

NATIONAL COUNCIL
FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

Annual Report 2012

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Chairperson's Letter to the Minister

Mr Ruairi Quinn TD
Minister for Education and Skills
Marlborough Street
Dublin 1

Dear Minister,

I am pleased to submit to you a copy of the NCSE's annual report for 2012 in accordance with Section 34 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004.

This report outlines the progress made in 2012 in delivering the NCSE strategic priorities. This included:

- processing over 14,000 new applications for resource teaching hours;
- processing over 6,500 new applications for SNA support;
- sanctioning over 90 new special classes in mainstream schools;
- publishing the policy advice to you on the education of children with challenging behaviour arising from an emotional disturbance/behavioural disorder;
- publishing two new research reports;
- holding the 4th annual conference on research into special education which afforded us the opportunity to disseminate findings;
- agreeing a new Statement of Strategy 2012–2016;
- agreeing the first performance delivery agreement with your Department.

December 2012 marked the end of the period of office for the former chairperson of the NCSE Council, Sydney Blain, along with a number of other members. The many achievements outlined in the annual report predate my own appointment as chairperson and it is important to acknowledge the role and contribution of the former members and chairperson in progressing the work of the NCSE during 2012.

I also wish to report to you as required under paragraph 13.1 of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

NCSE is not a commercial State body. We have no subsidiaries, joint ventures or shareholdings. No commercially significant developments affected the NCSE in 2012 and we do not anticipate any such developments.

The financial position of NCSE is as disclosed in our 2012 annual accounts which are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General. These accounts are submitted separately to you under Section 29 of the EPSEN Act and include, as required, my report and confirmations to you regarding the NCSE System of Internal Financial Controls (SIFC).

The NCSE has adopted, and complies with, the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. In particular, I can affirm that:

- all appropriate procedures for financial reporting, internal audit, procurement and assets' disposals are being carried out;
- NCSE members comply with the NCSE Code of Business Conduct for Members;
- NCSE employees comply with the Code of Standards and Behaviour for Civil Servants;
- salaries payable to the Chief Executive and all employees comply with Government policy;
- no Directors' fees are payable to NCSE Council Members;
- the NCSE complies with the guidelines for the Appraisal and Management of Capital Expenditure Proposals;
- the NCSE complies with Government travel policy requirements;
- the NCSE does not expect any significant post-balance sheet events.

If you, or any officials of your Department, require any further clarification in any governance matter, NCSE Council will be happy to provide any further information or advice required.

Yours sincerely

Eamon Stack
Chairperson
National Council for Special Education

June 2013

Glossary of Acronyms

ASD	Autistic spectrum disorder
DES	Department of Education and Skills
EADSNE	European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education
EBD	Emotional disturbance/behavioural disorder
EPSEN	Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004
EU	European Union
GLD	General learning disability
HSE	Health Service Executive
ICT	Information and communications technology
IQ	Intelligence quotient
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
OPW	Office of Public Works
SD	Standard deviation
SEAS	Special Education Administration System
SENO	Special Educational Needs Organiser
SESS	Special Education Support Service
SIFC	System of Internal Financial Controls
SNA	Special Needs Assistant
VET	Vocational education and training

National Council for Special Education

The Organisation & Main Achievements 2012



The Organisation

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) was established in 2003. Our functions are set out in Section 20 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act, 2004.

These functions include:

- planning for, and co-ordinating, the provision of education for children with special educational needs and ensuring that a continuum of special educational provision is available;
- conducting and carrying out research;
- providing policy advice to the Minister for Education and Skills in relation to special education;
- disseminating information on special education issues, including best practice, to parents, schools and other interested persons;
- consulting with voluntary bodies to ensure that their knowledge and expertise can inform the development of policy advice by the Council;
- reviewing generally the provision made for adults with disabilities to avail of further, higher and/or continuing education and advising educational institutions concerning best practice in respect of the education of adults who have disabilities.

In 2012, a total of 103 people were employed by the NCSE to enable the delivery of the above functions. This included 82 Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs) who were locally based and who provided a local service to schools and parents.

Main Achievements in 2012

Providing for Special Education in Schools

In 2012 the NCSE:

- enabled over 39,000 students with special educational needs to receive additional teaching in mainstream schools;
- enabled over 22,000 children with special educational needs who also have significant care needs to access special needs assistant (SNA) support;
- processed over 14,000 new applications from schools in relation to children with special educational needs for additional teaching hours in primary and post-primary schools in the 2011–12 school year;
- processed over 6,500 new applications from schools in relation to children with special educational needs for access to SNA support in the 2011–12 school year;
- processed over 2,300 new applications for school transport in respect of children with special educational needs in the 2011–12 school year;
- processed over 2,200 new applications for assistive technology/special equipment in respect of children with special educational needs in the 2011–12 school year;
- sanctioned 91 new special classes in mainstream schools for the 2012–13 school year.

Research

In 2012 the NCSE:

- disseminated some of our key research findings at our fourth annual research conference in November which was attended by more than 200 delegates;
- published two new research reports on the subjects of:
 - curriculum issues for students with special educational needs in post-primary settings
 - measuring educational engagement, progress and outcomes for children with special educational needs.

Policy Advice

In 2012 the NCSE:

- published NCSE policy advice to the Minister on the education of children with challenging behaviour arising from an emotional disturbance/behavioural disorder;
- consulted with education partners on how students with special educational needs should, in the future, be supported in schools and on the preparation of guidelines on the educational placement of students with special educational needs.

Adult Education

In 2012 the NCSE:

- adopted a new strategic approach in regard to the special educational needs of adults with disabilities;
- commenced a process to map educational and training provision for adults with disabilities.

Corporate Functions

In 2012 the NCSE:

- reviewed and agreed a new Statement of Strategy for 2012–2016;
- finalised a performance delivery agreement with the Department of Education and Skills;
- ensured delivery of our essential priority services and functions on a nationwide basis;
- moved our payroll function to a shared service;
- developed our first communication strategy.

Plan and co-ordinate the provision of education and support services to children with special educational needs



Introduction

NCSE provides schools with additional educational supports, which they need to help children with special educational needs get an appropriate education. We operate within overall limits prescribed by Government and we allocate available resources fairly and equitably to schools.

**€1.3 billion was spent on special education in 2012
– 15 per cent of the entire education budget.**

Continuum of Provision

The EPSEN Act requires the NCSE to ensure that a continuum of special educational provision is available for each type of disability. NCSE has a network of locally based Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs), who work with schools and parents to identify the need for local school placements and to plan, in conjunction with the Department of Education and Skills (DES), for the ongoing and future provision of such placements in mainstream school and special school settings.

An NCSE working group is currently engaged in developing consistent SENO planning processes for the future continuum of provision. This working group identified current planning processes and conducted an exercise to map special schools and classes around the country as a baseline source of information for the planning process. Two meetings were also held with the DES Building Unit. The work of this group will continue into 2013 to develop and embed consistent planning processes in all areas of the country.

