

# NATIONAL STRATEGY: LITERACY AND NUMERACY FOR LEARNING AND LIFE 2011-2020

**Interim Review: 2011 – 2016**

**New Targets: 2017 – 2020**

**PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES**

**TEACHING**

**LEADERSHIP**

**CURRICULUM**

**TACKLING EDUCATIONAL**

**DISADVANTAGE**

**ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION**



AN RÓDINN | DEPARTMENT OF  
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION  
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS

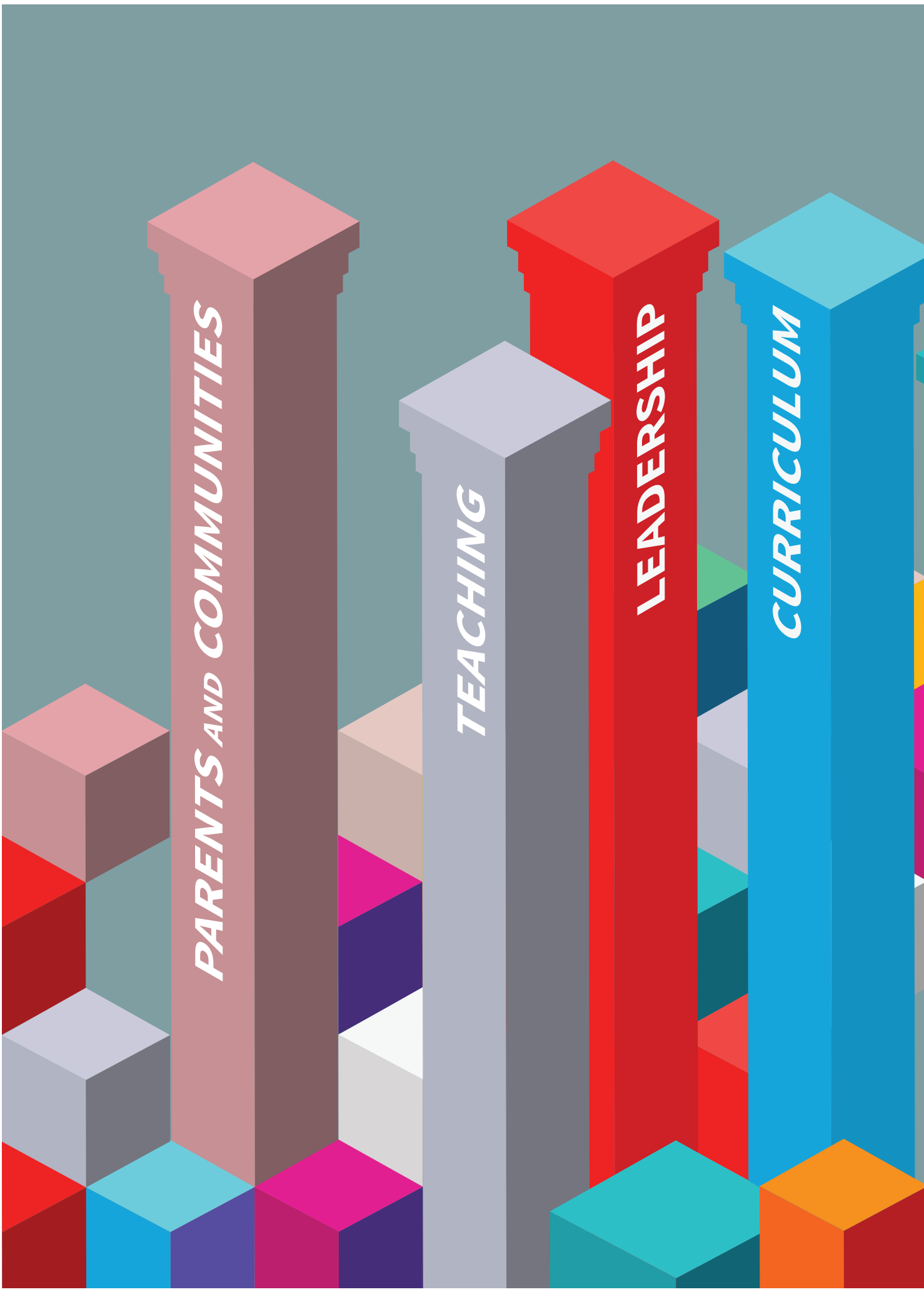
**March 2017**


*PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES*

*TEACHING*

*LEADERSHIP*

*CURRICULUM*



The background features a collection of colorful 3D cubes and pillars. On the left, three tall pillars are prominent: a teal one with the text 'TACKLING EDUCATIONAL', a dark teal one with 'DISADVANTAGE', and a purple one with 'ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION'. The rest of the background is filled with a cluster of smaller cubes in various colors including red, yellow, orange, green, blue, and grey.

# NATIONAL STRATEGY: LITERACY AND NUMERACY FOR LEARNING AND LIFE 2011-2020

**Interim Review: 2011 – 2016**

**New Targets: 2017 – 2020**

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## FOREWORD

BEING LITERATE AND BEING NUMERATE ARE KEY SKILLS WHICH ENABLE OUR YOUNG PEOPLE, AS CITIZENS OF TOMORROW, TO LEARN, TO ENJOY AND CONFIDENTLY PARTICIPATE IN THE ARTS, SCIENCES AND EVERY ASPECT OF DAY-TO-DAY LIFE.

The vision of this government is to sustain our economic progress and use it to build a fair and compassionate society. That is why, in September 2016, we published and started implementing the *Action Plan for Education 2016-2019* which aims to make Ireland the best education and training system in Europe over the next 9 years.

In 2011, the *National Strategy: Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011-2020* was published. It sets out a vision for raising standards in our early years and school settings, against the backdrop of considerable concern (in particular, following PISA 2009) about achievement in these fundamental skills.

Everyone should be very proud of what has been achieved to date. A huge part of this success is due to the commitment of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) practitioners, teachers and school leaders, parents and school managers, staff in support services of various types, teacher educators and a range of other bodies, agencies and organisations, and especially the young people who have worked so hard to enhance their literacy and numeracy skills. Such commitments have been underpinned by support and resources from my Department.

The commitments carried out over the past six years are multifaceted. They relate to reforms in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and in dedicated support for school leaders' and teachers' professional learning. Curriculum reform, particularly at primary and junior cycle, has prioritised the enhancement of learners' literacy and numeracy skills. Work outside the school sector by agencies like SOLAS, by Education and Training Boards (ETBs), libraries and by organisations such as Aontas and the National

Adult Literacy Agency (NALA), is enabling adults to gain the competence to enhance their own literacy and numeracy skills and thereby to assist them to confidently work with their children and grandchildren.

This Report of the Interim Review has considered progress between 2011 and 2016, informed by consultation with stakeholders and evidence from national and international studies. These findings acknowledge our significant achievements in literacy but they also highlight the critical need to focus on improving our achievements, especially in numeracy. A gap in achievement between those learners in schools with the highest concentration of disadvantage (DEIS Band 1 in particular), and other schools, has persisted and must also be addressed.

Implementation of the 2011 *Strategy* continues up to 2020. Improvements in numeracy achievement need to be prioritised over the second half of the lifetime of the *Strategy*. Tackling educational disadvantage, in tandem with the *DEIS Plan 2017*, is also critical. We must also focus on better enabling our higher achievers to reach their full potential. Finally, we must embed achievements in literacy, including literacy for and through the Irish language and enhance the digital literacy skills of all our learners.

I believe the targets set and the actions identified within this Report will enable us to focus on achieving the best results for our learners. Working together, we can reach our goals.

**Richard Bruton T.D.**

Minister for Education and Skills  
March 2017

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### National Strategy: Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life (2011-2020)

In July 2011, the Department of Education and Skills (the Department) launched the *National Strategy: Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011-2020* (the *Strategy*). The *Strategy* sets a clear vision for raising standards in literacy and numeracy in early years, primary and post-primary settings by 2020. Actions in the *Strategy* are identified across six Pillars of the education system:

- Pillar 1: Enabling parents and communities to support children's literacy and numeracy development*
- Pillar 2: Improving teachers' and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE<sup>1</sup>) practitioners' professional practice*
- Pillar 3: Building the capacity of school leadership*
- Pillar 4: Improving the curriculum and the learning experience*
- Pillar 5: Helping students with additional learning needs to achieve their potential*
- Pillar 6: Improving assessment and evaluation to support better learning in literacy and numeracy.*

The *Strategy* will continue to be implemented to 2020, taking on board the findings of this Interim Review Report.

### Interim Review – Methodology

An Interim Review of the *Strategy* commenced in 2015, in order to take stock of the successes and challenges encountered with its implementation to date. This Interim Review involved consideration of research findings, both national and international, and a consultation process with a wide range of stakeholders. It concluded in late 2016 with the publication of PISA<sup>2</sup> (2015) and TIMSS<sup>3</sup> (2015) reports.

### Key Priorities

The Interim Review has shown the considerable progress made at the mid-way point in the *Strategy*. Ireland's progress in promoting a high level of literacy for all has been especially impressive. Irish students ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 35 OECD countries in reading in PISA 2015. It has also identified areas where additional focus is needed if we want to achieve our ambition, as set out in the *Action Plan for Education 2016-2019*, to have the best education and training system in Europe in the next nine years.

Feedback in relation to the implementation of the *Strategy* to date suggests that there may have been a greater focus on literacy than numeracy. A stronger focus on numeracy is now warranted, in order to bring about the 'step-change' that will help us to achieve our ambition to be among the top performers in Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> A list of acronyms used in this report is available in Appendix 1

<sup>2</sup> Programme for International Student Assessment

<sup>3</sup> Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

Our key priority will be to engage all education stakeholders with **numeracy** for learning and life.

In addition to focusing on numeracy, attention up to 2020 also needs to be focused on:

- Tackling **educational disadvantage** – with targets that will link the literacy and numeracy agenda with the *DEIS Plan 2017*.
- Enabling **higher-achieving learners** to reach their full potential in light of the strong messages from a number of national and international assessments which indicate that the attainment of higher-achieving Irish learners lags behind their international counterparts.
- Embedding achievements in literacy – additional emphasis needs to be placed on gaining improvements in **literacy for and through the Irish language** and on enhancing the **digital literacy skills** of our learners.

This Report puts forward priority actions and targets which set the trajectory needed across the education system to successfully enhance our learners' achievements, particularly in numeracy, but also across the other key priorities identified above.

Critically, the priorities under the *Strategy* are linked to actions for related policy developments in the Department, including:

- Action Plan for Education 2016 – 2019
- Digital Strategy for Schools 2015 – 2020
- DEIS Plan 2017
- Further Education and Training Strategy 2014 – 2019
- Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017 – 2022
- School Self-Evaluation and Looking At Our Schools 2016: A Quality Framework for Primary / Post-Primary Schools
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education Policy Statement – expected in 2017.

Examples of specific actions include:

- An Annual Literacy and Numeracy Forum
- Research on creative and innovative ways to support parents in their role as educators
- Prioritising the development of Mathematics curricula at primary and post-primary
- PDST continuing to prioritise and refine its literacy and numeracy supports for teachers
- Developing further support for the transitions between educational settings, e.g. from early years settings to primary.



## Targets

The findings from studies such as the National Assessments of English Reading and Mathematics (NAERM) 2014 and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2015 highlight progress made in reading and Mathematics. Many of the targets for reading and Mathematics achievement, set in the *Strategy* in 2011, have been met in little over half of the *Strategy*'s lifetime.

In order to maintain focus to 2020, targets have been revisited, in particular where achievements are already at or near the benchmark set in 2011. The Interim Review also identified a gap in achievement between schools with the highest concentration of disadvantage (DEIS urban Band 1 at primary) and other schools. In order to keep focus on this cohort, a set of discrete targets have been identified in literacy and numeracy for DEIS schools, linked to the *DEIS Plan 2017*. Finally, an additional target focused on the key priority group of higher achieving students has been included. These targets are set out here:

1. Build on improvements in reading and Mathematics for all primary schools.

### National Assessments of English Reading and Mathematics – All Primary Schools

		Target for 2020 set in the 2011 Strategy <sup>4</sup>	Current Position (NAERM 2014)	New Target to 2020
Reading: At or above Level 3	Second class	40%	46%	50%
	Sixth class	40%	44%	50%
Reading: At or below Level 1	Second class	30%	22%	20%
	Sixth class	30%	25%	20%
Mathematics: At or above Level 3	Second class	40%	47%	53%
	Sixth class	40%	42%	50%
Mathematics: At or below Level 1	Second class	30%	26%	20%
	Sixth class	30%	27%	20%

2. Focus on reducing the gap between achievement in reading and Mathematics of pupils in DEIS Band 1 schools and pupils in all primary schools

### National Assessments of English Reading and Mathematics – DEIS Band 1 Primary Schools

		Target for 2020 set in the 2011 Strategy	Current Position (NAERM 2014)	New Target to 2020
Reading: At or above Level 3	Second class	No corresponding target in 2011 Strategy	18%	25%
	Sixth class		21%	27%
Reading: At or below Level 1	Second class		44%	40%
	Sixth class		47%	40%
Mathematics: At or above Level 3	Second class	No corresponding target in 2011 Strategy	21%	30%
	Sixth class		19%	27%
Mathematics: At or below Level 1	Second class		52%	45%
	Sixth class		50%	42%

<sup>4</sup>The most recent results at that point were from NAERM 2009

3. Build on improvements in reading and Mathematics for all post-primary schools. There will also be a specific focus on the needs of the highest achieving students.

**Programme for International Student Assessment – All Post-Primary Schools**

		<b>Target for 2020 set in the 2011 Strategy<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>Current Position (PISA 2015)</b>	<b>New Target to 2020<sup>6</sup></b>
<b>Reading Literacy: At or above Level 4</b>	<b>15 year olds</b>	34%	37%	40%
<b>Reading Literacy: At or above Level 5 (highest achievers)</b>	<b>15 year olds</b>	No corresponding target in 2011 Strategy	11%	12%
<b>Reading Literacy: At or below Level 1</b>	<b>15 year olds</b>	8.5%	10%	8.5%
<b>Mathematics: At or above Level 4</b>	<b>15 year olds</b>	31%	31%	36%
<b>Mathematics: At or above Level 5 (highest achievers)</b>	<b>15 year olds</b>	No corresponding target in 2011 Strategy	10%	13%
<b>Mathematics: At or below Level 1</b>	<b>15 year olds</b>	10.5%	15%	10.5%

4. Focus on reducing the gap between achievement in reading and Mathematics of students in DEIS post-primary schools and students in all post-primary schools

**Programme for International Student Assessment – DEIS Post-Primary**

		<b>Target for 2020 set in the 2011 Strategy</b>	<b>Current Position (PISA 2015)</b>	<b>New Target to 2020</b>
<b>Reading Literacy: At or above Level 4</b>	<b>15 year olds</b>	No corresponding target in 2011 Strategy	28%	33%
<b>Reading Literacy: At or above Level 5 (highest achievers)</b>	<b>15 year olds</b>		7%	10%
<b>Reading Literacy: At or below Level 1</b>	<b>15 year olds</b>		16%	12%
<b>Mathematics: At or above Level 4</b>	<b>15 year olds</b>	No corresponding target in 2011 Strategy	23%	29%
<b>Mathematics: At or above Level 5 (highest achievers)</b>	<b>15 year olds</b>		6%	10%
<b>Mathematics: At or below Level 1</b>	<b>15 year olds</b>		22%	16%

<sup>5</sup> The most recent results at that point were from PISA 2009

<sup>6</sup> New targets have been set in all areas where targets from the 2011 Strategy have already been reached

5. Consolidate and further increase the number of students taking Higher Level Mathematics in the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate examinations to reach the targets set in 2011, in a measured way, by 2020.

