resources targeted for set periods at the schools with the worst outcomes and that such an approach was not sustainable in the long term. Participants highlighted the importance of welcoming and comfortable school environments, and specifically, well-designed library areas, but queried whether the current Schools Building Handbook provided sufficient flexibility for schools particularly in light of the new curriculum.
19. Elsewhere, participants in this research highlighted the value of specific resources to support literacy and numeracy including the use of ICT and the availability of attractive and comfortable libraries, stocked with a range of different types of reading materials for both adults and children. In Ireland,

for example, the programme of demonstration libraries with qualified librarians in schools is being expanded nationally.

Collaboration with other schools and organisations

20. Literacy and numeracy co-ordinators in Northern Ireland provided several examples of successful collaborations both between schools and between schools and other organisations. Benefits of such collaborations included:
- ◆ Easing the transition between phases;
 - ◆ Accessing additional resources; and
 - ◆ Demonstrating potential career options through collaboration with, for example, the private sector.
21. Clusters of schools, such as federations in England, the New Learning Communities initiative in Glasgow or those formed under the School Completion Programme in Ireland, were thought to assist in easing the transition from primary to post-primary and thus reduce the risk of pupils falling behind at this time.

What are the lessons from successful schools in Northern Ireland?

22. Visits to selected schools in Northern Ireland identified as performing better than would be expected (given the proportion of pupils entitled to Free School Meals) revealed that these schools are characterised by:
- ◆ Strong leadership and strategic vision;
 - ◆ A focus on learning and development for all staff;
 - ◆ Close linkages with parents and the wider community;
 - ◆ An emphasis on personalised learning and pastoral care;
 - ◆ Creativity and making learning fun;
 - ◆ Collaboration with other schools, particularly at transition stages; and
 - ◆ The effective use of data.

What are the lessons from the comparator cities?

23. Throughout this research, respondents stressed that “one size did not fit all” and that the more successful local authorities and schools cherry picked those aspects of national strategies which best suited their circumstances. There is some evidence from the literature however that a more faithful adherence to the implementation of improvement initiatives is linked to better outcomes. Further evaluation would therefore be required before any implementation of specific strategies in Belfast.
24. While respondents reported a broad range of literacy and numeracy initiatives and strategies that were supporting improvement, there are a number of characteristics common to all of these approaches, including:
- ◆ Raising self-esteem and expectations through, for example, having high expectations of all learners and demonstrating the value of learning to children at an early age;
 - ◆ Using data effectively to track and monitor pupils’ progress and to set challenging targets for all pupils including those with SEN, EAL, looked after children, minority ethnic groups and those who are socially or economically disadvantaged;
 - ◆ Linking self-evaluation and school development planning to pupil achievement data;
 - ◆ Focusing on high quality teaching and learning. Effective and improving schools have a clear work scrutiny system for regularly reviewing the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders in these schools regularly observe lessons, give feedback to staff on the quality of teaching and learning, and provide support to teachers who may be experiencing difficulties;
 - ◆ Personalising learning, by focusing on the pastoral needs of pupils and tailoring teaching to individual learning needs (as informed by effective data analysis), styles and preferences;

- ◆ Focusing on family learning and engaging parents as partners to encourage parental involvement in their children’s schooling and by stimulating their interest in their own learning;
- ◆ Making learning fun by using games, competitions, events, visits and play as a basis for learning in literacy and numeracy;
- ◆ Exploiting the potential of ICT through whiteboards and computer games and other resources; and
- ◆ Taking a whole-school approach, emphasising the importance of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum and consistency in teaching methodologies both within and between phases. In Ireland, for example, there is a drive to ensure that every primary and post-primary teacher has a SEN role.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

25. At a system level:

- ◆ Given that many of the issues identified above are long-standing, and that the education sector in NI is currently undergoing a period of unprecedented change, there is a clear need for **strong strategic leadership** from the Department and the Education and Skills Authority, particularly with a view to counteracting uncertainty in the sector.
- ◆ There should be **greater clarity** about the scope, mission and powers of the proposed Literacy and Numeracy Taskforce;
- ◆ There should be a more **‘joined-up’ approach** across the NI Executive and the Assembly to ensure that all departments and related agencies are aware of, and working towards, improving literacy and numeracy attainment in Northern Ireland. This could include i) **reviewing** all relevant new initiatives to ensure that the potential for contributing to the standards agenda has been fully assessed and ii) **communicating** the revised Strategies to both the Executive and the relevant Assembly Committees, to inform their scrutiny role;

