

# **The National Council for Special Education**

# **Annual Report 2009**

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## **Foreword by Chairperson of Council**

This 2009 Annual Report provides an account of the work of the present Council in the third year of its three-year term of office. Upon appointment in 2007, Council had the ambition of working with all stakeholders to deliver a significantly improved special education system. It viewed the implementation of the EPSEN Act 2004 as set out in the previous Council's implementation report as the conduit through which this ambition would be realised. As a first step it completed a Statement of Strategy for the period 2008-2011 which was based on the core provisions of the EPSEN Act 2004 but which was not contingent on a particular timetable of implementation.

As the Council approaches the end of its term of office it is most disappointing to note that five years after the passing of the Act, it has not been fully implemented. The enshrinement in law of such provisions as the statutory right to assessment, education plans and an independent appeal process were expected and still can be expected to further enhance and improve the special education system to a significant degree. However, it is understandable that the change in the country's economic circumstances might impact on the speed at which the Act might be implemented. While the full implementation of the EPSEN Act at the earliest opportunity must continue to be a priority objective, a key issue is that supports for children with special education needs are maintained. In this regard, this year's report shows that progress has been made in relation to the maintenance and improvement of the special education system. Data gathered through research and from the NCSE database on resource allocation clearly shows a continuing movement towards inclusive education and the availability of a range of placements to suit children whose needs require alternative settings.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all council members for their active participation in all aspects of the council's work and their expert and considered inputs to all the issues which arose over the past three years. I would also like to thank the members of the executive for the excellent support provided to the council across all its functional areas and particularly in relation to the support for council meetings.

**Sydney Blain,  
Chairperson**

## Statement by CEO

I am pleased to introduce the sixth Annual Report of the National Council for Special Education. This Report provides an overview of the work undertaken by the Council in 2009 under the key strategic priorities as set out in the Council's Statement of Strategy 2008 -2011 published in 2008.

This year has seen the advancement of a significant and wide ranging programme of research in the area of special education which will provide an evidential basis for policy review and development over the coming years. The findings of the first two of these reports on the role of special schools and classes and on the provision of education for deaf and hard of hearing children were presented at a seminar in November 2009 and are now published on our website [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie) . In 2010 the Council will be focusing on developing practical policy advice to the Minister for Education and Science on these issues building on the research findings and the experiences and views of the Council and stakeholders.

A core activity of the NCSE continues to be the allocation of resources to schools to support children with special educational needs. As shown in this report the NCSE sanctioned additional supports for over 8,500 pupils in 2009. It is critical that we continue to support these children to the maximum extent. In order to achieve this objective it is also more necessary than ever in the present economic circumstances to ensure that support is provided on the basis of evidence of need and the most effective and efficient use and management of the resources available. The NCSE's policy is to ensure consistency of decision making and equitable treatment of all children when applying the policy parameters within which we are required to operate. To improve the transparency in this regard an appeals system is being finalised and will be introduced in 2010.

The progress made this year in advancing our research programme, establishing a framework for developing policy advice, collaboration with other support agencies together with our continued sanctioning of supports for children with special educational needs provides a solid foundation on which together we can continue to build a better special education system.

**Pat Curtin**  
CEO

## The Organisation

The Council was originally established by Order (SI No. 270 of 2004) made by the Minister for Education and Science under Section 54 of the Education Act 1998 on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2003.

The Council was established under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 (EPSEN Act 2004) with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2005. Section 20 of the Act sets the general functions of the Council under the Act. These functions are

(a) to disseminate to schools, parents and such other persons as the Council considers appropriate information relating to best practice, nationally and internationally, concerning the education of children with special educational needs;

(b) in consultation with schools, health boards and such other persons as the Council considers appropriate to plan and co-ordinate the provision of education and support services to children with special educational needs;

(c) in consultation with schools and with such persons as the Council considers appropriate to plan for the integration of education for students with special educational needs with education for students generally;

(d) to make available to the parents of children with special educational needs information in relation to their entitlements and the entitlements of their children;

(e) to ensure that the progress of students with special educational needs is monitored and that it is reviewed at regular intervals;

(f) to assess and review the resources required in relation to educational provision for children with special educational needs;

(g) to ensure that a continuum of special educational provision is available as required in relation to each type of disability;

(h) to review generally the provision made for adults with disabilities to avail of higher education and adult and continuing education, rehabilitation and training and to publish reports on the results of such reviews (which reviews may include recommendations as to the manner in which such provision could be improved);

(i) to advise all educational institutions concerning best practice in respect of the education of adults who have disabilities;

(j) to advise the Minister in relation to any matter relating to the education of children and others with disabilities;

(k) to consult with such voluntary bodies as the Council considers appropriate, (being bodies whose objects relate to the promotion of the interests of, or the provision of support services to, persons with disabilities) for the purposes of ensuring that their knowledge and expertise can inform the development of policy by the Council and the planning and provision of support services, and

(l) to conduct and commission research on matters relevant to the functions of the Council and, as it considers appropriate, to publish in such form and manner, as the Council thinks fit, arising out of such research.

In addition the Council will acquire a range of specific functions under the Act when the provisions of the Act are fully commenced. These functions will broadly relate to the rights of children with special educational needs to assessment, an education plan and appeals processes.

Under its current remit a major function of the Council is the sanctioning of teaching and special needs assistant resources for schools to support individual children with special educational needs. In sanctioning such resources the Council is required to implement Departmental policy while taking into account the special educational needs of children as identified in assessment reports.