<b>Take up of Higher Level Mathematics at Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate</b>			
	<b>Position in 2011</b>	<b>Current Position (2016)</b>	<b>Target 2020</b>
<b>Junior Cycle Mathematics: Higher Level Candidates</b>	45%	55%	60%
<b>Leaving Certificate Mathematics: Higher Level Candidates</b>	17%	28%	30%

**The Interim Review Report**

In the 2011 *Strategy*, Chapter 2 set clear national improvement targets for literacy and numeracy (“What our young people should achieve”), while Chapters 3-8 looked in greater depth across the six Pillars identified in the *Strategy*. This Report (2017) follows the 2011 approach closely.

Part II of this Report provides a summary of progress under the *Strategy* to date. It sets a number of new and revised targets, where targets set in 2011 have already been reached, and identifies, based on the findings of the Interim Review, key priorities, particularly numeracy, for focus over the remainder of the *Strategy*, to 2020.

Part III examines progress across the six Pillars, setting out achievements and challenges relating to these, and suggests a number of additional actions for attention between 2017 and 2020.

Part IV sets out an Implementation Plan, with more detailed actions, based on the findings of the Interim Review. These detailed actions complement and do not replace those in the 2011 *Strategy*, which will continue to be implemented.

**Conclusion**

As with any journey, the half-way point is a good time to take stock. This Report of the Interim Review does not replace the (2011-2020) *Strategy*. The *Strategy* is, and will continue to be, the focal point, within our education system, for improving literacy and numeracy outcomes to 2020. This Report does, however, based on evidence, provide for new targets and re-focussed priorities, supported by additional actions to 2020. The findings from further national and international studies, up to PISA 2021, will act as indicators of the progress we will make over the remaining lifetime of the *Strategy*.

This Report of the Interim Review thus sets a positive and ambitious, but realistic, trajectory – to ensure that the *National Strategy: Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011-2020*, will fully achieve its objectives and go towards enabling our education system to realise the ambitious vision set out in the *Action Plan for Education 2016-2019*.

# PART 1 – INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Setting the review in context - National Strategy: Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011-2020

In July 2011, the Department of Education and Skills (the Department) launched the *National Strategy: Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011-2020* (the *Strategy*). The *Strategy* aims to raise standards in literacy and numeracy for young people in early years, primary and post-primary settings. Actions in the *Strategy* are identified across six Pillars of the education system:

<b>Pillar 1:</b>	<i>Enabling parents and communities to support children's literacy and numeracy development</i>
<b>Pillar 2:</b>	<i>Improving Teachers' and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE<sup>7</sup>) practitioners' professional practice</i>
<b>Pillar 3:</b>	<i>Building the capacity of school leadership</i>
<b>Pillar 4:</b>	<i>Improving the curriculum and the learning experience</i>
<b>Pillar 5:</b>	<i>Helping students with additional learning needs to achieve their potential</i>
<b>Pillar 6:</b>	<i>Improving assessment and evaluation to support better learning in literacy and numeracy</i>

What is meant by literacy and numeracy?	
<b>Literacy</b>	includes the capacity to read, understand and critically appreciate various forms of communication including spoken language, printed text, broadcast media and digital media.
<b>Numeracy</b>	encompasses the ability to use mathematical understanding and skills to solve problems and to meet the demands of day-to-day living in complex social settings. It means being able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ estimate, predict and calculate</li><li>■ identify patterns, trends and relationships</li><li>■ gather, interpret and represent data</li><li>■ express ideas mathematically</li><li>■ engage in problem solving, using investigation and reasoning skills</li><li>■ use digital technology to develop numeracy skills and understanding.</li></ul>

## 1.2 Outcome achievements to date: national and international

The 2011 *Strategy* places a focus on clearly defined outcomes, both quantitative and qualitative. As will be seen in Part II of this Report, many of its targets have already been reached, in little over half of the *Strategy's* ten-year lifespan (2011-2020).

<sup>7</sup> A list of acronyms used in this report is available in Appendix 1

The reports of both national and international tests since 2011 show that our primary and post-primary students are doing well, especially in reading, but with scope for improvement in Mathematics.

The National Assessments of English Reading and Mathematics (NAERM) at primary level, in 2014, show the first significant improvements in the performance of primary pupils in English reading and Mathematics at second and sixth classes in over thirty years. However, the gap between DEIS Band 1<sup>8</sup> schools and other schools remains significant.

Targets set in the *Strategy* seeking greater uptake at higher level at Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate Mathematics examinations, are well on the way to being met.

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) indicates that Ireland is above average in overall performance and doing very well in reading. Mean scores from PISA 2015 showed Ireland to be placed 3<sup>rd</sup> out of all 35 OECD countries in reading, with just one country, Singapore, having a significantly higher mean score. Although above average, Ireland is not among the highest performing countries in Mathematics. Mean scores from PISA 2015 showed Ireland to be placed 13<sup>th</sup> out of all OECD countries in Mathematics.

Even with this considerable progress being achieved since the *Strategy* was launched in 2011, it is clear there is still scope for further improvement. In addition, the findings from both PISA 2015 and TIMSS 2015 indicate that higher-achieving students in Ireland perform comparatively less well than their international peers in these tests. TIMSS 2015 did not show any statistically significant difference in performance between boys and girls in Mathematics at fourth class or second year. However, PISA 2015 found that girls significantly outperform boys in reading (though with the difference being less than the OECD average), while boys outperformed girls in Mathematics (with the difference being greater than the OECD average). Attention is needed to reduce these gender gaps in performance. PISA 2015 suggests that raising girls' confidence and proficiency in their use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), and their confidence in Mathematics, in the context of solving complex real-life mathematics problems, would be important in addressing this gender gap.

The *Action Plan for Education 2016-2019* (September 2016) commits Ireland to significantly reducing the gap between Ireland's achievement in numeracy and that of the top European performers.

### **1.3 Interim Review of the *Strategy* - Methodology**

An Interim Review of the *Strategy* commenced in 2015, in order to take stock of successes and challenges encountered in implementation to date.

For this Interim Review, the Department sought the views of every organisation and departmental section named in the *Strategy*, via a focused questionnaire. Inputs were also sought and received

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<sup>8</sup> Where the level of disadvantage is greatest, urban/town primary schools are classified as participating in Band 1 of DEIS

via questionnaires to organisations and bodies not named in the *Strategy*, but whose work is relevant to the *Strategy*, e.g. An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta & Gaelscolaíochta (COGG) and the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). Officials held follow-up meetings with stakeholders to allow for more in-depth discussion. A list of organisations who made submissions as part of the Interim Review is included in Appendix 2.

Focused meetings were also organised with groups of principals, teachers and students. *Review of National and International Reports on Literacy and Numeracy* (2016), a report analysing the findings from national and international surveys, was completed and published by the Department’s Inspectorate in February 2016. In addition, a forum was held in January 2016, where an outline of the findings and proposed priorities, based on the consultation process, was presented to stakeholders for consideration. The findings were also considered by the Literacy and Numeracy Implementation Advisory Group. A list of members of this Group in 2016 is included as Appendix 3. The Interim Review also took on board the targets set in the new *Action Plan for Education 2016-2019*. Finally, this Report also awaited the publication of two key international survey reports: PISA 2015 and TIMSS 2015. Evidence from all of these sources has informed the content and recommendations in this Interim Review.

As with any journey, the half-way point is a good time to take stock. This Report does not replace the *Strategy*. The *Strategy*, is, and will continue to be, the focal point for improving literacy and numeracy outcomes to 2020. It does, however, based on evidence, provide for new targets, where appropriate, focussed priorities and some additional actions to 2020.

The findings from further national and international studies, up to PISA 2021, will act as indicators, of the progress made up to the end of the *Strategy*.

### **1.4 Structure of this Report**

In the 2011 *Strategy*, Chapter 2 set clear national improvement targets for literacy and numeracy (“What our young people should achieve”), while Chapters 3-8 looked in greater depth across six Pillars in the education system.

This Report (2017) follows the 2011 approach closely.

Part II of this Report provides a summary of progress under the *Strategy* to date. It sets a number of new and revised targets, where targets set in 2011 have already been reached, and identifies, based on the findings of the Interim Review, key priorities for focus over the remainder of the *Strategy*, to 2020.

Part III examines progress across the six Pillars, setting out achievements and challenges relating to these, and suggests a number of additional actions for attention from 2017-2020.

Part IV is an Implementation Plan, with more detailed actions, based on the findings of the Interim Review. These detailed actions complement and do not replace those in the 2011 *Strategy*.

## **PART II – NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT TARGETS FOR LITERACY AND NUMERACY – SUMMARY 2011-2016; TARGET SETTING 2017-2020**

This Part of the Report gives a snapshot of progress on the national improvement targets in the *Strategy* since 2011. It also sets out developments regarding the targets in the *Strategy* and identifies new and revised targets in some areas, where appropriate. Finally, it identifies key priority areas where the Interim Review has shown that additional focus is needed to 2020.

### **2.1 National improvement targets for literacy and numeracy in the *Strategy* – Summary of Progress 2011-2016**

Chapter 2 of the *Strategy*, ‘What our Young People should Achieve’ is a short, focused chapter, outlining key national targets and objectives for literacy and numeracy. The following is a brief outline of significant developments across the key national targets and objectives.

#### *Improve our attitudes to literacy and numeracy*

- The Department has worked with NALA (the National Adult Literacy Agency) on a national campaign to reach parents and communities.
- New resources have been created, by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and others, to help engage parents with their children’s learning
- Collaboration between bodies and agencies with a stake in literacy and numeracy has been stepped up.

#### *Improve outcomes at early childhood level*

- The early childhood sector has undergone substantial change. There has been significant uptake of the State-funded ECCE programme, between 2011 and 2016.
- Funding and upcoming regulatory incentives have significantly increased the skills and qualifications level of the workforce, where almost all practitioners now have a minimum of QQI Level 5 qualification in Early Childhood Education and Care, and where approximately 18% of practitioners are graduates.
- The Better Start National Quality Development Service was launched by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in 2015 and this and other quality initiatives, including the *Aistear-Síolta Practice Guide* are contributing to embedding the use of *Síolta* and *Aistear* in the sector.
- Since 2015, externally conducted education-focussed inspections were introduced in early years’ settings by the Department of Education and Skills.

#### *Improve outcomes at primary school level*

- Provision has been made for more time to be spent on literacy and numeracy in primary schools.
- A new Primary Language Curriculum for infants to second class commenced implementation in September 2016, while curricular reforms for Mathematics and the general primary curriculum are being prepared for introduction over the next few years.

- The *Performance Report* of the National Assessments of English Reading and Mathematics (NAERM) 2014 (January 2015) showed significant improvement in reading and Mathematics among our young people, with performance exceeding targets set in the *Strategy* (Table 1 below).
- TIMSS 2015 (November 2016) found that, at primary level, Irish pupils' mean score in Mathematics was significantly higher in 2015 than in 2011 or in 1995.

*Improve outcomes at post-primary level*

- Being literate and numerate are two of the eight key skills prioritised within the new Framework for Junior Cycle (2015).
- All subject and short course specifications for Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate, as they are developed, will incorporate the enhancement of the skills of literacy and numeracy for students.
- PISA 2015 (December 2016) confirmed improvements in overall outcomes in reading and Mathematics for 15-year olds, which had previously been seen in PISA 2012, when compared with the outcomes from PISA 2009 (Table 3 below).
- Take up of higher level Mathematics at Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate has increased significantly (see Table 5). This has been strongly influenced not only by the award of the additional 25 points for CAO purposes at Leaving Certificate, but also by curricular reform and significant teacher professional learning opportunities.

*At primary and post-primary*

- The Department introduced mandatory school self-evaluation from 2012 for all primary and post-primary schools. The Department determined that schools should focus this self-evaluation on aspects of their teaching and learning, and especially (though not exclusively) on the enhancing of literacy and numeracy skills of their students.
- The *Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020* (October 2015) sets out an ambitious plan to embed Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) in teaching, learning and assessment over its lifetime. The implementation of the *Digital Strategy* is being supported by a fund of €210m, over the five years.

## **2.2 National improvement targets for literacy and numeracy in the *Strategy* –Targets**

The findings from national and international assessments, since 2014, show that significant progress has been made in respect of targets set in the *Strategy*, with several of the targets already achieved. The *Action Plan for Education 2016-2019* encourages Ireland to deliver the best education and training system in Europe within the next nine years. While fully conscious that these targets are but one aspect of the evidence presented as part of the Interim Review, the quantitative targets, as set out in the *Strategy*, provide a useful focal point for continued attention to literacy and numeracy improvement. In order to maintain focus to 2020, it is appropriate to revisit these targets where achievements are already at or near the benchmark set in 2011.



The findings also identified the gap in achievement between schools with the highest concentration of disadvantage (DEIS urban Band 1 at primary) and other schools. In order to keep focus on this cohort, a set of discrete targets have been identified in literacy and numeracy for DEIS schools, linked to the *DEIS Plan 2017*. It is important to emphasise that DEIS Band 1 is the most disadvantaged sub-set of DEIS schools overall which also includes DEIS Band 2 and DEIS rural schools. Focussing particularly on DEIS Band 1 at primary level highlights the very real need these disadvantaged young people have. If we are to improve their outcomes, it is necessary to identify their needs and from that point to focus on improving their achievements and lessen the gap between them and students in other schools.

Finally, an additional target focused on the key priority group of higher achieving students has been included.

The targets as adopted in the *Strategy*, in 2011, are set out in the Tables below. These Tables show the original targets and the position at the start of 2017 (based on the most recent studies). In some cases, targets have been revised, and additional targets added, to ensure that a positive but realistic course is maintained up to 2020.

**Targets for Literacy and Numeracy at primary - by 2020**

- Build on increases in the percentage of primary pupils performing at Level 3 or higher in reading and Mathematics in second and sixth class, while also significantly reducing the difference between pupils in DEIS Band 1 schools and pupils in all schools – to be measured by the National Assessments of English Reading and Mathematics in 2019.
- Build on decreases in the percentage of primary pupils performing at or below Level 1 in reading and Mathematics by the end of primary education, while also significantly reducing the difference between pupils in DEIS Band 1 schools and pupils in all schools – to be measured by the National Assessments of English Reading and Mathematics in 2019.
- Across both reading and Mathematics, it will be important to ensure that progress at second class is maintained by the time pupils reach sixth class.