- ◆ The NI Assembly should consider whether the **current budget allocation** for education in Northern Ireland is adequate to meet the literacy and numeracy challenge. This is of particular importance in regard to the **primary sector** given that there is evidence from our research that it is more difficult to overcome engrained difficulties in literacy and numeracy post-primary;
- ◆ Strengthening existing **North-South and East-West networks** in order to share and disseminate good practice between cities and other areas with similar levels of social deprivation;
- ◆ Investigating further and **evaluating existing city-wide approaches** such as the London Challenge to explore those aspects which could be transferred successfully to Belfast (such as additional support for heads through peer mentoring, school improvement consultants etc);
- ◆ In light of the Bain Report and subsequent consultation on sustainable schools the Department should consider the potential for '**new ways of working**' between schools (and between schools and other organisations, including the private sector) as well as the barriers to collaboration;
- ◆ To assist headteachers in managing underperforming teachers the Department should consider the need for **clearer, simplified performance management policies** and **support mechanisms** for teachers;
- ◆ There should be a review of the content of **ETI reports** on individual schools, with a view to maximising transparency regarding literacy and numeracy outcomes;
- ◆ The Department should **phase in mandatory professional development** modules on literacy for all teachers from KS1;
- ◆ Teachers should have access to more flexible, accessible and personalised development opportunities, e.g. through **e-learning**, on specific issues such as working in challenging urban schools, behavioural problems and improving attendance rates;

- ◆ The Department should review the current ‘support and challenge’ mechanisms for headteachers and consider the need for a greater focus on the leadership of literacy and numeracy in the **Professional Qualification for Headship (PQH)**;
- ◆ The Department should provide guidance on the **effective use of data** (including its interpretation) to headteachers;
- ◆ Consideration should be given to the use of **value-added data** to measure progression;
- ◆ Developing a system similar to RAISEonline, available to schools in England, which is used as **a single source of school data analysis**;
- ◆ To improve **parental and community involvement** in schools case studies of best practice should be disseminated to all schools;
- ◆ The Department should request the ESA to give urgent consideration to the **supply and resourcing of educational psychologists and psychology support**;
- ◆ To support the development and implementation of literacy and numeracy plans highly trained **Literacy and Numeracy consultants** should be appointed to work with small groups (clusters) of schools;
- ◆ Reviewing Initial Teacher Training to ensure that there is **an adequate focus on literacy and numeracy**, particularly at the post-primary level, where there should be a minimum training requirement in teaching literacy across the curriculum;
- ◆ Teacher trainees should be provided with sufficient opportunity to gain experience in a **range of high-quality practical settings**. Host schools for Newly Qualified Teachers should provide suitable learning environments at the early stage of their career;
- ◆ A focus on the identification of, and **early intervention** for, children experiencing difficulties in the first years of schooling;

- ◆ Providing **additional support** for children with little or no pre-school experience;
- ◆ Making **literacy and numeracy awareness training available to support staff** and other adults working in the school environment;
- ◆ Providing a central databank of **evaluated literacy and numeracy resources** for both primary and post-primary schools and creating an electronic “one-stop shop” for advice, resources and training for specific groups of students (boys, pupils with EAL);
- ◆ **Making explicit to school governors** the role of the head in leading literacy and numeracy and creating an ethos of high expectations;
- ◆ Emphasising the potential of **careers policy and advice** at an area or regional level to raise expectations and aspirations amongst children at an early age; and
- ◆ Strengthening the emphasis on **parental and community engagement in the schools inspection process**.

