

OFFICE FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION
Report for Department of Education and Science

REVIEW OF CURRENT SITUATION

OBJECTIVE: To ensure that all young people leave the educational system with an adequate education and related qualifications to support their full participation in the economy, in employment and in society.

To provide the opportunity to those who have already left school to address any lack of educational experience and related qualifications that militates against their ability to participate fully in the economy, in employment and in society.

Target 1	Halve the proportion of pupils with serious literacy difficulties by 2006
Summary Assessment¹	Unknown
Will Target be met on time²	Unlikely
Indicator (s)	Literacy levels in schools.
Progress being made	<p>Assessment of literacy attainment is conducted regularly through national assessments at primary level and through PISA at second level. The National Assessment of English Reading in First and Fifth classes (1998) concluded that some 10% of pupils did not acquire adequate levels of literacy while at primary school. The proportion of students in PISA 2003 who performed at, or below, Level 1 (11.1%) in Ireland was significantly below the OECD average of 19.1%. Surveys of literacy in primary schools serving disadvantaged communities have recently been completed by both the Educational Research Centre and the Department's Inspectorate. These surveys show that literacy problems among pupils from disadvantaged background at about 27-33% is almost three times the national average.</p> <p>This target will be further addressed by the following literacy and numeracy supports under the action plan for educational inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A new advisory service at primary level ○ More access to initiatives such as Reading Recovery, Maths Recovery and First Steps ○ A new family literacy project ○ ICT investment. <p>There will be a renewed focus on the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills in schools participating in the new School Support Programme (SSP) under the action plan, and on measuring progress systematically. Schools will develop three-year action plans which will prioritise, and set targets for, literacy and</p>

	<p>numeracy achievement.</p> <p>The Learning Support Scheme provides assistance for children experiencing learning difficulties, particularly in the core areas of literacy. All schools have access to this service based on their level of need.</p>
Areas where intended implementation not being achieved	<p>Target does not specify what the proportion of pupils with serious literacy difficulties is to be reduced from. Therefore, it is not clearly evident if progress is being made.</p>
Data sources used to monitor progress	
Areas where progress made/proposed to address data or indicator issues	<p>Actions to strengthen reporting in this area with a particular focus on those who are disadvantaged include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A report on the implementation of standardised testing has been submitted by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) - Development of the primary pupil database - Reports on national assessments of literacy and numeracy in primary schools due in 2005 - Report by Educational Research Centre (ERC) on literacy data in disadvantaged primary schools published in November 2004 - OECD PISA survey published December 2004 - Report on Literacy and Numeracy in Disadvantaged Schools: Challenges for Teachers and Learners published by the DES in April 2005 <p>These reports and surveys will provide the necessary baseline data</p>
Data/Indicator Deficiencies	

¹ Summary assessment of progress (taken from Implementation Criteria used in EU Joint Employment Report, with addition of new 'unknown' category):

"Complete" where the reform process is (practically) complete and the desired results have (practically) been achieved;

"In progress" where the policy reform is well advanced and progress in implementation is being made;

"Limited" where the policy response to the recommendation is only partial and implementation is limited;

"Insufficient" where no substantial policy measures going in the right direction have been taken;

"Unknown" where there is insufficient information/data available to assess what progress has been made.

² Yes/No/Likely/Unlikely/Unknown/Not time bound

Target 2	Reduce the proportion of adults aged 16-64 with restricted literacy to 10 to 20% by 2007
Summary Assessment	In Progress.
Will Target be met on time	Likely
Indicator (s)	Levels of participation in adult learning schemes. Proportion of adults with restricted literacy.
Progress being made	<p>There is ongoing and increased support for adult literacy programmes. Monitoring and evaluation of attainment, however, needs to be further developed. International Adult Literacy Survey 1995 found that 25 per cent of Irish Adults aged 16 – 64 possessed the lowest level of literacy skills – Level 1. Given the pattern of demographic change and rising initial educational attainment and its correlation to levels of literacy, it is most likely that less than 20% of the adult population (aged 25-64) will have more than Level 1 literacy.</p> <p>This target is being addressed by prioritising adult literacy within the field of adult education. Investment in this area in 2004 equated to €19m compared to €13.6m in 2001 and €1.1m in 1997. Client numbers rose in the same period from 5,000 to 30,000 a year. The NDP set a target of having 113,000 participants on adult literacy programmes for the period 2000 – 2006. A participation rate of 100,000 was achieved in the period 2000 - 2003.</p> <p>Special programmes have also been introduced targeted at groups with particular literacy needs. Literacy programmes in the workplace are also being implemented.</p> <p>A management information system will be developed to track the participation of different groups in Further Education (adult literacy programmes) to support targeting of resources and evidence-based decision making. A detailed analysis exercise has been completed for the system.</p>
Areas where intended implementation not being achieved	The effect of targeting resources at adult literacy programmes is not apparent as the latest data was published in 1997
Data sources used to monitor progress	International Adult Literacy Survey conducted in 1995, published in 1997.
Areas where progress made/proposed to address data or indicator issues	The Report of the Taskforce on Lifelong Learning and the White Paper on Adult Education form the strategic framework for the progression of lifelong learning. In response to one of the recommendations in the Report of the Taskforce on Lifelong Learning, regarding data collection, the CSO included a module on adult learning in the QNHS, 2003 Q2, and published results in