In 2008 the Council published its first Statement of Strategy for the period 2008-2011. That Statement sets out five high level strategic objectives for the Council over that period. This report outlines the progress made under each of these objectives in 2009.

## **Main Achievements in 2009**

1. Completion of the NCSE annual allocation of resources to schools to support children with special educational needs in a timely manner.
2. Advancement of an extensive Research Programme with the completion of a number of important international literature reviews of the evidence of best practice provision and the commissioning of further research projects as part of an agreed programme.
3. The NCSE's first research seminar was held in December 2009. This seminar provided an overview of the current NCSE research programme and featured presentations on a selection of key research reports completed in 2009.
4. Introduction of a structured Appeals Process whereby schools and where appropriate, parents may seek to appeal the decision of the Special Educational Needs Organiser in relation to the resources allocated to the school and the piloting of this process.
5. Localisation of the system for the Assessment of Needs process for children aged under five years which takes place under Part 2 of the Disability Act 2005 and involves local collaboration between the Health Service Executive (HSE), the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).
6. Launch of a new NCSE newsletter, NCSE News with on-line issues published in May and December 2009.
7. Commencement of a nationwide review of SNA allocations on the request of the Minister for Education and Science.
8. SENOs processed over 11, 000 applications for additional teaching hours in primary and post primary schools.
9. SENOs processed over 4, 600 applications for SNA support in primary and post primary schools.
10. Further development of NCSE governance and organisational infrastructure to ensure compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2009.

## **Strategic Priority 1: Facilitate children with SEN to get an appropriate education in an inclusive setting**

### **Resource Allocations Process 2009**

Guidelines in relation to the applications process issued to all primary, post-primary and special schools on the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2009. The guidelines provided for a similar process to that which applied last year. As in previous years schools were requested to submit applications for resources well in advance of the end of the school year in order that the SENO could inform the school as to the outcome of the applications process by the end of the current school year. Applications accompanied by the required professional reports were generally processed within a 4-6 week period.

The applications process requires the SENO to take account of the resources which have been freed up as a result of children with SEN leaving the school, when determining the overall level of resources required in the school for the following September.

Schools were also alerted of the new guidelines which issued from the DES in relation to school transport which primarily related to the transport of children with special educational needs to special schools/classes.

A full analysis of applications processed by NCSE for the school year 2008-2009 including profiles by disability category is set out at Appendix 4.

### **Special Needs Assistants (SNA) Review**

The NCSE was requested by the Department of Education & Science (DES) to arrange for its Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs) to carry out a review of Special Needs Assistant allocations in all schools with a view to ensuring that the criteria governing the allocation of such posts are properly met. The review commenced in April 2009 and Primary, Post Primary and Special schools in receipt of SNA support were contacted to arrange review dates. The expected date for the completion of review of schools is March 2010 when a full report will be provided to

the Council for approval and sent to the Minister for Education & Science. It is expected that reviews will be required in approximately 3000 schools nationwide.

### **Appeals System**

Following discussions with Management Bodies, the NCSE sought to introduce a structured appeals process whereby schools and where appropriate, parents may seek to appeal the decision of the SENO in relation to the resources allocated to the school. A number of schools were invited to participate in the pilot process and it is expected that the pilot process will be completed in early 2010. Once the pilot has been completed it is anticipated that all schools will be informed of the process and the facility for schools and parents to submit appeals will commence.

The process will involve two stages. Firstly, the relevant Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) will provide a rationale for the decision and the factors underpinning the decision. The school/parent will then be invited to make an appeal should they indicate a wish to do so. Secondly, following the receipt of the appeal, a Senior SENO will examine the decision and the outcome. The Senior SENO may uphold or alter the original decision and will provide written feedback regarding the rationale for the decision to the appellant.

### **Inclusive Education**

A report entitled 'A literature review on the principles and practices relating to inclusive education for children with special educational needs' was completed by the NCSE's Consultative Forum and signed off by the Council.

In presenting the above document to the Council, the Consultative Forum proposed the development of an inclusive framework and self evaluation tool that schools can use on a voluntary basis to assess their levels of inclusiveness. This is in keeping with the NCSE's strategic action points and an inter-agency advisory group was established to progress this work.

### **Research Programme**

The Review of Special Schools and Classes, commissioned by the Council at the request of the Minister for Education and Science, was completed and its findings were presented at the inaugural Research Seminar on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2009,

A number of research projects commissioned as part of the agreed research programme will help to inform how children with special educational needs can be facilitated to get an appropriate education in an inclusive settings. These include:

- The study of the Transition Experiences of Pupils with Special Educational Needs moving from Primary to Post-Primary School and
- The review of the NCSE Resource Allocation Process and Evaluation of the Deployment of Resources in Schools.

### **Publication of a Newsletter for NCSE**

The NCSE newsletter, NCSE News was launched with online issues published in May and December 2009. The main purpose of the newsletter is to provide a means through which the Council can communicate with its principal stakeholders and give information concerning its work and on-going priorities. Contributions were included from the NCSE executive, schools, SENOs and parents of children with special educational needs. A link to the newsletter was sent to all schools and to a large number of the stakeholders.