NCSE Local Services

NCSE, through its national network of locally based SENOs:

- allocates additional resource teaching support to schools so they can meet the special educational needs of children diagnosed with special educational needs arising from disability;
- allocates SNA support to schools so they can provide care support to those children with special educational needs who have been assessed with significant care needs;
- reports to the DES in relation to special transport arrangements that might be required for some of these children, for example for a child with a physical disability who uses a wheelchair;
- reports to the DES in relation to applications for assistive technology or special equipment on behalf of some of these children, for example where a child with a hearing impairment requires specialist audio equipment in the classroom;
- plans for special class settings for children who cannot be educated in a mainstream class setting but who can still attend their local school in a special class with a lower pupil–teacher ratio.

Local Liaison with Parents and the Health Authorities

NCSE SENOs liaise on an ongoing basis at local level with Health Service Executive (HSE) staff such as therapists and assessment officers. The HSE identifies pre-school children with disabilities at an early age and engages with SENOs so that the educational planning process can commence. Before children with special educational needs start school, parents may seek information from SENOs about available options and about supports for their child in school. This process continues as the child progresses through primary and on to second level.

Resource Allocations Process 2012

In 2012, the NCSE allocated additional resource teaching and SNA posts to schools that had enrolled pupils with special educational needs who met the criteria for access to such supports. This covers two school years, namely the 2011–12 school year, which finished in August 2012, and the 2012–13 school year, which commenced in September 2012.

Under Government policy to control public sector numbers, a specific number of resource teachers and SNAs were made available to the NCSE for allocation to schools. For the 2012–13 school year, 5,265 resource teachers and 10,575* SNAs were available for allocation to schools. This reflects the continuing State priority in the resource funding of special education.

During 2012, €1.3 billion or approximately 15 per cent of the total education budget was spent on supporting special education.

Over 22,000 students are supported by special needs assistants.

The Academic Year 2011–12

The NCSE, through the local SENO network, processed over 14,200 applications for resource teaching hours and 6,500 applications for SNA support from primary and post-primary schools for the school year 2011–12. During this process, SENOs engaged and met with parents, principals, school staff and other relevant professionals such as HSE therapists, where appropriate.

By the end of the 2011–12 school year, approximately 5,100 resource teachers and 10,300 SNAs had been allocated to schools.

* This figure includes 60 Child care workers allocated directly by the DES under the Early Start Scheme.

Over 20,000 new applications for resource teacher / SNA posts were processed during 2011–12 school year.

The Academic Year 2012–13

In advance of the start of this school year, the DES advised that post-primary schools would no longer be required to submit applications for additional resource teaching to the NCSE for pupils with high incidence disabilities, namely for children with a mild general learning disability, borderline mild general learning disability or a specific learning disability. As part of the new arrangements, the NCSE allocated a level of teaching support to post-primary schools for these pupils based on the allocations made in the previous year and consequently, schools were only required to make applications for pupils with low incidence disabilities.

By the end of 2012, a total of 5,265 resource teachers and 10,420[†] SNAs were allocated to schools. Details of the actual allocation to each of the 3,900 schools, are available on the NCSE website: www.ncse.ie.

Over 39,000 students receive additional resource teaching support in schools.

Special Schools and Classes

In some cases, a special school setting may be required for children who have complex needs and who cannot be educated in a mainstream school. SENOs advise parents about the schools, which may be in a position to meet the needs of their children.

As part of the local planning and support process, the numbers of special classes and places available in special schools were expanded to meet the increased need and SENOs worked with the schools, parents and relevant clinical supports to achieve this.

NCSE sanctioned the establishment of 91 new special classes attached to mainstream schools for children with special educational needs, bringing the total of such classes to over 630. Special classes have a much lower pupil–teacher ratio than a mainstream school class (between 6:1 and 11:1, depending on the profile of the children in the class). As a result, special classes have now been established in every county, thus broadening the options available for children who cannot be educated in a mainstream setting. A list of the schools with special classes is published on the NCSE website: www.ncse.ie.

[†] This figure includes 60 Child Care workers allocated directly by the DES under the Early Start Scheme.

Statistical Information for the 2011–12 School Year

Statistical information in relation to the breakdown of the allocation of supports for the 2011–12 school year is provided in Appendix 3.

Inclusive Education Framework

Following the publication in 2011 of the Inclusive Education Framework, a guide for schools on the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs, we provided SENOs with training in early 2012 to equip them to provide an information session to schools to support them in using the Framework. During the year, information sessions were provided in almost 100 schools, which is an encouraging number in the first year.

The Framework has significant similarities with the DES Inspectorate's school self-evaluation scheme in terms of structure, language and approach. School self-evaluation is now mandatory in all schools. As the scheme develops and other themes are included within it, such as support for pupils with special educational needs, the Inclusive Education Framework will be a key resource for schools to enhance and develop the ways in which pupils with special educational needs are included.

More students with special educational needs can attend special classes in mainstream schools.

A total of 91 new special classes were sanctioned in 2012 – 630 special classes are now in place in mainstream schools.

Provide evidence-informed
policy advice to the Minister
for Education and Skills
concerning the education
of children with special
educational needs



Background and NCSE Role

NCSE provides the Minister for Education and Skills with expert, independent, evidence-informed policy advice on special education for children and young adults.

In 2012 the Minister accepted key NCSE policy advice on:

- the education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children and
- the future role of special schools and classes in Ireland.

Minister's Acceptance of Two NCSE Policy Advice Reports

During 2012, the Minister for Education and Skills considered and accepted the NCSE's previously submitted policy advice on:

- the future education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children (accepted in February 2012) and
- the future role of special schools and classes (accepted in December 2012).

NCSE staff are members of the DES working groups established to implement the recommendations of the policy advice papers. Copies of the policy advice reports are published on our website: www.ncse.ie.

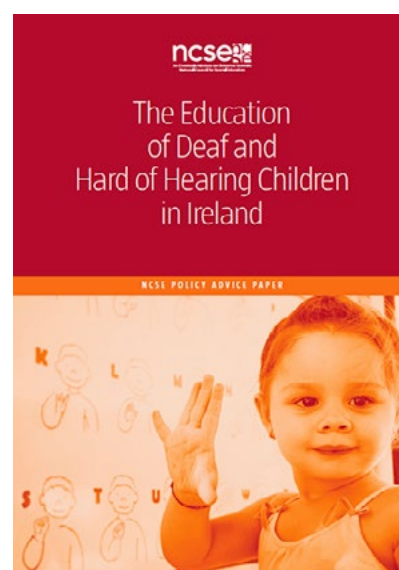
Policy Advice on Deaf and Hard of Hearing children

This policy advice mapped out the future direction for the education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children in Ireland. The significance of this policy advice paper was highlighted by research evidence suggesting that the academic achievement levels of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children remain significantly delayed compared to those of hearing children with similar ability. The NCSE policy advice emphasised that the goal must be that Deaf and Hard of Hearing children in Ireland are given the opportunity to achieve academic outcomes similar to those of their hearing peers of similar ability.

The policy advice provides a blueprint to guide the development of appropriate early intervention and school services.

