AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF
OIDEACHAIS | **EDUCATION**
AGUS EOLAÍOCHTA | AND SCIENCE

Statement of Strategy

2005-2007

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

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Foreword

Minister for Education and Science

This Government believes in education, both as a means of enabling all individuals to reach their full potential and as a major contributor to our current and future economic success. These two key priorities underpin the actions set out in this Statement of Strategy.

The Strategy shows the range of functions and services provided by the Department, the key role of education in delivering on a range of cross-sectoral Government objectives and the changing context in which work is undertaken.

It sets out our ambitious plans in areas such as reversing the historical under-investment in school buildings, greatly improving services for children with special needs and ensuring a multi-faceted approach to enabling children from disadvantaged areas to make the most of the opportunities available to them at school.

It shows how we intend to rise to challenges such as catering for the needs of an increasingly multicultural society, preparing young people for the knowledge society and building the research base that will be central to our ability to attract high skills jobs into the future.

On a very wide range of issues, at every level of our education system, a programme of action is set out. Together with Ministers of State Síle de Valera and Brian Lenihan, I look forward to working with the staff of my Department, and in a spirit of partnership with all the stakeholders in education- parents, teachers, school patrons/trustees, management bodies and the community – to deliver on the goals set out in these pages.

Le gach dea-ghuí

Mary Hanafin T.D.
Minister for Education & Science

Introduction

Secretary General of the Department

This Strategy Statement sets out the key objectives and related strategies of the Department of Education and Science over the period 2005 - 2007. It is drawn up in the context of Government policy the Department's mission statement and within the framework of available resources.

Learners, parents, educators and others rightly demand high standards of service, greater accountability and quality planning to meet future educational needs. This Statement sets out the Department's commitment to delivering quality services that address the needs of our customers, clients and learners at all levels, working in partnership with other Government Departments and agencies, as appropriate.

The Department has undergone significant structural reform. The setup of the State Examinations Commission, the establishment of a National Council for Special Education, the National Education Welfare Board and the Regional office network are improving the delivery of key services.

Over the coming years the Department will implement a major decentralisation programme posing significant organisational challenges. Our experience as a Department with significant services already in decentralised locations should help us in meeting this challenge while maintaining our services.

The delivery of this ambitious strategy while managing organisational change depends on the work and commitment of the staff of the Department. I would like to thank those whose work contributed to progressing the objectives in earlier strategy statements. I look forward to working together to deliver on our ambitious agenda.

Brigid McManus
Secretary General

Our Mission

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Department of Education and Science is to provide for high-quality education, which will:

- **enable individuals to achieve their full potential and to participate fully as members of society, and**
- **contribute to Ireland's social, cultural and economic development.**

HIGH LEVEL GOALS

In pursuit of this mission, the Department has the following high level goals:

1. We will deliver an education that is relevant to individuals' personal, social, cultural and economic needs.
2. We will support, through education, a socially inclusive society with equal opportunity for all.
3. We will contribute to Ireland's economic prosperity, development and international competitiveness.
4. We will seek to improve the standard and quality of education and promote best practice in classrooms, schools, colleges and other centres for education.
5. We will support the delivery of education by quality planning, policy formulation and customer service.

OUR MANDATE

In support of these high-level goals, our mandate covers the key areas of policy analysis, planning and evaluation, quality assurance, resourcing and regulation, as well as providing a wide range of support services for the education sector.

Policy planning and review

The provision of quality policy advice, as a support to the Minister and the Government and as an aid to decision-making and accountability to the Houses of the Oireachtas, is a crucial element of the service provided by the Department of Education and Science. Development and review of policy take place in consultation with the key stakeholders in education. Research and sharing of best practice are particularly important in the policy development process. A number of crosscutting and cross-departmental areas of policy responsibility, such as social inclusion and early childhood education, are advanced through our participation in working groups and task forces.

Quality assurance

Ensuring quality in education is one of our core responsibilities. The Inspectorate plays a key role in relation to quality at first and second levels while, in further and higher education, the Department, together with the Higher Education Authority, the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, the Further Education and Training Awards Council and the Higher Education and Training Awards Council have a role. Quality learning outcomes are vital for the achievement of active citizenship, employment and social inclusion. Evaluation of education programmes, assessment and certification, staff development and ongoing curriculum review all support this function.

Human and financial resource allocation

The Department is charged with a wide range of functions relating to the funding of the education sector. These include the payment of teaching staff, the payment of capitation grants to schools at first and second levels and the administration of a series of other recurring grants and once-off payments. We provide funding for a wide range of other bodies and services including Vocational Education Committees and youth and community-based services. Funding for the higher education sector is provided either directly by the Department or through the Higher Education Authority, which we fund for this purpose.

The allocation of teachers at first, second and further education levels involves a range of considerations, from the numbers of pupils enrolled to the special requirements in particular schools. Specific teaching resources and other supports are allocated for individuals or groups of special needs pupils. This has been an area of significant expansion in recent years. Major changes and improvements in the allocation processes require to be managed in the context of the establishment of the National Council for Special Education and the enactment of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004. The Department also performs a wide range of personnel and staff relations functions at all levels of education.

The National Development Plan for 2000-2006, launched in November 1999, included provision of over €6.7 billion (in 1999 prices) for measures in the education sector. The European Community Support Framework for Ireland has allocated over €457 million from its Structural Funds for measures in the education sector, over the period 2000-2006.

Planning and provision of education infrastructure

We are responsible for providing the necessary education infrastructure to support the delivery of quality education at all levels. The Department must identify, quantify and prioritise the need for educational provision in order to deliver cost-effective, high quality accommodation to meet that need. Delivery depends on sustained and adequate capital allocations provided within a multi-annual framework.

Enhancing Education through Co-operation

In the context of the Good Friday Agreement, the Department has an important role to play in promoting North/South and East/West consultation, co-operation and common action in education, in particular through the North/South Ministerial Council.

The Department plays an active role in a variety of European Union (EU) activities in the fields of education and training, both at the level of policy development and programme management. The Department is also actively involved with a wide range of international agencies, including OECD, UNESCO and the Council of Europe, and with a large number of individual countries.

Functions and services provided by the Department include:

- Providing a wide range of programmes and services for students at every level, particularly those with special educational needs and those experiencing educational disadvantage.
- Funding school transport services including those for special needs pupils.
- Funding student support grants.
- Funding adult literacy and community education, vocational education and training programmes for early school leavers, the unemployed, Travellers and participants on Post Leaving Certificate courses.
- Providing education and care for young offenders in residential accommodation.
- Paying teachers' salaries and pensions.
- Providing staffing and financial resources for first and second level schools and VECs.
- Providing staffing and financial resources for third-level institutions.
- Ensuring the provision of a supply of trained teachers.
- Providing for the in-career professional development of teachers.
- Funding and development of a network of Education Support Centres.
- Supporting the activities of a range of organisations involved in education, training and out-of-school activities for young people.
- Providing a broad range of services to the Minister, Ministers of State and Members of the Oireachtas together with replies to parliamentary questions and replies to correspondence, including representations, speeches and briefing material.
- Participating in and contributing to the work of a wide range of working groups and committees at national and international levels.
- Providing information and advice to schools, parents, teachers, students and others.

Bodies under the Aegis of the Department
In carrying out our functions and delivering services in the area of education, we are assisted by a number of agencies that operate under the aegis of the Department. These vary in their roles, structures and means of operation and have specific responsibilities in particular areas. These agencies are detailed at Appendix **B**.

PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY STATEMENT
The Strategy Statement sets out the key objectives and related strategies of the Department over the period 2005-2007. It is drawn up within the framework of available resources and in the context of Government policy and the Department's mission statement and high-level goals.

Chapter 1 of the statement outlines the changing environment in which education is delivered in Ireland today, describing some of the principal challenges and trends in meeting the requirements of a knowledge- and innovation-based and lifelong learning society. Chapters 2-6 deal with each of the Department's high-level goals. We set out our objectives in relation to each goal, the strategies we will pursue to achieve them and the means by which progress will be measured.

Chapter 7 focuses on our commitment to improving service to our clients and Chapter 8 describes how we will contribute to the achievement of broad Government strategies by working together with other Government Departments and agencies. Chapter 9 sets out the steps we are taking to strengthen the Department's capacity to deliver on its mission.

This statement builds on our experience in drawing up previous strategies and focuses on delivering quality services that meet the needs of our customers, particularly learners, as identified through discussion in the Management Advisory Committee, the Department's Partnership Committee, with all staff and through an ongoing engagement with our customers.

MONITORING OUR PROGRESS
We will monitor the objectives and strategies detailed in this Strategy Statement against the delivery of related outputs on the basis of the performance indicators outlined. This monitoring will take place at a number of levels within the Department.

Each of the Department's business units will draw up a detailed annual Business Plan designed to deliver on the objectives and strategies outlined in the Strategy Statement. The Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) will, in turn, facilitate the attainment of personal and business unit goals by individual members of staff. In this way, every part of the organisation will be working towards the achievement of the Department's mission.

Personal targets will be regularly reviewed, as will the Business Plans relating to individual areas of activity. These reviews will serve to demonstrate the level of progress being made at business unit level in relation to the objectives and strategies outlined in the Strategy Statement. In addition, the Department's Partnership Committee will have a role in monitoring progress.

At senior management level, the Management Advisory Committee will regularly report on progress and contribute to the Minister's twice-yearly review of implementation of the Strategy Statement in advance of bilateral meetings with the Taoiseach.

The Department will provide an annual progress report to the Minister detailing progress on the implementation of the Strategy Statement in accordance with the terms of the Public Service Management Act, 1997. In addition to indicating areas of progress, the report will set out reasons for non-delivery of outputs or particular difficulties encountered. It will also highlight changing circumstances and emerging issues and, if necessary, adapt or revise the Strategy Statement in the light of such developments.

CHAPTER 1
A Changing Environment for Education

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

It is recognised and accepted that education is a critical driver of economic success and social progress in modern society. There is a growing recognition, particularly in the European Union, that the provision of quality education and training is central to the creation of a high-skills, knowledge- and innovation-based economy that will underpin ongoing and sustainable prosperity. Education and training are also crucial to achieving the objective of an inclusive society where all citizens have the opportunity and the incentive to participate fully in the social and economic life of the country.

Central to our future economic and social success is the development of quality and inclusiveness in education. This must be seen as part of a strategy to support lifelong learning with the aim of improving knowledge and skills and promoting personal fulfillment. The attainment of these objectives and goals will require that we ensure access, progression and completion and the achievement of high standards for all learners, irrespective of their background.

SUPPORTING GOVERNMENT POLICY

Education is a key priority for the Government. This Strategy Statement has been drawn up taking into account the education objectives of Government policy as outlined in the Agreed Programme for Government concluded in June 2002.

In addition, the goals and objectives outlined in this document are designed to contribute to a range of policies developed by the Government to address issues of national strategic importance. These include the National Development Plan 2000-2006, *Sustaining Progress*, the National Anti-Poverty Strategy, the National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2003-05, the National Children's Strategy, the National Health Strategy, the Information Society Strategy, the National Spatial Strategy and the Asia Strategy 1999 - 2009. The National Anti-Poverty Strategy is under review and a revised National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion will come into effect in 2006. A further policy context is provided by the European Union, in particular by the Lisbon Strategy which seeks to make the "European Union the most dynamic and competitive knowledge based economy in the world by 2010, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion". EU Education Ministers have agreed a work programme to achieve the Lisbon objective in the education and training areas. Related policy guidelines for Member States are provided by the Copenhagen and Bologna declarations regarding vocational education and higher education respectively, as well as the EU Council Resolution on Lifelong Learning.