## **Strategic Priority 2: Promote the identification and certification of educational programmes for children with SEN and monitor outcomes**

### **Research Programme**

A number of research projects commissioned as part of the agreed programme contributed to a better understanding of this second strategic priority. These include:

- The Review of the International Research Literature on Curriculum and Curriculum Access Issues for Students with Special Educational Needs in Post Primary Settings and

- The study to Explore the Application of the Curriculum in Mainstream Primary School Classes (junior, senior, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> classes) that include pupils with a variety of Special Education Needs; and access to the curriculum among those pupils.

### **Representation on Steering Committees**

The NCSE was represented on the Steering Committees of the following bodies involved in the identification of educational programmes for children with SEN:

- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment – Special Education Steering Committee
- Special Education Support Service
- Joint Managerial Board Special Education Sub-committee

### **Strategic Priority 3: Coordinate the provision of supports to enable inclusive and effective education for children with SEN to be delivered**

#### **Research Programme**

A research project which will inform issues relating to this third strategic priority was commissioned as part of the agreed programme. The report was entitled ‘A National Survey of Parental Attitudes to and Experiences of Local and National Special Education Services’.

An interagency advisory group was established in 2008 to conduct an initial exploration of the needs of Children with Severe Emotional Disturbance and/or Behavioural Difficulties (Severe EBD) who may be excluded from special schools for severe EBD because of persistent violence that is a threat to teachers, other pupils and/or themselves. This group concluded its work in 2009 and the findings of the work will be considered by the newly established Policy and Research Expert Group on the Education of Children with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD).

### **Assessment of Needs (Under 5s)**

The Disability Act, 2005 is a key element of the National Disability Strategy and is designed to provide for and underpin the participation of people with disabilities in society by supporting the provision of disability specific services and improving access to mainstream public services.

Part 2 of the Disability Act, 2005 commenced in June 2007 and established a system for the assessment of children aged under 5 years with a disability. The NCSE processed all requests for assistance from Assessment Officers centrally in the headquarters in Trim. NEPS provided assistance (again on a centralised basis) in order that the appropriate response could issue. This centralised approach was adopted in order to obtain a profile on the numbers and types of requests received. While this was achieved, it did lead in some cases to a delay in the provision of a response due to the concentration of all requests into one central area.

Early in 2009, it was agreed that a programme for the localisation of the process should be developed. It was agreed in principle that the process would now enable the Assessment Officer (HSE) to refer such requests to the local representative of the NCSE i.e. the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) who could in turn request the assistance of the NEPS service, if required.

A regional training programme was agreed, which provided for the joint training of assessment officers (HSE), special educational needs organisers (NCSE) and psychologists (NEPS), designed to improve each group's understanding of the role of the other two groups in the process. The main benefit of the localised approach is that it can assist in the early identification of children with special educational need so that an improved planning process can be implemented to identify how the special educational needs of these children may be met before they enrol in a school setting.

Children assessed under the provisions of the Disability Act will be entitled to an annual review by the Assessment Officer which will encompass both the health and education components of the assessment process.

## **Ombudsman for Children**

In 2009 the NCSE responded to five investigations initiated by the Ombudsman for Children under the Ombudsman for Children Act, 2002 in relation to the role of the Council in the allocation of resources to particular children with special educational needs. In three of these cases, the Ombudsman for Children concluded that there was no evidence of maladministration and that no further investigations were required. In the remaining two cases investigations are still ongoing.

In 2009 there were also nine cases which remained open from 2008. In six of these cases it was concluded that no further investigations were required and three cases remain ongoing. In general the complaints made to the Ombudsman related to decisions concerning the level of access of the child concerned either to SNA support or the provision of school transport.

## **Processing Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act**

Section 29 of the Education Act provides that parents may appeal decisions made by a school namely:

- Permanent exclusion from a school
- Suspension from a school
- Refusal to enrol a child

The appeal is made to an Appeals Committee set up by the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.

In 2009, the Council provided information to the Appeals Committee in relation to approximately 95 cases involving children with diagnosed special education needs where the section 29 process had been triggered.

In 30% of the above cases, the appeal was withdrawn by parents. In 35% of cases the appeal was not upheld while in 18% of cases the appeal was upheld. In 17% of cases a facilitator or local resolution applied.

## **Working in collaboration with other Agencies**

### **1. National Education Welfare Board (NEWB)**

Operational arrangements for working together with children with special educational needs and their families were developed with NEWB. These protocols were agreed by NEWB, NCSE and the DES and are now being implemented. A review of the operation of the protocols is planned for mid-year 2010.

### **2. National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)**

Operational protocols on how the NCSE and NEPS can work most effectively together to support children, their parents and schools are being developed.

### **3. College of Psychiatrists**

During 2009 discussions were held with the College of Psychiatrists to agree a template for use in the allocation of resources for children with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders.

### **4. Cross Sectoral Group between Health and Education**

NCSE continue to be represented on this group in 2009.

### **5. Department of Education and Science (DES)**

The NCSE continued to participate in the DES Value for Money and Policy Review of the Special Needs Assistant Scheme and was represented on the Steering Committee.

### **6. Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI)**

The ESRI established a new Steering Board for its Leaving School in Ireland Research Programme and the NCSE is represented on this Board.

### **7. HEA National Office for Equity of Access**

The NCSE continued to sit on the Advisory Group of the National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education

## **8. European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (EADSNE)**

NCSE was represented at bi-annual meetings of the European Agency in April and November 2009. Council was also represented at an initial meeting of the EADSNE project, Teacher Education for Inclusion held in Dublin in Oct 2009.