	<p>2004.</p> <p>The CSO proposes to conduct a survey of participation by adults in education and training in late 2006 or 2007. This will improve the quality and scope of data on adult participation in education and training.</p> <p>The International Adult Literacy Survey is unlikely to be repeated before 2008 at the earliest, with results published in 2010.</p>
<p>Data/Indicator Deficiencies</p>	

Target 3	Reduce the number of young people who leave the school system early, so that the percentage of those who complete upper second level or equivalent will reach 85 per cent by 2003 and 90 per cent by 2006
Summary Assessment	Limited
Will Target be met on time	No
Indicator (s)	Early school leaving rates / school retention rates
Progress being made	<p>The latest figures on retention rates compiled by the Department of Education and Science (published in May 2003) are based on the 1994 cohort (i.e. pupils who commenced the junior certificate programme in September 1994). These figures indicate that the senior cycle retention rate is 81.8%. The data in this analysis deals only with retention within the State-aided schooling system. It does not allow for the tracking of those following educational pathways outside the mainstream school senior cycle such as Youthreach and apprenticeship training. It also excludes a number of 'external' Leaving Certificate Examination students who leave state-aided schools to complete second level in private second level colleges. If these groups are taken into account, it is estimated that the retention rate would be some 5 percentage points higher, at approximately 87%.</p> <p>The CSO's report Measuring Ireland's Progress, 2004, puts early school leavers at 12.9% - early school leavers being defined as persons aged 18 to 24 whose highest level of educational attainment is lower secondary or below. This compared with an EU average of 15.9%.</p> <p>Attainment equivalency will be facilitated by the ongoing development of the national qualifications framework.</p> <p>DEIS (Delivering Equality Of Opportunity In Schools) a new action plan for educational inclusion was launched in May 2005. The action plan will be implemented on a phased basis over five years, starting in the next school year and involves an additional annual investment of €40m and the provision of some 300 additional posts across the education system on full implementation. The plan places particular emphasis on attendance, progression, retention and attainment and includes a number of measures to promote retention to upper second level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhanced supports to improve literacy and numeracy at primary and second-level • smaller classes for more children in disadvantaged urban schools • greater support for the involvement of parents and the

	<p>community in schools,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • successful transition from primary to second-level and • wider access to a range of academic and non-academic supports for young people at risk of early school leaving. <p>Services of the National Educational Welfare Board are being prioritised in disadvantaged communities. D/E&S is working with the National Education Welfare Board to ensure that opportunity for those whose work involves a school attendance element, are exploited to the full.</p>
Areas where intended implementation not being achieved	Senior Cycle Retention rate 81.8% (Based on 1994 entry cohort) Department's reports on retention rates in post-primary schools for the 1994 and 1995 cohorts will be published shortly.
Data sources used to monitor progress	-ESRI Annual Schools Leavers Survey -NESF report on Early School Leavers 2002 -D/E&S Statistical reports -CSO: NQHS and Measuring Ireland's progress in 2004
Areas where progress made/proposed to address data or indicator issues	<p>Attendance data returns from schools collected by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) compiled for the first time in 2004. Results show a strong relationship between levels of disadvantage and levels of non-attendance. The study concludes that there is a strong relationship between the levels of disadvantage in a school and both the level of attendance and the number of children who miss 20 days or more. Reporting of individual student absences is being developed to help educational welfare staff identify children who are having difficulty.</p> <p>CSO's report Measuring Ireland's Progress in 2004 will be produced on a yearly basis in the future. The 2004 report showed that early school leavers accounted for 12.9% of 18 to 24 year olds compared with an EU average of 15.9%.</p>
Data/Indicator Deficiencies	Outcome measures for the period under review are lacking.

Objective: To increase the participation of people with disabilities in work and society generally, and to support people with a disability and their families, to lead full and independent lives.