The implementation of these strategies requires the input and support of a range of Government Departments and agencies. A number of interdepartmental structures have

been put in place to ensure a coordinated approach to the delivery of these strategies. The Department of Education and Science contributes to the implementation of Government policy through its involvement in these structures and the delivery of key services. The Department's contribution in this regard is detailed throughout the Strategy Statement and, in particular, in Chapter 8.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE IN EDUCATION

Looking ahead, a number of major challenges and trends in Ireland and elsewhere will necessitate ongoing adaptation and renewal of provision for education and education structures. These challenges and trends will include:

The personal and social roles of learning

- The role of education and learning in promoting values of tolerance, civic participation and social cohesion, as well as personal and economic goals.
- Growing awareness of the importance of families and communities in providing encouragement and the right settings for effective learning.
- Growing awareness of equality and inclusion issues and, in particular, educational disadvantage.
- Meeting the diverse educational needs of an increasingly multicultural society.
- Increased emphasis on individual learning needs, as well as values of self-expression and individual rights and responsibilities.
- Increases in retention at second level in the light of NAPS targets

Supporting a knowledge- and innovation-based society and lifelong learning

- Increased emphasis on a much wider range of competencies and personal qualities, particularly flexibility, teamwork and communication, in a rapidly changing economic and social environment.
- The development and implementation of school self-evaluation and external evaluation so as to improve standards in schools.
- Appropriate updating of the school curriculum.
- The development of quality early childhood education.
- Providing the motivation to learn and "learning to learn" at all stages of formal education and beyond school.
- The urgent need for investment in science and research to support a knowledge and innovation based society, essential to our economic competitiveness and continuing prosperity.
- Greater choice and flexibility in learning opportunities and pathways.
- New opportunities for learning at all levels through developments in information and communications technologies.

Changing social, economic and labour market circumstances
- Meeting the needs of a modern economy and society through more responsive, flexible and innovative public services.
- Demand for a wide range of skills at all levels, especially skills in growth areas such as information and communications technologies and in the services sector.
- More women in the labour force, requiring different training responses, greater job flexibility, childcare and educational opportunities.

Impact of demographic change
- Increasing enrolment at primary level reflecting steady and consistent increases in births since the mid-1990s.
- Continuing net inward migration
- Pressure for provision of schools in rapidly growing areas and greater concern about regional balance, particularly in the context of the Government's National Spatial Strategy.
- Increasing demand for Third Level places as well as intake of part-time, mature and overseas students.

The changing teaching environment
- The changing face of delivery of education, including changes in the practice and profession of teaching to reflect today's information age.
- The role of the teacher is less focused on the provision of knowledge and more concerned with the teaching of learning skills.
- The changing environment requires ongoing training, support and development.

Changing legal circumstances and demands
- The evolving legislative framework for the delivery of education in Ireland (see Appendix **C**)
- Increased awareness of the legal rights and responsibilities of all those involved in education.
- The need to work towards common policies in matters identified for co-operation under the North/South Ministerial Council as well as increased co-operation at a European level.

The nature of Government responses to crosscutting issues
- Greater recognition that many issues of national importance require a coordinated response from Government Departments or agencies.

A broader context for co-operation
- Greater awareness of cultural diversity and the roles of Irish and other cultures and languages in promoting identity in a European and international context.
- Greater personal mobility and transfer of ideas, knowledge and education services across State boundaries.

- A substantial immigrant population and returning emigrants, providing opportunities for greater diversity and enrichment of education and a requirement to make provision for the specific needs of these groups.
- Enhanced co-operation at EU level, particularly in the context of the "concrete future objectives of education and training systems".
- Enhanced North/South and British-Irish dialogue and co-operation on education in the context of the Good Friday Agreement.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

The achievement of the goals and the successful implementation of the strategies outlined in this Statement are dependent on a number of critical success factors. In particular, the availability of resources, the capacity of our organisation to deliver and a climate of co-operation among those involved in education are essential elements in delivering a quality education for all.

Resources

Success in delivering on the Department's mission requires a level of financial and human resources sufficient to meet the scale and complexity of a changing education system. In particular, the commitment of teachers and other staff to the provision of a first-rate education system has been a key factor in the success of the system to date and will continue to be essential in the future.

The availability of an adequate level of financial resources is clearly a key success factor in delivering all existing and future services required to fulfil the mission of the Department. The development of new research and evaluation processes and financial control and management systems will enable us to better manage and control existing resources and to prioritise funding to meet the areas of greatest need. The June 2002 Agreed Programme for Government outlines a number of areas in the education sector targeted for development. Priorities for investment in the medium term are highlighted in the National Development Plan, which identifies education as a priority. *Sustaining Progress* highlights the importance of education in addressing a number of social and economic issues.

Organisation Capacity

As a Department, we are at an advanced stage in the implementation of an extensive programme of restructuring and transformation. The setup of the State Examinations Commision, the establishment of a National Council for Special Education and the Regional office network will see the Department better placed to focus on its core functions. This programme of reform will continue into the future, with the on-going alignment of processes at first and second level and with the introduction of web based technology, to replace our traditional paper based systems.

Partnership

The partners in education (parents, teachers, patrons/trustees/governors, management bodies, the community and the State), because of their constitutional, legal and moral

rights and responsibilities, are involved in both policy development and in the provision of education services. Their continued involvement at all levels - in the Department and right across the sector - is vital to fulfilling the needs of learners and to the progress of education in Ireland. In particular, the participation of the education partners and of other groups and individuals, such as the social partners, in the development of the partnership approach with the Department and associated bodies is critical to the achievement of the our key goals and objectives.

The Department promotes partnership in policy development at both national and local levels. This concept was given a statutory basis in the Education Act, 1998. It is through genuine partnership that education policy development and implementation are strengthened and the commitment of stakeholders in the education sector is secured.

More generally, in addition to the mutually beneficial North/South and East-West relationships underpinned by the Good Friday Agreement, the growing importance of education and training on the European Union agenda and increased co-operation with education authorities and institutions outside the State have enhanced the capacity of Irish education in terms of funding, knowledge and innovation and contribute to the objective of Ireland being recognised as a centre of educational excellence.

CHAPTER 2
Meeting the needs of the Individual

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 1

> **We will deliver an education that is relevant to individuals' personal, social, cultural and economic needs.**

Objective 1.1: **We will support the development and provision of quality early childhood education in line with the strategy set out in the White Paper on Early Childhood Education, "*Ready to Learn*".**

The White Paper on Early Childhood Education "Ready to Learn" set out a comprehensive strategy for the development of early childhood education for all children up to six years with a particular focus on disadvantage and special needs. Action by the Department of Education and Science in this area must complement the actions of other relevant Government Departments and agencies and the Department is represented on a High Level Group established by the Cabinet Committee on Children to consider policy on child care and early education

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Coordinated policy and programme development in consultation with the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education and the various stakeholders in the sector	• Establishment of national quality framework for early childhood education including a regime for quality assurance • Participation in work of High Level Group on child care and early education • Supports for pre-school provision for disadvantaged children and children with special needs	• Publication of National quality framework • Report to Cabinet Committee on Children • Number of disadvantaged/special needs children benefiting from State funded pre-schooling • Number of providers adhering to quality framework

Objective 1.2: We will enable schools at primary and second level to deliver a high quality education by providing a comprehensive range of provision, including financial, staffing and curricular supports.

The Department provides support and assistance to primary and second-level schools and VECs. In addition to addressing demand for teaching and financial resources and curricular and other supports, we promote improvements in organisational structures and efficient and effective delivery of educational services. We also provide an ongoing programme of in-service training and professional development for teachers and other stakeholders in education. This objective reflects our commitment to the EU "*concrete future objectives of education and training systems*" process. This objective supports Government policy measures outlined in the **Agreed Programme for Government**, *Sustaining Progress*, the **NAPS**, the **National Children's Strategy**, the **NDP** and **Making Ireland's Development Sustainable**.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Allocate teachers to schools and VECs in a manner which is equitable, transparent and efficient and reduce class sizes in line with Government commitments as resources permit	• Teaching resources in place • Clear and transparent regulations in place to underpin the allocations process • Effective operation of appeals System and number of appeals processed	• Allocations to schools by due dates • Functioning appeals process in place for addressing school grievances • Improvement in staffing for schools
Fund schools and VECs in a manner which is efficient, fair and transparent	• Financial resources in place at first and second levels • Progressive implementation of equalisation of funding arrangements at second level	• Timely and efficient payment of financial support by due dates • Progress in removing differences in funding arrangements for the different sectors at second level
Provide, in conjunction with the NCCA, curricula and syllabi which are relevant to the educational needs of students at primary and second level	• Revised primary curriculum and second level syllabi being taught	• Phased implementation of the primary curriculum • Phased implementation of revised syllabi at second level • Progress in reform of senior cycle in line with emerging needs
Support Literacy Testing in schools to assist teachers in their work.	• Report by the NCCA on Standardised Testing	• Literacy testing in schools.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
	• Support for schools with testing	
Initiate and progress a programme of structural reform of in-service training delivery systems having regard to the outcomes of the Education Centres review	• Enhanced local delivery of services through the Education Centre network • Enhanced overall quality of provision • Reduction in disruption of the school year	• Level of increased effectiveness of delivery through Education Centres • Feedback on quality and cohesion of delivery • Results of evaluations • Level of reduction in school year disruption
To provide for the delivery of a comprehensive, effective, efficient and high quality payroll service to full and part-time teaching, non-teaching staff in first and second level schools and retired teachers, within agreed financial parameters. To co-ordinate and administer a range of personnel functions to Special Needs Assistants.	• Salary payments to serving teachers and non teaching staff on Department payrolls made on a fortnightly basis. • Pension paid to retired teachers each fortnight. • Conditions of service are implemented as agreed with partners in education.	• Timely and accurate issue of payments. • Favourable feedback on quality and cohesion of delivery. • Compliance with relevant Legislation. • Quality and accuracy of information provided. • All Special Needs Assistants are aware of the terms and conditions of employment.
Provide appropriate legislative, financial and accountability frameworks for the primary and post-primary sectors	• Promulgate updated regulations governing financial and regulatory matters affecting VECs • Commence remaining sections of Vocational Education (Amendment) Act 2001	• Commencement of all sections of the VEC (Amendment) Act, 2001 • Standardised financial frameworks in place • Appropriate audit structures in place on a phased basis
Provide, in conjunction with Bus Éireann, a school transport service	• Children safely transported to and from school	• Safe and efficient school transport system operated in conjunction with Bus Éireann within available resources • Extent to which provision matches entitlement • All grants issued on schedule
Operate an appeals system for	• Resolution of complaints	• Completion of appeals and

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
students/parents in relation to school transport	and processing of appeals	implementation of decisions
Operate an appeals system for students/parents in relation to issues of enrolment, suspension and expulsion	• Resolution of complaints and administration of appeals	• Completion of appeals process provided for under Section 29 of the Education Act and necessary follow-up
Provide a range of teacher education and development programmes spanning the continuum from initial to induction and in-service teacher education and development covering curricular change and specific areas relating to teaching and learning at primary, post-primary and further education sectors.	• An adequate number of high quality teacher training places for the primary and post-primary sectors • A range of relevant programmes to support teacher education and development having regard to: - ongoing structural reform - Teaching Council - International developments - National and local priorities - Ongoing evaluation and review	• Successful implementation in an effective and efficient manner of curricular change and specific areas relating to teaching and learning • National programme/ support service trainer teams in place well in advance for 2005/06 school year • Improved financial and operational management arrangements to ensure service delivery in the most efficient and effective manner • Evaluations and reviews undertaken of national programmes/support services • Minimise disruption to schools while providing a quality and relevant teacher education and development service to help teaching and learning
Ongoing programme of structural reform of in-service training delivery systems with a particular focus on Education Centres	• Enhanced delivery of services through the Education Centre Network • Improved financial and operational management of Education Centres • Improved information on services delivered to teachers including Performance Indicators	• Increased engagement of all teachers in priority CPD courses • Improved financial and operational management arrangements to ensure service delivery in the most efficient and effective manner • Feedback on quality and