Policy Advice on Future Role of Special Schools and Classes

This policy advice sets out that the vast majority of pupils with special educational needs should be educated alongside their peers in inclusive



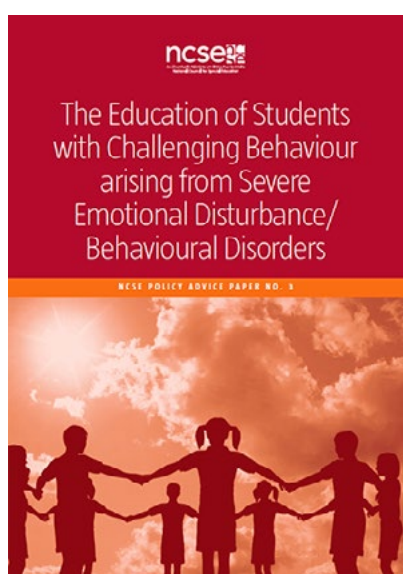
settings, unless that is not in their best interests or the best interest of their peers with whom they are to be educated. However, in line with the spirit of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act, the policy advice recognises that some children have such complex or severe needs that placement in a mainstream setting would not be in their best interest. For these children, locally based special classes attached to mainstream schools or special schools located on mainstream campuses are recommended as the best way forward to maximise inclusion.

Friends for Life and the Incredible Years Programme

As part of its policy advice on the education of students with challenging behaviour, the NCSE recommended that schools use educational programmes with proven success. It recommended the use of two particular programmes, Friends for Life and the Incredible Years programme. Articles published in NCSE NEWS in November 2012 presented positive findings in relation to the use of these programmes in schools.

Policy Advice Submitted by NCSE in 2012

Education of students with challenging behaviour arising from severe emotional disturbance/behavioural disorders (EBD)



In 2012 the NCSE provided policy advice to the Minister for Education and Skills on the education of students with challenging behaviour arising from severe emotional disturbance/behavioural disorders.

The original focus of NCSE's policy advice was the particularly urgent needs of a very small cohort of students (20–30 in number each year) with extremely challenging behaviour arising from severe EBD. The levels of challenging behaviour being presented by these students were posing extreme difficulties to the educational system. The difficulties are in meeting the needs both of the students with severe EBD and of those students with whom they are to be educated. The policy advice noted that even special schools for students with severe EBD were finding it exceedingly difficult to cater for these students and in some cases were failing to do so.

The NCSE policy advice paper sets out a suite of recommendations in relation to students with exceptional levels of challenging behaviour. However, in developing this policy advice, it became clear that the issue of how schools

manage challenging behaviour arising from EBD and/or severe EBD affects a much broader range of students than the small number who were the initial focus of the paper. The paper therefore also sets out recommendations which the NCSE believes, if accepted and implemented, will increase and improve the capacity of the educational system generally to manage challenging behaviour.

The recommendations in the NCSE policy advice are focused on the prevention and management of challenging behaviour and emphasise that priority should be given to:

- early identification and intervention;
- adoption of whole school approaches;
- educational programmes with proven effectiveness;
- developing teacher expertise in the management of behaviour;
- additional supports being time-bound, reviewed regularly and conditional on the development of an individual education plan which includes educational and behavioural targets;
- timely and equitable access to health supports, where required; and
- staffing levels in special schools/classes being sufficient to ensure that students are enabled to learn and that the safety of students and staff is ensured.

The report and policy advice was submitted by NCSE to the Minister and was published on 1st October 2012. A copy is available on our website: www.ncse.ie.

In 2012 the NCSE consulted widely with education partners on how best to support students with special educational needs at school.

Consultation with Key Stakeholders in 2012

In 2012 the NCSE was requested by the Minister for Education and Skills:

- to provide policy advice on how students with special educational needs should, in the future, be supported in schools;
- to develop guidelines on the educational placement of students with special educational needs.

The NCSE held a series of consultation meetings with its Consultative Forum and other educational partners from April to June 2012 seeking views on the above matters. The educational partners included students, parents, teacher representatives, SNAs, advocacy groups, principal representatives, HSE professionals, educational psychologists, school management bodies and voluntary bodies.

Draft policy advice papers and guidelines were prepared having regard to the consultation process and research evidence. The policy advice paper and guidelines

were considered by NCSE Council and its Strategy and Policy Committee at a number of meetings.

The policy advice on supporting children with special educational needs in schools and the guidelines on school placement were both approved by Council at its meeting in December 2012. Both documents are now being finalised for submission to the Minister, in early 2013.

Teacher Training and Continuing Professional Development

One of the most constant themes emerging from NCSE research and policy advice is the central importance of the teacher in the education of children with special educational needs and the need for these teachers to be equipped with the skills necessary to meet the diverse range of needs that children present in the classroom.

The aim of the Special Education Support Service (SESS) is to enhance the quality of learning and teaching, with particular reference to special education provision. The service co-ordinates, develops and delivers a range of professional development initiatives and support structures for school personnel working with students with special educational needs in mainstream primary and post-primary schools, special schools and special classes.



During 2012 NCSE participated in the work of the SESS steering committee. This enabled the NCSE to be up to date with the work of the SESS and to exchange information, as necessary, regarding the training needs of teachers working with students with special educational needs in mainstream and special settings.

European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (EADSNE)

The European Agency was established by Member States of the European Union. Iceland, Norway and Switzerland are also participating countries. It is maintained by annual contributions from member countries and is also supported by the European Union institutions under the EU Lifelong Learning Programme. The Agency facilitates the collection, processing and dissemination of information regarding the education of young people with special educational needs across Europe. It also promotes the full participation of young people with special educational needs in mainstream education and training.

The NCSE participates in this work and also assists the Agency in disseminating its publications to key stakeholders in Ireland. A staff member of the NCSE acts as the National Coordinator for Ireland. The EADSNE held two bi-annual meetings during 2012.

The final vocational education and training (VET) project conference took place during 2012. The aim of this project is to gather responses to the questions: 'what' works in the VET programmes for students with special educational needs; 'how' it works; and 'why'. Irish representatives for this project were Finn O'Murchú, Inspector, Department of Education and Skills and Rory O'Sullivan, Principal, Killester College of Further Education. An important output of this project will be a summary country report on vocational education and training in Ireland, which is currently being finalised for publication on the Agency's website.

The Agency also held a conference in Odense, Denmark, June 13th–15th 2012 on Raising Achievement for All Learners – quality in inclusive education (RA4AL). The Raising Achievement for All Learners project aims to explore how the presence, participation and achievement of all learners in education can be improved in a meaningful way that improves their life chances and opportunities for active citizenship. Two Irish experts were nominated to this project, a NCSE staff member was nominated as research representative and a DES inspector was nominated as the policy representative. Both Irish representatives attended the conference in Denmark and made a well received joint workshop presentation on relevant Irish research and team teaching as a mechanism for delivering inclusive and quality learning.

Through our work with the European Agency, the NCSE has built up a network of European contacts, which has already proved important in informing our research and policy advice work. It also assists us in keeping up to date with international developments in special education and provides a channel through which we can inform our European colleagues about important initiatives regarding the education of children with special educational needs in Ireland. For example, during 2012, European

colleagues expressed considerable interest in the Inclusive Education Framework, published by the NCSE, and copies of the Framework were circulated in a number of European countries.

Conduct and deliver a research programme to underpin the dissemination of information relating to best practice in special education to schools, parents and the education sector



Introduction

The NCSE commissions, conducts and shares research on national and international practice regarding all aspects of special education. Our research base underpins our policy advice, with which we aim to help support and improve educational services for students with special educational needs.