**Table 1. National Assessments of English Reading and Mathematics – All Primary Schools**

		Target for 2020 set in the 2011 Strategy <sup>9</sup>	Current Position (NAERM 2014)	New Target to 2020
<b>Reading: At or above Level 3</b>	<b>Second class</b>	40%	46%	50%
	<b>Sixth class</b>	40%	44%	50%
<b>Reading: At or below Level 1</b>	<b>Second class</b>	30%	22%	20%
	<b>Sixth class</b>	30%	25%	20%
<b>Mathematics: At or above Level 3</b>	<b>Second class</b>	40%	47%	53%
	<b>Sixth class</b>	40%	42%	50%
<b>Mathematics: At or below Level 1</b>	<b>Second class</b>	30%	26%	20%
	<b>Sixth class</b>	30%	27%	20%

<sup>9</sup> The most recent results at that point were from NAERM 2009

**Table 2. National Assessments of English Reading and Mathematics – DEIS Band 1 Primary Schools**

		<b>Target for 2020 set in the 2011 Strategy</b>	<b>Current Position (NAERM 2014)</b>	<b>New Target to 2020</b>
<b>Reading: At or above Level 3</b>	<b>Second class</b>	No corresponding target in 2011 <i>Strategy</i>	18%	25%
	<b>Sixth class</b>		21%	27%
<b>Reading: At or below Level 1</b>	<b>Second class</b>		44%	40%
	<b>Sixth class</b>		47%	40%
<b>Mathematics: At or above Level 3</b>	<b>Second class</b>	No corresponding target in 2011 <i>Strategy</i>	21%	30%
	<b>Sixth class</b>		19%	27%
<b>Mathematics: At or below Level 1</b>	<b>Second class</b>		52%	45%
	<b>Sixth class</b>		50%	42%

***Targets for Literacy and Numeracy at post-primary – by 2020***

- Build on increases in the percentage of 15-year old students performing at or above Level 4 in PISA reading and Mathematics assessment while also significantly reducing the difference between students in DEIS schools and students in all schools.
- Build on decreases in the percentage of 15-year old students performing at or below Level 1 in PISA reading and Mathematics assessment while also significantly reducing the difference between students in DEIS schools and students in all schools.
- Increase the percentage of 15-year old students performing at or above Level 5 in PISA reading and Mathematics assessment. This is a new target to focus attention on the higher achieving students, while also decreasing the difference between students in DEIS schools and students in all schools.
- Consolidate and further increase the number of students taking Higher Level Mathematics in the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate examination to reach the targets set in 2011 in a measured way by 2020.

**Table 3. Programme for International Student Assessment – All Post-Primary Schools**

		<b>Targets for 2020 set in the 2011 Strategy<sup>10</sup></b>	<b>Current Position (PISA 2015)</b>	<b>New Target to 2020<sup>11</sup></b>
<b>Reading Literacy: At or above Level 4</b>	<b>15 year olds</b>	34%	37%	40%
<b>Reading Literacy: At or above Level 5 (highest achievers)</b>	<b>15 year olds</b>	No corresponding target in 2011 Strategy	11%	12%
<b>Reading Literacy: At or below Level 1</b>	<b>15 year olds</b>	8.5%	10%	8.5%
<b>Mathematics: At or above Level 4</b>	<b>15 year olds</b>	31%	31%	36%
<b>Mathematics: At or above Level 5 (highest achievers)</b>	<b>15 year olds</b>	No corresponding target in 2011 Strategy	10%	13%
<b>Mathematics: At or below Level 1</b>	<b>15 year olds</b>	10.5%	15%	10.5%

**Table 4. Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) – DEIS Post-Primary**

		<b>Target for 2020 set in the 2011 Strategy</b>	<b>Current Position (PISA 2015)</b>	<b>New Target to 2020</b>
<b>Reading Literacy: At or above Level 4</b>	<b>15 year olds</b>	No corresponding target in 2011 Strategy	28%	33%
<b>Reading Literacy: At or above Level 5 (highest achievers)</b>	<b>15 year olds</b>		7%	10%
<b>Reading Literacy: At or below Level 1</b>	<b>15 year olds</b>		16%	12%
<b>Mathematics: At or above Level 4</b>	<b>15 year olds</b>	No corresponding target in 2011 Strategy	23%	29%
<b>Mathematics: At or above Level 5 (highest achievers)</b>	<b>15 year olds</b>		6%	10%
<b>Mathematics: At or below Level 1</b>	<b>15 year olds</b>		22%	16%

<sup>10</sup> The most recent results at that point were from PISA 2009.

<sup>11</sup> New targets have been set in all areas where targets from the 2011 Strategy have already been reached.

**Table 5. Take up of Higher Level Mathematics at Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate**

	<b>Position in 2011</b>	<b>Current Position (2016)</b>	<b>Target 2020</b>
<b>Junior Cycle Mathematics: Higher Level Candidates</b>	45%	55%	60%
<b>Leaving Certificate Mathematics: Higher Level Candidates</b>	17%	28%	30%

### 2.3 Interim Review – What our young people should achieve – Looking forward to 2020

The findings from the Interim Review, including recently published international assessments, highlight many areas where progress has been made. Ireland’s progress in promoting a high level of literacy for all has been especially impressive (see Tables above). They also highlight areas that need more attention over the remaining years of the *Strategy*, if we want achieve our ambition, as set out in the *Action Plan for Education 2016-2019*, to have the best education and training system in Europe in the next nine years.

Feedback in relation to the implementation of the *Strategy* to date suggests that there may have been a greater focus on literacy than numeracy in the first years of this *Strategy*. While this has undoubtedly contributed to the very good progress in literacy, a stronger focus on numeracy is warranted in the next phase of the *Strategy*’s implementation. Although average Mathematics performance in Ireland was significantly above the OECD average in 2012 and 2015, Ireland still performed less well than a number of European countries, including Estonia, the Netherlands, Denmark and Finland. Mindful of this finding, the *Action Plan for Education 2016-2019* sets a clear direction for numeracy: to significantly reduce the gap that exists between Ireland and the top European performers.

In the remaining lifetime of the *Strategy*, 2017-2020, the key priority will be to engage all education stakeholders with “numeracy for learning and life”, in a similar manner to that experienced in literacy between 2011 and 2016.

In addition to focusing on numeracy, attention up to 2020 also needs to be focused on:

- Tackling educational disadvantage – with targets that will closely link the Literacy and Numeracy agenda with the *DEIS Plan 2017*
- Enabling higher-achieving learners to reach their full potential, in light of the strong messages from a series of international assessments which indicate that the attainment of higher-achieving Irish learners lags behind their international counterparts
- Embedding achievements in literacy – additional emphasis needs to be placed on gaining improvements in literacy for and through the Irish language and also on enhancing the digital literacy skills of our learners.

Making real progress in respect of these key priorities will depend on a range of actions by stakeholders across the education system. These are discussed in more detail across Parts III and IV but the most important key priority actions are listed here:

### 1. A 'step-change' in numeracy – key priority actions

- Support practitioners in ECCE settings and teachers in Early Start centres to gain a deeper understanding of numeracy concepts, the sequence in which children learn early mathematical ideas and identifying and providing materials and activities which further promote learning in this area, through the implementation of the national curriculum framework *Aistear* along with the roll out of the Department of Education and Skills' Early Years Education-focussed Inspections.

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- Redevelop the primary Mathematics curriculum, to include work on coding and ICT, starting with the curriculum for the junior classes, and implement in schools, supported by professional development for teachers.

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- Review the time allocation for Mathematics at primary, as part of a review by the NCCA of the structure of and time allocation in the primary school curriculum, to ensure that the allocation reflects learners' requirements.

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- Review the operation of the revised post-primary Mathematics curricula (formerly known as "Project Maths") and use the findings to inform the revision of curriculum for Junior Cycle Mathematics, for September 2018.

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- Roll out, by the full-time primary numeracy team in the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), of supports in priority areas, including cluster meetings for schools which are being developed as professional learning communities and *Team Teaching for Numeracy* seminars which also have a focus on learning support and inclusive teaching.

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- Examination by the PDST of ways to provide further opportunities to support numeracy across post-primary subject areas.

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- Promote and encourage projects and initiatives that heighten interest and excellence in Mathematics, in particular in DEIS schools, e.g. Science Fairs, BTYSTE, SciFest, CoderDojo, Intel MiniScientist, Smart Futures, Science Week, Discover Maths and Science.

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- Design resources for teachers and schools to support a broad range of teaching and learning methodologies, including inquiry-based learning and problem solving.

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- The *Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020* sets out an ambitious plan to embed ICT in teaching, learning and assessment over its lifetime, which coincides with the remaining lifetime of this *Strategy*.

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- A National *STEM Education Policy Statement*, based on the outcomes of the *Report of the STEM Education Review Group 2016* (November 2016), including a detailed implementation plan will be adopted in 2017. This *Policy Statement* will be cognisant of the importance of Mathematics as fundamental for all STEM education.

## **2. Tackling educational disadvantage**

The adoption of DEIS-specific targets will assist in maintaining a focus on reducing the literacy and numeracy achievement gap between DEIS and non-DEIS schools. Publication of the new *DEIS Plan 2017* is a significant step and its implementation will be the vehicle for driving progress. Among the actions in the *DEIS Plan 2017* will be delivery by the PDST of targeted development support for teachers in DEIS schools.

## **3. Enabling high achievers to reach their full potential.**

Targeted teachers' professional learning opportunities and updated guidelines will be provided to help higher achieving learners to reach their full potential, supported by resource development.

**4. Embedding achievements in literacy** – with emphasis on gaining improvements in literacy for and through the **Irish language** and also on enhancing the **digital literacy** skills of our learners.

Implementation of new curricula in Irish at both primary and post-primary, which aim to improve Irish as Language 1 in Irish medium schools and Irish as Language 2 in English medium schools, is a vital aspect to improving the quality of teaching and learning in the Irish language across the school. Implementation of the Department's *Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022* (October 2016) will also address issues regarding Irish language provision in Gaeltacht areas.

Implementation of the *Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020* will continue to improve engagement with digital literacy across the education continuum.

Achieving all of these actions will require extensive collaboration within the education system and with the wider community with a view to increasing behaviour shown to link to positive outcomes.


# PART III – DEVELOPMENTS ACROSS THE SIX PILLARS AND ACTIONS REQUIRED

This part of the Report of the Interim Review addresses developments since 2011 under each of the six Pillars in the *Strategy*.

Pillar 1:	Enabling parents and communities to support children’s literacy and numeracy development
Pillar 2:	Improving teachers’ and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) practitioners’ professional practice
Pillar 3:	Building the capacity of school leadership
Pillar 4:	Improving the curriculum and the learning experience
Pillar 5:	Helping students with additional learning needs to achieve their potential
Pillar 6:	Improving assessment and evaluation to support better learning in literacy and numeracy.

It also indicates areas where more attention is needed over the remaining years of the *Strategy*. A small number of actions, additional to those already in the *Strategy* or adjusted versions of actions in the *Strategy*, are listed at the end of each Pillar.

The original actions from 2011 will also continue to be key drivers of the implementation of the *Strategy*.



**PILLAR**  
**01**

## ENABLING PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN’S LITERACY AND NUMERACY DEVELOPMENT

### **Developments**

The *Strategy*, in 2011, sought to stimulate a ***national information campaign*** to raise awareness of the important role that parents and communities play in supporting the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Much has been achieved in this area, including:

- The National Adult Literacy Agency’s (NALA) “www.helpmykidlearn.ie” website and “Family Project” TV series which reached an average audience of 190,000
- The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government’s (DHPCLG) “Right to Read” campaign led by the public libraries
- Aontas’ ongoing work in developing adult literacy and basic skills.

National policies such as *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020* (April 2014) have recognised developing good literacy and numeracy skills, including digital literacy skills, as fundamental to the life chances of each individual and essential to the quality and equity of society. The Government’s *20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030* is prioritising the strengthening of the Irish language, which is further underpinned by the Government’s *Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022*.

In the words of NALA, “the *Strategy* has provided a central policy context for connecting children, young people and adults in literacy and numeracy discussions”. This kind of success must be sustained and built upon over the remaining lifespan of the *Strategy*. This is particularly important for homes and communities:

- Where English or Irish may not be the main language of communication or
- Where parents themselves have skills deficits in these areas, including lack of ICT skills.

The *Strategy* also looks at provision of **advice and information to parents** on how to support their children’s language, literacy and numeracy development. Such advice and support has to date been more readily available in literacy than in numeracy. Examples of initiatives being implemented include:

- The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment’s (NCCA) publication of materials that are targeted towards or can be used by parents in supporting their children’s language and mathematical learning, e.g. the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide* ([www.aistearsiolta.ie](http://www.aistearsiolta.ie)) for early years and the toolkit of support materials for the new Primary Language Curriculum ([www.curriculumonline.ie](http://www.curriculumonline.ie))
- The distribution of promotional material for [www.helpmykidlearn.ie](http://www.helpmykidlearn.ie) in early years settings, to every crèche, pre-school, parent and toddler group
- The National Council for Special Education’s (NCSE) information booklets for parents of children with special educational needs on the transition between educational settings <http://ncse.ie/information-booklets-pamphlets-2>.

During the first phase of the school self-evaluation process (2012-2016) schools were expected to prioritise literacy and numeracy. In the second phase to 2020, both primary and post-primary are required to continue to monitor the progress they are making on achieving the goals they have set to improve literacy and numeracy. School self-evaluation also requires schools to complete short School Self-Evaluation (SSE) reports and School Improvement Plans (SIPs). Schools are expected to make summaries of these available to their school community, including all parents. This provides a very useful means of communicating with parents about the actions taken, to date, in schools to improve literacy and numeracy and the targets set for improvement. Some schools have a long tradition of involvement with actions to promote parental engagement in children’s learning (whether through or in addition to parent/teacher meetings) and/or have additional supports to facilitate this. For example, under the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) initiative, Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) coordinators play a critical role in supporting the development, implementation, evaluation and review of the school’s DEIS Action Plan, particularly in the promotion of parental involvement. HSCL Coordinators, who are allocated by the Department of Education and Skills, are teachers who are released from teaching duties to engage in full-time liaison work between the home, the school, and the community.

Evidence provided by schools suggests, however, that the flow of information from schools to parents can still be improved.



Research showing activities that relate to higher achievement in literacy and numeracy, such as those outlined in the recommendations of the *Context Report* from NAERM 2014 (September 2016), need to be communicated widely, as do resources that are available, such as the digital resources in public libraries.

Support for parents should include:

- Placing more emphasis on parents' role in the development of numeracy skills, across the full range from simple sums to problem solving, encouraging the correct understanding and use of mathematical terms
- Increasing parents' awareness of the link between children's language skills in English and Irish and development of other skills, such as numeracy
- Increasing awareness of the possibilities for students who follow a STEM career path, for which Mathematics is fundamental
- Supporting children's learning of the Irish language
- Promoting digital skills as intrinsic to modern literacy and numeracy
- Continuing to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the value of reading and structured talk, i.e. talk which involves parental questioning and explanation, introduces vocabulary and helps to develop a child's thinking, verbal reasoning, ability to form sentences, link them into conversation etc., and using real-life routines and experiences to do this.

Libraries have a central role to play in supporting family literacy, providing a space where parents and children access free literacy and numeracy resources, including extensive digital resources. The establishment of a collaborative approach for the provision of educational support and leisure reading materials between schools and public libraries is an objective of the *Public Library Strategy 2013-2017 Opportunities for All*, which reinforces the objectives of this *Strategy*.

A significant minority of adults need support to improve their own literacy and numeracy skills. Over 17% of Irish adults sampled scored at or below Level 1 in literacy and over 25% scored at or below level one in numeracy in the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) Report of 2013.