Target 4	Aim to increase participation by students with disabilities at Third Level to 1.8 per cent by 2006
Summary Assessment	Complete
Will Target be met on time	Yes
Indicator (s)	Percentage of students with disabilities at Third Level
Progress being made	<p>A survey carried out by the Association for Higher Education Access and Disability (AHEAD) showed a first year undergraduate participation rate for PwD of 1.4 per cent in 1998/99 and 1.1 per cent of the total undergraduate population in 1998/99. Initial results from a more recent survey by AHEAD indicate that for the 2003/04 academic year 2.4% of all undergraduate students have a disability compared with 1.1% in 1998.</p> <p>Under the Fund for Students with Disabilities, provisional figures indicated that €6.73m was allocated to some 1,800 students in the 2004/05 academic year.</p>
Areas where intended implementation not being achieved	
Data sources used to monitor progress	
Areas where progress made/proposed to address data or indicator issues	The Action Plan 2005-07 for Achieving Equity of Access to Higher Education in Ireland sets out an implementation strategy and timetable including the setting of objectives and quantitative and qualitative indicators of progress on access programmes.
Data/Indicator Deficiencies	

Objective: to improve the life experience of Travellers through the provision of appropriate education, health and housing services and to remove any remaining barriers to the full participation of members of the Traveller Community in the work and social life of the country.

Target 5	Age Appropriate placement of all Travellers in primary school will be achieved by 2003
Summary Assessment	Complete
Will Target be met on time	Yes
Indicator (s)	Number of Travellers at primary school
Progress being made	Feedback from the Visiting Teachers for Travellers service indicates that the majority of Traveller children in primary school are in age appropriate places. Almost 6,000 Traveller children in primary schools in 2003. Traveller Education Strategy, to be published in 2005, will help to facilitate Traveller participation in education
Areas where intended implementation not being achieved	The proportion of Traveller children who are not enrolled in primary school has not been reported. Only schools that have access to a Resource Teacher for Travellers (RTT) report the number of Travellers in their school. Those schools that do not have access to an RTT but have Traveller children enrolled do not make returns to the Department. This issue is being considered in the context of the development of the Primary Pupil Database.
Data sources used to monitor progress	Enrolment of Traveller children at primary schools
Areas where progress made/proposed to address data or indicator issues	The issue of reporting the number of Travellers in schools is being considered in the context of the development of the Primary Pupil Database. Data on Traveller children's attendance is being co-ordinated by the Department's regional offices network.
Data/Indicator Deficiencies	

Target 6	The transfer rate of Travellers to post primary schools will be increased to 95 per cent by 2004
Summary Assessment	Limited
Will Target be met on time	No
Indicator (s)	Percentage of Travellers transferring from primary to post primary schools
Progress being made	School completion programme targeted approx. 2,000 Traveller children in 2003.
Areas where intended implementation not being achieved	85% transfer rate to post-primary level in 2003 and 2004. Approx. 45% of the age cohort are attending post-primary schools. A Traveller Education Strategy is being developed, which will provide recommendations on the way forward in relation to Traveller education.
Data sources used to monitor progress	Enrolment of Traveller children at post primary schools
Areas where progress made/proposed to address data or indicator issues	
Data/Indicator Deficiencies	

Target 7	Each third-level institution will double the participation by mature disadvantaged students, including Travellers and refugees, by 2006 (within the 15 per cent quota)
Summary Assessment	Insufficient
Will Target be met on time	Unknown
Indicator (s)	Number of mature disadvantaged, Travellers and refugees at third level
Progress being made	<p>HEA Report – A Review of Higher Education Participation in 2003 – identifies an increase in the number of mature students entering tertiary education from 4.5% in 1998 to 8.7% in 2003</p> <p>Recent statistical data from the Department of Education and Science show that in 2003/04 approximately 10% of full-time new entrants to higher education were mature students (i.e. over 23 years of age).</p> <p>Data from the CSO indicates that 1.4 per cent of adult Travellers have a third-level qualification.</p>
Areas where intended implementation not being achieved	Baseline data not available. Progress cannot be determined.
Data sources used to monitor progress	<p>2002 Census Data on the Irish Traveller Community and Education</p> <p>HEA statistics on Higher Education Participation</p>
Areas where progress made/proposed to address data or indicator issues	The National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education intends to agree mechanisms for gathering data with a view to the setting of future targets.
Data/Indicator Deficiencies	<p>No statistics are available for the participation by refugees in education.</p> <p>Statistics on higher education participation by mature student are not disaggregated for socio-economic background.</p>