The programme of research continued to progress actively in 2012. The research findings are used to inform parents, educational and other professionals, disability and advocacy groups, policymakers and academia about the latest themes and trends emerging in special education. It also informs our policy advice to the Minister for Education and Skills. Our research programme will continue to focus on developing knowledge and information and to provide a basis for evidence-informed policymaking.

Did you know?

There are now 14 research reports published on our website with more to come. We also have a freely accessible database available on our website containing over 1,600 references to Irish research or policy publications in special education since 2000. This will make the search for publications much easier for those interested in the area.

Publication of Two New Research Reports in 2012

During 2012 the NCSE published two new research reports, both of which are available to download from the NCSE website. These were:

- *Measuring Educational Engagement, Progress and Outcomes for Children with Special Educational Needs: A Review;*
- *Curriculum and Curriculum Access Issues for Students with Special Educational Needs in Post-Primary Settings: An International Review.*

Measuring Educational Engagement, Progress and Outcomes for Children with Special Educational Needs: A Review

Authors: Dr Graeme Douglas, Dr Joseph Travers, Prof Mike McLinden, Christopher Robertson, Prof Emma Smith, Dr Natasha Macnab, Dr Steve Powers, Dr Karen Guldberg, Dr Anne McGough, Dr Margaret O'Donnell and Dr Penny Lacey.

The NCSE commissioned this study in 2010 to explore how best to measure and assess how children with special educational needs are doing in the Irish education system. The research team undertook three key tasks:

- an international literature and policy review;
- five detailed country case studies (Australia, England, Finland, Scotland and the US);
- an analysis of Irish policy and practice (which included an exploratory survey of teachers and an analysis of special school inspectorate evaluations).

The review found that it is difficult to get a sense at national level of how pupils with special educational needs are doing in the education system and that many children with special educational needs do not participate in national assessments. As a result the report authors recommend the development of a more inclusive assessment system that fully captures the achievements and wellbeing of pupils with special needs, and can help us understand what supports and interventions make a positive difference. An 'inclusive assessment' framework proposes that:

- all students are included and benefit from assessment;
- assessments are accessible and appropriate for the diverse range of children in the education system;
- the full breadth of the curriculum is assessed (including curriculum areas of particular relevance to students with special educational needs).

The concept of inclusive assessment is relevant to classroom assessment as well as system-based national assessment. If done well, the authors argue this should enable the measurement of pupil engagement and progress, and inform teaching (contributing to an assessment for learning approach). They also argue that information from inclusive assessment could be shared with teachers, parents and the students themselves (for example through report cards). The report authors make other recommendations on the issues of the national pupil database, award bearing assessment, the literacy and numeracy strategy, data collection, school and class based assessment and the need for further research. The NCSE will assess these recommendations in the development of relevant policy advice on these matters to the Department of Education and Skills.

Curriculum and Curriculum Access Issues for Students with Special Educational Needs in Post-Primary Settings: An International Review

Authors: Alison O'Mara, Benedicte Akre, Tony Munton, Isaac Marrero-Guillamon, Alison Martin, Kate Gibson, Alexis Llewellyn, Victoria Clift-Matthews, Paul Conway and Chris Cooper.

This report is based on a systematic literature review on the topic of curriculum and curriculum access issues for students with special educational needs in post-primary settings. It presents an overview of research evidence on this topic in Ireland and internationally, and highlights key lessons arising from the literature. The report also highlights gaps in the evidence base, particularly the need for more robust studies to assess what works in ensuring curricular access for students with special educational needs, and in relation to how the curriculum should best be designed, developed, adapted and delivered for post-primary students with special educational needs. However, despite the lack of robust evaluations to provide an unequivocal evidence-based position on good practice, the review offers a useful account of current policy and

practice both in Ireland and internationally that provides an enhanced understanding of key issues.

The evidence broadly supports the view that students with special educational needs can benefit from a flexible approach to curriculum adaptation and delivery. The research, however, also points out the need to balance any potential benefits of flexibility against the need for students to meet standard criteria for accreditation and certification, and to prevent adapted curricula from becoming too narrow. In addition, the available evidence shows that schools in Ireland, and internationally, vary in their effectiveness in delivering inclusion strategies for students with special educational needs.

Two New NCSE Research Studies Commissioned in 2012

The NCSE commissioned two new research studies in 2012, one on the important topic of hearing the voice of students with special educational needs, and another on reviewing education and training provision for adults with disabilities. These were:

- *A Study of the Experiences of Students with Special Educational Needs at Post-primary School; and*
- *What Works in the Provision of Higher and Further Education, Continuing Education, Rehabilitation and Training for Adults with Disabilities: A Literature and Country Review.*

A Study of the Experiences of Students with Special Educational Needs at Post-primary School

This new study will enable students with special educational needs in secondary schools to tell us about their experiences and how they think they are faring in the education system. The study is being conducted by a team from the University of Manchester, UK, led by Dr Garry Squires, with the involvement of Irish academics.

The study will focus on student views and experiences of issues that impact on their participation in, and engagement with, school and learning, both formal (relating to academic achievement) and informal (relating to wellbeing and independence). It will also attempt to assess how these student experiences link to both formal and informal educational outcomes, such as academic attainment, early school leaving, independence and skills development. There is some evidence that the second level environment may present more difficulties for students with special educational needs than for students without such needs. However, we need more rigorous research like this to establish the distinct experience of students with a wide range of special educational needs, and how these students feel they are faring with the curriculum, school and their peers.

The project will start with a review of the Irish and international literature focused on the general experiences of secondary students in relation to curriculum access, learning, participation and engagement at school, and an overview and analysis of key lessons that emerge from the literature for students with special educational needs in particular. The second phase will engage with students in a sample involving 30 to 40 schools

around the country. It will also involve interviews with key school personnel and the collection of relevant background documentation and data from those schools. Most of the fieldwork will take place in 2013 and it is envisaged that the study will be completed by the end of 2014.

What Works in the Provision of Higher and Further Education, Continuing Education, Rehabilitation and Training for Adults with Disabilities: A Literature and Country Review

In 2012 the NCSE commissioned its first ever research study to investigate the field of education and training provision for adults with disabilities. This study will help the NCSE gain a better understanding of this area and will make a valuable contribution to building an evidence base to identify potential best practice in education and training for adults with disabilities.

The study is being conducted by Dr Carmel Duggan of WRC Social and Economic Consultants in Dublin. This research involves a review of the international research evidence about what works best in educating adults with disabilities across a range of sectors including higher and further education, continuing and adult education, vocational education and rehabilitation. The evidence will be grouped by these sectors and the stages in the education process: access, participation and progression. The study will also provide five detailed country case studies to illuminate aspects of best practice in more detail and draws on examples from the US, Canada, Australia and Scotland. It is envisaged that the review will conclude in 2013.

Other Research Work

Six other research projects continued or were under review in 2012. These were:

- *Inclusive Research in Irish Schools (Project IRIS)* (This is a longitudinal study examining the provision of special education within Irish schools, the experiences of pupils/students with special educational needs receiving this education and their associated outcomes).
- *A Study of Transition from Primary to Post-Primary School for Pupils with Special Educational Needs*
- *Review of NCSE Resource Allocation Process and Evaluation of the Deployment of Resources in School*
- *Study of Access and Progression Experiences of Students with Special Educational Needs Moving from Compulsory Education to Further and Higher Education*
- *The Special Class Model in Ireland: How Is It Working for Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools?*
- *Continuum of Education Provision for Children with Special Educational Needs: Review of International Policies and Practices.*

Over 200 education stakeholders came to our annual research conference to hear about the latest issues emerging from national and international research on special education.