The *Further Education and Training Strategy (FET) 2014 -2019* (April 2014) incorporates a specific strategy on literacy and numeracy for the adult sector. It contains 12 elements to promote and coordinate adult literacy provision, to be further elaborated on over the life of the *FET Strategy*, including increased promotion and awareness, increased participation, completion and attainment at National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) levels 1-3, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Continuing Professional Development (CPD), initial assessment and screening, improved data collection, prioritisation of numeracy amongst others.

A national awareness campaign "*Take the First Step*" took place in September 2016, managed by the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) on behalf of SOLAS. This campaign, which was organised as part of the *Further Education and Training Strategy 2014 -2019*, focused on helping to encourage parents with skills needs to access supports to enhance their own literacy and numeracy skills.

The work done in supporting the adult population’s literacy and numeracy needs, through the implementation of the *Further Education and Training Strategy 2014 –2019*, will complement the efforts within schools, and vice versa, since many adult learners will be the parents or grandparents of school-going children.

The *Strategy* advises of the need to **identify and learn from effective initiatives** to support children’s well-being and learning. Effective practice can be seen across:

- Long-established national organisations (including NALA and AONTAS)
- School initiatives, such as DEIS
- Localised, highly cohesive projects
- Some excellent partnerships developed between third level institutions or further education settings, and schools and communities in urban disadvantaged areas.

These and other initiatives demonstrate how community and family learning can work as a bridge between home and formal education. The challenge is now to find ways of mainstreaming the learning from such initiatives to support the national effort for further improvement on literacy, but especially numeracy.

The *Strategy* addresses the need **to target, coordinate and strengthen links between home and education settings**, and to develop and promote **models of good practice** to support literacy and numeracy acquisition. Initiatives need to complement each other, and in this regard, the need for a cohesive and coordinated national approach is recognised. The following are regarded as good examples of coordinated approaches:

- The “Right to Read” National Steering Group
- The Better Start National Quality Development Service
- The strong partnerships which are developing between Local Authorities’ libraries and schools, through a dedicated formal twinning process
- The National Steering Committee, chaired by SOLAS, which has been working towards raising awareness of opportunities for adults to improve their literacy and numeracy skills under the *Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019*.

## **Additional actions – to 2020**

### *Actions to raise awareness*

- Organise an annual literacy and numeracy forum to drive progress and provide further opportunities to promote good practice.

### *Actions to support parents*

- Projects that promote interest and excellence in Mathematics, in particular in DEIS schools, will be encouraged and promoted.
- Provide additional guidance to support parents in developing their children’s literacy and numeracy skills as part of everyday life. This should result in an increase in behaviour by parents that has been shown to correlate to positive outcomes. Key indicators for this will be to:
  - Increase the percentage of parents who strongly agree that they set aside time for their child to read for fun or enjoyment on most days to 45% by 2020, from 37% in NAERM 2014.
  - Increase the percentage of 15-year olds who report that their parents discuss with them how well they are doing at school several times a week to 60%, from 56% in PISA 2015.
- Further strengthen reporting between educational settings and parents, so as to promote engagement in children’s learning, with particular attention on points of transition between ECCE and primary and also between primary and post-primary.

### *Strengthen collaboration for literacy and numeracy*

- Promote library usage to support family literacy, encouraging all children and families to avail of the free membership of their local library. Key indicators for this will be to:
  - Increase the percentage of pupils in sixth class who borrow books from a public library at least monthly to 60% by 2020, from 47% of pupils in NAERM 2014.
  - Increase the proportion of boys reading on a daily basis to at least 60% and the proportion of girls to at least 70% by 2020, from 52% (boys) and 64% (girls) in PISA 2012.
- Strengthen inter-agency and inter-departmental collaboration on the development of resources and guidance for literacy and numeracy.
- Strengthen the involvement of educational psychology with literacy and numeracy actions, in particular through the National Educational Psychological Service.
- Schools should consider how best to engage with the student voice, as key partners in the learning process. It is intended to introduce legislation on a Parent and Student Charter which aims to improve how schools engage with parents and students.



## IMPROVING TEACHERS' AND EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION (ECCE) PRACTITIONERS' PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

### **Developments**

The *Strategy* targets the upskilling of ECCE practitioners. A lot has been achieved since 2011:

- The State-funded ECCE Programme, which was launched in January 2010, offered universal provision of one pre-school year for each child. From September 2016, this has been extended so that children will be able to start in free pre-school when they reach 3 years of age and to remain in free pre-school until they transfer to primary school (provided that they are not older than 5 ½ years at the end of the pre-school year). The expansion of this programme provides additional opportunities to enhance the literacy and numeracy skills of our very young learners.
- *Aistear* – the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework gives clear guidance to practitioners on supporting children’s literacy and numeracy in their early years setting. In 2015, the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide* was published online by the NCCA and is proving an invaluable online resource for early years practitioners in the implementation of *Aistear* across the sector. The guidance provided includes assistance for practitioners with encouraging and extending children’s understanding and acquisition of key numeracy terms, through the regular use of and modelling of appropriate mathematical language. In addition, mathematical thinking is promoted through the provision of a learning environment which provides for open-ended resources, materials and games, linked to the everyday events in children’s lives.
- The new education-focussed ECCE inspections by the Department’s Inspectorate will further promote and support improvements in early years’ education. The inspections focus on the development of children’s skills, concepts and knowledge, including in literacy and numeracy, as well as their dispositions towards learning. Inspection reports are available on the Department’s website ([www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)). In the numeracy sphere, the Inspection team evaluates current numeracy provision in early years settings using the early years Inspection tool. The team also provides guidance and advice to practitioners to ensure that children have daily exposure to key early numeracy concepts, experiences and materials. These concepts include exploration by children of number words and symbols, shapes, counting patterns, spatial awareness, measurement and data analysis all experienced through the medium of play rather than didactic practices.
- The Better Start National Quality Development Service was launched by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) in 2015. Its mentors support early years practitioners to use the *Aistear* Curriculum Framework to plan and provide rich and appropriate experiences for children.
- There has been a significant increase in the level of qualifications achieved by practitioners in ECCE contexts, particularly at NFQ Level 5, due to systemic encouragement provided by the *Strategy*, regulatory change and contractual incentives, as well as DCYA-funded access for practitioners to qualifications. The focus is now on upskilling as many as possible in the workforce to Level 6 and increasing the numbers of graduate-led services across the sector.

It will be important, as these developments progress and lessons are learned, to ensure that embedding early literacy and numeracy best practice across the early years sector and in the junior infants classes in schools is continued and strengthened.

The *Strategy* places a strong emphasis on the quality and content of initial teacher education (ITE) programmes to enable the targets outlined to be achieved. The organisational arrangements for the provision of initial teacher education were reviewed by an international panel of experts chaired by Professor Pasi Sahlberg in 2012. The Review proposed a fundamental change and a reduction in the number of institutions from 19 to six new “centres for teacher education” to facilitate more research based programmes and a broader remit extending from early childhood, to primary, post-primary and further education. The findings were accepted by the Department and noted by Government. It was considered that the changes would complement the reconfiguration of programme content. The institutions concerned have taken a positive and constructive approach to the implementation of the reforms with the support of the Higher Education Authority. The institutions involved in three of the proposed centres have agreed to merge while the others have entered more broadly based arrangements aimed at better coordination and cooperation.

Since 2011, both **the primary and post-primary ITE sectors** have extended the duration of their ITE programmes, and literacy and numeracy are mandatory areas of study within these programmes. However, it is noted, from the consultation, that the extended school placement has presented challenges to both the school system and ITE providers in terms of the strain on supervisory resources and the fulfilment of the differing roles in the process, as set out Teaching Council’s *Guidelines on School Placement*, for example:

- the additional workload on the Higher Education Institutions’ (HEIs) Placement tutors and on schools, due to the additional time being spent by students in school placements
- cooperating teachers in the partner schools need training to support their student teachers, especially with increased student-teacher presence in the schools.

While additional funding has been made available to HEIs from 2015 onwards, other options to address these concerns need to be considered. Potential areas for development include: increased collaboration between HEIs, agreement of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) between HEIs and partner schools and balancing student intake with capacity in the school system. A partnership approach to school placement, built on communication and collaboration, and a recognition of the value of each partner (school, student teacher and HEI) will be important for the process.

The provision of advice on the **entry requirements for primary and post-primary ITE programmes** has proven a complex task. Concerns have been raised by stakeholders as to whether Leaving Certificate results (converted to CAO points) are an optimum guide/measure for entry to ITE and also the implications that raising the academic requirements in English, Irish and Mathematics would have for the diversity of the applicant profile. The Teaching Council requested that the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) consider the issues raised. The ESRI’s report together with the Teaching Council’s advice, is currently being considered by the Department.

The *Strategy* refers to the need to promote **post-graduate courses to equip teachers for Irish-medium settings**. The Teaching Council noted that, at both primary and post-primary, a significant standard of Irish is needed to teach Irish as a subject and also to use Irish as a means of

communication and as a medium of instruction. A number of challenges to achieving this goal were highlighted by stakeholders during the review:

- there is a disincentive for ITE students (for the post-primary sector) to study through Irish, based on the perception that it is easier for student-teachers to perform better in their assessments by studying through English rather than through Irish
- there is no ITE provision currently available through Irish for primary education.

The Government's *Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022* will address some of these issues as they relate to ITE and to teaching not only the Irish language, but also of teaching through the medium of Irish.

The *Strategy* also highlights the need for **continued support for teachers' literacy and numeracy practice**. Among the significant measures which have been put in place in this area are:

- Support for newly-qualified teachers through the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT)
- A particular emphasis on literacy and numeracy within the *Droichead* model, established by the Teaching Council for mentoring and induction of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs)
- Acknowledgement, in the Teaching Council's newly-developed national framework of teachers' professional learning opportunities, *Cosán*, of the many ways in which teachers learn. *Cosán* provides a clear and accessible framework for that ongoing professional learning to be recognised, in the context of teachers' status as registered professionals
- Provision of significant dedicated Continuing Professional Development (CPD) support for literacy and numeracy to encourage innovation in teaching and learning, including dedicated Literacy (English and Irish), Numeracy and Language teams. The Department's Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) prioritises SSE as a feature of provision across its teams and support services
- Delivery of CPD to support the implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle (2015), including literacy and numeracy as embedded elements in its work. This is in line with best practice regarding the manner in which literacy and numeracy should be encountered by students during lessons, acknowledging that "Being Literate" and "Being Numerate" are Key Skills of the Framework for Junior Cycle (2015)
- Provision of CPD to support the implementation of the reformed post primary mathematics specifications. This CPD focuses on the teacher as reflective practitioner. The classroom practices supported by this approach promote the implementation of the key skills of literacy and numeracy
- Establishment of the Department's Mathematics postgraduate programme, providing training for out-of-field teachers of Mathematics at post-primary level – led by EPI-STEM the National Centre for STEM Education (formerly the National Centre for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching and Learning) at the University of Limerick. This programme is providing substantial professional development opportunities for post-primary teachers, with approximately 1,000 teachers of Mathematics gaining a post-graduate qualifications as a result
- Prioritisation of DEIS schools for literacy and numeracy support

- Introduction of a requirement that all online summer courses incorporate literacy, numeracy and digital skills within their programmes
- Continued development of a range of models of teachers' professional learning opportunities, including blended learning approaches, involving a mix of school-based and whole-staff learning, on-line and externally facilitated models
- Commissioning of COGG, in collaboration with NCCA, to prepare resource materials for use in English-medium schools that will enhance the teaching of the Irish language
- Adoption of the *Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020*, which sets a framework for embedding digital technology across the continuum of teacher education and other departmental supported teacher education programmes.

SOLAS has developed a FET *Professional Development Strategy* in consultation with the sector. Literacy and numeracy have been identified as a development need of practitioners in the context of working with the FET learner. This will inform professional development provision for ETB practitioners including Youthreach staff.

Continued efforts are needed to ensure teachers' awareness, understanding and practice of literacy and numeracy pedagogies are in line with best practice. The *Chief Inspector's Report for 2010-12* (published 2013) noted some less than satisfactory teaching in Irish and Mathematics at both primary and post-primary in a minority of schools. Messages from national and international studies, including TIMSS 2015 and PISA 2015, also highlighted some areas that may need additional attention. In particular, for Mathematics, greater focus on Shape and Space, Measuring and the skill of Reasoning is required at primary level while at post-primary level greater focus on Geometry and Algebra and the skill of Applying is required.

Overall we need to ensure that higher achieving students are stretched to reach their full potential and that problem solving and higher-level thinking skills are emphasised. This has been highlighted in findings from NAERM 2014, PISA 2015 and TIMSS 2015. PISA 2015 also indicated a need to increase girls' interest in Mathematics and to strengthen their performance.

### **Additional actions – to 2020**

#### *Early Childhood Care and Education*

- Complete the review of the quality of further and higher education and training programmes in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE).
- Increase the focus on oral language, early literacy and early Mathematics in level 7 and 8 degrees for ECCE practitioners.
- Support practitioners in ECCE settings and teachers in Early Start centres to implement the national curriculum framework *Aistear* and improve the learning experience, through roll-out of CPD in *Aistear* and *Síolta* through the *Síolta/Aistear* initiative and with the roll out of the Department of Education and Skills' Early Years Inspections. As part of these, practitioners will be helped to gain a deeper understanding of numeracy concepts, the sequence in which children learn early mathematical ideas and identifying and providing materials and activities which further promote learning in this area. Practitioners will need to ensure there is regular exchange of information and ideas with parents to extend young children's mathematical learning and problem solving skills between the home and early years environment.

### *Early Childhood Care and Education*

- Support ECCE practitioners to make structured self-review part of ECCE practice, and with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy development based on the *Aistear* framework. The Department of Education and Skills' Early Years Inspectorate will encourage the practitioners to develop their self-evaluation processes within the setting to assess current levels of numeracy provision, and plan further learning opportunities. Ensuring engagement with numeracy by both boys and girls is embedded at an early age will be important, as part of this.

### *Initial Teacher Education*

- Complete the review of entry requirements into Initial Teacher Education including in the case of primary teaching, the potential of raising the minimum grades required in Leaving Certificate Mathematics, English and Irish.
- Provide additional training to support cooperating teachers in the partner schools for ITE, subject to resources.
- Develop and promote new partnership models between ITE providers, schools, student teachers and HEI Placement tutors.
- Request, in the context of the review of the "Initial Teacher Education: criteria and guidelines for programme providers" by the Teaching Council, that any revised criteria and guidelines take account of the aims and objectives of this *Strategy*, in particular those relating to numeracy, Irish and digital literacy.
- Review the implementation of the recommendations of the International Review Panel (led by Professor Pasi Sahlberg) on Initial Teacher Education Provision.