26. At a school-level:

- ◆ Headteachers should act as **leaders of literacy and numeracy** in their institution.
- ◆ Headteachers should be expected to create a **culture of high expectations** and aspirations, regardless of the ability level of individual pupils, and motivate teachers to respect and embrace this ethos;
- ◆ **Sharpening the focus on distributed leadership** to ensure that all staff, whether teaching or non-teaching, or whether a member of the senior leadership team or not, are using their time in the most effective and appropriate ways in the pursuit of school improvement;
- ◆ Heads should ensure that **literacy and numeracy co-ordinators are appointed to sufficiently senior roles** in order to drive through cross-curricular working;

- ◆ There should be a greater focus on the **effective use of data** and self-evaluation at all levels in school;
- ◆ Establishing **a range of pupil assessment protocols** (including both summative and formative assessments) which provide regular information on the progress and learning needs of individual students and groups of students in all phases;
- ◆ **All teachers** should be expected to act as teachers of literacy;
- ◆ There should be **greater with-in school collaboration** between teachers in all subjects containing a numerical element, particularly in post-primaries, to ensure a consistent approach;
- ◆ Consideration should be given to **best practice in flexing teaching to the needs of individual pupils, or groups of pupils, such as boys**, and establishing schemes such as target-setting and mentoring and involving role-models for pupils at risk of underperforming;
- ◆ Teachers should be encouraged to exploit the **potential of ICT** to engage pupils, particularly those at risk of disaffection;
- ◆ Schools should consider ways in which they can **collaborate beyond the school boundaries** to a greater extent with other schools, parents and community groups;
- ◆ Linking with other local schools to explore ways in which the **transition between phases** can be eased, e.g. through the sharing of staff between primary and post-primary schools;
- ◆ Adapting **existing literacy and numeracy interventions** to the specific circumstances and needs of the school whilst maintaining consistency of approach with good practice;
- ◆ Focusing on **professional development for all staff** using a range of external and in-school methods, including for example, joint INSET, collaborative planning, team teaching, classroom observation and modelling;

- ◆ Developing a broad range of **well-organised literacy and numeracy resources which include teachers' support materials**. Reading materials should include both fiction and non-fiction books which reflect a wide range of cultural backgrounds and interests. Non-fiction texts and 'new literacy' materials including CD-ROMs should be available to support the teaching of literacy across the curriculum;
- ◆ **Promoting a culture of research and enquiry**, drawing on well-researched and evaluated interventions in literacy and numeracy, and in particular on good practice in schools in similar circumstances elsewhere;
- ◆ Ensuring that the **school environment is open and welcoming**, and that library areas in particular are comfortable and inviting, and are stocked with a range of reading materials, maths games and IT packages suitable for different learning styles and age groups (including adults);
- ◆ Collaborating with local services and agencies such as the Library Service to enable access to, for example, **qualified librarians and other specialist expertise** and resources;
- ◆ Identifying **appropriate male role models for boys**, internally and externally, to promote the concept of reading for pleasure;
- ◆ Strengthening **ways of working with parents as partners** in all phases through, for example, parent/student workshops, family literacy and numeracy learning activities, school councils and surveys; and
- ◆ Appointing **designated staff to liaise with families** in the home to improve the learning environment.

METHODOLOGY

27. The Literacy and Numeracy of Pupils in Northern Ireland research report was based on the following methodology:
- ◆ An analysis of data provided by the Department of Education on the correlation between Free School Meal entitlement and the attainment in English and Maths at Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3 and GCSE in Northern Ireland;
 - ◆ A synthesis of the international literature on boys' underachievement;
 - ◆ An extensive review of 20 Education and Training Inspectorate reports on underperforming schools;
 - ◆ Eight in-depth interviews and meetings with stakeholders in Northern Ireland including CCEA, ETI, and CCMS;
 - ◆ Four focus groups with literacy and numeracy co-ordinators; and
 - ◆ Ten visits to schools in Northern Ireland identified as performing better than would be expected, given the level of FSM entitlement.
28. The comparator cities report was based on two phases of research: desk-based research and fieldwork (depth interviews with relevant personnel in selected local authorities in Great Britain and focus groups with primary and post-primary school leaders in Ireland). The desk-based research included:
- ◆ An analysis of Free School Meals (FSM) entitlement data provided by the education authorities in each of the four jurisdictions (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) to identify those cities with similar or higher levels of FSM entitlement than Belfast;
 - ◆ A comparison of outcomes at system level at Key Stage 2 and 3 and GCSE in 2005-06 in literacy and numeracy in Belfast, Liverpool and Glasgow, and other cities with similar or higher levels of FSM entitlement; and

- ◆ An initial review of comparative funding levels (where available) and approaches to the teaching and support of literacy and numeracy in the selected cities with attainment levels higher than Belfast (including Liverpool and Glasgow as specified by the PAC).