NCSE Research Conference 2012

The NCSE's fourth annual research conference took place on November 21st at the Croke Park Conference Centre, Dublin with more than 200 key stakeholders in attendance. These included researchers, those involved in teacher education and support, principals and teachers, parents, educational psychologists, disability advocacy groups, departmental officials, access officers and teacher union representatives, among others.

The event was opened via video link by the Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn, TD. Featured presentations included:

- international guest speakers, Professor Petra Engelbrecht, Canterbury Christ Church University, on teacher education for inclusion; and Professor Neil Humphrey and Dr Garry Squires, University of Manchester, on the UK *Achievement for All* National Evaluation;
- the launch of findings from two recently completed NCSE commissioned studies on the topics of: measuring educational engagement, progress and outcomes among students with special educational needs; and scoping international practice and policies on the continuum of educational provision for these students;
- interim findings from Project IRIS, the NCSE longitudinal study exploring the experiences of and outcomes for pupils with special educational needs; and from the first phase of the NCSE commissioned study of special classes in Ireland.

All presentations are available to download from the NCSE website.

What is an inclusive assessment?

This question was explored in research published in 2012 on measuring educational engagement, progress and outcomes for children with special educational needs. The report authors state that an inclusive assessment framework would ensure that:

- all children are included and benefit from assessment;
- assessments are accessible and appropriate for the diverse range of children in the education system;
- the full breadth of the curriculum is assessed (including curriculum areas of particular relevance to students with special educational needs).

They argue that not only will it ensure that no child is excluded from the assessment process; it will also enable the measurement of pupil engagement and progress, inform teaching and could be shared with teachers, parents and the students themselves.

Review further and higher educational provision for adults with special educational needs and develop best practice guidelines



During 2012, we adopted a new strategic priority in adult education and commenced work.

Since its first establishment in 2003, the priority objectives of NCSE focused on establishing and developing its services in providing supports for pupils with special educational needs.

Under Section 20 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004, one of the functions of the NCSE is to review and provide advice on education and training services for adults with disabilities. In addition, when Part 2 of the Disability Act 2005 comes into force for adults, NCSE, in consultation with the Minister for Education and Skills, will have certain functions in regard to planning and co-ordinating the provision of education services to adults with disabilities.

In its review of strategy for 2012–16, NCSE decided to review further and higher educational provision for adults with special educational needs and develop best practice guidelines. The work of the NCSE in this strategic priority area is at a very early stage. NCSE looks forward to ongoing positive engagement with providers and authorities at national and local level in working to facilitate and improve access for young people and adults to appropriate educational and training services.

NCSE is scoping the continuing options available in further and higher education and training for young people and adults with special educational needs. Consultation with stakeholders about this initiative has also commenced through the NCSE Consultative Forum. NCSE is also engaged directly with the wide range of authorities and providers at national and local level.

In 2012, NCSE commenced mapping adult education and training options, services and supports available for people with disabilities when they are leaving school or when they are returning later as adults to education and/or training. It is planned to finalise this mapping and information initiative and publish this material on the NCSE website in 2013. It will be used as a basis for an information brochure for adults, parents and schools and to inform and brief local NCSE staff who work directly with parents, pupils, schools and local agencies on an ongoing basis.

General indications from the mapping process include the following:

- There is a wide range of diverse provision currently in place to meet the education and training needs of adults and young people with disabilities. The main sectors of provision are
 - higher education in third level institutions
 - further education with some focus on second chance provision
 - training for employment currently mainly provided by FÁS
 - health adult services under the auspices of the HSE.

- The provision has developed separately over a number of sectors leading to regional variations, variations in the mode of delivery and different approaches in certain sectors.
- It is not always clear to individuals what options are available, which options are most suited to meet their needs and where information and support may be obtained.
- There are significant reforms currently underway in the further education and training sectors as well as in the health and qualification validation sectors.

Ensure that the NCSE continues to develop as an effective organisation which is compliant with all statutory, regulatory and corporate governance requirements as well as having effective information dissemination, communication and media strategies in place



Introduction

During 2012, the NCSE continued to maintain and develop its capacity as an organisation in line with statutory and regulatory requirements, prescribed policy, the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, budgetary and staffing limits, and its strategic priorities.

In line with Government policy on public service staffing, the NCSE was required to reduce its staffing under the Employment Control Framework from 107 to 103. The NCSE action plan and progress reports for the implementation of reform under the Public Service Agreement are published on our website (www.ncse.ie).

The reorganisation of NCSE structures and staffing progressed further during 2012. NCSE moved its staff payroll to a shared service during 2012. Planning for the transfer of transactional human resources functions to a shared service (PeoplePoint) was also further progressed.

The NCSE agreed a new strategy statement following strategic review.

Strategic Planning and Implementation

NCSE Council carried out a strategic review and agreed a new strategy statement for the period 2012–2016, which is published on NCSE website: www.ncse.ie. A work plan of the actions for 2012 to implement the priorities in the strategic plan was agreed by the Council. The implementation of the work plan was actively monitored by the Council during the year. NCSE and the Department of Education and Skills agreed a performance delivery agreement for a three year period 2012–2014.

Communication Strategy

The NCSE developed its first communication strategy in 2012. Effective communication with and dissemination of information to our stakeholders is a key feature across our strategic objectives. The strategy outlines our key tasks, audiences and messages and now underpins all of our communication and information activities.

Developing a Programme of Information Sessions for Parents

Parents are one of our key stakeholders and we are aware that finding the right information about their child's education can be a challenge for parents. Our local SENOs engage regularly with parents in the course of their work and are a significant source of information. During 2012 we worked with SENOs to develop a programme of structured information sessions for parents. The aim of the session is to provide parents with information about how children with special educational needs are supported through the education system to guide parents in their decision making about their child's education. The programme, which will be piloted and rolled out across the country

in 2013, is initially targeted at parents of young children who may have recently been diagnosed with special educational needs.

Information for Parents of Children with Special Educational Needs



The NCSE published the first in a series of information pamphlets for parents of children with special educational needs, called *Information for Parents/Guardians of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children and Young People*. An electronic and Irish sign language version of this pamphlet is available on the NCSE website www.ncse.ie. A hard copy version of this pamphlet is also available through the SENO network.

Further pamphlets in the series will be published during 2013.

NCSE NEWS

A further issue of the NCSE newsletter, NCSE NEWS, was electronically published on our website in December 2012. The key items included:

- news about two new research studies commissioned by NCSE on hearing the voice of students with special needs and a review of provision for adults with disabilities;
- two articles contributed by NEPS psychologists on educational programmes aimed at teaching children and young people to cope with anxiety (FRIENDS) and at helping schools and teachers to manage behaviour and promote social and emotional competence (Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management programme).

NCSE Website Review

The NCSE website is an important public face of the organisation and a key route through which parents, teachers, students and other stakeholders keep up to date with NCSE work and activities. A review of the NCSE website was undertaken in 2012 to assess how the site was working and whether or how it could be improved.