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
		cohesion of delivery
Provide through the Colleges of Education and Education Departments of Universities/ Colleges of adequate numbers of well-training newly qualified teachers primary, post-primary and further education sectors	• Adequately trained and optimum numbers of newly qualified teachers • Efficient and effective management of financial and staffing resources • Reform of teacher training courses to meet emerging needs.	• Numbers of newly qualified teachers meeting demands across the primary, post-primary and further education sectors • Quality of newly qualified teachers

Objective 1.3: **We will provide for a range of supports and services for children with special educational needs to assist them fulfill their potential.**

The Department will continue to enhance services to students with special educational needs. We will improve service delivery through the National Council for Special Education. We will underpin provision through the implementation of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004 and through special needs policy development. This objective supports Government policy measures outlined in the **Agreed Programme for Government**, *Sustaining Progress*, the **NAPS**, the **National Children's Strategy and** the **National Health Strategy**.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Develop, in consultation with the National Council for Special Education, a continuum of special support services across the spectrum of special needs in line with best international practice	• Delivery and development of special support services for children with special educational needs in integrated settings, special classes/units and special schools • Provision of learning support teachers, resource teachers and special needs assistants. • Deployment of Visiting Teacher Service • Provision of special materials and equipment	• Number of children and adults with special educational needs for whom appropriate provision has been made • Number of learning support teachers, resource teachers and special needs assistants appropriately deployed in schools • Number of pupils receiving appropriate provision • Number of pupils receiving appropriate allocations of equipment
Support the National Council for Special Education in its operations through the effective transfer of functions and collaboration in the development of its services	• An area based special education service which will be accessible and responsive to parents and service users at local level • Increased capacity within the Department to focus on core policy issues relating to special needs	• Commencement of operations by National Council for Special Education in January 2005 and completion of transfer of functions on a phased basis.
Provide a comprehensive legislative framework for the delivery of special education services	• Commencement and progress on implementation of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004 in the context of the implementation plan to be drawn up by the	• Number of sections of the Act commenced

	National Council for Special Education	
Complete the rollout of the National Educational Psychological service thus providing high-quality client-centred educational psychology service to children and young people	• Educational psychological service available to schools through NEPs and through the scheme for commissioning psychological assessments	• Number of pupils for whom educational psychological service is available.

Objective 1.4: We will provide for the effective operation of the State Certificate Examinations.

The Department is committed to the ongoing enhancement of the operation of the certificate examinations, underpinned by a strategic focus on policy goals and educational objectives and informed by best international practice. In this, the Department works closely with both the State Examinations Commission and the National Council for Curriculum Assessment.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Review the programmes and assessment procedures in the certificate examinations to ensure a relevant, balanced and equitable approach to assessment which adequately reflects the full range of student learning	• Identification and implementation of appropriate curricular and assessment reforms • Maintenance of the quality and integrity of the Certificate Examinations in the context of national educational goals and international standards	• Dialogue with partners in education in the light of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment's discussion papers and consultation processes. • Performance of students in international assessments • Recognition accorded to the Junior and Leaving Certificates (including JCSP, LCVP and LCA) for employment and access to further and higher education.

Supporting an Inclusive Society

> **We will support, through education, a socially inclusive society with equal opportunity for all.**

Objective 2.1: We will contribute, through education, to the implementation and development of the Government's Social Inclusion Policy and continue to provide and review targeted support programmes for children experiencing or at risk of educational disadvantage and early school leaving.

The Department will achieve this objective through the promotion and elaboration of strategies (including cross-sectoral responses) to combat educational disadvantage at all levels of the education system, in the formal and non-formal sectors. The Department is directly responsible for the management, resourcing and delivery of a range of programmes in relation to educational disadvantage. We are also responsible for residential and education provision in the five residential centres for children under 16 who are convicted or placed on remand by a court and for educational services for children at risk. The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, provides a comprehensive framework for promoting regular school attendance and dealing with the problems of absenteeism and early school leaving. The objective reflects our commitment to the EU Future Objectives Process in the context of the Lisbon Agenda. This objective also supports Government policy measures outlined in the **Agreed Programme for Government**, *Sustaining Progress*, the National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion, the National Employment Action Plan, the **National Children's Strategy**, the **National Drugs Strategy**, the **NDP**.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Promote achievement of the Education targets in the National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion, 2003-2005 (NAPs/incl) and Sustaining Progress by progressing the strategies identified in the NAPS/incl	• Mechanisms for progressing and monitoring implementation of strategies identified under the NAPS/incl and Sustaining Progress	• Percentage of School Leavers with Leaving Cert/equivalent • Remediation strategies implemented and consequent impact on literacy levels in schools serving disadvantaged

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
and Sustaining Progress documents	• Regular reports to the National Office for Social Inclusion • Quarterly reports on Sustaining Progress	communities • Literacy levels as measured by National Reading Surveys • Attainment and participation levels associated with a wide range of supplementary targets in the NAPS/incl
Achieve the education targets in the National Drugs Strategy and contribute to the work of the National Drugs Strategy Team, the Interdepartmental Drugs Group and the Regional and Local Drugs Task Forces	• Implementation of the nine education actions in the National Drugs Strategy • Regular reports to the Interdepartmental Drugs Group	• Number of schools implementing drug education programmes • Number of schools developing substance misuse plans • Level of participation in National Drugs Strategy forums • Satisfactory implementation of educational components of the National Drugs Strategy
Promote and coordinate social inclusion in the Department's policies and programmes in consultation with the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB), the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and other relevant bodies	• Provision of advice on social inclusion issues relevant to education • Level of awareness across the Department of social inclusion as a priority area	• Degree to which social inclusion dimension is included in education policies and programmes
Contribute effectively to cross-departmental social inclusion forums and initiatives, including Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion, Senior Officials Group, Steering Group for Sustaining Progress, NAPS/incl, National Drugs Strategy, RAPID, County Development Boards and Regional and Local Drugs Task Forces	• Progress on educational elements of cross-sectoral policies • Establishment of links with other Departments/agencies • Co-ordinated policy approaches to address problems and identify priorities and areas for co-operation	• Level of contribution to Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion covering education elements of NAPS/incl, Sustaining Progress, National Drugs Strategy and other initiatives • Level of coordination and integration with other bodies achieved by the Department
Continue to work towards the co-ordinated delivery of public	• More co-ordinated delivery of services	• Level of public satisfaction with the

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
services at local and regional level through support of and participation on the County/City Development Boards. Ensure Department representation on all County/City Development Boards by Regional Office staff	• Provision of quality information on educational issues to the CDBs. • Regular reports to the relevant sections of the Dept with local and regional perspectives on education. • Identification of gaps in services, potential duplication of services	delivery of services • Level of efficiency in the use of financial and other resources due to greater co-ordination
Contribute to the work of the Educational Disadvantage Committee	• Provision of data, administrative and secretarial support to the Committee on an ongoing basis	• Level of responsiveness in supplying requested information to the Committee • Level of satisfaction of the Committee with service provided
Provide additional funding and teaching resources through schemes of support for early childhood education and to primary and second-level schools serving disadvantaged pupils	• Implementation of DEIS, the new action plan for educational inclusion, involving a more systematic, targeted and integrated approach and strengthening the capacity of the system to meet the educational needs of disadvantaged children and young people • Extra resources for schools serving disadvantaged pupils • Additional, targeted support for disadvantaged pupils • Assist schools in areas of significant disadvantage to recruit and retain teachers. • Prioritised access to NEWB, NEPS, School Development Planning and other services • Projects selected and resourced to promote	• Level of development of targeted educational inclusion measures for early childhood education and in primary and second-level schools • Level of co-ordination and integration across the full range of educational inclusion measures • Level of development of planning and measurement processes on the ground • Educational attainment levels in supported schools, with particular reference to literacy and numeracy and attainment in State Examinations • Retention levels in supported schools

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
	improved retention and educational attainment by children and young people in schools serving disadvantaged communities	
Plan and provide for an adequate number of places for offending children, having regard to the provisions of the Children Act, 2001	• Ongoing monitoring of occupancy levels in the Children Detention Schools	• Provision of adequate bed places in the Schools for Young Offenders
Plan and provide for the delivery of education services for children placed in High Support or Special Care Units under the Health Boards, having regard to provisions of the Children Act, 2001	• Delivery of education service to children placed in High Support and Special Care Units	• Provision of adequate educational services in High Support or Special Care Units
Provide for the National Educational Welfare Board to deliver the range of services set out in the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000	• Delivery of an Educational Welfare Service in accordance with the provisions of the Act • Registration, assessment and monitoring in relation to provision for children being educated outside school and for young people who leave school early to take up employment • Provision of a service in respect of expulsion and suspension cases	• Level of improvement in school attendance • Quality of education provided where children are being educated outside of recognised schools • Participation rate in appropriate education and training programmes of young people who have left school early to take up employment • Expulsion and suspension cases resolved so as to ensure continued suitable education/training where possible.

Objective 2.2: We will promote the development of a high quality inclusive further education and vocational training system for young people and adults, which is relevant to social and economic needs.

Further education embraces adult literacy, programmes for early school leavers and the unemployed, post-Leaving Certificate courses, the Back to Education Initiative and adult and community education outside of third level education. It has a major role to play in providing second chance education, addressing skills needs, promoting equality and social inclusion and creating a framework for lifelong learning. It is an important progression route for young people not proceeding to third level education and a major re-entry route for adults seeking a return to learning. This objective reflects our commitment to the EU "*concrete future objectives of education and training systems*" process and some activities receive support under the Community Support Framework. The **Agreed Programme for Government,** the **White Paper on Adult Education:** *Learning for Life*, the **National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2003-2005**, *Sustaining Progress*, the **National Development Plan**, the **Information Society Strategy**, and the **Report of the Task Force on Lifelong Learning**, all contain key commitments to the development and enhancement of the sector. These commitments include expanding access, supporting quality, a National Adult Literacy Strategy, a part-time Back to Education Initiative aimed at flexible learning for those with less than upper secondary education and including an Adult ICT skills programme, the development of an adult guidance service, and the expansion of community education models.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Develop policy to support a framework for lifelong learning Support and promote the implementation of the National Adult Literacy Strategy	• Enhanced mechanisms for liaison with key Departments and agencies on cross-cutting issues relating to Lifelong Learning policies	• Agreed policies and strategies at National Level • Level of clarity and complementarity in the structural, operational and accountability frameworks within which the various elements of lifelong learning policies are delivered to learners
Support VECs in the development and delivery of vocational education and training (i) to meet the needs of young early school leavers and adults requiring second chance education and (ii) to address the skills needs of entrants and re-entrants to the labour market	• Delivery of Adult Literacy Service by VECs • Funding agreement with the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) for an agreed programme of support in such areas as promotion, development of materials, training and research.	• Participation rates • Quality of delivery • Increase in the number of places provided. • Level of awareness • Innovative modes of delivery

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
	• Programmes that are relevant and effective in meeting the needs of the target groups (e.g. Youthreach, Senior Traveller Training, VTOS, Post-Leaving Certificate)	• Participation rates • Completion Rates • Certification rates • Placement/progression outcomes
Support community education	• Implementation of Education Equality Initiative, Phase 2 (2004-2006)) • Funds to VECs for Community Education • Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) community strand	• Outcomes from EEI by 2006 • Number of community groups supported • Number of participants in BTEI Community Strand • Prior educational levels, target group profiles and placement/progression outcomes
Promote access, quality and relevance in Further and Adult Education	• Adult Educational Guidance Service • Childcare supports for participants on Youthreach, VTOS and Traveller Training Programmes • Integrated model for Further Education Support Services • Support for VECs to develop policies to meet FETAC quality assurance and validation requirements	• Expanded service in place • Supports in place • Integrated structure in place • Policy statements developed • Relevant training provided for staff

Objective 2.3: We will promote the personal and social development of young people through non-formal education, having particular regard to the youth work needs of young people aged 10-21 and those who experience social or economic disadvantage.