THE PROJECTS

29. The two projects were undertaken by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP. The total cost of the two projects was £74,751.

FULL REPORT

30. The full reports are available on the Department of Education website at http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg.htm

This paper is a summary of the research report and as such any views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Department of Education.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESEARCH BRIEFINGS (2000 TO DATE)

Three years later: a follow-up survey of teachers who qualified in 1995	RB 1/2000
Immersion education: a literature review	RB 2/2000
From pre-school to school: a review of the research literature	RB 3/2000
The effects of the selective system of secondary education in Northern Ireland	RB 4/2000
Department of Education Funded Research 2000/01	RB 1/2001
Assessment of the effectiveness of the Youth Service Community Relations Support Scheme (YSCRSS) during 1998/1999 and 1999/2000, in relation to the needs of youth and community groups	RB 2/2001
An investigation of the provision for health education in schools during 1998/99	RB 3/2001
Careers provision in schools at Key Stages 3 and 4	RB 1/2002
Evaluation of Raising School Standards Initiative (RSSI) using Value Added measures of school performance	RB 2/2002
Literature review: effectiveness of different forms of interventions in the schools and youth sectors	RB 3/2002
Outcomes for pupils who received an Irish-Medium education	RB 4/2002
Multiply-suspended pupils: their educational career and support projects available to them	RB 5/2002
Reducing the bureaucratic burden on schools	RB 6/2002
Developing linguistic accuracy in Irish-Medium primary schools	RB 7/2002
Bullying in schools: a Northern Ireland study	RB 8/2002
Community use of schools: an international literature review	RB 1/2003
Department of Education Funded Research 2002/03	RB 2/2003
A study of Careers Education and Guidance	RB 1/2004
Out of School Hours Learning Provision and School Improvement in Northern Ireland	RB 2/2004

The Professional Development of Teachers and Principals in Irish-Medium Education	RB 3/2004
Traveller children's experiences in mainstream post-primary schools in Northern Ireland: a qualitative study	RB 1/2005
The nature of Youth Work in Northern Ireland: purpose, contribution and challenges	RB 2/2005
Parental attitudes to the statutory assessment and statementing procedures on Special Educational Needs	RB 3/2005
A study into current practice and potential models for the effective teaching of Personal Development at Key Stage 3 in Northern Ireland curriculum	RB 4/2005
Evaluating the potential for virtual learning environments: a VLE for teaching Citizenship	RB 5/2005
Language Development Programmes – coverage and effectiveness of provision in Northern Ireland (0-36 months)	RB 1/2006
Attitudes of the Socially Disadvantaged towards Education in Northern Ireland	RB 2/2006
Effective Pre-school Provision in Northern Ireland (EPPNI)	RB 3/2006
The Development of Inclusive Schools in Northern Ireland: A Model of Best Practice	RB 4/2006
Department of Education Funded Research 2005/06	RB 5/2006
The recruitment and retention of teachers in post-primary schools in Northern Ireland	RB 6/2006
An evaluation of the need and early intervention support for children (aged 2-4 years) with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder in Northern Ireland	RB 1/2007
Alternative Education Provision (AEP) in Northern Ireland	RB 2/2007
The Nature and Extent of Bullying in Schools in the North of Ireland	RB 3/2007
Department of Education Funded Research 2006/07	RB 4/2007
An Investigation of Youth Work, as a process of informal learning, in formal settings	RB 1/2008
E-consultation with Pupils – a Pilot Study	RB 2/2008

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.

The full range of DE Research Briefings can be accessed at the DE Internet site -

www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg.htm

DE Research Briefings may be photocopied for use within your own institution.

If you have difficulty getting access to DE Research on the DE website please contact us at:

Statistics and Research Branch
Room G2, New Building
Department of Education
Rathgael House
Balloo Road
BANGOR
Co Down
BT19 7PR

Telephone: 028 9127 9391
Fax: 028 9127 9594
e-mail: statistics@deni.gov.uk

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