### *Teachers' Professional Learning Opportunities*

- Ensure continuing access to learning opportunities in literacy and numeracy in pedagogy, subject knowledge and assessment for teachers and providers in special, primary, post-primary and Youthreach contexts and continue the development of quality assurance frameworks.
- Roll out of supports in priority areas by the full-time primary numeracy team in the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), including cluster meetings for schools which are being developed as professional learning communities and Team Teaching for Numeracy seminars which also have a focus on learning support and inclusive teaching.
- Examine ways to explore further opportunities to support numeracy across post-primary subject areas, to address areas highlighted by research such as the gender differences in Mathematics achievement (PISA 2015).
- Design resources for teachers and schools to support a broad range of teaching and learning methodologies, including inquiry-based learning and problem solving.
- Provide opportunities for teacher professional learning in support of the new Mathematics curriculum in primary, as this is implemented.
- Implement the Department's *Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022*.
- Provide post-graduate opportunities for primary teachers in Mathematics and for primary and post-primary teachers of Irish, subject to resources.
- Prioritise digital literacy across the continuum of teacher education, i.e. in ITE, Induction and teachers' professional learning, with emphasis on its integration and use by students in learning across the curriculum, as set out in the *Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020*.



### **Developments**

The role of leaders in ECCE settings was not referred to in the *Strategy*, as the State funding of ECCE was in its early stages of development. Given the extensive recent developments in the sector, additional attention for leaders in these settings should become a feature as the *Strategy* progresses.

The *Strategy* seeks to **improve the understanding and support for Principals and Deputy Principals of the most effective approaches for improving the teaching of literacy and numeracy, including in the context of school self-evaluation (SSE)**. It was always intended that new and aspiring principals and deputy principals would also be included. Significant progress has been made:

- The Education Centre Network has strongly supported principals' and deputy principals' professional learning
- The establishment of the Centre for School Leadership in 2015, whose responsibility extends across the continuum of leadership development from pre-appointment training through to the induction of newly appointed school leaders, supports continuing professional development
- The IPPN and NAPD have continued to be key players in facilitating CPD for their members.

School self-evaluation (SSE) is becoming embedded in school practice, supported by Inspectorate advisory visits. The success of SSE to date has been due to the commitment of many, but in particular to the engagement of school leadership with the process. It was perhaps to be expected that most schools initially focused on literacy initiatives, followed by numeracy, which contributes to an overall message coming through in the review that greater emphasis should now be placed on numeracy. In Phase 2 of SSE, 2016-2020, schools are expected to continue to have a meaningful focus on literacy and numeracy, in the context of their focus on teaching and learning.

Within the consultation process, it was also noted that, in order to build on the progress to date, school leaders are seeking:

- More post-holders to support and progress the schools' priority areas e.g. literacy and numeracy within SSE
- More meaningful engagement during professional learning time to embed and align current initiatives, but also to build synergies and to balance and interpret the relationship between the different initiatives.

There are other areas which have been highlighted for focus, in the context of the Interim Review of the *Strategy*. One such area, relates to the importance of recognising the role of more broadly defined leaders of learning, who can contribute to literacy and numeracy in the school community. Attention has also been drawn to the use of assessments in schools and the need to ensure that assessments and testing data are used appropriately.

### **Additional actions – to 2020**

- Support leaders in ECCE settings to implement the national curriculum framework *Aistear* and improve the learning experience, through CPD in *Aistear* and *Síolta*, through the *Síolta/Aistear* initiative.
  - Support leaders in ECCE to make structured self-review part of ECCE practice, and with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy development based on the *Aistear* framework.
  - Continue to provide professional learning opportunities for principals and deputy principals to further develop and enhance their skills in supporting numeracy, Irish and digital literacy in their schools, and the use of assessment to support this in their schools.
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## IMPROVING THE CURRICULUM AND THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

### **Developments**

Children's enjoyment of, motivation and engagement in learning are important factors that influence their learning across the curriculum, whether in a pre-school or in a Leaving Certificate class.

In the *Strategy*, there is a focus on the **curriculum in ECCE settings**. The extension of the State-funded ECCE Programme up to two years now gives further significant opportunities for:

- *Aistear* to be appropriately and comprehensively implemented
- The use of the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide* to support self-evaluation as part of ECCE practice
- The re-invigoration of literacy and numeracy in the curriculum and day-to-day pedagogies of ECCE settings.

The new education-focussed inspections for ECCE settings will support and enhance the quality agenda, as will the Better Start National Quality Development Service.

As these developments facilitate promotion of emergent language, literacy and numeracy skills, the potential to further enhance development of the key priorities, in particular numeracy skills and ensuring equal engagement by girls with numeracy, even at this early stage in their learning, should be explored.

In relation to the **curriculum for primary schools**, the central vehicle for progress in literacy which has emerged is the new Primary Language Curriculum. It commenced phased implementation for pupils from junior infants to second class from September 2016. There is a separate curriculum for English-medium and Irish-medium schools. The new curriculum offers an exciting opportunity not just for language learning but also for literacy development. It will also allow for the revisiting of *Aistear* to strengthen the messaging around literacy and numeracy. The NCCA Priority Learning Unit (PLU) for Communication, Language and Literacy for pupils with Moderate, Severe and Profound General Learning Disability (GLD) is now a key component of the new Primary Language Curriculum. Between 2016 and 2020, the Primary Language Curriculum development by the NCCA will focus on third to sixth classes.

NEPS has developed a web-based resource: *A Balanced Approach to Literacy Development in the Early Years*. This is available for English (Language 1), and the Gaelige (Language 1) version is in development by COGG.

Following the introduction of the *Strategy* in 2011, a specific focus for primary schools was on increasing the amount of time spent on literacy and numeracy, which was to include integration of literacy and numeracy skills in all curriculum areas. Circular 56/2011 requested schools to increase the amount of time spent on literacy and numeracy from January 2012 onwards:

- For literacy skills, particularly in the first language of the school (English or Irish), by one hour per week
- For Mathematics by 70 minutes per week.

It has been suggested, in the consultation process, that the integration of literacy and numeracy across the full primary curriculum needs further support and resources made available to support for example, teachers, incorporating numeracy in arts, geography or PE classes. This will help children to see aspects of literacy and numeracy as part of their everyday lives without in any way diminishing the time or richness of such other curricular areas.

The NAERM *Context Report* (2016) by the Educational Research Centre (ERC), identifies that a stronger emphasis is needed on numeracy in primary schools. This may mean that different approaches are required for Mathematics in general, as well as different approaches to numeracy across the curriculum.

There are also concerns that the implementation of the *Strategy* has had an adverse effect on provision for Irish, particularly where it is language 2. It has not often been allocated extra time in schools and in some schools, the time allocated to Irish may have been reduced. Its place, alongside English, in the new Primary Language Curriculum should address some of these issues.

The *Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020* emphasises the importance of embedding digital learning across the curriculum. In 2016, the NCCA commenced work on development of a new primary Mathematics curriculum for junior classes, including the place of coding in Mathematics. A new Mathematics curriculum for junior classes is due to be finalised by the NCCA in autumn 2018.

The NCCA has also begun a review of the structure of and time allocation in the primary school curriculum, to ensure that the allocation reflects learners' requirements, which will include considerations related to time allocation for Mathematics. The NCCA is considering areas across the primary curriculum where coding skills and practice could apply, in this review.

These developments will provide opportunities to further consolidate the integration of literacy, numeracy and digital skills across the primary curriculum and for all classes, as well as providing scope to challenge higher-performing learners.

There are a number of actions associated with **post-primary curricular development** in the *Strategy* in place. Progress in Mathematics at post-primary level, includes:

- New Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate Mathematics syllabuses, colloquially known as “Project Maths”, which are now fully implemented. The development of new syllabuses for Mathematics pre-dated the *Strategy*, but their implementation and impact are closely linked
- Increased time provision for numeracy, as set out in Departmental Circulars
- A notable increase in the percentage of candidates taking higher level Mathematics in the Leaving Certificate, from 17% in 2010 to 28% in 2016 - the target in the *Strategy* is 30% by 2020

- A notable increase in the percentage of candidates taking higher level Mathematics in the Junior Cycle, from 45% in 2010 to 55% in 2016 - the target in the *Strategy* is 60% by 2020.

The Chief Examiner's Reports on Mathematics in the Leaving and Junior Certificate Examinations 2015 highlight and acknowledge the systemic change to Mathematics education and learning arising from the introduction of the new Mathematics syllabuses. The Reports would suggest that, in post-primary contexts, a greater emphasis is needed on problem solving, autonomous and collaborative learning and exposing students to situations where they are expected to hypothesise and explain their reasoning. The Reports also give a cautionary note that students, at the Ordinary / Higher level divide, need to consider seriously which paper they should choose, since the Chief Examiner believes that "not all of those who opt for the Higher level are necessarily making the optimum choice". In this context, the original targets related to Higher Level uptake at Junior and Leaving Certificate Mathematics examinations from the 2011 *Strategy* are being retained.

The findings from PISA 2015 show that Irish students' achievement in Mathematics is above the OECD average but is not at the level of the top performing countries. PISA and TIMSS 2015 both indicate a need to improve the performance of our higher-performing students both at primary and at post-primary level. We need to focus on developing pupils' cognitive skills to a greater extent by focussing on skills development as provided for in the primary and post-primary curricula. Concentrated efforts are required to increase emphasis on problem solving and higher-level thinking in Mathematics and, especially, to increase girls' interest in Mathematics and to strengthen their performance.

The impact of the changes and the increased uptake of higher level Mathematics is being kept under review. The NCCA, in 2016, commenced a post-implementation review of post-primary Mathematics. This will determine what changes, if any, are needed and will inform the revision of curriculum at Junior Cycle Mathematics, for September 2018.

The *Framework for Junior Cycle 2015* emphasises the role of skills development. Being literate and numerate are prioritised as two of the eight key skills. The development of new specifications in **Junior Cycle English and Irish** was prioritised. As outlined above, a new Mathematics curriculum had already been introduced at Junior Cycle.

The Junior Cycle English specification was implemented for first years from September 2014. It places an emphasis on oral language, reading and writing. Assessment emphasis has changed. There are now two Classroom-Based Assessments (CBA): one concentrating on oral communication and one on students gathering a collection of their own writing. There is an Assessment Task related to the second CBA, linked to the collection of the student's writing. In addition, there will be a final examination organised by the State Examinations Commission (SEC). The first Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) will issue in autumn 2017. CPD is being provided by Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) team for school leaders and teachers. Work has been carried out by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) to align the English statements for the Junior Cycle Schools Programme (JCSP) with the new English specification.

Development of the Junior Cycle Irish specification is being advanced, but with additional time being given to ensuring that the specific language and literacy needs of native speakers of Irish

and students in Irish-medium settings will be catered for, including their cognitive and higher-order thinking skills. Thus the new specifications will be introduced in September 2017, not 2016 as originally planned. This delay is an outcome of the NCCA consultation on Junior Cycle Irish. To date, it has been agreed that there will be a two-track approach differentiating between schools that have Irish as Language 1 or Language 2, similar to the approach offered at primary level. There will also be a particular focus on oral skills to complement the emphasis at both Primary and Senior Cycle.

The NCCA has developed Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs) (Communication; Literacy and Numeracy) for those students with low, mild or moderate general learning difficulties (GLD) at Junior Cycle.

In addition, all emerging subject specifications in Junior Cycle now explicitly support “being literate” and “being numerate” as key skills for Junior Cycle students. This multifaceted approach will reinforce the importance of these skills for all students.

The creation of short courses on Digital Media Literacy and on Coding, by the NCCA, offer additional opportunities for schools to focus on the development of digital literacy skills by their students. ICT should be seen as a very useful resource that should become an integral part of learning to reflect its integral role in a student’s life outside of the classroom. Resources available include Census@School, a resource developed by the Maths Development Team that can be used across subject areas to promote digital literacy.

**Senior Cycle developments are to follow on from Junior Cycle.** Reflecting the prioritisation of the junior cycle developments, senior cycle developments have proceeded at a more gradual pace and on a more limited scale. In addition to developments regarding Leaving Certificate Mathematics, work is well advanced on adjustments to other subject specifications, including the suite of Leaving Certificate Sciences, Applied Mathematics, Physical Education and Economics, which, when enacted, will promote enhancement of literacy and numeracy. The NCCA is working on the development of Computer Science, including coding, as a new Leaving Certificate subject, which is due to be ready for introduction in September 2018.

The NCCA has in 2017 begun a review of Senior Cycle programmes (including Leaving Certificate Applied) and vocational pathways in Senior Cycle with a view to recommending areas for development that will benefit all young people (16-18 years), as resources permit.

## **Additional actions – to 2020**

### Early Years Education

- Support ECCE practitioners and teachers in Early Start centres with comprehensive implementation of the *Aistear* curriculum framework and building reflective practice around their work, in particular development of early literacy and numeracy skills.
- Enhance the relationship between pre-schools and primary schools, completing the development of reporting templates for the transition by children between these two settings.

### Primary and Post-Primary

- Ensure that numeracy, in its broadest sense, is prioritised in all curricular developments in primary and post-primary.
- Review of targets for literacy and numeracy in the National Assessments of English Reading and Mathematics (NAERM) and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in light of progress (see Part II).
- Redevelopment of the primary Mathematics curriculum, to include work on coding and ICT, starting with the curriculum for the junior classes, and its implementation in schools, supported by professional development for teachers.
- Ensure a greater focus on Shape and Space, Measuring and the development of pupils' cognitive skills in particular the skill of Reasoning at primary level.
- Review the time allocation for Mathematics at primary, as part of a review by the NCCA of the structure of and time allocation in the primary school curriculum, to ensure that the allocation reflects learners' requirements.
- Review the operation of the revised post-primary Mathematics curricula (known as "Project Maths") and use this to inform the revision of curriculum for Junior Cycle Mathematics, for September 2018.
- Ensure a greater focus on Geometry and Algebra and the development of students' cognitive skills in particular the skill of Applying at post-primary level.
- Roll out of new curricular developments in Irish at primary and Junior Cycle.
- Integrate digital literacy across all aspects of learning, in accordance with the *Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020*.
- All curricular developments at primary and post-primary level should seek opportunities to enable higher-achieving students to reach their full potential.



## HELPING STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS TO ACHIEVE THEIR POTENTIAL

### *Developments*

The *Strategy* stresses the importance of literacy and numeracy provision as key educational components for enhancing the educational outcomes for **students experiencing educational disadvantage in its many forms**. The *Strategy* highlights the needs of four groups in particular:

- Children and young people attending schools that serve communities where there are high concentrations of social and economic disadvantage, including members of the Traveller community
- Children of migrants whose first language is neither English or Irish
- Children and young people with special educational needs, including children who are exceptionally able
- Young people who have dropped out of school early and for whom centres for education, e.g. Youthreach and Community Training Centres, provide a second chance to acquire and improve literacy, numeracy and other necessary skills.

Information on this Pillar is set out in relation to each of these groups below.

### ***Schools in areas of concentrated social and economic disadvantage.***

The Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) programme, launched in 2005, has continued to support **the needs of children attending schools where there is a high concentration of students from socially, economically and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds**. The programme includes:

- Measures for improving literacy and numeracy
- Priority access to literacy and numeracy programmes
- Initiatives in Mathematics and reading that promote enjoyment

Túsla, the Child and Family Agency, took over the functions of the National Education Welfare Boards from January 2014 and is a key stakeholder in terms of supporting educational welfare and assisting students to achieve their full potential. Its integrated Educational Welfare Service includes key DEIS supports of Home School Community Liaison Officer (HSCL) and School Completion Programme (SCP).