### **Information Booklet for Parents**

Work was initiated on the production of an Information Booklet for Parents which will provide information and guidance on the education of children with special educational needs. It is intended that a draft of this booklet will be available, for consultation with stakeholders during 2010.

## **Strategic Priority 4: Enhance educational provision for children with SEN through quality research and policy advice on SEN issues**

### **Research Programme**

The following research projects were completed in 2009:

- A review of special schools and classes.
- Three international literature reviews of the evidence of best practice provision and evidenced-based outcomes in the education of pupils and students who are deaf/hard of hearing; blind/visually impaired; and on the autistic spectrum.
- An international literature review of the diagnostic procedures/tools used to diagnose a disability and the assessment procedures/tools used to identify the special education needs arising from the diagnosed disability.

Work on the following projects continued:

- An international literature review of the evidence of best practice provision and evidenced-based outcomes in the education of pupils and students with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- An assessment of the experiences of pupils with special educational needs transitioning from primary to post-primary school.

- A study to explore the application of the curriculum in mainstream primary school classes that include pupils with a variety of special education needs in junior, senior, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> classes; and access to the curriculum among those pupils.
- A national parental survey of attitudes and experiences of local and national special education services.

A number of new projects were commissioned:

- Inclusive Research in Irish Schools (Project IRIS). A longitudinal study initially over 3 years examining the provision of special education within Irish schools, the experiences of pupils/students with special education needs receiving this education and their associated outcomes.
- A Special Education Need/Disability Prevalence Study Incorporating a Review of Special Education Data Sources.
- A Review of the NCSE Resource Allocation Process and Evaluation of the Deployment of Resources in Schools.
- An Audit of Research in the Field of Special Education on the Island of Ireland since 2000.
- A Study of the Access and Progression Experiences of Students with Special Educational Needs Moving from Compulsory Education to Further and Higher Education.
- A Review of the International Research Literature on Curriculum and Curriculum Access Issues for Students with Special Educational Needs in Post Primary Settings.

### **Research Seminar**

The NCSE's first research seminar was held in December 2009. This seminar provided an overview of the current NCSE research programme and featured presentations on a selection of key research reports signed off by the Council.

### **Policy Initiatives 2009**

A Framework for Policy Development was agreed by Council to guide the policy development programme of the NCSE for the period 2009-2010. Policy development will take place within the parameters agreed and according to the priorities set down.

It was also recognised that there are times when it is necessary for Council to consider policy initiatives outside the agreed framework and/or that requests for policy advice may from time to time emanate from the Minister for Education and Science.

The National Council for Special Education now intends to embark on its statutory role of providing formal independent policy advice to the Minister of Education and Science in a number of areas, as specified under Section 20 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN). In developing this advice the Council intends to avail of the widest possible inputs and advice from stakeholders, experts and practitioners in the special education area as well as its own research and experience.

As part of this consultative process, Council recommended that broadly based groups/committees are formed to consider the various policy issues and provide collective views to the Council through its Strategy and Policy sub committee and Special Education Adviser. These views together with relevant research and the Council's own experience will then be considered by the Council in deciding on the advice to be offered to the Minister.

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) set up a Research and Policy Advisory Group on the Education of Children with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders to assist its Strategy and Policy Committee in developing initial policy and research proposals for consideration by Council, who ultimately retain the responsibility to advise the Minister for Education and Science in relation to matters relating to the education of children and others with disabilities.

The Council invited individuals from a number of key agencies and services to serve on this group to ensure that a wide range of views is reflected in its discussions and recommendations. This group will convene initially for a period of one year (October 2009- October 2010).

## **Strategic Priority 5: Ensure that the NCSE is developed and maintained as an effective organisation and that it operates in a fully compliant manner with all of its statutory, regulatory and corporate governance requirements**

### **Further development of the Organisation**

The NCSE has continued to develop its capacity as an effective organisation in line with statutory and regulatory requirements, prescribed policy, budgetary and staffing limits and its strategic priorities

NCSE has worked during 2009 to further develop its governance and organisational infrastructure and ensure compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2009. An updated guide for NCSE Council members which has regard to the requirements of the new Code and other recent relevant developments was commissioned by NCSE in late 2009 to be available for a new Council in 2010.

### **Strategic planning and implementation**

The NCSE Strategy Statement 2008-2011 which was developed and adopted by the NCSE Council is published on the NCSE website. An annual work plan consistent with the Strategic Plan was agreed for 2009 and its implementation monitored over the year.

### **Development of Organisational Structure**

The NCSE is organised around four key functional areas namely: - Operational Services, Policy, Research and Development and Corporate Services. Each of these areas is headed by a responsible Head of Function reporting to the NCSE Chief Executive.

An outline of the general NCSE organisational structure is included in Appendix 3.

### **Human Resources Developments**

NCSE staffing numbers are subject to the approval of the Minister for Education and Science and the Minister for Finance. At the commencement of 2009, NCSE had an

approved complement of 113 posts, of which 86 were front line staff in SENO and Senior SENO positions. Details of NCSE approved staffing in 2009 is given in Appendix 2 . Sanction was granted in January 2009 to NCSE for 10 additional SENO posts in recognition of the need for the further development and improvement of NCSE front line SENO services.

### **Government moratorium on recruitment**

On 30 March 2009, all civil service Government Departments and State agencies, including NCSE, were advised of the Government decision to implement savings measures on public service numbers and that no vacant or new posts could be filled and that this moratorium would apply until the end of 2010.