The review process involved consultation with visitors to our website and NCSE staff, analysis of statistics on web traffic to the site, and discussions with other organisations and providers on issues of cost and website development and improvement.

The key recommendations from the review focus on: improvements to the presentation and organisation of content to ensure a more intuitive organisation of material, ease of navigation and a more visually attractive 'look'; improvements to technical aspects of the website architecture; addition of updated information and content on key aspects of the organisation's work that have undergone change in recent years; and the adoption of new internal procedures and policies in relation to the management of the website. These will be considered by the NCSE and implemented in 2013, pending approval of funding.

Finance and Budgeting

The NCSE is wholly funded by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The DES notifies an annual allocation each year and the NCSE is required to prepare and implement an operational budget within the parameters set down in the budget allocation. The Council was fully compliant again with these requirements in 2012.

In 2012 the NCSE and DES agreed a revised funding and budget procedure. The agreed procedures further assist the DES and NCSE in meeting reporting obligations, ensure compliance with public financial procedures and facilitate the NCSE to maintain sufficient but not excess funds to meet immediate cash flow requirements.

Annual Accounts

The Council is responsible for the preparation of annual accounts in accordance with the requirements set down in the Code of Practice for Governance of State Bodies and as stipulated in the EPSSEN Act. The audited accounts are published separately on the NCSE website.

ICT Developments

The NCSE manages its information and communications technology (ICT) network and systems largely through outsourced service arrangements. It avails of centrally procured drawdown arrangements and the framework agreements put in place by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

In 2012, NCSE made arrangements with the Revenue ICT service to house NCSE ICT systems offsite in the Revenue purpose built IT centre. At year end, the project to progress the migration of NCSE hardware was well underway and is scheduled for completion in 2013.

The NCSE established a project team to design and oversee the implementation of enhancements to the Special Education Administration System (SEAS) to ensure NCSE's primary information system can meet requirements in a changing policy environment. System development commenced at year end to be ready for the allocations process commencing in spring 2013.

NCSE Office Accommodation Infrastructure

The NCSE operates a network of 38 offices throughout the state including its headquarters in Trim, Co. Meath. NCSE local staff operate from local offices and provide services directly to schools and parents in their areas.

The Office of Public Works (OPW) provides expert support to the NCSE in securing and maintaining its office network. The NCSE is engaged in a programme to reduce accommodation costs and to rationalise its commercial leaseholds in line with government policy. In 2012 the NCSE closed two local offices (in Dublin and in Longford) and transferred these local services to other nearby NCSE office locations. Full contact

details for NCSE headquarters and local services are published and available on www.ncse.ie.

Compliance with Corporate Governance Requirements

The Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies has been adopted by NCSE. NCSE has developed guidelines for Council and procedures to ensure compliance with the Code. These guidelines were reviewed by the NCSE Internal Auditor in 2012. The main objective of the review was to carry out a gap analysis between the corporate governance procedures currently in place within NCSE, and those specified in the Code. The audit review results indicated that relative to the nature and size of NCSE, reasonable assurance could be gained from the adequacy and effectiveness of processes and controls in place over corporate governance procedures in NCSE.

Other Confirmations Required under the Code

A number of annual confirmations of compliance by NCSE are required under the Code. These confirmations of compliance are included in Appendix 1 and in the Council Chairperson's letter accompanying this report.

Governance



The Council of the National Council for Special Education

The governance authority for the NCSE is the Council of the National Council for Special Education. The Council is appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills under Section 21 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004. The current Council was appointed for a term of three years, commencing January 1st 2010 and expiring on December 31st 2012. The Council met on seven occasions during 2012. Details of individual members and their attendances are given in the table below.

Membership of the Council of the NCSE during 2012		
Name	Details	Attendance
*Sydney Blain (Chairperson)	Former Principal, Church of Ireland College of Education, Dublin.	7
*Maighread Ní Ghallchobhair (Deputy Chairperson)	Former Principal, Benincasa School for children with emotional and behavioural disorders.	5
*Siobhán Barron	Director, National Disability Authority (NDA). Nominated by the NDA.	6
Maureen Costello	Director, National Educational Psychological Service.	6
Mick Coughlan	Principal Clinical Psychologist of the National Learning Network. Nominated by the NDA.	5
*Seamus Hegarty	Chairman of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement. Former Director of the National Foundation for Educational Research (UK).	6
Pat Kinsella	Principal, Coláiste Choilm, Ballincollig, Co. Cork.	7
Anne Lodge	Principal, Church of Ireland College of Education, Dublin.	2
*Don Mahon	Assistant Chief Inspector, Department of Education and Skills.	5
James O'Grady	Former Head of Disability Services in the Health Service Executive and Disability Policy Adviser to the Office of Mental Health and Disability in the Department of Health.	5
Julie O'Leary	Graduate of University College Cork and NUI Galway.	6
*Tom O'Sullivan	Assistant General Secretary, INTO. Former Principal of St. Senan's Boys National School, Limerick.	6
Joan Russell	Chief Executive Officer (Acting) for Co. Cork Vocational Education Committee.	4

Note: Those members with an * are serving a second term on Council.

Council Committees

The Council has established five committees under Section 33 of the EPSEN Act. These committees operated during 2012 and reported to Council in accordance with their terms of reference and governance guidelines agreed by the Council. Members of the Council agreed to act on one or more committees. In the case of the Audit Committee, the Council has appointed an external chairperson with relevant experience.

Research and Communications (6 meetings)	Attendance
Seamus Hegarty (Chairperson)	6
Tom O'Sullivan	5
Anne Lodge	3
Julie O'Leary	4
Don Mahon	4

Strategy and Policy (5 meetings)	Attendance
Maighread Ní Ghallchobhair (Chairperson)	5
Pat Kinsella	5
James O'Grady	4
Mick Coughlan	4

Finance (6 meetings)	Attendance
Siobhán Barron (Chairperson)	5
Joan Russell	4
Maureen Costello	5

Audit (4 meetings)	Attendance
Donal Lawlor (Chairperson)	4
Maighread Ní Ghallchobhair	2
Seamus Hegarty	3
Siobhán Barron	2

CEO Performance (2 meetings)	Attendance
Tom O'Sullivan (Chairperson)	2
Sydney Blain	2
Siobhán Barron	2

NCSE Consultative Forum

The Consultative Forum is established by the Council under Section 22 of EPSEN. Up to 17 members are appointed by the Council following a prescribed consultation process. Three members are appointed by the Minister. The term of the current Forum completes in July 2013. There were two meetings in 2012. For 2012, the Forum consisted of the members listed in the table below.

Members of the Consultative Forum (2 meetings)		
Members appointed by the Council		Attendance
Pat Goff (Joint Chairperson)	Irish Primary Principals Network	2
Seán Burke (Joint Chairperson)	Irish Vocational Education Association	1
Sally Maguire	Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland	2
Des Swan	Psychological Society of Ireland	2
Edward Byrne	National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education	2
Rory O'Sullivan	National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals	1
Marie Therese Kilmartin	Joint Managerial Body	2
Sarah Parlane	National Parents Council – Primary	1
Seán Balfe	Catholic Primary School Management Association	1
Robert Jones	Disability Federation of Ireland	1
Bernie Ruane	Teachers' Union of Ireland	1
Antoinette Nic Gearailt	Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools	2
Mary Van Lieshout (see note 1 below)	National Disability Authority	0
Eithne Fitzgerald (see note 2 below)	National Disability Authority	1
Feargal Brougham	Irish National Teachers' Organisation	1
Katherine O'Leary	Inclusion Ireland	1
Patricia McLarty	Health Service Executive	2
Members appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills		
Alan Sayles	Inspector, Department of Education and Skills	0
Paula Long	Senior Psychologist, National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)	2
Terry Reynolds	Assistant Principal, Special Education Section, Department of Education and Skills	2

Note 1: Mary Van Lieshout resigned as a member of the Consultative Forum in March 2012.