The Department is responsible for the provision of a policy framework and financial support for the development of youth work programmes and services. These non-formal education programmes and services are concerned with the personal and social development of young people outside of, but complementary to, formal education and prioritise the 10 – 21 age group and disadvantaged youth.

This objective reflects our commitment to the EU "concrete future objectives of education and training systems" process. This objective supports Government policy measures outlined in *Sustaining Progress*, the *National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2003-2005*, the *National Children's Strategy,* and the *National Development Plan 2000 – 2006.*.

Services and programmes are delivered largely by national and regional voluntary youth organisations and through structures to be developed within the VECs[1]. Programmes and Services are supported by the National Development Plan, with certain funding support provided by the National Lottery.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Policy development in the field of youth work	• Implementation of the Youth Work Act, 2001 on a phased basis in consultation with relevant stakeholders • Implementation of the National Youth Work Development Plan on a phased basis in consultation with relevant stakeholders • Development of policies in youth work as appropriate	• Phased development of appropriate and cohesive youth work structures and initiatives
Provision of support to youth work organisations and initiatives	• Funding to youth work organisations and initiatives as resources permit • Administration of	• number of young people engaged in youth work services and initiatives • number of young

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[1] In accordance with the Youth Work Act, 2001.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
	schemes, including review and development of schemes as resources permit.	people from priority target groups in youth work services and initiatives • number of youth work organisations, projects, and groups in receipt of DES financial support
Develop and support consultation and co-operation at National and International level in youth work related matters	• Initiatives at national and international level which facilitate dissemination and implementation of best practice in youth work • Ireland's participation in transnational exchange programmes	• Active contribution to the development of EU policy in relation to youth work • Fulfilment of obligations to Youth Council and other EU Committees • Contribution to North/South cooperation in the area of youth work • Active contribution to understanding and dissemination of information on Ireland's youth work sector to other EU Member and Accession States

Objective 2.4: We will manage the Department's response to initiatives for the redress of child abuse in residential institutions

The Department has a dual role in relation to the work of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse in that it is responsible for supporting the Commission through the provision to it of adequate support and resources to enable it to conduct its work while it is also a respondent to the Investigation Committee of the Commission. The Department is also responsible for supporting the Residential Institutions Redress Board which is charged with administering a compensation scheme for victims of childhood abuse. The Department also has a role in supporting and liaising with victims' groups who provide services to people who, as children, suffered abuse in residential institutional care.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Support the work of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse	• Adequate resources and assistance given to the Commission • Amending legislation put in place • All requests for discovery complied with within agreed time limits	• Work of the Commission continues efficiently and effectively • Legislation in place • All discovery directions dealt with within time limits
Support the work of the Residential Institutions Redress Board	• Adequate resources and assistance given to the Redress Board	• Work of the Redress Board continues and awards are made
Support and liaise with former residents of institutions	• Provide appropriate funding to groups and arrange regular meetings	• Former residents informed of ongoing developments

Objective 2.5: **We will promote greater equity of access to third level education, particularly for disadvantaged and mature students and students with disabilities, through improved targeting of student support/access initiatives.**

Arising from the conclusions and recommendations of the report "Supporting Equity in Higher Education", the Department is examining with the relevant stakeholders the options for the future administration of the student support schemes. This examination is also being conducted in the context of implementing the Programme for Government commitment to introduce 'the payment of grants through a unified and flexible grant payment scheme'.

The overall objective of the examination is to ensure the more efficient and effective administration of the schemes, which will ensure public confidence in relation to the targeting of the substantial funds involved in favour of those persons most in need of support and thereby achieve the Government's objective of achieving greater access to education by those groups of people currently under-represented.

The Department will be working closely with the recently established National Office for Equity of Access to Third Level Education in the achievement of the objective and in the implementation of the Action Plan published by the National Office

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Addressing with the National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education and other key stakeholders, under-representation in higher education among particular groups such as students from disadvantaged backgrounds, students with a disability and mature "second chance" students	• Implementation of the action points identified in the action plan 2005-2007 on Achieving Equity of Access to Higher Education in Ireland	• Specific targeting of funds including the Disability Fund, the Student Assistance fund and the Millennium fund and the Special Rate of Maintenance Grant ("Top-up grant") • Increased participation by students with disabilities, disadvantaged students and mature "second chance" students • Mature students as a percentage of all entrants to undergraduate full-time higher education • Implementation of the recommendations in the report of the Action Group on Access, in the light of available resources.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Review of Student Support Schemes including their future administration	• Introduction of a single unified Higher Education Grants Scheme and more efficient and effective administration of the schemes	• Progress on the implementation of decisions arising from the report 'Supporting Equity in Higher Education' • Timely issue of annual grants schemes

Objective 2.6: We will promote gender equality in services, actions, programmes and measures for children and adults at all levels of education.

The Department is committed to promoting and sustaining full compliance with both the spirit and the letter of gender equality legislation throughout the education system. Some activities under this objective receive support under the Community Support Framework. The objective supports Government policy measures outlined in the **Agreed Programme for Government**, **Sustaining Progress** and the **NDP**.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Promote the development of gender mainstreaming in education	• Provision of training, support and information to schools and relevant Department staff • Support for and publication of research and disaggregated statistics on gender issues in education	• Number of teaching and Department staff receiving training • Number of publications prepared and published • Achievement of NDP effectiveness targets
Develop a research base	• Fund research projects	• Publication of research findings
Pilot complementary measures	Development of guidelines for schools, Boards of management and parents at primary and at post-primary level	• Dissemination to schools • Access by numbers of teachers, BOMs and Parents
Promote equal access for women in educational management	Provision of accredited programmes	• Uptake of courses • Increased numbers of women in Principalships, and deputy principals in schools and centres of education

Contributing to Economic Prosperity

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 3

> ## We will contribute to Ireland's economic prosperity, development and international competitiveness.

Objective 3.1: We will promote the contribution of the third level sector to economic and social development in the context of changing needs and arrange a supply of qualified and skilled personnel to support Ireland's competitiveness and economic and social development.

As the move towards a knowledge based society gains momentum at national and EU levels, new sectors and new occupations are emerging which require a flexible and adaptable workforce. A key challenge for education is to develop the necessary mix of creativity and skills to enable us to respond to the needs of society as well to the current, and projected, needs of the labour market.

The Department liaises closely with the Higher Education Authority in relation to the university sector to support this objective and also supports the other State-aided third level institutions in providing a range of courses, including apprenticeship training and teacher training, targeted to meeting the changing needs of the economy. In tandem with a changing society and economy, a process of change and modernisation is underway in third level institutions. In September 2004, the OECD published a strategic review of Irish third level education and this will guide policy in the sector. A strategic review of the capital needs of the third-level sector was also completed and published in 2004.

The Department is committed to a large-scale programme of investment in research, drawing on the National Development Plan. The aim is to develop a world-class research and development capability in institutions of higher education to meet the fast-changing economic, social and technological circumstances. The objective also reflects our commitment to the EU "concrete future objectives of education and training systems" process and some activities receive support under the Community Support Framework. The objective supports Government policy measures outlined in the *Agreed Programme for Government*, *Sustaining Progress* and the *National Development Plan.*

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Establish targets and develop strategies for meeting specific occupational and skills requirements, drawing on the work of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, the Health Skills Group and other identified and agreed sectoral skills requirements	• Provision of places in line with targets set	• Achievement of targets set in relation to creation of third level places to meet identified skills needs including those of the health sector, teaching and apprenticeship • Adequate skilled workforce to meet demand
Provide support for research and for individual researchers and teams in a wide range of disciplines, assist in the development of strategic capacity in institutions, facilitate the development of technology transfer services and programmes supporting entrepreneurship/innovation	• Continuing implementation of the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTLI) and funding support to Research Councils and other research bodies under the aegis of the Department • Ongoing support for research through HEA and direct Departmental funding and through funding the activities of Research Councils • Research and development supports for social, economic and business interests. • Participation in Inter-Departmental Committee in Science, Technology and Innovation to ensure coordinated policy implementation within public research system • Development of strategies for the higher education system, which will contribute to the target of 0.8% of GNP for the public research system as envisaged in the report "Building Ireland's Knowledge Economy" (Ireland's response to meeting the Lisbon target for R & D expenditure)	• Outcome of formal evaluations • Achievement of NDP effectiveness targets for number of researchers engaged by strand and level of research • Involvement by third level institutions in a range of collaborative projects with social, economic and business interests • Increase in number of researchers, in line with targets proposed by Inter-Departmental Committee in Science, Technology and Innovation

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Bring together the work of the Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology and the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences together.	• Agreed legislative and administrative framework	• Consultation will take place in 2005 with a view to developing an appropriate framework which would enable the research councils to realise their respective missions.
Reconstitute the Higher Education Authority to include responsibility for the Institutes of Technology	• Coordinated and devolved structures for third level sector in place	• Transfer of responsibility for the Institutes of Technology to the reconstituted Higher Education Authority effected on a phased basis following the enactment of the necessary legislation. • Publication of amending legislation • Department's policy-making capacity enhanced
Implement the recommendations of the "Review and Prioritisation of Capital Projects in the Higher Education Sector" (Kelly Report) through a multi-annual capital programme for the third level sector.	• Provision of quality infrastructure in third level institutions that supports the delivery of third level education in general and skills development in particular.	• Delivery of key priority projects identified in the Kelly Review in accordance with multi-annual funding envelope. • Introduction of devolved funding for minor works and equipment renewal.
Support the continued development of research and innovation in third level institutions by providing capital resources for required physical infrastructure and equipment.	• The provision of high quality infrastructure in third level institutions to assist internationally competitive research and to achieve a Government target that Ireland develops into an innovation driven knowledge economy.	• Delivery on commitments arising under the various cycles of the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions.
To develop new entry procedures to medical schools which lessen the impact of the existing points system	• Await and then consider the recommendations of the Inter-Departmental group convened to specifically examine medical education and recruitment	• Development of a system of recruitment to medical schools which is equitable and which identifies the most suitable candidates.

Objective 3.2: We will promote the use of ICT in schools and encourage pupils to achieve computer literacy and acquire the necessary skills for participation in the Information Society.