In view of the priority front line nature of the service identified by NCSE Council, derogation from this moratorium in the case of its SENO staffing was actively pursued by NCSE during 2009.

### Early retirement and incentivised Career Break scheme

An incentivised early retirement scheme and an incentivised career break scheme which were designed to help reduce public service numbers and exchequer pay costs in 2009 and future years were both made available to NCSE HQ staff. Because of the priority of NCSE front line SENO services, these schemes were not offered to SENO staff. A member of NCSE HQ staff (an Assistant Principal) was granted early retirement under the incentivised early retirement scheme. An Executive Officer was granted a career break for three years under the incentivised career break scheme. The question of filling the resultant vacancies through the redeployment of surplus posts from elsewhere in the public service, was not finalised in 2009.

### Staff training and Development

Appropriate training and development programmes have been provided for staff and strategies are being further developed. A significant programme of communication training was provided for all staff to meet identified needs. In addition training to support other key staff competency requirements is identified and provided in the context of PMDS.

## PMDS

PMDS continued to be developed and implemented in NCSE in line with other civil service departments and agencies. Following specific training for all staff provided in 2008, the full cycle of PMDS was implemented during 2009 for all staff.

## **ICT developments**

NCSE has continued to develop, maintain and manage an effective and secure ICT system and infrastructure for a wide area network including over 40 offices and over 100 users. NCSE provides remote secure access to its staff who work with schools and parents. This is critical for the efficient and effective delivery and management of service on a nationwide basis.

NCSE has continued to implement, support and manage its Special Education Administration System which is used by NCSE and its staff to record information on cases, to administer processes and to provide management information.

## **NCSE Office Accommodation infrastructure**

NCSE operates a network of 41 offices throughout the State including its Headquarters in Trim, County Meath. NCSE local staff operates from its local offices and provide services directly to schools and parents in their areas. NCSE has continued to maintain and develop its office network in line with appropriate norms and organisational needs and policy.

Details of the NCSE Office Accommodation is provided at Appendix 1.

## **Finance and Governance**

The Council has noted and is fully complying with the terms of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

All appropriate procedures for financial reporting, internal audit, travel and procurement were complied with.

Codes of business conduct for council members and employees were in place and adhered to.

Government policy on staff pay and pensions, expenses, numbers, conditions of service has been complied with.

The NCSE has complied with its obligations under tax laws.

No directors fees were paid to Council members.

The Council has taken steps to ensure an appropriate control environment by:

- ensuring the NCSE complies with its financial obligations under the Act
- clearly defining management responsibilities in a defined organisational structure with clear segregation of duties
- developing and implementing appropriate control procedures
- establishing appropriate committees of the Council to give greater focus on specific areas and
- establishing an internal audit function.

The system of internal financial control is based on a framework, which aims to provide regular management information, administrative procedures (including segregation of duties, authorisation limits and a documented procedures manual), and a system of delegation and accountability. In particular it includes:

- a comprehensive budgeting system with an annual budget, which is reviewed and agreed by the Council prior to presentation to the Department of Education and Science;
- an operational budget agreed by the Council based on prescribed budget limits set by the Department of Education and Science;
- detailed review by the Executive and the Council of monthly and period to date financial reports which indicate financial performance against budget;
- regular review by the Executive and the Council of financial reports and key operational indicators and
- clearly defined procurement and tendering guidelines.

During 2009 NCSE continued to operate, maintain, review and develop its risk management and procurement procedures and policies in line with best practice and the Code of Practice.

The statutory audited accounts of the NCSE for 2009 will be published separately on the NCSE Website.

## **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 Science 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 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 expiring on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009.

### **Membership of the Council**

The Chairperson and 12 other members of the Council were appointed by the Minister for Education and Science from among persons who have a special interest in or knowledge relating to the education of children with disabilities, and include two persons nominated to the Minister by the National Disability Authority (NDA) and a nominee of the Minister for Health and Children.

### **Council Meetings**

The Council met on 7 occasions during 2009. Details of individual member attendances are given on the table overleaf.

<b>Membership of the Council of the NCSE during 2009</b>		<b>Attendance</b>
<b>Mr. Sydney Blain (Chairperson)</b>	Principal , Church of Ireland College of Education, D6	7
<b>Mr. Christy Lynch</b>	CEO KARE, Nominated by NDA	6
<b>Dr Seamus Hegarty</b>	Chairman of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement. Former Director of the NFER	5
<b>Ms Siobhan Barron</b>	Director, National Disability Authority, Nominated by NDA	6
<b>Mr. Rory O Sullivan</b>	Principal, Killester College of FE, Dublin	4
<b>Ms Teresa Griffin</b>	Principal, Special Education Section, DES	7
<b>Mr. Tom O Sullivan</b>	Assistant General Secretary, INTO. Former Principal of St Senan's BNS, Limerick.	6
<b>Professor Patricia Noonan Walsh</b> (see note 3 below)	Professor of Disability Studies, UCD. Vice-President International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual Disability	4
<b>Sr. Maighread Ní Ghallchobhair</b>	Vice Chairperson of the NABMSE. Former Principal of Benincasa School for children with EBD	7
<b>Ms Anita Dillon</b>	Special class co-ordinator in Killina Presentation Secondary School, Tullamore, County Offaly	4
<b>Mr. Barry Murphy</b> (see note 2 below)	Principal, Department of Health and Children. Nominee of Minister for Health and Children	3
<b>Caroline O Brien</b>	Assistant Principal of Holy Child Secondary School, Killiney, County Dublin. Former member of the Board of Directors of the Special Olympics Ireland.	2
<b>Mr. Don Mahon</b> (see note 1 below)	Assistant Chief Inspector, Department of Education and Science	5