Note 2: Eithne Fitzgerald was appointed as a member of the Consultative Forum on 16th May 2012.

Appendices



Appendix 1

Confirmations of Compliance with Requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies

NCSE System of Internal Financial Control (SIFC)

The Council is responsible for the NCSE system of internal control and for reviewing annually the effectiveness of the internal controls, including financial, operational, compliance controls and risk management. In 2012, NCSE Internal Auditors carried out a review of the SIFC, which was submitted to the NCSE Audit Committee. The Audit Committee considered the internal audit review and reported to Council. The audit review concluded that reasonable assurance could be placed on the sufficiency and operation of internal controls to mitigate and/or manage one or more of those key inherent risks to which financial activities are exposed. NCSE Council is satisfied following review that its SIFC continues to be sufficient.

Tax and Regulatory Compliance

There have been no communications concerning non-compliance with requirements of regulatory or tax authorities with respect to any matter. NCSE is not aware of any actual or possible non-compliance with laws or regulations that could impact on the financial statements.

NCSE Travel Policy

Government policy on business travel is being complied with in all respects. The NCSE has developed and maintains its travel policy and procedures in accordance with Government requirements. NCSE operates an electronic web-based system to ensure claims are processed efficiently and in line with prescribed procedures. Details of payments to Council in 2012 for business travel claims will be included in the audited NCSE Financial Statement.

Procurement Policy

Government policy on public procurement is being applied in the NCSE. The NCSE has developed procurement policy and procedures, implemented a corporate procurement plan and developed in-house expertise to ensure the NCSE procurement effectively provides value for money purchasing in line with NCSE strategic priorities and budget limits, with probity and accountability and in compliance with Government policies.

The NCSE avails of shared service arrangements and central drawdown contracts including those procured by the National Procurement Service and ICT Government contracts where available.

Disposal of Assets

Disposal of assets by the NCSE fully complies with requirements set down by the Code of Practice. The NCSE has developed policy and procedures to ensure that disposal and replacement of assets are efficient, secure, in line with Government policy and driven by business needs.

Confidential Disclosures

The Council has agreed procedures whereby employees and members may, in confidence, raise concern about possible irregularities in financial reporting or other matters and will, where appropriate, ensure meaningful follow-up of any matters raised in this way.

Audit

The NCSE has established an internal audit function and has agreed an Internal Audit Charter. Council has appointed an Audit Committee with an agreed terms of reference including oversight of the internal audit function and review of the draft annual accounts.

Appendix 2

NCSE Staffing

Grade	Staff end 2012
Chief Executive	1
Principal (head of function)	4
Assistant Principal	4
Higher Executive Officer	5
Executive Officer	3
Staff Officer	1
Clerical Officer	3
Senior Special Educational Needs Organiser	9
Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO)	73
Total	103

Appendix 3

Statistical Tables for Academic Year 2011–12

Table A1: Pupils by disability in receipt of resource teaching supports in primary schools in 2011–12 school year

Disability Category	No. of Pupils
Assessed syndrome	201
Autism/Autistic spectrum disorders	4,231
Emotional/behavioural disturbance	3,904
Hearing impairment	692
Moderate general learning disability	544
Multiple disabilities	1,913
Other	241
Physical disability	3,066
Severe emotional/behavioural disturbance	852
Severe/profound general learning disability	30
Specific speech and language disorder	4,180
Visual impairment	284
Total	20,138

Figure A1: Proportion of pupils by disability in receipt of resource teaching supports in primary schools

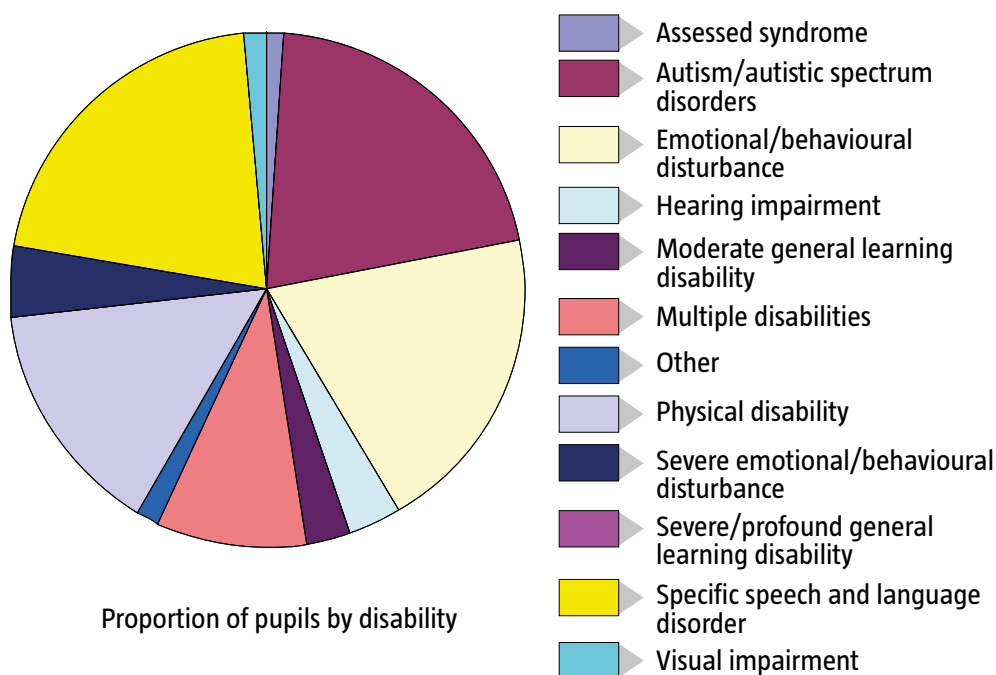
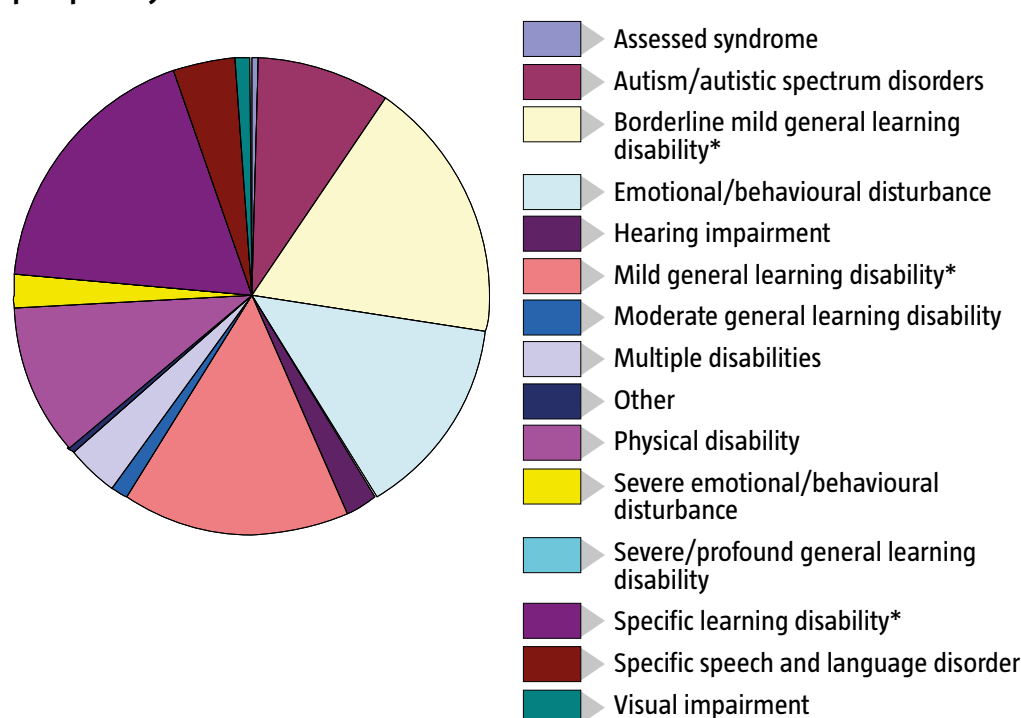