The *Performance Report* from NAERM 2014 highlighted the gap that exists between DEIS Band 1 primary schools and pupils in other schools in both reading and Mathematics (see Table 6). However, the authors of the report highlight a number of limitations to their analysis of achievement by schools with DEIS/SSP status. For example, standard errors are large meaning that the outcomes reported can, at best, be viewed as indicative. Findings from the evaluation of the



DEIS programme also indicate that while the gap between DEIS and non-DEIS schools is narrowing, overall achievement in reading and Mathematics, particularly in DEIS Band 1 schools, remains below that in other schools. Although the DEIS programme does not cater for a homogeneous group of schools, and it is therefore difficult to specify universal targets for them, it is nevertheless appropriate to introduce measures to further focus attention on reducing the gap between DEIS and non-DEIS schools.

The implementation of the Department’s new *DEIS Plan 2017* will be key in tackling literary and numeracy problems experienced by pupils in disadvantaged communities. The Plan recognises the need to address specific DEIS themes where weaknesses persist, including literacy and numeracy. Piloting of innovation by adopting new evidence-based approaches to tackling underperformance in DEIS schools in areas such as literacy and numeracy, will be supported by a School Excellence Fund to encourage the development and implementation of good practice suitable for wider application. Targeted development support for teachers in DEIS Band 1 schools to aid schools in devising strategies and making maximum use of resources to meet the specific progress targets for these schools in the *Strategy*, will also be important. The Plan also recognises the need for improved interagency working to achieve more effective delivery of the range of supports that are important to DEIS schools. Accordingly actions aimed at improving the school readiness of pre-school children, increasing the effectiveness of behavioural and therapeutic supports and integrating services that support school attendance, retention and progression are included.

Actions identified under other Pillars, such as those that support parents with skills deficits are relevant also. Development windows’ in early childhood also provide key opportunities for children’s language and mathematical learning, suggesting the potential in ECCE to help tackle educational disadvantage.

<b>Table 6. Performance of DEIS Band 1 schools in National Assessments of English Reading and Mathematics 2014</b>	
<b>DEIS Band 1 Reading Literacy</b>	Second class: 18% of children in DEIS Band 1 schools performed at Level 3 or higher (i.e. at the highest levels) compared to 46% nationally
	Sixth class: 21% of children in DEIS Band 1 schools performed at Level 3 or higher compared to 44% nationally
	Second class: 44% of children in DEIS Band 1 schools performed at or below Level 1 (i.e. at the lowest levels) compared to 22% nationally
	Sixth class: 47% of children in DEIS Band 1 schools performed at or below Level 1 compared to 25% nationally
<b>DEIS Band 1 Mathematics</b>	Second class: 21% of children in DEIS Band 1 schools performed at Level 3 or higher (i.e. at the highest levels) compared to 47% nationally
	Sixth class: 19% of children in DEIS Band 1 schools performed at Level 3 or higher compared to 42% nationally
	Second class: 52% of children in DEIS Band 1 schools performed at or below Level 1 (i.e. at the lowest levels) compared to 26% nationally
	Sixth class: 50% of children in DEIS Band 1 schools performed at or below Level 1 compared to 27% nationally

### ***Children of migrants whose first language is not English or Irish***

The **needs of ‘English as an Additional Language’ (EAL) students** are the subject of other specified actions in the *Strategy*. It is encouraging that inclusive education (incorporating the areas of special educational needs (SEN), multiculturalism and disadvantage) is now a mandatory area in all ITE programmes approved by the Teaching Council. The needs of EAL children have been identified as a necessary part of the focus of the second free pre-school year. The new Primary Language Curriculum encourages the recognition of pupils’ home language as a classroom resource.

Reforms introduced in the 2012/13 school year created a single simplified allocation process for both learning and language support. At primary level, learning/language support hours are allocated on the basis of mainstream classroom teaching posts in the school. At post-primary level, learning/language support is allocated on the basis of student numbers. Schools have autonomy to deploy this resource between learning support and language support depending on the specific needs of the school. The revised arrangements also provided for additional permanent teaching posts to be given to schools with a high concentration of pupils that require language support. Further additional temporary language support posts are provided on the basis of appeals to the Staffing Appeal Boards. The appeal criteria are set out in the published staffing arrangements.

The *Context Report* from NAERM 2014 (September 2016) has indicated that pupils in second and sixth classes who reported speaking a language other than English/Irish at home performed significantly less well in English reading than pupils who spoke English or Irish. At both class levels, performance in Mathematics was lower among these pupils, although not to a statistically significant extent. At second level, PISA 2015 findings indicated that there was a significant difference in reading performance between native and immigrant students who speak a language other than English or Irish at home, with native students scoring some 25 points higher. It did not find a significant difference in their performance in Mathematics.<sup>12</sup>

There remains a considerable need to:

- Prioritise the needs of EAL children at ECCE level and in other educational settings
- Prioritise not just first generation, but also second generation EAL students
- Focus on the particular requirements of EAL students who also have special educational needs.

A significant effort is needed to ensure that the *Strategy* can reinvigorate the support required for EAL students, whether newcomer or second generation, so that they can achieve not only proficiency in basic language, but also for their academic language needs.

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<sup>12</sup> It should be noted, however, that large standard errors arising from the small numbers of students in the immigrant groups may mask differences that exist between the groups on the basis of immigrant and language background.

## ***Children and young people with special educational needs, including children who are exceptionally able***

In 2015, a new Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) to support access for children with a disability to the universal pre-school scheme (ECCE) was agreed by the Departments of Education and Skills; Children and Youth Affairs; and Health. The inter-departmental group (IDG) based its conclusions on national and international evidence, which shows that attending high-quality mainstream pre-schools brings significant benefits for children with disabilities. The model depends on cross-sectoral co-operation, building on, rather than acting in parallel with, existing supports in early years education and health.

Implementation of the model, introduced from September 2016, is being led by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and will build an inclusive culture in all early years services. The roll-out of this model includes seven levels of support, ranging from universal to targeted supports. A key element of AIM is the national rollout of a higher education special purpose award to upskill practitioners to become Inclusion Co-ordinators and support curriculum development, planning and inclusion for children with a disability in every pre-school service.

At school level, it is expected that the proposed new model for allocating additional teaching resources to schools for pupils with special educational needs will help in breaking the distinction between resources and learning support, while emphasising high quality teaching methodologies. It should and must also facilitate more equitable distribution of resources across the system. Under the new model:

- Schools will be guided and supported in identifying students requiring additional support and in using and deploying additional teaching posts to best effect for these students
- A system will be in place for advising schools on how to develop goals for students receiving additional support and on recording and reporting outcomes, (for example, through the NEPS Student Support File), thereby shifting the focus to monitoring student outcomes
- The NCSE Inclusion Support Service (ISS), when established, will provide one coherent service to improve the capacity of schools to meet the needs of students with additional learning needs.

Other positive steps include:

- The progression continua, in the new Primary Language Curriculum, which are designed to support all children, as they learn at their own pace, and support teachers in planning rich language experiences which are more tailored to the individual child
- New Level 2 NFQ Learning Programmes are already available in junior cycle, and Level 1 NFQ Learning Programmes are being developed.

Little evidence has been found, through the review process, of an increased national emphasis on students with exceptional ability. The need for additional focus on this cohort is reinforced by the findings from TIMSS 2015, PISA 2015 and NAERM 2014. Their needs are a key priority up to 2020 and beyond. Existing work by the NCCA, such as the Draft Guidelines for Teachers on Exceptionally

Able Students and the SESS work, including their pilot project, *'Equality of Challenge Initiative - Piloting Educational Provision for Exceptionally Able and Dual Exceptional Students'* can inform this.

Promoting a better understanding of **the role of speech and language therapy in supporting students with special educational needs** is emphasised in the *Strategy*. Research by the National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS) and the University of Limerick, highlights the:

- Importance of speech and language needs of students with behavioural challenges
- Need for a whole-school focus on oral as well as written language skills
- Importance of students being involved in decision-making about their own learning.

In the second half of the *Strategy*, it is felt that support should focus on links between speech, language and communication needs and the educational engagement of students with special educational needs. In the *Action Plan for Education 2016-2019*, the Department has committed to working with relevant Government Departments and agencies to introduce a new in-school speech and language service, creating stronger linkages between parents, teachers and Speech and Language Therapists. The Inclusion Support Service (ISS), when established, will have a key role to play.

***Literacy and numeracy needs of young people who have dropped out of school early and for whom centres for education, e.g. Youthreach and Community Training Centres, provide a second chance to acquire and improve literacy, numeracy and other necessary skills.***

The quality of **literacy and numeracy provision in Youthreach and community training centres (CTCs)** needs to continue to be prioritised and supported. Youthreach and CTCs are being assisted by resources such as:

- The NEPS guidelines (2013) on best practice in teaching basic literacy and numeracy skills in Youthreach and Community Training Centres
- *Operator Guidelines for the Youthreach Programme (2015)*
- This *Strategy* and the *Further Education and Training Strategy 2014 –2019*, which have set out shared values and objectives relating to literacy and numeracy to improve outcomes for these learners.

There is an ongoing need for CPD on appropriate approaches to literacy and numeracy for staff in these centres. Opportunities for collaboration in good practice between CPD providers for these services and for post-primary schools should be considered, cognisant of the varying needs of learners in the different settings.

### Additional actions – to 2020

- Examine how to tackle socio-economic disadvantage in ECCE settings, including ways to improve children’s oral language, early literacy and early Mathematics.

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- Implement the new *DEIS Plan 2017* to improve the learning experience, learning outcomes and progression for those at risk of educational disadvantage.

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- Reduce the gap in test scores between students in DEIS and non-DEIS schools in the National Assessments of English Reading and Mathematics, particularly in DEIS Band 1 schools (Table 2). Reduce the gap in test scores between students in DEIS and non-DEIS schools at post-primary (Table 4).

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- The National Assessments of English Reading and Mathematics should continue to analyse English reading and Mathematics achievement by school DEIS/SSP status, and the numbers of DEIS schools sampled should be increased to improve the reliability of the data collected.

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- Ensure that schools with high concentrations of students who require language support are aware of available resources to support EAL students in primary and post-primary settings.

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- Support levels of participation by children with special educational needs in State-funded ECCE provision, in line with the 7-level AIM (Access and Inclusion Model) published by DCYA in 2015.

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- Enhance the capacity of schools to use assessment information that will inform interventions to support children in schools and to support the implementation of the proposed new model for allocating additional teaching resources.

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- Provide guidelines for teachers on achieving learning outcomes for students in a variety of special education contexts, subject to resources.

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- Provide national guidelines to support the needs of students with exceptional ability, with particular emphasis on enhancing their literacy and numeracy skills.

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- Increase collaboration and sharing of good practice between CPD providers for post-primary schools and those for Youthreach and CTCs, mindful of the different needs of learners.

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## IMPROVING ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION TO SUPPORT BETTER LEARNING IN LITERACY AND NUMERACY

### **Developments**

**Improving the ability of teachers and ECCE practitioners to use assessment approaches and data** is prioritised in the *Strategy*.

Assessment and evaluation are key to the delivery of a high quality learning experience in ECCE, but for this to happen, supports are required. The *Síolta* Quality Assurance Programme provides a way forward and complements the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide*. Education-focused inspection reports for ECCE settings, the first of which were published in 2016, will be significant, particularly in their focus on the quality of practice to support children’s learning and development.

The appropriate use of assessment data for a variety of purposes is an important aspect of teaching and learning practice for the primary and post-primary curricula. Progress in this area since 2011 includes:

- A new report form to support transfer from ECCE to primary schools, which is being created by NCCA
- An additional point was added in standardised testing at primary, such that the requirement is for standardised testing at 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes. The resultant data allow for tracking of student progress. 100% of primary schools return their results to the Department annually. The frequency and timing of such testing, in both English and Irish, is under consideration owing to, for example, feedback provided during the Department’s work in developing its *Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022*
- The NCCA Education Passport, which allows for transfer of data from primary to post-primary schools, became a mandatory requirement from 2014/2015. A special educational needs transfer form is also available
- A new system of reporting that culminates in the awarding of the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) will be available from Autumn 2017.

The use of **assessment information will support better quality teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy** for individual students. The potential role of assessment in supporting early interventions for pupils with learning difficulties was also highlighted in the *Strategy*. A number of considerations which need to inform the *Strategy* until 2020, remain. Relevant considerations are:

- In Irish-medium schools, the expectation of holding standardised tests in English in 2<sup>nd</sup> class is being re-considered (i.e. tests in English confined to 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes only). This approach may better support an immersion model in early primary years
- The question as to why English-medium schools are not currently required to administer standardised tests in Irish, particularly in 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes

- Standardised tests will not be implemented in 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Junior Cycle in the short term, to better facilitate the introduction of other new assessment approaches that are a key part of the reform of Junior Cycle
- Formative and summative assessment should both be used, in the classroom, to support quality learning experiences not only in Junior Cycle, but also in Senior Cycle.

Since 2012, each primary and post-primary school is required to engage in SSE and develop school improvement plans (SIPs). In the first four-year cycle of SSE, schools were asked to focus on literacy and numeracy. Schools were encouraged to use assessment information, among other evidence, and to set specific targets to improve literacy and numeracy within their 3-year School Improvement Plans (SIPs). In the 2014/15 school year, schools were asked to complete an online survey about their engagement in SSE (response rate: 95% of primary and 88% of post primary schools). Among respondents to the survey:

- 98% of primary schools and 97% of post-primary schools had focused on literacy
- 71% of primary schools and 66% of post-primary schools had focused on numeracy
- 95% of primary and 79% of post-primary schools had prepared SSE reports
- 95% of primary and 61% of post-primary schools had compiled a SIP.

In terms of ongoing challenges, and for consideration in the implementation of the *Strategy* between 2017-2020, the SSE report and SIP should be made available to the whole school community. Only 66% of primary schools and 40% of post-primary schools, in the survey, had complied fully with this requirement up to 2015.

Within the 2011 *Strategy*, a major emphasis has been placed on **improving the availability of assessment data on achievement in literacy and numeracy, at both national and international levels**. While acknowledging that achievement on these tests is not an end in itself, Ireland's involvement heightens awareness of how Irish students are performing both at home and by international comparison. Participation in national and international assessment surveys helps guide inputs, interpret outcomes and enables use of evidence-based data to compare our achievements with international peers:

- NAERM 2014 shows the first significant improvement in reading by primary pupils in 30 years, with fewer pupils performing at lower levels of proficiency in reading, and more performing at higher levels of proficiency
- In PISA 2015, Irish students' performance in reading compares very favourably internationally but performance in Mathematics remains below the highest performers
- Irish students' performance in TIMSS 2015 also compares well internationally, but Ireland is not among the highest performing countries.

The results of PIRLS and ePIRLS in 2017 will provide valuable additional information regarding our progress in literacy.

Results from these national and international assessments and other reports, such as the most recent *Chief Inspector's Report for 2010-2012* (2013), are quite encouraging but do highlight areas of weakness to be worked on. For example, it will be important to:

- Improve students' competence in numeracy, particularly their ability to reason, apply learning and engage in problem-solving processes
- Enhance the performance of higher performing students in literacy and numeracy and increase expectations in relation to their achievement
- Strengthen achievement of boys in reading and girls in Mathematics.