*Note 1: Don Mahon appointed 27<sup>th</sup> March 2009 to replace Gearoid O Conluain who resigned from the Council in September, 2008 following his appointment to another position.*

*Note 2: Barry Murphy appointed 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2009 to replace Dermot Ryan who resigned from the Council in December, 2008 following his appointment to another position.*

*Note 3: Professor Patricia Noonan Walsh resigned from the Council in July 2009 following her appointment to another position.*

## Council Committees

The Council established four committees under Section 33 of the EPSEN Act. These committees operated during 2009 and reported to Council in accordance with their agreed terms of reference and governance guidelines. 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.

<b>Research and Communications</b>
Dr Seamus Hegarty (Chairperson)
Mr Tom O Sullivan
Professor Patricia Noonan Walsh
Mr Don Mahon

<b>Strategy and Policy</b>
Mr Christy Lynch (Chairperson)
Ms Caroline O Brien
Ms Anita Dillon
Sr Maighread Ni Gallachobhair

<b>Finance</b>
Ms Siobhan Barron (Chairperson)
Mr Rory O Sullivan
Ms Teresa Griffin
Mr Dermot Ryan

<b>Audit</b>
Mr Donal Lawlor (Chairperson)
Mr Christy Lynch
Dr Seamus Hegarty
Ms Siobhan Barron

### **Deputy Chairperson of the Council**

The Council elected Christy Lynch as Deputy Chairperson in accordance with Section 19 (Schedule 1) of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004.

### **Consultative Forum**

Section 22 of the EPSEN Act, 2004, provides for the establishment, by the Council, of a consultative forum, with whom Council may consult with respect to the performance of its functions. Council may appoint up to a maximum of 17 people to this forum and must consult with the Minister for Education and Science and other bodies before making the appointments.

For 2009, the Consultative Forum consisted of the following members:

<b>Members of the Consultative Forum 2009</b>	
<b>Mr Tim Geraghty Chairperson</b>	National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD)
<b>Mr Jim Moore</b>	Parents Association for Voc School and Comm Colleges
<b>Ms Geraldine Graydon</b>	National Parents Council (NPC)
<b>Ms Jennifer Duffy</b>	Association of Secondary School Teachers in Ireland (ASTI)
<b>Ms Bernie Ruane</b>	Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI)
<b>Ms Anne Fay</b>	Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO)
<b>Ms Patricia McCrossan</b>	National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education (NABMSE)
<b>Mr. Liam Ryder</b>	Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (ACCS)
<b>Mr Sean Burke</b>	Irish Vocational Education Association (IVEA)
<b>Mr Pat Goff</b>	Irish Primary Principals Network (IPPN)
<b>Ms Helen Guinan</b>	National Federation of Voluntary Bodies
<b>Ms Joanne McCarthy</b>	Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI)
<b>Mr Bill Shorten</b>	Inclusion Ireland
<b>Ms Marion Meaney</b>	Health Services Executive (HSE)
<b>Ms Frances Berry</b>	Centres for Independent Living
<b>Mr Gerard McGuill</b>	Joint Managerial Board (JMB)
<b>Ms Mary Horan</b>	Ministerial Representative
<b>Ms Maureen Costello</b>	Ministerial Representative
<b>Mr Don Mahon</b>	Ministerial Inspectorate Representative
<b>Sr Bernadette Carron</b>	Catholic Primary School Management Association (CPSMA)

## Appendix 1

### NCSE Offices\*

Trim, Co. Meath (NCSE HQ)	
Carlow Town, Co. Carlow	Castlebar, Co. Mayo
Cavan Town, Co. Cavan	Navan, Co. Meath
Ennis, Co. Clare	Monaghan town, Co. Monaghan
Cork City (Mahon)	Tullamore, Co. Offaly
Fermoy, Co. Cork	Roscommon Town
Mallow, Co. Cork	Sligo town, Co. Sligo
Dunmanway, Co. Cork	Nenagh, Co. Tipperary
Letterkenny, Co. Donegal	Clonmel, Co. Tipperary
Donegal Town, Co Donegal	Waterford City
Tallaght, Co. Dublin	Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
Blanchardstown, Co. Dublin	Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford
Dublin City Centre	Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow
Kimmage, Co. Dublin	Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow
Donabate, Co. Dublin	Carrick on Shannon, Co Leitrim
Blackrock, Co Dublin	Portlaoise, Co. Laois
Galway City 1	Limerick City
Galway City II	Newcastlewest, Co. Limerick
Tralee, Co. Kerry	Hospital, Co. Limerick
Naas, Co. Kildare	Longford Town, Co. Longford
Kilkenny City	Drogheda, Co. Louth

\* See NCSE Website for full address information.