The Department contributes to the use of ICT in assisting learning and the effective exchange of information, learning resources and ideas relevant to education. Working with the National Centre for Technology in Education, we will continue to devise policy on the integration of ICT into learning, teaching and assessment procedures, including the development of school ICT infrastructure and the provision of software and multimedia resources in support of learning. We also aim to enhance the educational opportunities available to pupils with special needs and provide a comprehensive programme of teacher training in the use of ICT in the classroom. This objective reflects our commitment to the EU "*concrete future objectives of education and training systems*" process. This objective supports Government policy measures outlined in the **Agreed Programme for Government**, **Sustaining Progress**, the **NAPS**, the **National Children's Strategy**, and **New Connections,** the Government's strategy to realise the potential of the Information Society.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Implement Schools Broadband Access Programme	• Establish National Broadband Network for Schools and connect all schools to National Network	• Development of a National Broadband Network for Schools and roll-out of broadband connectivity to all schools
Use financial allocations to support Schools' ICT infrastructure	• Grants to schools with particular emphasis on the development of computer networks	• Increase in number and size of school networks
Support schools to integrate ICT into teaching and learning	• NCTE to provide a teacher training programme with particular emphasis on pedagogical practice	• Number of teachers trained with particular emphasis on pedagogical use of ICT
	• Development of ScoilNet web-site into an education portal and broadening range of classroom resources available to teachers and learners	• Demonstrable Expansion of delivery of online resources to schools, by the NCTE through Scoilnet
	• NCCA to pursue ICT curricular focus	• Finalisation of an ICT Framework in Curriculum and Assessment

Identify future priorities for ICT in Schools Programme	• Undertake National census on ICT Infrastructure in schools and support research into the use of ICT in teaching and learning • Review existing policies and identify future priorities for programme	• Publication of Census results and publication of Inspectorate Evaluation of ICT in Teaching and Learning • Agreed future priorities for programme

Objective 3.3: We will contribute to the development of education in Ireland through co-operation and decision making in the European Union, international organisations and bilaterally and through participation in programmes and initiatives in the education, scientific and training areas assisted by the European Union and other international organisations.

The Department plays an active role in a variety of European Union (EU) interventions in the fields of education and training, both at the level of the development of strategic policy and at programme management level. At national level, the Department is responsible for ensuring the implementation of EU education and training programmes in Ireland. The Department is also actively involved with a wide range of international agencies, including OECD, UNESCO and the Council of Europe and, bilaterally, with a large number of individual countries. This objective reflects our commitment to the EU "Future Objectives Process" and the Bologna and Copenhagen processes in the context of the Lisbon Agenda. Education is a key factor in the European Union's competitiveness, sustainable growth and employment and therefore a prerequisite for achieving the economic, social and environmental goals set in Lisbon.This objective supports Government policy measures outlined in the **Agreed Programme for Government** and **Sustaining Progress**.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Contribute to and influence the formulation of EU policy in education and training through the EU Council, Education Committee and other EU committees and the Council of Education Ministers	• Initiatives at European level, which facilitate implementation of best practice in Ireland and the creation of a European area of educational excellence	• Irish contribution to second joint Council/Commission Interim Report 2006 relating to the "Education and Training 2010" work programme. • Level of promotion of and monitoring of "future objectives" implementation in Ireland
Promote the European dimension in education and contribute to the improvement of the quality of education by promoting participation in EU-funded education and training programmes	• Development and implementation of programmes in a way which is of benefit to our national education and training systems • Implementation of the Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci Programmes by the National Agencies in Ireland	• Level of increase in EU programme awareness and participation in Ireland • Extent to which initiatives address Irish needs • Effectiveness of national agencies in implementing EU programmes in Ireland • Level of impact on EU Commission management and advisory committees

Promote Ireland as a centre for international excellence in education Link Ireland with Asia through education	• Implementation of education and culture agreements with other countries • Reassessment of the role of the International Education Board - Ireland and the Advisory Council for English Language Schools in the context of the consultation on the implementation of the recommendations of the Report on the Internationalisation of Education Services (December 2004). • Completion of the consultation process in early 2005 leading to draft legislation for the international education services sector • Implementation of commitments in the Asia Strategy	• Progress on development of a coherent policy to promote Ireland as a centre of educational excellence • Number of scholarships, summer schools, professor and education expert exchanges • Level of increase in the number of foreign students studying in Ireland • Establishment of an Institute of Chinese Studies. Level of increase of students from priority Asian countries

Objective 3.4: We will contribute to maintaining international competitiveness by developing Ireland as a leading knowledge-based economy.

The development of science and technology education at all levels in education and, in particular, the up-take of science subjects at second level has received particular attention in recent years. A Task Force on the Physical Sciences was established in 2000 to examine all matters impacting on the uptake of the physical sciences and related subjects at both second and third level. The Task Force reported in March 2002, identifying six action areas: Planning and Resources; Equity, Teaching and Learning; Curriculum and Assessment; Promotion of Science; Transition and Integration into Third-level. This objective supports Government policy measures outlined in the **Agreed Programme for Government**, *Sustaining Progress*, the **NDP** and **New Connections,** the Government's strategy to realise the potential of the Information Society.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Develop a comprehensive response, in consultation with key stakeholders to the recommendations of the OECD Examiner's Report "Review of Higher Education in Ireland"	• Consultations with key stakeholders • Proposals put to Government for agreement	• Implementation of agreed proposals.
Increase in the uptake of the physical sciences and related subjects at both second and third level	• Availability of increased numbers to meet skills needs in science related areas of the economy	• Full implementation of Primary science curriculum and revised Junior Certificate Science syllabus • Continued strengthening of science in the context of senior cycle reforms

Improving Standards and Quality

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 4

> ## We will seek to improve the standard and quality of education and promote best practice in classrooms, schools, colleges and other centres for education.

Objective 4.1: We will work to improve the quality of education provision through regular inspection, evaluation and planning.

The strategies identified under this objective relate to the work of the Department's Inspectorate and to the other sections of the Department that support improvement in the quality of education and the promotion of best practice in schools and centres for education. The Inspectorate undertakes external evaluation of the work of teachers and schools and promotes initiatives that support school self-review, curriculum implementation and teacher education. The Inspectorate's comprehensive Whole School Evaluation procedure will be extended to a greater number of schools and will provide an effective means of evaluating and reporting on quality and standards in schools. The publication of reports on selected curricular areas and on educational programmes or services will provide schools, parents and the general public with meaningful information on quality and standards in the education system and will support the provision of high quality advice to policy makers. The Department will also support further co-ordination in the work of the support services to schools and will seek to promote effective school leadership and build a culture of self-review and development in schools.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Operate a programme of evaluations in schools and centres for education	• Evaluation reports from Whole-School Evaluation activity • Evaluation reports on the quality of provision in subjects, curriculum areas, or in educational initiatives • Reports on individual teachers including probationary teachers	• Timely delivery of all reports in accordance with the annual inspection plan • Identification of areas for development and specific recommendations in relation to management, planning, curriculum provision, the quality of

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
	• Reports on other forms of school and out-of-school provision • Composite reports in relation to particular aspects of provision	teaching and learning, and assessment • Systematic procedure for Boards of Management to respond to evaluation reports • Relevance of recommendations to schools and to policy makers
Communicate the findings of Inspectorate evaluations to schools and to the system generally	• Inspectorate publications disseminated throughout the system	• Effectiveness of publications issued in communicating main trends in quality of provision
Provide evidence-based policy advice in relation to the quality of educational provision	• Policy advice provided.	• Quality and relevance of the policy advice provided
Monitor compliance with provisions of legislation and with Departmental regulations	• Specific recommendations in school reports relating to compliance • Development of strategies to address non-compliance	• The level of monitoring by the Department of compliance with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, other relevant legislation and regulations • Department actions arising from findings in relation to compliance
Monitor the promotion of professional development of teachers in schools and centres for education	• Specific recommendations in school reports relating to professional development • Evaluation reports on aspects of professional development of teachers	• Clarity and specificity of recommendations regarding professional development of teachers in evaluation reports • Publication of reports in relation to the professional development of teachers

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Promote effective school management and leadership	• Promotion of the use of *Looking at Our School* self-evaluation guidelines • Specific recommendations in school evaluation reports relating to school leadership, school planning and review • Ongoing co-ordination and support for the Leadership Development for Schools support programme and for the School Development Planning initiative	• Improved awareness of school boards and of in-school management teams concerning *the Looking at Our School* self-evaluation guidelines • Clarity and specificity of recommendations regarding effectiveness of school management, school planning and leadership in evaluation reports • Quality of support provided in the area of leadership development for schools
Monitor and evaluate the quality of provision in schools in relation to curriculum and assessment	• Reports on the quality of curriculum implementation at first and second level • Specific recommendations in school reports relating to Irish • Specific recommendations in school reports relating to assessment and achievement of pupils • Promotion of best practice approaches to assessment in schools • Advice provided to committees of the NCCA and of the support services	• Clarity and specificity of recommendations regarding curriculum and assessment in evaluation reports and briefings

Objective 4.2: We will support the development and implementation of a national framework of qualifications as provided for under the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999 and the co-ordination of the recognition of qualifications.

The Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999 provides for the development of a national framework of qualifications through which all learning achievements may be measured and related to each other. The framework was launched in October 2003 and is being implemented on a phased basis. It covers all awards in the State across the education and training sectors, and provides for 10 levels of qualification ranging from basic education and literacy to doctorate level. Activities under this objective are EU aided under the National Development Plan. Key objectives are to promote access, transfer and progression for learners to higher levels of qualification, to enable credits to be accumulated towards awards, and to provide mechanisms for the accreditation of prior learning. Awards will be based on the achievement of learning outcomes – standards of knowledge skills and competences – appropriate to each level of the framework. The system is designed to facilitate accreditation of learning in the formal and non formal sectors and in community and workplace settings.

This objective supports Government policy measures outlined in the **NDP.**

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Promote the development and implementation of the national framework of qualifications as provided for under the Qualifcations (Education and Training) Act 1999	• National framework of qualifications • Performance of statutory functions by National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, and the Further and Higher Education and Training Awards Councils	• Progress in implementing the national framework of qualifications • Number of students receiving certification under the NQAI framework • Number of students receiving certification under FETAC and HETAC
Enhance mutual recognition of qualifications with Northern Ireland and the UK Promoting the mutual recognition of qualifications through engagement in EU fora by NQAI, FETAC and HETAC to support the development of a European	• A ready reckoner for employers, learners and providers setting out the key points of alignment between the levels of qualification in Ireland and those in Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales • Enhanced mutual recognition of qualifications	• Publication of information setting out the awards which are broadly equivalent in level in Ireland and the UK

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
framework of qualifications • Ensuring a co-ordinated approach in Ireland to the mutual recognition of qualifications in the regulated professions in compliance with EU Directives • Enhancing the quality of systems for the recognition of international awards in Ireland and for the inclusion of awards of professional bodies and those of other accrediting bodies in the national framework of qualifications	• Improvement in mobility and recognition of qualifications for learners and employees • Mobility and mutual recognition • Centralising key elements of the co-ordination functions within the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland for improved access to support the development of a one stop shop for recognition of qualifications	• Progress in implementing EU qualifications policy • Feedback from stakeholders • Transfer of functions achieved. • New systems agreed and implemented.

Objective 4.3: We will work to support excellence in the quality of academic teaching and learning in higher education.

The Universities Act (1997) obliges universities to engage in processes of self-evaluation within their various departments, accompanied by peer reviews. The Higher Education Authority (HEA) has a remit under the Act to ensure that such quality assurance procedures are in place in the universities. Outside of the university sector, the NQAI in partnership with FETAC and HETAC is responsible for setting standards for accreditation. This objective supports Government policy measures outlined in the **Agreed Programme for Government** and **Sustaining Progress**.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Maintain and improve the quality of academic teaching and learning at undergraduate level, examine the role of funding in supporting excellence in undergraduate programmes and consider procedures for rewarding outstanding performance by departments, faculties and institutions	• A HEA review of the recurrent funding mechanism is examining means of ensuring that progress on key objectives is incentivised and excellence in teaching is rewarded at institutional level • An independent review of Quality Assurance procedures in universities has been commissioned by the HEA and the Irish Universities Quality Board	• Completion and successful implementation of approved recommendations of both reviews.