Among further areas of more general concern, but still linked to literacy and numeracy and to be worked on, are the need to:

- Continue to engage in teachers' planning, use of assessment strategies, and use of ICT, for example, Reflections on Practice developed by the Maths Development Team
- In the case of Mathematics, use teaching approaches such as discovery-based learning and context-rich problem solving
- Provide additional measures to strengthen literacy and numeracy provision, particularly for DEIS schools, EAL students, and students with more complex special educational needs including those with moderate, severe or profound GLD, and also exceptionally able students
- Develop awareness among adults of the importance of literacy and numeracy in their working and personal lives, and provide opportunities for them to develop their proficiency in literacy and numeracy and give parents and grandparents the confidence and skills to assist their children.

### **School Self-Evaluation (SSE) and external inspection support improvements in literacy and numeracy achievement in a number of ways:**

- SSE is becoming embedded in school practice, supported by Inspectorate advisory visits
- In the evaluation of English, Irish and Mathematics in all WSE inspections in primary schools, literacy and numeracy are emphasised
- Literacy and numeracy feature, through the evaluation of Language 1 and Mathematics, in all whole-school evaluations – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE-MLL) inspections in post-primary schools
- At post-primary, cross-curricular development of literacy and numeracy is a focus of inspections in all subjects.



Since 2012, inspections at both primary and post-primary show high levels of satisfaction with learning outcomes in English, but the *Chief Inspector's Report for 2010-12* (2013) suggests that planning for, and delivery of, appropriate teaching and learning approaches for numeracy were somewhat more satisfactory in primary than in post-primary classrooms.

The Inspectorate reported on its analysis of standardised test data for 2011/12 and 2012/13 in primary schools (2016) and pointed to areas for development also. Amongst these areas for development:

- Prioritise both formative and summative assessment and the sharing of data, particularly with parents and also with learners
- Provide professional development opportunities to principals and teachers to support them in administering the tests, with an emphasis on good practice and objectivity, professionalism and confidentiality
- Embed practices regarding transfer of assessment information, both within and between educational settings e.g. as learners move from one class to another, between ECCE and primary schools and between primary schools and post-primary schools
- Continue to embed the SSE process in primary and post-primary schools
- Provide advice to schools as to how the outcomes of standardised tests can help identify teaching and learning strategies that best support learners' educational needs, with an emphasis on why to test and keeping the learner central to the whole process
- Continue involvement in national and international surveys so that achievement can be benchmarked longitudinally, nationally and internationally
- Reconsider the frequency of the use of standardised tests, particularly of English and Irish.

Consideration should also be given to:

- The provision of normed tests (one for English and one for Mathematics) that can also facilitate criterion referencing. Criterion-referenced tests would enable schools to set targets relating to pupils' achievement of specific learning outcomes or sets of outcomes and to monitor the extent to which cohorts of pupils achieve these outcomes over time. The current norm-referenced standardised tests where the achievement of pupils on such tests is interpreted in relation to the achievement of other pupils nationally were not designed for the purpose of target setting.
- Whether the tests in Irish reading for pupils in Irish-medium schools need to be revised
- The introduction of computer-based adaptive testing in national as well as international tests.

Work by NEPS on related additional resources for normed tests of literacy at post-primary level, is also underway.

***Additional actions – to 2020***

- Complete development of a report form and guidance to support the transition from ECCE to primary, including information on children’s dispositions and learning needs.
  - Provide supports to teachers and school leaders on how to make use of available information from transitions reports and assessment information.
  - Improve formative assessment practice through curricular reform and CPD at primary and post-primary levels.
  - In order to ensure that standardised testing arrangements are optimum: consider whether the frequency of testing in English and Irish-medium schools should be adapted alongside the introduction of the Primary Language Curriculum; defer the introduction of standardised testing in Junior Cycle, to allow for better integration of school-based assessments into teaching and learning, and update standardised testing instruments on a regular basis and in line with Irish norms.
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## PART IV – IMPLEMENTATION PLAN – ADDITIONAL DETAILED ACTIONS TO SUPPLEMENT THOSE IN THE STRATEGY

### Pillar 1: Enabling parents and communities to support children’s literacy and numeracy development

Pillar 1	Original Objective 2011 <sup>13</sup>	Additional Detailed Actions	Indicative date
1.1	<b>Support a national information campaign to build up awareness of the important role that parents and communities can play in supporting literacy and numeracy learning</b>	Participate as an active partner with SOLAS in national awareness campaign to support adult literacy, in particular for parents with skills deficits, in line with implementation of the <i>Further Education &amp; Training Strategy</i> .	2017 onwards
1.2	<b>Provide advice and information to parents to enable them to support their children’s language, literacy and numeracy development</b>	Examine creative and innovative ways to support parents in their role as educators.	2017 onwards
		Ensure that support for parents emphasises numeracy skills alongside literacy skills, with particular emphasis on problem posing and problem solving.	2018 onwards
		Ensure that support is provided for literacy and numeracy through Irish and that parents are informed of curricular developments for Irish, at both primary and post primary. The implementation of the <i>Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022</i> is relevant to this.	2018 onwards
		Provide support to schools to enable them to engage with parents/guardians to further the use of ICT in supporting student learning, in line with the implementation of the <i>Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020</i> .	2017 onwards
		Provide guidelines for migrant families whose first language is neither English nor Irish, to promote the enhancement of mother tongue skills, in accordance with the implementation of the <i>Foreign Languages Strategy</i> , when published.	2018 onwards
		Increase, as part of the implementation of recommendations of the STEM Education Review Group, the level of information available to parents on the career possibilities for students who follow a STEM career and the fundamental role of Mathematics, in particular, in this context.	2017 onwards

<sup>13</sup> Objectives which were not in the 2011 Strategy or are adapted from that Strategy are marked with \*.

**PART IV – IMPLEMENTATION PLAN – ADDITIONAL DETAILED ACTIONS TO SUPPLEMENT THOSE IN THE STRATEGY**

**Pillar 1: Enabling parents and communities to support children’s literacy and numeracy development**

<b>Pillar 1</b>	<b>Original Objective 2011</b>	<b>Additional Detailed Actions</b>	<b>Indicative date</b>
<b>1.3</b>	<b>Ensure that parental engagement in children’s learning is integrated into each school’s <i>School Improvement Plan</i></b>	Consider ways to progress any actions to promote parental engagement in children’s learning which have been identified through school self-evaluation and the school improvement plan. Identify and use examples of good practice.	2017 onwards
		Reinforce the need for prominence to be given to the student voice, including in the development of school improvement plans / SSE to improve literacy and numeracy development. It is intended to introduce legislation on a Parent and Student Charter which aims to improve how schools engage with parents and students.	2017 onwards
<b>1.4</b>	<b>Seek to target and coordinate support for initiatives that enable parents, families and communities to support children’s well-being and learning and that strengthen links between home, ECCE settings and schools</b>	Continue to improve reporting and understanding between schools and parents at all stages from pre-school to Leaving Certificate experience, with particular attention to be focused on points of transition between ECCE, primary and post-primary contexts.	2017 onwards
		Enhance partnerships between schools and the FET sector to highlight opportunities for adult learners to participate in FET programmes that will enhance their skills and enable them to more confidently assist their children.	2017 onwards
<b>1.5</b>	<b>Develop and promote models of good practice that enable parents, families, communities, ECCE settings and schools to work together to support literacy and numeracy acquisition</b>	Showcase and celebrate examples of good practice at a local level through the public libraries.	2017 onwards
		Promote library usage as a means of supporting family literacy. Ensure that all children, through their school and parents, are motivated to avail of membership of a public library, ideally one twinned with their ECCE or school setting.	2017-2020

**Pillar 1: Enabling parents and communities to support children’s literacy and numeracy development**

<b>Pillar 1 Original Objective 2011</b>	<b>Additional Detailed Actions</b>	<b>Indicative date</b>	
		Projects that promote interest and excellence in Mathematics, in particular in DEIS schools, will be encouraged and promoted e.g. Science Fairs, BTYSTE, SciFest, CoderDojo, Intel MiniScientist, Smart Futures, Science Week, Discover Maths and Science.	2017 onwards
		Hold an annual Literacy and Numeracy Forum.	2017 onwards
		Increase awareness of resources for parents to promote children’s literacy and numeracy, with particular emphasis on parents with skills needs, including migrants and Travellers e.g. the family literacy resource pack being developed by NALA, with sponsorship from EirGrid aimed at supporting parents and guardians from disadvantaged communities.	2017
<b>1.6</b>	<b>Strengthen inter-agency and cross-departmental structures to support literacy and numeracy*</b>	Enhance cooperation between this <i>Strategy</i> and the literacy and numeracy <i>Strategy</i> within the <i>Further Education and Training Strategy 2014 – 2019</i> on areas that are common to both strategies, particularly in relation to raising awareness and family literacy support.	2017 onwards
		Provide high quality broadband to all schools. Improved connectivity for primary schools specifically is a priority under the <i>Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020</i> . This is a key element in promoting digital literacy and numeracy, and educational opportunity for all.	2017 onwards
		Develop and publish a <i>STEM Education Policy Statement</i> , to include a detailed implementation plan with responsibilities and timelines clearly outlined.	2017
		Strengthen the contribution of educational psychology to the development of literacy and numeracy skills, through greater engagement of NEPS in the literacy and numeracy agenda, in partnership with the NCCA and other agencies.	2017 onwards

**PART IV – IMPLEMENTATION PLAN – ADDITIONAL DETAILED ACTIONS TO SUPPLEMENT THOSE IN THE STRATEGY**

**Pillar 2: Improving teachers’ and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE ) practitioners’ professional practice**

<b>Pillar 2 Original Objective 2011</b>		<b>Additional Detailed Actions</b>	<b>Indicative date</b>
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Encourage and support the upskilling of early childhood care and education (ECCE) practitioners</b>	Complete and consult on revised occupational role profiles as part of 2 <sup>nd</sup> phase of review of quality of further and higher education and training programmes.	2017
		Increase the focus on oral language, early literacy and early mathematics in level 7 and 8 degrees for ECCE practitioners.	2017 onwards
		Support practitioners in ECCE settings and teachers in Early Start centres to implement the national curriculum framework <i>Aistear</i> and improve the learning experience, through roll-out of CPD in <i>Aistear</i> and <i>Síolta</i> through the <i>Síolta/Aistear</i> initiative.	2017 onwards
		Support ECCE practitioners to make structured self-review part of ECCE practice, and with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy development based on the <i>Aistear</i> framework. Ensuring engagement with numeracy by both boys and girls is embedded at an early age will be important.	2017 onwards
		Develop further materials on and examples of children’s oral language, early literacy and early mathematical development as part of the <i>Aistear Síolta Practice Guide</i> .	2017 onwards
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Cooperate with the Teaching Council to set new, higher standards in entry requirements for initial teacher education (ITE)</b>	In light of the advice received from the Teaching Council and the ESRI Report, consider the adequacy of Leaving Certificate examinations in Irish, English and Mathematics, and other indicators, as criteria for students’ entry into ITE.	2017
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Continue to implement recommendations from the International Review Panel on Initial Teacher Education Provision*</b>	Review the implementation of the recommendations of the International Review Panel on Initial Teacher Education Provision.	2017

**Pillar 2: Improving teachers' and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE ) practitioners' professional practice**

<b>Pillar 2 Original Objective 2011</b>	<b>Additional Detailed Actions</b>	<b>Indicative date</b>	
<b>2.4</b>	<b>Cooperate with the Teaching Council to re-configure the content and duration of initial teacher education (ITE) courses for primary and post-primary teachers to ensure the development of teachers' skills in literacy and numeracy teaching*</b>	Request, in the context of the review of the “Initial Teacher Education: criteria and guidelines for programme providers” by the Teaching Council, that any revised criteria and guidelines take account of the aims and objectives of this <i>Strategy</i> , in particular those relating to numeracy, Irish and digital literacy.	2017 onwards
		Develop and promote new partnership models to ensure collaboration between HEIs, schools, student teachers and HEI placement tutors to deal with challenges arising from the extended duration of ITE, e.g. developing Memoranda of Understanding between HEIs and partner schools.	2017 onwards
		Provide additional training to support cooperating teachers in the partner schools for ITE, subject to resources.	2018 onwards
		Explore potential for linking assessment of student teachers' competence in Irish to the TEG (Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge), in accordance with the implementation of <i>Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022</i> .	2018
		Embed ICT throughout ITE programmes.	ongoing
<b>2.5</b>	<b>Provide accredited course to allow student teachers to complete Primary ITE through Irish*</b>	Provide an option of an Irish-medium ITE course leading to qualification as primary teacher and increase the number of students with a qualification to teach in an Irish medium post-primary schools, in line with the <i>Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022</i> .	2018
<b>2.6</b>	<b>Focus the provision of Department-supported continuing professional development for teachers on the teaching of literacy and numeracy and the use of assessment</b>	Deliver training to Aistear tutors, who will in turn roll out national training on the <i>Balanced Approach to Literacy Development in the Early Years</i> in 2016-2017.	2016-2017
		Promote new models, including communities of practice and collaborative learning, to support the continuum of teachers' professional learning opportunities.	2017 onwards

**PART IV – IMPLEMENTATION PLAN – ADDITIONAL DETAILED ACTIONS TO SUPPLEMENT THOSE IN THE STRATEGY**

**Pillar 2: Improving teachers’ and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE ) practitioners’ professional practice**

<b>Pillar 2</b>	<b>Original Objective 2011</b>	<b>Additional Detailed Actions</b>	<b>Indicative date</b>
		<p>Ensure continuing quality provision of training in literacy and numeracy in pedagogy, subject knowledge and assessment for teachers and providers in special, primary, post-primary and Youthreach centres through a variety of approaches, with emphasis on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mathematics, prioritising the skills of reasoning, problem analysis and problem solving, and taking account of research findings such as the differences between boys’ and girls’ achievement shown by PISA 2015. Upskilling teachers of 3-6th class at primary will be a priority.</li> <li>■ numeracy and mathematical thinking, across all areas of the curriculum</li> <li>■ Irish, both as a subject and also as a medium through which students are taught</li> <li>■ teaching in contexts where there is a significant amount of educational disadvantage, EAL and SEN</li> <li>■ digital literacy, its integration and use by students in learning across the curriculum.</li> </ul>	2017 onwards
		<p>Roll-out of primary numeracy supports in priority areas, including cluster meetings for schools which are being developed as professional learning communities and <i>Team Teaching for Numeracy</i> seminars which also have a focus on learning support and inclusive teaching.</p>	2017 onwards
		<p>Examine ways to explore further opportunities to support numeracy across post-primary subject areas, addressing areas highlighted by research such as the gender differences in mathematics achievement shown by PISA 2015.</p>	2017 onwards
		<p>Design resources for teachers and schools to support a broad range of teaching and learning methodologies, including inquiry-based learning and problem solving.</p>	2017 onwards
		<p>Provide ongoing support for the practical application of the SSE process to enhance literacy and numeracy achievements.</p>	ongoing
		<p>CPD to be delivered on how differentiated learning can be provided in inclusive and creative ways that specifically addresses the needs of high achievers.</p>	2018
		<p>Ensure that support materials are available both in Irish and English.</p>	2017 onwards



**Pillar 2: Improving teachers' and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE ) practitioners' professional practice**