[www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie)

## Appendix 2

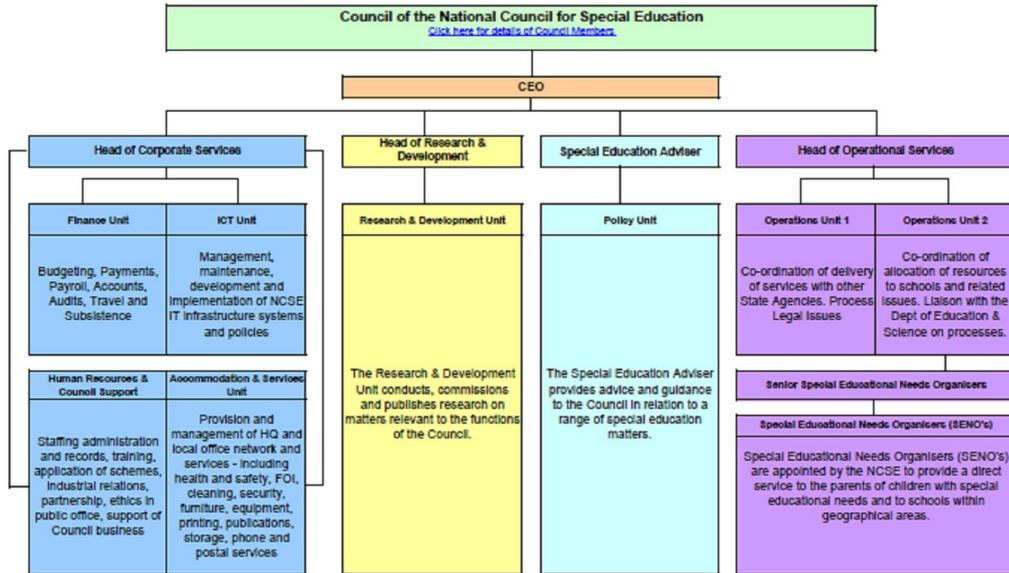
### NCSE Staffing

	Approved Posts 2009
Chief Executive Officer	1
Principal Officer	4
Assistant Principal	6
Higher Executive Officer	5
Executive Officer	5
Staff Officer	1
Clerical Officer	3
Senior Special Educational Needs Organiser	12
Special Educational Needs Organiser	86
Total	123

## Appendix 3



### National Council for Special Education Organisational Structure



## Appendix 4: Statistical Tables for Academic Year 2008-2009

### Analysis of Applications for Resource Allocation: Primary Schools

#### Applications in respect of Children in Primary Schools

(Includes a number of applications from Special Schools)

##### *Applications for Resource Teaching*

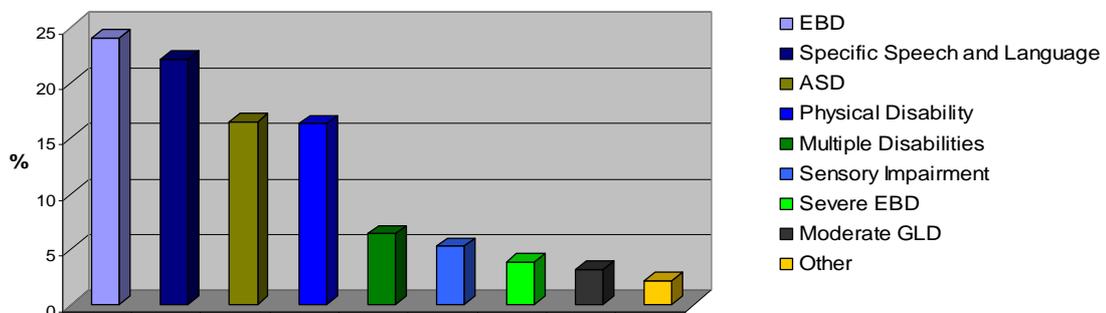
5,453 applications for resource teaching support were received in relation to children with low incidence disabilities as children with high incidence disabilities are supported through the General Allocation Model which operates in primary schools. Of the 5,453 applications, **4,427 (81%)** resulted in additional resource teaching support being granted.

3,278 applications for access to SNA support were received. In this regard, a number of applications for such support were received from children with a high incidence disability, primarily those with a Mild General Learning Disability. Of the 3,278 applications, **2418 (74%)** resulted in SNA support being granted.

The process of entering all the data in relation to these applications on our Special Education Administrative System is on-going. An analysis of resources granted in 2009 indicates a breakdown by disability as shown on the graphs below.

#### Resource Hours Granted by Disability – Primary (Mainstream)\*

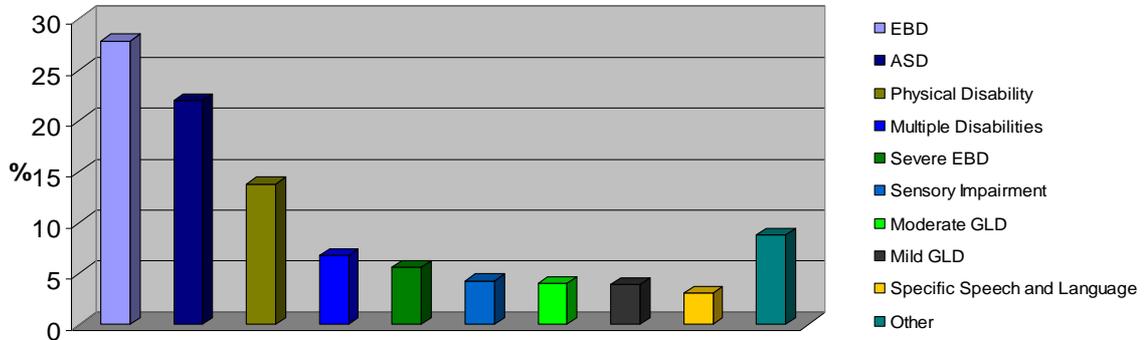
\*includes those in a special class in a mainstream setting