Table A2: Pupils by disability in receipt of resource teaching supports in post-primary schools

Disability Category	No. of Pupils
Assessed syndrome	85
Autism/autistic spectrum disorders	1,759
Borderline mild general learning disability*	3,484
Emotional/behavioural disturbance	2,613
Hearing impairment	407
Mild general learning disability*	2,995
Moderate general learning disability	247
Multiple disabilities	688
Other	70
Physical disability	1,945
Severe emotional/behavioural disturbance	428
Severe/profound general learning disability	4
Specific learning disability*	3,531
Specific speech and language disorder	826
Visual impairment	216
Total	19,298

Figure A2: Proportion of pupils by disability in receipt of resource teaching supports in post-primary schools


* Children with special educational needs diagnosed in these three categories of disability will have accessed resource teaching support at primary level under the General Allocation Model. Under this model, all mainstream primary schools have a learning support/resource teaching service, which complements the work of the class teacher in supporting students with special educational needs. Children assessed with these particular disabilities can access additional teaching support through this learning support/resource teaching service. From September 2012, the DES advised that Post-Primary schools would no longer be required to submit applications for additional resource teaching for pupils with a high incidence disability (ref DES Circular 10/2012)

Table A3: Description of disability categories

High Incidence Disabilities	
Disability category	Description
Borderline Mild General Learning Disability	Such pupils have been assessed by a psychologist as having a borderline mild general learning disability (the pupil's full scale IQ will have been assessed in the range of 70 to 79)
Mild General Learning Disability	Such pupils have been assessed by a psychologist as having a mild general learning disability, (the pupil's full scale IQ will have been assessed in the range 50 – 69).
Specific Learning Disability	Such children have been assessed by a psychologist as: 1. Being of average intelligence or higher; and 2. Having a degree of learning disability specific to basic skills in reading, writing or mathematics which places them at or below the 2nd percentile on suitable, standardized, norm-referenced tests.
Low Incidence Disabilities	
Disability category	Description
Autism/autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)	A psychiatrist or psychologist will have assessed and classified such pupils as having autism or autistic spectrum disorder according to DSM-IV or ICD-10 criteria.
Emotional disturbance and/or behaviour problems	Such pupils are being treated by a psychiatrist or psychologist for such conditions as neurosis, childhood psychosis, hyperactivity, attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and conduct disorders that are significantly impairing their socialisation and/or learning in school.
Hearing impairment	Such pupils have a hearing disability that is so serious to impair significantly their capacity to hear and understand human speech, thus preventing them from participating fully in classroom interaction and from benefiting adequately from school instruction. The great majority of them have been prescribed hearing aids and are availing of the services of a Visiting Teacher.
Moderate general learning disability	Such pupils have been assessed by a psychologist as having a moderate general learning disability (the pupil's full scale IQ will have been assessed in the range 35 – 49).
Multiple disabilities	Pupils assessed with multiple disabilities meet the criteria for two or more of the low incidence disabilities described above.
Pupils with special educational needs arising from an assessed syndrome	Such pupils with an assessed syndrome e.g. Down syndrome, William's syndrome and Tourette's syndrome in addition to any of the other low-incidence disabilities.

Low Incidence Disabilities	
Disability category	Description
Physical disability	<p>Such pupils have permanent or protracted disabilities arising from such conditions as congenital deformities, Spina Bifida, Dyspraxia, Muscular Dystrophy, Cerebral Palsy, brittle bones or severe accidental injury. Because of the impairment of their physical function, they require special additional intervention and support if they are to have available to them a level and quality of education appropriate to their needs and abilities.</p> <p>Many require the use of a wheelchair, mobility or seating aid, or other technological support.</p> <p>They may suffer from a lack of muscular control and co-ordination and may have difficulties in communication, particularly in oral articulation, as for example severe Dyspraxia.</p>
Severe and profound general learning disability	<p>Such pupils have been assessed by a psychologist as having a severe or profound general learning disability, (the pupil's full scale IQ will have been assessed as being below 35). In addition, such pupils may have physical disabilities.</p>
Severe emotional disturbance and/or behaviour problems	<p>The criteria for Severe EBD are that the pupil is in the care of a Psychiatrist or Clinical Psychologist for a severe clinical disorder. A very small number of pupils would be expected to fall within this category.</p>
Specific speech and language disorder	<p>Such pupils should meet each of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the case of specific speech and language disorder it is a pupil's non-verbal or performance ability that must be within the average range or above (i.e. non-verbal or performance IQ of 90 or above). • The pupil must also have been assessed by a speech and language therapist and found to be at two or more standard deviations (S.D.) below the mean, or at a generally equivalent level (i.e. – 2 S.D. or below, or below a standard score of 70) in one or more of the main areas of speech and language development. <p>Two assessments, a psychological assessment and a speech and language assessment are necessary in this case.</p>
Visual impairment	<p>Such pupils have a visual disability which is so serious as to impair significantly their capacity to see, thus interfering with their capacity to perceive visually presented materials, such as pictures, diagrams and the written word. Some will have been diagnosed as suffering from such conditions as congenital blindness, cataracts, albinism and retinitis pigmentosa. Most require the use of low-vision aids and are availing of the services of a Visiting Teacher.</p>

Appendix 4

Table 1: SNA posts allocated at end 2012* to schools for 2012–13

School type	Number
Primary schools	6,256.30**
Post-primary schools	2,041.13
Special schools	2,123.41
Total	10,420.84

Table 2: Resource teaching posts allocated at end 2012* to mainstream schools for 2012–13

School type	Number
Primary schools	3,029.58
Post-primary schools	2,235.93
Total	5,265.51***

* November 2012

** Figures include 60 Child care workers allocated directly by the DES under the Early Start Scheme

*** In addition, 1,050 class teachers were allocated to 119 special schools