Objective 4.4: **We will promote teaching as a profession and maintain and improve the quality of teaching by the establishment of a Teaching Council.**

The Department will establish a Teaching Council under the Teaching Council Act, 2001 for the purpose of promoting teaching as a profession and maintaining and improving the quality of teaching. This objective reflects our commitment to the EU "*concrete future objectives of education and training systems*" process. This objective supports Government policy measures outlined in **Sustaining Progress**.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Establish a Teaching Council under the Teaching Council Act, 2001	• A date set for establishment day	• Establishment day to be set within a period of 12 to 18 months from the first meeting of Council members

Objective 4.5: We will contribute, in the context of the Good Friday Agreement, to the development of North/South co-operation and common action in the field of education and to the development of co-operation with relevant Departments in Northern Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales and the United States.

The Department is responsible for the development of co-operation and common action in the field of education between both parts of the island of Ireland, in the context of the *Good Friday Agreement*. This co-operation is taken forward through the North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC) and, within that framework, common policies in the designated areas of special educational needs, educational underachievement, teacher mobility and school, youth and teacher exchanges will be developed. This co-operation has the potential to improve the quality of education provision in both parts of the island. This objective supports Government policy measures outlined in the **Agreed Programme for Government**, **Sustaining Progress** and the **NDP**.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Develop, within the framework of the North/South Ministerial Council, common policies in the designated areas of special educational needs, educational underachievement, teacher mobility and school, youth and teacher exchanges	• Improved quality of education provision in both parts of the island • Establishment of a joint delivery agency to manage and facilitate exchange • Establishment of an all-island Centre of Excellence for Autism	• Extent to which co-operation contributes to improving the quality of education provision • Effective progress and timely establishment of exchange agency in 2005. • Continued development of North/South Centre of Excellence through 2005.
Identify and promote the Department's priorities in the allocation of assistance under relevant EU programmes for North/South Co-operation	• Participation in programmes such Peace and Interreg	• Successful co administration of initiatives with Departments in Northern Ireland.

Objective 4.6: We will plan for and provide suitable cost-effective accommodation to underpin the delivery of quality education.

The Department is responsible for the planning and provision of accommodation, furniture and equipment to support the delivery of quality education. This includes the building of new schools and the extension and refurbishment of existing school accommodation. This objective supports Government policy measures outlined in the **Agreed Programme for Government**, **Sustaining Progress** and the **NDP**.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Detailed planning for the provision of accommodation needs at first and second level	• Pupil projections for new accommodation • Optimal use of existing provision involving rationalisation as appropriate • Delivery of enhanced educational provision	• Timely anticipation of need • Evaluation of the validity of pupil projections • Number of centres where schools were amalgamated
Use financial allocations to provide new or additional accommodation and to modernise existing accommodation	• Create a continuous flow of projects to construction within a multi-annual framework • Information to schools and public regarding project delivery	• Assess the value for money obtained against standards set including area norms, room layouts and cost limits • Number of planned projects progressed through architectural planning • Number of planned projects under construction • Evaluation of quality of completed projects
Implement safety programmes for radon, asbestos and dust extraction in schools	• Ongoing safety programmes for radon, asbestos and dust extraction in all affected schools	• Percentage of schools where safety programmes have been completed
Develop further systems and procedures for the delivery of school building projects in a more effective and efficient manner, involving increased devolution to and empowerment of school authorities	• Use of generic repeat designs • Schemes involving devolution to schools • Schemes based on a joined-up Government approach • Programme of Summer Works • Increased use of IT,	• Improved systems and procedures for the delivery of school building projects • No of projects delivered involving devolution • No of projects delivered through summer works schemes • No of projects delivered based on a partnership

	particularly web-based technologies, to assist the effective management of the building programme and to improve public access to information	approach with other Government Departments/Agencies • Satisfaction of interested parties with improved information systems
Develop the Public Private Partnership (PPP) models having regard to the learning experience of the pilot phase	• Timely delivery of school buildings • Appropriate transfer of risk to the private sector partner • Project start-ups beyond the level possible under an exclusively direct exchequer-funded model	• Number of new PPP projects • Identified refinements to model used in pilot phase • Risk transfers fully identified • Number of projects delivered ahead of or on time
Developing a more open and participative approach to planning decisions	• Publication of draft area development plans • Public consultation conducted by the Commission on School Accommodation • Production of area development plans	• No. of draft area plans published • Level of public engagement • No of area plans finalised
To facilitate the development of the Grangegorman site in Dublin as a modern campus for the Dublin Institute of Technology	• Enactment of the Grangegorman Development Agency Bill 2004	• Establishment of State agency to develop Grangegorman site • Appointment of members • Participation by local community and other stakeholders in the project

CHAPTER 6
Developing our Capacity to Deliver

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 5

We will support the delivery of education by quality planning, policy formulation and customer service.

Objective 5.1: We will create a greater capacity within the Department to concentrate on our core functions, especially that of strategic planning.

The programme of structural reform which has been planned and implemented over the past few years, is now almost complete. 2005 will see the transfer of functions to The National Council for Special Education and their adoption of a direct operational role with the deployment of 80 Special Education Needs Organisers. The rollout of the regional offices will continue into 2005.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Continue to implement a programme of structural reform within the Department and assist managers and staff to deliver high quality services by ensuring that organisations, structures and processes are effective.	• Complete the transfer of functions from the Department to the National Council for Special Education • The regional office structure of 10 offices fully operating • Continued implementation of improved structures, processes and systems • Transfer of responsibility for Institutes of Technology to the Higher Education Authority • Reform of a range of administrative processes to include central funding	• Improved delivery of services to pupils with special educational needs • Ten Regional Offices in place. • Continued implementation of new appeals processes for teacher allocations at primary and second level. • Publication of amending legislation • Meeting agreed timescale for individual reforms

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Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
	mechanisms for schools, payroll integration, delegation of more responsibility to schools and development of a modern records management system	

Objective 5.2: **We will recruit, deploy, develop and support staff to enable them to contribute to their fullest in a well-managed, performance-driven culture and in an open and positive working environment.**

The successful implementation of organisational change, and of the strategies outlined in this statement, are critically dependent on the commitment, knowledge, skills and competencies of the staff of the Department. The recruitment and deployment of an adequate level of staffing resources and the enhancement of the capability of staff in line with changing demands are key objectives of the Department's human resources management policies. This objective also supports Government policy measures outlined in **Sustaining Progress**.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Progress commitments in the Department's Human Resources (HR) Strategy	• Policies agreed through Partnership process, in relation to probation, induction, mobility etc	• Delivery of commitments within time-frame
Continuously improve staff planning, recruitment, promotion and placement policies in line with changing demands including decentralisation	• Employees who are committed to the organisation and capable of delivering a quality service • Appropriate deployment of staff linking individual attributes to requirements while providing opportunities for a staff member to expand his/her skills set	• Availability of panels to fill internal vacancies
Enhance the performance of individuals through the provision of training for identified needs and competencies	• A comprehensive programme of training interventions aimed at enabling each employee to develop to his/her maximum potential	• Expenditure on training and development to equate to at least 4% of employee payroll costs • Number of training days • Number of training days per employee
Prepare a Training and Development Strategy within the context of the overall Civil Service policy and the Department's HR Strategy	• Training and Development Strategy agreed through Partnership process	• Publication of Training and Development Strategy
Provide and maintain accommodation and other services for staff, and ensure compliance with health and safety requirements	• Ongoing delivery of improved accommodation and services for staff • Compliance with health and safety legislation through implementation of control measures as set out in the Department's Safety Statement and through	• Maintenance of high quality working environment for staff of the Department • Delivery on Safety Statement control measures • Safety statement revisions as necessary

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
	revision of the Safety Statement as necessary	
Develop a gender equality policy within the context of the overall Civil Service policy and the Department's HR Strategy	• Gender Equality policy agreed through Partnership process	• Publication of Gender Equality Policy • Percentage of AP posts held by women • Percentage of PO posts held by women
Facilitate the appointment of persons with disabilities	• Employees with disabilities facilitated through the provision of assistive technology etc	• Percentage of employees with disabilities

Objective 5.3: We will support managers and staff in effectively delivering high quality services within a strategic and value-for-money framework.

The Department will co-ordinate and support the implementation of the modernisation programme for the public sector. This includes promoting a customer service culture and assisting managers in delivering quality customer service. This objective supports Government policy measures outlined in social partnership agreements and under the **Strategic Management Initiative**.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Implementation of the modernisation programme for the public sector, including bodies under the aegis of the Department	• Implementation of modernisation programme commitments • Annual Business Plan for sections and for the Department • Annual Report • Partnership structures with a defined programme of work • Implementation of the modernisation programme by bodies under the aegis of the Department	• Satisfactory progress reports to the CSPVG on modernisation programme • Timely completion of Section and Departmental business plans • Annual report produced for each year • Development of the Partnership process • Progress in the implementation of the modernisation process by bodies under the aegis of the Department
Promote a quality customer service (QCS) culture	• Improvement in customer service by implementing the commitments in the Customer Charter and Customer Service Action Plan 2004 -2007 • QCS comments and complaints handled using Department procedures • Internal Customer Service Action Plan developed • QCS embedded in management processes	• Progress on implementation evaluated annually and reported in Annual Report • Effective comments and complaints system in place • Internal Customer Service Action Plan in place • QCS included in business planning process, PMDS and training programmes for staff
Comply with the Official Languages Act	• A 2005- 2007 scheme identifying improvements in the number of services available through Irish • Publications available simultaneously through Irish	• Improvement of level of services available through Irish

Objective 5.4: We will provide IT services within our organisation, which support policy formulation, policy evaluation and modern, effective service delivery to our clients.

IT services are critical to the efficient and effective discharge of the Department's functions. We are particularly committed to the future development of e-Government services and intend to implement interactive web-based services during the period covered by this statement. This objective supports Government policy measures outlined in the **Agreed Programme for Government**, **Sustaining Progress,** the **NDP** and **New Connections,** the Government's strategy to realise the potential of the Information Society.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Operate, maintain, support, enhance and upgrade existing IT systems and services	• Reliable, secure IT systems, network and operational services for Department staff • Up to date software and hardware underpinning the delivery of systems and services • Support for staff in the use of the IT systems and services	• Extent of "down-time" on core IT services • Extent of enhanced services implemented, such as improved remote access and Intranet services • Efficient response to requests for assistance and support
Develop the *Education Services Interactive (ESI)* Project, which will put in place a portal web-site to act as a "one-stop shop" for the secure delivery of interactive e-government services to schools, centres of education and other key client groups.	• An *On-Line Claims System (OLCS)* to support the processing of claims for payment for substitute teachers and other part-time employees • Other online services on a phased basis.	• Implementation of the On-Line Claims System • Number of schools using the On-Line Claims System
Implement new IT systems to support the work of the business units of the Department	• New systems, or significant enhancements to existing systems to meet the requirements of the business units e.g. a new Personnel System supporting improved HR practices, enhancement to the teacher payrolls, and the School Planning & Building systems	• Timely and effective implementation of quality systems • Level of improvement in business unit processes and in access to information
Ensure that new technologies (video conferencing and eKiosks) are available in the Regional Offices	• Information provided on intranet site and Dept's website. • Facilitation of meetings between public and central sections of the Department	• Number of queries resolved by using IT system. • Sites up to date with relevant and accurate information. • Extent of savings due to

	through the use of video-conferencing	reduced travel to meetings. • Extent to which the public can access information through use of DES webpage and internet services.
Develop and enhance the new Financial Management IT system in line with the objectives of the SMI, the public service modernisation programme and the Management Information Framework	• An enhanced Financial Management System supporting improved planning and control within the Department, through better/improved management reports, as well as efficient and effective provision of financial and other services to the staff and management of the Department. • A new Personnel System supporting improved Human Resource practices	• Improvement in the quality, timing and accuracy of the financial information produced. Enhance the ability of staff to obtain value from the new systems • Level of improvement in financial and HR management processes and in access to related information • Quality and accuracy of information produced by the new systems

Objective 5.5: We will provide a range of financial functions and supports to underpin improved financial management in the provision of education services, including monitoring and reporting on progress in relation to educational measures that are part-financed by the European Union, which are incorporated in the National Development Plan for 2000–2006.