The category 'Other' includes Assessed Syndrome and Severe and Profound General Learning Disability

## SNA Support Granted by Disability – Primary (Mainstream)\*

\*includes those in a special class in a mainstream setting



*The category 'Other' includes Assessed Syndrome and Severe and Profound General Learning Disability*

### Conclusions

The following trends can be identified from the above figures:

- 28% of applications granted for resource teaching and 33% of applications granted for access to an SNA related to children with an emotional behavioural disturbance or a severe emotional behaviour disturbance.
- 16% of applications granted for resource teaching and 14% of applications granted for access to an SNA related to children with a physical disability.
- 16% of applications granted for resource teaching and 22% of applications granted for access to an SNA referred to children with ASD.
- 22% of applications granted for resource teaching and 3% of applications granted for access to an SNA referred to children with Specific Speech and Language Disorder.

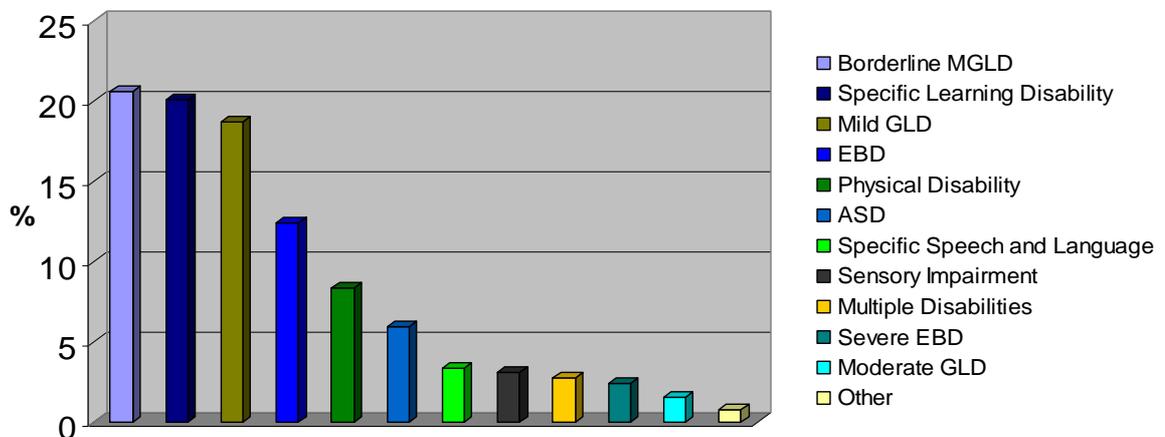
## Analysis of Applications for Resource Allocation: Post-Primary Schools

\*includes special classes in a mainstream setting

Pupils with a high incidence disability are included in these figures as the General Allocation Model only applies at primary level.

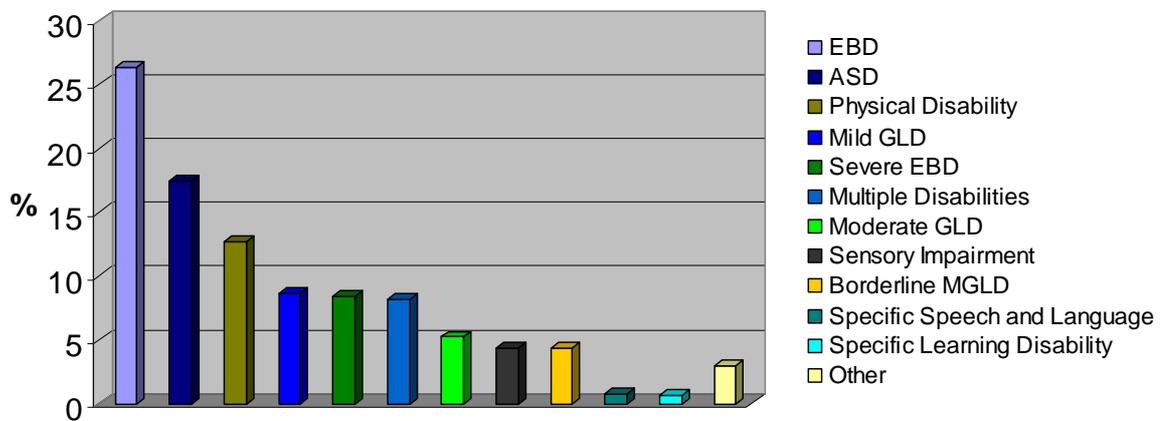
5,612 applications for additional teaching support were received. Of these 4,169 (74%) resulted in additional resource teaching support being granted. 1,346 applications were received for access to SNA support. Of these 901 (67%) resulted in SNA support being granted.

### Resource Hours Granted by Disability – Post Primary



*The category 'Other' includes Assessed Syndrome and Severe and Profound General Learning Disability*

## SNA Support Granted by Disability – Post Primary



*The category 'Other' includes Assessed Syndrome and Severe and Profound General Learning Disability*

### Conclusions

The following trends can be identified from the above figures:

- 15% of applications granted for additional teaching support and 34% of applications granted for access to an SNA related to children with an emotional behavioural disturbance or a severe emotional behavioural disturbance
- 60% of applications granted for additional teaching support relate to children with a high incidence disability
- 19% of applications granted for additional teaching support and 9% of applications for access to an SNA related to children with a mild general learning disability