<b>Pillar 2</b>	<b>Original Objective 2011</b>	<b>Additional Detailed Actions</b>	<b>Indicative date</b>
2.7	<b>Provide accredited post-graduate course to support teaching of Irish in primary and post-primary*</b>	Expand opportunities for teachers to engage in postgraduate study and research on Irish-medium and immersion education and language pedagogy for first and second language learners of Irish in line with implementation of the <i>Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022</i> .	2018 onwards
2.8	<b>Provide accredited post-graduate course to support teaching of Maths at primary*</b>	Consider introduction of post-graduate programme for primary teachers that concentrates on Mathematics, based on the existing post-primary post-graduate model, subject to resources.	2018 onwards
2.9	<b>Ensure that adequate quality assurance mechanisms are in place for CPD courses for teachers as provided for in the Teaching Council Act</b>	Continue to quality assure teachers' professional learning opportunities and relevant resource materials, having regard to Cosán, the national framework for teachers' learning.	Ongoing
		Ensure that participation on a continuum of lifelong education for teachers will be a requirement for registered teachers.	Ongoing

**Pillar 3: Building the capacity of school leadership**

<b>Pillar 3</b>	<b>Original Objective 2011</b>	<b>Additional Detailed Actions</b>	<b>Indicative date</b>
3.1	<b>Supporting leaders in ECCE settings to the increased prioritisation of educational perspectives in early years education*</b>	Support leaders in ECCE settings to implement the national curriculum framework <i>Aistear</i> and improve the learning experience, through roll-out of CPD in <i>Aistear</i> and <i>Síolta</i> , through the <i>Síolta/Aistear</i> initiative.	2017
		Support leaders in ECCE settings to make structured self-review part of ECCE practice, and with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy development based on the <i>Aistear</i> framework.	2017 onwards
3.2	<b>Improve understanding for principals and deputy principals of the most effective approaches to improving the teaching of literacy and numeracy and the use of assessment to support this</b>	Professional learning opportunities for principals and deputy principals will further develop and enhance their skills in leading on initiatives related to numeracy, Irish and digital literacy and the use of assessment to support this in their schools.	2018
		Examine ways in which schools can further support and facilitate leaders of learning in prioritising literacy and numeracy, particularly through SSE.	2018 onwards

**PART IV – IMPLEMENTATION PLAN – ADDITIONAL DETAILED ACTIONS TO SUPPLEMENT THOSE IN THE STRATEGY**

**Pillar 4: Improving the curriculum and the learning experience**

<b>Pillar 4</b>	<b>Original Objective 2011</b>	<b>Additional Detailed Actions</b>	<b>Indicative date</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Monitor and review curricular practice in ECCE settings over time</b>	Support ECCE practitioners and teachers in Early Start centres with comprehensive implementation of the <i>Aistear</i> curriculum framework and building reflective practice around their work, in particular development of early literacy and numeracy skills. Early Years inspections will assist with this.	2017-2020
		Enhance the relationship between pre-schools and primary schools, completing the development of reporting templates for the transition between these.	2018
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Further strengthen the impact of the Strategy across the primary curriculum*</b>	Ensure that numeracy, in its broadest sense, is prioritised in all curricular developments in primary.	2020
		Consider how to further strengthen numeracy in primary schools through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ redevelopment of primary Mathematics curriculum, to include work on coding and ICT, starting with the curriculum for the junior classes</li> <li>■ integration of numeracy across the curriculum, supported by instructional online resource materials.</li> </ul>	2020
		Review the structure of and time allocation in the primary school curriculum, to ensure that the allocation reflects learners' requirements. This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ consideration of the time allocation for Mathematics</li> <li>■ ensuring that the time allocation and focus on literacy in Irish is achieved</li> <li>■ taking account of children's dispositions towards learning.</li> </ul>	2020
		Develop an integrated programme for teaching Irish in 3rd-6th class in English medium schools.	2020
		Develop specific guidelines and resources to strengthen the achievement of boys in reading and girls in Mathematics	2017-2020

## Pillar 4: Improving the curriculum and the learning experience

Pillar 4	Original Objective 2011	Additional Detailed Actions	Indicative date
		Promote the use of evidence-based interventions for struggling readers, for example, <i>Effective Interventions for Struggling Readers</i> , <i>Good Practice Guide and Resource Pack</i> / <i>Straitéisí Molta le haghaidh Feabhsúchán Deacrachtaí sa Léitheoireacht</i> .	2017 onwards
		Integrate digital literacy across all aspects of learning, in accordance with the <i>Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020</i> .	2020
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Further strengthen curricular support for literacy and numeracy in post-primary schools*</b>	Ensure that best practice subject-specific literacy and numeracy (including reasoning and problem solving) skills and digital literacy are embedded in all new specifications in Junior and Senior Cycle and that this approach is emphasised in teachers' professional learning to support these.	2017-2020
		Complete the subject specifications for Irish, both for learners in English-medium and Irish-medium schools, at Junior Cycle.	2017
		Commence review of the operation of the revised post-primary Mathematics curricula and use this to inform the review of Junior Cycle Mathematics for 2018.	2017-2018
		Promote formative assessment through curricular change, including assessment which focuses on improving literacy and numeracy and helps to identify appropriate teaching and learning strategies to do so.	2017-2020
		Integrate digital literacy across all aspects of learning, in accordance with the <i>Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020</i> .	2020
		Consider options, in the context of implementing the <i>STEM Education Policy Statement</i> , for a means to recognise participation in informal (extra-curricular) STEM events and activities into STEM curriculum and assessment at primary and post-primary.	2017 onwards

**PART IV – IMPLEMENTATION PLAN – ADDITIONAL DETAILED ACTIONS TO SUPPLEMENT THOSE IN THE STRATEGY**

**Pillar 5: Helping students with additional learning needs to achieve their potential**

<b>Pillar 5 Original Objective 2011</b>	<b>Additional Detailed Actions</b>	<b>Indicative date</b>
<b>5.1 Continue to support enhanced literacy and numeracy provision for students from socially, economically and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds</b>	Examine how to tackle socio-economic disadvantage in ECCE settings, including ways to improve children’s oral language, early literacy and early mathematics.	2017 onwards
	Implement the new <i>DEIS Plan 2017</i> to improve the learning experience, learning outcomes and progression for those at risk of educational disadvantage.	2017 onwards
	Continue to analyse English reading and Mathematics achievement by school DEIS/SSP status as part of the National Assessments of English Reading and Mathematics. Increase the numbers of DEIS schools sampled to improve in the reliability of the data.	2018-2019
<b>5.2 Rebalance the supports made available to address the literacy and numeracy learning needs of EAL students</b>	EAL provision at second level should be reviewed and data collection strengthened, in line with the implementation of the <i>DEIS Plan 2017</i> .	2017
<b>5.3 Reduce marginalisation through renewed emphasis on students with special educational needs, including students of exceptional ability</b>	Support levels of participation by children with special educational needs in State-funded ECCE provision, in line with the 7-level Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) published by DCYA in 2015.	2016-2018
	Enhance the capacity of schools to use assessment information that will inform interventions to support children in schools and will support the implementation of the proposed new model for allocating additional teaching resources.	2017-2020
	Provide guidelines for teachers on achieving learning outcomes for students in a variety of special education contexts, subject to resources. PLUs at Level 1 and 2 Junior Cycle are a useful model, subject to resources.	2018-2019
	Provide continued support to schools on the use of ICT for students with special educational needs.	2017 onwards
	Provide national guidelines to support the needs of students with exceptional ability, with particular emphasis on literacy and numeracy, subject to resources.	2018-2019

## Pillar 5: Helping students with additional learning needs to achieve their potential

Pillar 5 <i>Original Objective 2011</i>		<i>Additional Detailed Actions</i>	<i>Indicative date</i>
5.4	<b>Improve the quality of literacy and numeracy provision in Youthreach, and community training centres (CTCs)</b>	Provide CPD for staff in Youthreach and CTCs, as planned in the context of the <i>Further Education &amp; Training Strategy 2014-2019</i> .	2017 onwards
		Promote the sharing of good practice between CPD providers for post-primary schools and those for Youthreach and CTCs, mindful of the different needs of learners.	2017 onwards
5.5	<b>Promote better understanding of the role of speech and language therapy in supporting students with special educational needs</b>	Seek to introduce whole-school CPD that is focused on the links between speech, language and communication needs, and the educational engagement of students with special educational needs.	2018 onwards

## Pillar 6: Improving assessment and evaluation to support better learning in literacy and numeracy

Pillar 6 <i>Original Objective 2011</i>		<i>Additional Detailed Actions</i>	<i>Indicative date</i>
6.1	<b>Improve the ability of teachers and ECCE practitioners to use assessment approaches and data</b>	Improve formative assessment practice through curricular reform and CPD in early years, primary and post-primary.	2017-2020
6.2	<b>Improve the use of assessment information to support better teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy for individual students</b>	Develop a new report form and guidance to support the transition from ECCE to primary and including information on children's dispositions and learning needs.	2018
		Provide supports to primary and post-primary schools on how to use the information that transfers from the previous stage of education to best support children's learning, informed by feedback on user experience.	Ongoing
		To support learning, make relevant assessment data available and understandable to parents via reporting, particularly at key transition stages.	2017-2020
		Promote technology supported assessment, in accordance with the <i>Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020</i> .	2017-2020

**PART IV – IMPLEMENTATION PLAN – ADDITIONAL DETAILED ACTIONS TO SUPPLEMENT THOSE IN THE STRATEGY**

**Pillar 6: Improving assessment and evaluation to support better learning in literacy and numeracy**

<b>Pillar 6 Original Objective 2011</b>	<b>Additional Detailed Actions</b>	<b>Indicative date</b>
	Consider confining standardised tests in English to 4 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> classes in Irish-medium primary schools, in order to better support early Irish immersion opportunities.	2020
	Consider the frequency with which English-medium primary schools may be required to do standardised tests in Irish in 4 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> class. English medium primary schools are not currently required to do standardised tests in Irish.	2020
	Defer the introduction of standardised testing in Junior Cycle, to allow for better integration of school-based assessments into teaching and learning.	2017-2020
	Update standardised testing instruments on a regular basis and in line with Irish norms.	2019
	Provide ongoing CPD for principals and teachers in the administration and appropriate use of results of standardised tests at primary level.	2018-2020
	Provide ongoing CPD for post-primary principals and teachers in the appropriate use of the information from primary standardised tests.	2018 onwards
	Explore and facilitate the use of ICT for formative and summative assessment.	2017-2020
<b>6.3 Use self-evaluation and external inspection to support improvements in literacy and numeracy achievement</b>	Ensure that relevant school self-evaluation reports, school improvement plans and other relevant reports are made available to all parents using accessible means and in a format that is easily understood.	2017-2018

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## APPENDIX 1 – ABBREVIATIONS

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COGG	An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta & Gaelscolaíochta
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CTC	Community Training Centre
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
DHPCLG	Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (the Department of Education and Skills' programme to support learners in disadvantaged communities)
DES	Department of Education and Skills
EAL	English as an Additional Language
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EPI*STEM	National Centre for STEM Education (formerly National Centre for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching and Learning)
ERC	Educational Research Centre
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
ETB	Education and Training Board
FET	Further Education and Training
GLD	General Learning Disability
HSCL	Home School Community Liaison
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDG	Inter-departmental Group
IEA	International Association for Evaluation of Educational Achievement
IPPN	Irish Primary Principals' Network
ISS	Inclusion Support Service established within the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) in February 2015. It is intended that this service will include the Special Education Support Service (SESS), the National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS), and the Visiting Teacher Services when it becomes operational.
ISSU	Irish Second-Level Students' Union
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
JCPA	Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement
JCSP	Junior Cycle Schools Programme
JCT	Junior Cycle for Teachers
L1	The primary language of instruction (for example, Irish as L1 refers to the teaching of Irish as a first language, or its use as the medium of instruction in Irish medium schools)
L2	A language taught as a second language (for example, Irish as L2 in English-medium schools)
LGMA	Local Government Management Agency
MDT	Maths Development Team
NABMSE	National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education

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## APPENDIX 1 – ABBREVIATIONS

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NAERM	National Assessment of English Reading and Mathematics
NALA	National Adult Literacy Agency
NAPD	National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals
NBSS	National Behaviour Support Service
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
NIPT	National Induction Programme for Teachers
NPC-P	National Parents Council – Primary
NPC – PP	National Parents Council – Post-primary
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PDST	Professional Development Service for Teachers
PIAAC	Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study (international study of reading literacy conducted under the auspices of the IEA)
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment (international study of reading, mathematical and scientific literacy conducted under the auspices of the OECD)
PLU	Priority Learning Unit
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
SEC	State Examinations Commission
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SESS	Special Educational Support Service
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SSE	School Self-Evaluation
SSP	School Support Programme
STen	Standardised tests using a STen (standard ten) score
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (international study of Mathematics and Science achievement conducted under the auspices of the IEA)
UL	University of Limerick



An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta & Gaelscolaíochta (COGG)
An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (SOLAS)
Aontas – The Irish National Adult Learning Organisation
Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland (ASTI)
Association of Teacher Education Centres Ireland (ATECI)
Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA)
Department of Education and Skills (DES)
Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI)
Educational Research Centre (ERC)
Irish National Teachers’ Organisation (INTO)
Irish Primary Principals’ Network (IPPN)
Irish Second-Level Students’ Union (ISSU)
Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT)
Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB)
Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) Libraries Development
Marino College of Further Education - Initial Teacher Education (ITE)
Mary Immaculate College - Initial Teacher Education (ITE)
Maths Development Team (MDT)
National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)
National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education (NABMSE)
National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD)
National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS)
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)
National Council for Special Education (NCSE)
National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
National Parents Council – Primary (NPC-P)
National University of Ireland – Galway (NUI-G Gaeilge) Initial Teacher Education (ITE)
National University of Ireland – Galway (NUI-G) Initial Teacher Education (ITE)
Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST)
Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
Special Education Support Service (SESS)
St Patrick’s College, Dublin City University (St. Pat’s DCU - Literacy) Initial Teacher Education (ITE)
St Patrick’s College, Dublin City University (St. Pat’s DCU - Numeracy) Initial Teacher Education (ITE)
State Examinations Commission (SEC)
Teachers’ Union of Ireland (TUI)
Teaching Council
University College Cork, School of Education
University College Dublin (UCD) Initial Teacher Education (ITE)
Youthreach

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## APPENDIX 3 – MEMBERSHIP OF THE LITERACY AND NUMERACY IMPLEMENTATION ADVISORY GROUP - 2016

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Seán Ó Foghlú, Secretary General, Department of Education and Skills
Harold Hislop, Chief Inspector, Department of Education and Skills
Gary Ó Donnchadha, Assistant Secretary, Department of Education and Skills
Gerry Shiel, Research Fellow, Educational Research Centre
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John Hammond, Acting Chief Executive, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
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Deborah Frost, Standards and Improvement Team Curriculum, Qualifications and Standards Directorate, Department of Education Northern Ireland
Brian Murphy, Senior Lecturer, University College Cork
Aidan Farrell, Chief Executive Officer, State Examinations Commission
Jim Rose, Formerly Her Majesty's Inspector and Director of Inspection for the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED)
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Breda Naughton, Principal Officer, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit, Department of Education and Skills



*PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES*

*TEACHING*

*LEADERSHIP*

*CURRICULUM*

*TACKLING EDUCATIONAL*

*DISADVANTAGE*

*ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION*



AN ROINN DEPARTMENT OF  
OIDEACHAIS EDUCATION  
AGUS SCILEANNA AND SKILLS