The Department provides a range of financial functions and support services which underpin the provision of education services and contribute to the achievement of our overall objectives. The **NDP** includes provision of €6.7 billion for the education sector and the European Community Support Framework for Ireland 2000–2006 makes provision for over €457 million in Structural Funds for measures in the education sector.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Operate an appropriate accounting framework and financial/management/control system	• Annual Appropriation Accounts • Daily and monthly financial records	• Deadline related – daily and monthly deadlines with PMG/Department of Finance
Prepare and negotiate Estimates and Supplementary Estimates in accordance with resource allocation priorities	• Annual Education Estimates and financial statistics	• Adherence to time scales/deadlines - quality and accuracy of information
Continue to develop on an incremental basis the enhanced thematic/progammatic presentation of the vote structure in the Book of Estimates following consultation with the Department of Finance.	• Consolidation of elements in the estimates that facilitate financial management • Estimate data presented in a format that provides greater clarity for stakeholders	• Presentational changes in the published Estimates volumes.
Implement an annual internal audit plan	• Audits completed and reported on	• Timeliness and quality of audit reports • Action taken on foot of recommendations
Develop superannuation policy for retired teachers, lecturers and other education sector staff	• Amendments to superannuation provisions	• Circulars issued in good time • Removal of anomalies
Support the delivery of education services by ensuring maximum allocation and drawdown of assistance from the European Structural Funds and optimising its use	• Drawdown of financial assistance for education services from the Community Support Framework	• Maximum drawdown of allocation from the ESF and ERDF over the life of the NDP and by the EU deadlines

Objective 5.6: We will promote good industrial relations practice throughout the education sector and encourage and support the modernisation of the sector through a partnership process.

The Department provides an industrial relations framework at national level to manage industrial relations in the wider education sector. We also support the modernisation of the sector through a partnership process. This objective supports Government policy measures outlined in **Sustaining Progress** and, in particular, Government public pay policy.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Co-ordinate and manage industrial relations with groups and unions in the education sector through agreed processes and structures	• Good industrial relations • Agreements on pay and conditions within public service norms • Sanctioned salary scales	• Minimal industrial action • Settlements within pay policy guidelines • Resolution of issues through agreed industrial relations processes
Promote and foster modernisation and the development of partnership structures in all publicly-funded education institutions	• Modernisation programme • Establishment of partnership arrangements in institutions throughout the education sector	• Successful operation of partnership arrangements • Level of implementation of the modernisation programme in the sector

Objective 5.7: We will support improved administration and forward planning by developing policy and legislative proposals and by collecting and analysing relevant education statistics.

In developing policy, the Department has regard for the constitutional and legal environment in which the education system operates and ensures that the requirements of that environment are accommodated in the overall policy framework.. The legislative and regulatory framework which underpins the implementation of policy requires regular review to ensure continued relevance and minimisation of the regulatory burden. In this context, a collaborative review of the administrative burden on schools has been initiated.

In addition, accurate, timely and relevant dissemination of education statistics and analysis is vital for administration and forward planning to meet the needs of future and current educational provision and demand. It is necessary to build on existing statistics as well as to develop new sources of data.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Review policy proposals, in particular those requiring legislation, with a view to resolving any constitutional or legal issues Preparation of primary and secondary legislation	• Enactment of Legislation • Participating in consultations with relevant stakeholders • Provision of briefing on legislation within 1 day of a request	• Completion of tasks by due date
Respond to requests for information under the FOI Act	• Reply to all FOI requests in accordance with the Act and its time limits	• Reduction in number of appeals upheld by OIC
Progress in relation to a Data Implementation Strategy following the CSO review of data holdings in the Department in 2003.	• Increase use of PPSN.	• Use of PPSN on new developments.
Consultation and agreement on the development of a standard entry form at each level	• Standardisation of information collected on entry to First, Second, Further and Third Level (on key demographic and socio-economic characteristics of students)	• Implementation of a standardised form at each level on a phased basis.
Analysis of data trends and allocation of expenditure, enrolment (including retention) and teachers.	• Periodic analyses and projections of enrolment, expenditure, student retention and associated teaching requirements	• Timely completion of analytical reports.
Provision of data on enrolment, teachers, expenditure and graduates to	• Publication of key international comparisons and provision of policy-	• Timely provision of data to the relevant international

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
international organisations.	relevant briefing.	organisations.
Collection, processing, compilation and analysis of data.	• (i) Annual Statistical Report, (ii) Time-series leaflet, (iii) Education-in-Ireland and (iv) periodic thematic statistical reports (including gender equality).	• Publication of the Annual Statistical Report within one year of the end of the school-year reported.

Objective 5.8: We will implement that part of the Government's decentralisation programme involving the relocation of the Department's Dublin offices to Mullingar and Athlone.

The Department has already prepared and submitted to the Decentralisation Implementation Group an initial implementation plan for the transfer of approximately 400 staff to Mullingar and Athlone.

In November 2004, the Government approved the proposal of the Implementation Group to include the Department in a group of potential early movers. The Department has now commenced the more detailed planning process required to give effect to this decision.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Revise the implementation plan to ensure the smooth relocation of Department staff to Mullingar and Athlone in accordance with the latest Government Decision and timeframes. Ensure that proper structures are in place to implement the decentralisation programme as it relates to the Department Contribute at central level through the Decentralisation Liaison Officers Group to the resolution of HR and IR issues Develop appropriate training strategies in consultation with CMOD Work closely with the Office of Public Works to ensure that a high standard of accommodation is provided on time	• Progressive transfer of staff willing to decentralise to appropriate sections of the Department. • Establish Steering Committee to oversee implementation. • Comprehensive risk assessment report for DES. • Communications plan, staff training plan, IT plan, accommodation plan,HR plan to be prepared and in place. • Participation in Dept Liaison Officers Group to ensure co-ordinated approach to IR and HR issues. • Contribution to resolution of all issues relating to accommodation	• Staff fully trained and in fully functioning decentralised offices without interruption to or reduction in quality of services provided. • Obstacles/risks identified early and mitigation measures in place • Staff transfers (inward and outward) proceed smoothly without interruption to vital services. • Necessary training undertaken by all staff. • Practical training manuals in place. • HR and IR issues satisfactorily resolved. • High quality accommodation provided on time and in accordance with the implementation plan

Objective 5.9: **In the context of achieving better value for money, to promote procurement management reform by developing policies, process and practices in support of a more strategic approach to procurement within the Department and bodies for which is it is responsible.**

A more effective and efficient approach to procurement policy, procedures and practices by public bodies can have a significant impact on the purchase and use of goods and services by the State. These are important in the context of improving and strengthening governance and accountability arrangements and achieving value for money outcomes for the significant expenditure on procurement of goods and services by the State.

The reform process involves capacity building, training and education measures and procurement aggregation. These reform pillars are being developed and rolled out in tandem with incremental e-procurement measures.

Strategies	Outputs	Performance Indicators
Liaise with the National Policy Procurement Policy Unit (NPPPU) of the Department of Finance.	• Revised procurement procedures in the light of the reform document to be produced by the National Policy Procurement Policy Unit (NPPPU) of the Department of Finance (2005)	• Effective and efficient procurement policy, procedures and practices

CHAPTER 7
Focusing on the Needs of our Clients

WHO ARE OUR CLIENTS?

Everyone in Ireland has a direct or indirect involvement with education at some point in their lives. This may be as a student, a parent, a teacher, an employer, an employee or as a member of the community. Many people also participate in parent associations, school boards of management, governing bodies of third-level institutions, Vocational Education Committees (VECs) or other bodies involved in the development and delivery of education-related services.

Although the Department is involved in providing a comprehensive range of services for over one million students, most students' dealings are with the direct providers of these services - schools, colleges and universities. The Department's main customers are the Education Service Providers, i.e., teachers, management of schools and colleges and organisations providing education services. Government, members of the Oireachtas and the Social Partners are also important client groups for the Department.

Our staff, as internal customers, exchange a wide range of services on a daily basis within the Department. We are committed to ensuring that our staff, as internal customers, are fully supported and equipped to carry out their functions.

MEETING OUR CLIENTS' NEEDS

Learners, parents, educators and others rightly demand high standards of service, greater accountability and quality planning to meet future educational needs. Rapid economic and social changes have heightened public awareness of educational standards, while providers of education have to deal with an increasingly complex and diverse environment.

In pursuit of its mission statement and high-level objectives, the Department is committed to delivering quality services that meet the needs of our customers and clients, particularly learners, at all levels. This commitment is reflected in the performance management process, where quality customer service is identified as a core competency for all our staff.

It is also fully in line with the central objective of the modernisation process in the public sector - the achievement of an excellent service for the Government and for the public, as customers and clients.

PROVIDING A QUALITY SERVICE

The Department aims to provide high quality services throughout its broad range of functions and activities. The *Customer Charter* describes the level of service that can be expected in accordance with the 12 Quality Customer Service (QCS) principles. A Comments and Complaints system is in place to help people who are not satisfied that the service they received was in line with our quality service commitments or generally accepted principles of equity and good administrative practice.

The Department's *Customer Service Action Plan 2004 – 2007* outlines the services we provide and our commitments to improve these services. It is based on a service-focused approach by developing customer service plans at section/unit level. It provides a means to evaluate and develop services and activities in line with the 12 QCS Principles

The Department will continue to set up systems to measure and evaluate its standards of service provision. We are committed to building on the continuing evaluation of all our services, to ensure the provision of a relevant, quality service. The involvement of our staff is central to the Department's policy of making improvements in the standard of service. We will continue to consult with our staff directly, and through the Quality Customer Service Liaison Network and the Partnership Committee.

We will ensure the effective development and implementation of emerging policy and legislation in partnership with parents, teachers and school management, with a view to promoting access, quality, efficiency and accountability in education. We will also extend and develop our consultation with customers on the delivery of our services through the use of focus groups.

MAKING THE BEST USE OF TECHNOLOGY

An ambitious programme of technology-based developments is being pursued with the aim of ensuring that we make the best possible use of Information and Communications Technologies

We will continue to take a pro-active approach to involvement in *e*-Government initiatives and maintain a strong involvement, in partnership with REACH (the agency developing an electronic gateway for accessing Government Services), in the implementation of the Public Services Broker. In addition, we are continuing to work with the Government's frontline website for Public Service information through involvement with the OASIS Project.

The Department's *Education Services Interactive (ESI)* Project, will put in place a portal web-site to act as a "one-stop shop" for the secure delivery of interactive e-government services to schools, centres of education and other key client groups.

CLARIFYING THE RULES – BETTER REGULATION

In dealing with regulatory reform, our focus is to introduce regulation, including independent appeals procedures, in order to promote clarity as to entitlement to resources, to make the allocation of resources as transparent as possible and to ensure that clients who are dissatisfied with a decision taken by the Department on the allocation of resources have recourse to appeal that decision to a body independent of the Department.

We have separate appeals processes to handle appeals for a number of services. These include appeals on applications for services and grants and for review of inspections in schools.

- Incremental Credit Appeals Board for teachers who are appealing a Department decision not to award incremental credit

- Post Primary Staffing Appeals Process

- Primary Staffing Appeals Board

- Procedure for Review of Inspection of Schools and Teachers under Section 13(9) of the Education Act,1988 *(This procedure allows schools and individual teachers to seek reviews of inspection reports)*

- School Transport Appeals Board

- Suspensions and Enrolment Decisions Section 29 of the Education Act

- Recognition of New Primary Schools Appeals Board

Throughout the period of this strategy, the Department will continue to work to ensure that these processes promote clarity and transparency.

Contributing to Cross-Departmental Strategies

The Department contributes to a number of interdepartmental structures that have been put in place to ensure a coordinated approach to the delivery of policies developed by the Government. These policies address issues of national strategic importance and include the National Development Plan 2000-2006, *Sustaining Progress*, the National Anti-Poverty Strategy, the National Children's Strategy, the National Health Strategy, the Information Society Strategy, the National Spatial Strategy, the Asia Strategy 1999 – 2009 and strategies relating to the Lisbon agenda and the Convention on the Future of Europe. The Department's contribution to these strategies has been outlined under each of its objectives in Chapters 2 to 6.

Likewise, the achievement of many of the Department's goals and objectives outlined in this Strategy Statement is critically dependant on a "whole of Government" approach, involving a significant degree of cross-departmental cooperation.

Educational Disadvantage
The Department's approach to tackling educational disadvantage is progressed within the overall Government cross-departmental framework for promoting social inclusion viz., the Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion, the Senior Officials Group, the Steering Group for Sustaining Progress, the National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion, the National Drugs Strategy, the County Development Boards, RAPID and a number of other cross-sectoral forums, including the statutory Educational Disadvantage Committee, dealing with specific aspects of social inclusion. The Department has reviewed its educational disadvantage programmes, with a view to building on what has been achieved to date, adopting a more systematic, targeted and integrated approach and strengthening the capacity of the system to meet the educational needs of disadvantaged children and young people. The review process built on earlier work carried out by the Educational Disadvantage Committee and the action plan for educational inclusion (DEIS) launched by the Minister in May 2005 takes account of the need for cross-sectoral and inter-Departmental integration and partnership working.

Special Educational Needs
The provision of appropriate education services to children and adults with special educational needs crucially involves close co-operation and co-ordination of activities between education and health authorities. The Health Services Executive (HSE) has a key role in providing support services such as the delivery of various therapies and others with disabilities often attend HSE-funded day care services or reside in HSE-funded facilities. The implementation of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004 will enhance co-ordination in this area and will require enhanced co-operation between the Departments of Education and Science and Health and Children and relevant bodies in their remit

Child Protection
The Report of the Working Group on Garda Vetting which was submitted in March 2004, recommended that prospective full-time employees, part-time employees, volunteers and students on placement who would have substantial unsupervised access to children and/or vulnerable adults, should be vetted prior to taking up their posts and, in this regard, that all organisations that recruit and select such persons should avail of the vetting services of the Garda Central Vetting Unit.

The Department of Education and Science is represented on the Implementation Group established to implement the recommendations of the Working Group with a view to putting additional appropriate arrangements in place in the education sector.

Early Childhood Education
The Department works closely with a number of other Departments which are involved in the provision of early education or childcare services. These include the Departments of Health and Children, Justice, Equality and Law Reform and Social and Family Affairs.

Lifelong Learning
The Department is working with a number of other Departments and the Social Partners in taking forward actions to support strategies for Lifelong Learning under the National Development Plan, the White Paper on Adult Education and the Task Force on Lifelong Learning. The White Paper marks the adoption of lifelong learning as a central principle of education policy in Ireland. The key to successful lifelong learning is through providing a firm foundation of high quality relevant initial education and broadening curricular choice in second level schools as well as providing a range of options to meet different abilities, interests and needs. The Department's programmes for adult and second chance education are also central to lifelong learning strategy.

Youth Services
This Department is the lead Government Department with responsibility for the National Youth Work Advisory Committee, a statutory committee established under the Youth Work Act, 2001. It brings together a wide range of representatives from the statutory and voluntary sectors, including several Government Departments, for the purpose of providing advice to the Minister of State with responsibility for youth affairs on youth work policy and services.

Future Skills Needs
In relation to higher education, the Department works closely with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and its agencies, including Forfás and FÁS, in identifying and meeting the future skills needs of the economy in the context of the work of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs. Similar arrangements are in place with the Department of Health and Children and its partner agencies in relation to meeting future skills needs in the health area.

Research and Development
In line with the Government decision in June 2004, the Minister for Education and Science is working with fellow Ministers with research portfolios to provide for

strategic prioritisation, direction setting and resourcing. The Cabinet group is supported by an interdepartmental committee of senior officials with designated responsibility for Science and Technology in their respective Government Departments and the Department of Education and Science attends this forum.

Health Education

The Department liaises closely with the Department of Health and Children and the Health Services Executive in relation to a number of health education and promotion strategies. These include the programme of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in schools, the Strategic Task Force on Alcohol, the Heart Health Task Force and the National Youth Health Programme. The Department is committed to contributing to sustaining and improving health status in line with the National Health Strategy, "*Quality and Fairness*".

Public Procurement

Arising from the Department's very substantial involvement in the schools and third level building programmes, it is represented on the Government Contracts Committee, which is chaired by the Department of Finance and includes representation from the Department of the Environment and Local Government, the Department of Health and Children, the Department of Defence, the Government Supplies Agency and the Office of Public Works. The function of the committee is to ensure that all Government contracts are placed in accordance with the public procurement guidelines and that there is fair and open competition.

e-Government

From an Information Technology perspective, the Department will continue to take a pro-active approach to involvement in cross-departmental *e*-Government initiatives, including *e*-Procurement, *e*-Cabinet and *e*-Legislation. It will maintain a strong involvement, in partnership with REACH (the agency responsible for the provision of an electronic gateway for citizens accessing Government Services), in the implementation of the Public Services Broker, and in the integration of this Broker with the Department's own *e*-Government projects. In addition, we will continue to work in partnership with the OASIS Project and the Reachservices project.

North/South Co-operation

The Department works closely with the Department of the Taoiseach, the Department of Foreign Affairs, the North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC) Joint Secretariat and a range of other Departments in relation to North/South co-operation issues and, in particular, issues identified for co-operation in the NSMC.

European Union

In relation to the Lisbon agenda, the Department of the Taoiseach has put in place a cross-departmental group looking at all issues arising from the wide-ranging conclusions of the EU Heads of State and Government (HOSG) at their summit in Lisbon in Spring 2000. The HOSG set for themselves the strategic goal of making the European Union *"the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010"*. Education and training play a key role in meeting this goal. The Department of Education and Science is also represented on the Interdepartmental Co-ordination Committee on EU Affairs. Chaired by the Minister of State with special responsibility for European Affairs, this committee looks at all significant issues arising at European Union level

European Community Support Framework
The European Community Support Framework for Ireland 2000–2006 makes
provision for over €457 million in Structural Funds for measures in the education
sector. The Department works closely with the Department of Enterprise, Trade &
Employment, which has overall responsibility for the management of the Operational
Programme for Employment & Human Resources Development and the Productive
Sector Operational Programme. With regard to the Border Midlands & Western
(BMW) and Southern & Eastern (S&E) Operational Programmes, the Department
liaises with the appropriate Regional Assemblies.

Asia Strategy
'A Decade of the Asia Strategy 1999 to 2009' sets out various proposals for
developing trade and other supporting relationships with Asian countries. Linking
Ireland with Asia through education is an important aspect of the Strategy. The
Department works closely with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
and other Government Departments on the implementation of the Strategy.

Decentralisation
Decentralisation will affect all Government departments, including those not in the
first phase of moves and those remaining in Dublin. This arises because a substantial
level of staff transfers between departments and other agencies will take place at
every stage of implementation. The successful delivery of the programme within the
timescales envisaged will require close co-operation between departments to ensure
that the potential for disruption to the delivery of State services arising from staff
changeover is minimised.

Through its membership of the Decentralisation Liaison Officers Group, the
Department will contribute to the development of policy at central level in relation to
decentralisation and to the resolution of general difficulties arising from
implementation.

A Changing Organisation

Changing our Focus

The Department is in the final stages of completing a major structural reform programme which has seen the establishment of a State Examinations Commission (SEC), a National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and a network of Regional Offices.

The setup of the SEC has enabled the Department to move away from detailed involvement in operational matters and to focus on policy development, forward planning and evaluation. The structured transfer of functions from the Department to the NCSE will allow the Department to concentrate on planning future policy to ensure that resource allocation results in appropriate educational services being available for all children.

A key objective is to strengthen the management of knowledge to enable more effective policy formulation. We are committed to making better use of existing evidence and research, both national and international, to support policy development and decision-making. This will also involve proactive and systematic identification of information needs, and management of information flows, in a way that applies knowledge of best practice to practical policy issues. In particular, we will:

- Strengthen and develop our policy-making structures in order to anticipate and plan for medium and long-term educational needs
- Ensure that policy formulation will be undertaken in a consistent and coherent manner both within the Department and across the education system
- Develop a medium-term strategic plan for education research and development that reflects policy priorities
- Locate, analyse and disseminate research relevant to best practice and innovation at all stages of learning
- Develop structures for the promotion and development of education research

Enhancing our Service Provision

The Department is committed to providing its customers with the best service possible within available resources. A very significant part of the work of the majority of staff in the Department is directed at providing a wide range of services on a day-to-day basis. Over the period of this Strategy Statement, and during the process of change outlined above, the Department will continue to maintain and enhance its provision of these services, so that they are provided in the most effective, efficient, timely and high-quality manner possible. Our customer service strategy is outlined in Chapter 7, *Focusing on the Needs of our Clients.*

Working with other Government Departments

The Department will contribute to strengthening linkages between Government Departments and other agencies, at national and local levels, to improve co-ordination

and integration of related Government policies. Our contribution to cross-departmental strategies is detailed in Chapter 8.

Strengthening our Analytical Capacity

The Department is committed to developing a stronger planning capacity, including the analysis of statistics and indicators of performance of Irish education in both a national and an international context to underpin national policy formation. In particular, the Department will strengthen its capacity to formulate effective and innovative policy options in relation to major social, demographic and economic trends.

Better Financial Management

The additional demands being made on the Department arising from the increased level of public expenditure on education and the need for improved financial management information to support the strategic management process require the further development of the Department's integrated financial management system. This will facilitate the full costing of programmes and will incorporate indicators and other information relating to the achievement of our objectives and, as a result, secure better value for money.

Developing our most Important Resource

The successful implementation of organisational change and of the strategies outlined in this statement are critically dependent on the commitment, knowledge, skills and competencies of the staff of the Department. The recruitment and deployment of an adequate number of staff, the provision of relevant training and the management of PMDS are key objectives of our HR Strategy

We will also improve and expand training and development options for staff to meet identified needs at all levels and to assist the integration of new staff into the organisation. We will continue to support and review the work of the Partnership Committee, which was originally set up under the Partnership 2000 agreed framework for modernisation and now plays a crucial role in the Department's modernisation programme.

Bodies Under the Aegis of the Department

Advisory Council for English Language Schools

An Chomhairle um Oideachais Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta

Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education

Commission on School Accommodation Needs

Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies

Further Education & Training Awards Council

Higher Education and Training Awards Council

Higher Education Authority

Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann

Integrated Ireland Language and Training Ltd.

International Education Board - Ireland

Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology

Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences

Léargas – The Exchange Bureau

National Adult Learning Council

National Centre for Technology in Education

National Centre Guidance in Education

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

National Council for Special Education

National Education Welfare Board

National Qualifications Authority of Ireland

Residential Institution Redress Board

Royal Irish Academy of Music

Royal Irish Academy/Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann

State Examinations Commission

The President's Award – Gaisce

The Teaching Council