

**The Bain Review: A summary of the recommendations arising from the
comments of the Education and Training Inspectorate**

1. **The provision, and the effective and efficient management of the education and training estate**, need to be based on :
 - the paramount importance of the learners' interests and needs;
 - provision that is integrated and inclusive as described in paragraphs 1.1 and 1.6 of the Inspectorate's response and which reflects the values within 'A Shared Future';
 - an audit of the entire provision that currently exists in each of the regions where 'region' is a geographical area of the Province, to be determined by the ESA;
 - more versatility in the use of the entire estate.

2. **There is still too much of a vacuum at 14-19**. The Inspectorate, therefore, recommends :
 - a core curriculum for all 14-19 learners should be clearly identified, along with possible learning pathways, rather than a curriculum entitlement that is based mainly on providing access to larger numbers of subjects;
 - the provision in schools, FE, and work-based learning should be more clearly differentiated, and the progression routes within each made accessible and clear to their respective users;
 - much more help should be available for learners to make choices based on sound careers education, information and guidance; inspection evidence shows that improved provision in this regard is both timely and essential;

- the unhelpful level of competition among schools (within all phases), managing authorities, between FE and schools, and between FE and independent training organisations should be addressed; to that end, there should be urgent examination of the contributory factors such as the open enrolment policy and the differentials in funding mechanisms, with a view to removing or lessening impediments to collaborative work. In the primary phase, where there are many small schools and often nearly co-located, ESA should take a proactive approach and encourage, prompt and facilitate, streamlining and rationalisation at area level;
- **normally**, every post key stage 3 pupil should be taught by teachers who have a relevant specialist qualification or appropriate training in the subject they are teaching;
- the curriculum on offer needs to achieve a better balance between meeting the needs of the learner, the needs of the economy, and social inclusion.

3. **To ensure value for money** the Inspectorate recommends the following :

- a minimum enrolment in the post-primary sector of 500 in an 11-16 school; in an 11-18 school the enrolment should be a minimum of 500 in the 11-16 age range, and a minimum total size for a sixth form should be 80;
- minimum and maximum class sizes should also be determined for different key stages and for practical subjects;
- in terms of new or replacement primary schools, the enrolment should **normally** be a minimum of 140 children in urban areas and 105 children in rural areas;
- a maximum travel distance and maximum travel time for all pupils should be defined, with consideration given to both the age of the pupil and to the needs of the area, so that optimum siting of new schools results;

- detailed curriculum models for each size of school and preferably within a geographical area should be developed and include approximation of costs; the provision needs to be considered and assessed on an area basis as indicated above;
- a review of the conventional timetable and length of the school day (particularly for 14-19 year olds) coupled with the outcomes of the ‘extended schools’ project together have the potential to make better use of buildings and estate and to contribute to savings in transport costs; consideration should be given to the potential of education technologies to facilitate online learning communities regardless of location (this recommendation is also included below);
- when provision is to be improved, the changes should be driven by the child’s or young person’s interests and take due regard of parental perceptions including their perceptions regarding the safety of the environment;
- the needs of young people outside the conventional education system (e.g. in alternative educational provision or having home tuition) are given due importance; responsibility for them should rest with the parent school;
- increased priority needs to be given to the provision of areas within the school that are conducive to social interaction and individual/private study;
- given that we live in an increasingly multi-cultural society the growing presence of young people from ethnic minority groups, and their needs should be taken into account;
- ways are found of accommodating emerging schools, which serve particular groups or interests, within premises or sites already in use, but which have suitable surplus accommodation and space.

The above recommendations are dependent on a much better collation and analysis of pupil data, in particular movement from primary to post-primary and ultimately other post-16 provision, and of transport data

4. Information Technology

There is a need to develop the potential of information technology for both administrative purposes and for teaching and learning:

- Consideration should be given to the potential of education technologies to facilitate online learning communities regardless of location; the potential of Learning NI, for example, in this regard is significant.
- There is a need to facilitate and ensure the portability of management information between Management Information Systems across educational sectors. This initiative could well be linked to future developments of e-portfolios for learners, and the unique learner number.

5. Teachers

In addition to the criteria that protect the needs of the learner, there need to be criteria that safeguard the needs of the teacher. The Inspectorate recommends that:

- there should be a maximum of two year groups in a primary class unless there are exceptional circumstances;
- teachers in post-primary schools should teach predominantly their specialist subject/s; at key stage 4 and above they should not teach outside their specialist subject/s;
- class sizes should be strictly in accordance with DE guidance ;

- there should be equality of opportunity for staff development;
- a minimum entitlement to administration or non-teaching time should be introduced, with special conditions for, for example, principals in the primary sector, key stage coordinators, special needs coordinators, heads of department and beginning teachers;
- where there is shared provision, there needs to be a service level agreement amongst the different providers, which sets out which teacher travels and the conditions that apply:- any change to the length of the school day, may also have implications for the terms and conditions of teachers;
- there also needs to be a review of the school workforce and particularly of whether there are aspects of a teacher's current work that could be done by someone employed, for example an administrator, to assist the teaching staff;
- the desirability of a common set of standards for qualified teacher status across 14-19 provision should be explored.

6. **Funding**

- Capital investment and sustainable operational costs need to be considered together in any new build.
- There is a need to address the issue of short term funding arrangements that can distort or mask the viability of a school.
- There is a need for what might be called early intervention and investigation. When there are signs that a school's enrolment is falling, and there is a budgetary difficulty, the causes of these should be identified and, if possible, addressed, or a long-term strategy put in place .

7. **Partnerships between schools and other organisations**

- Action is needed to address the key factor that militates against collaboration and the most effective use of the schools and FE estate, namely the absence of a common and cohesive 14-19 education and training policy (including curriculum, funding, teacher education) as indicated above.
- There also needs to be well-founded assurance to parents that collaboration is in the best interests of their children; for example, parents need to be better informed about the career pathways available through the FE and training sectors; FE, in particular, needs to improve its perception among parents, and the pastoral support it provides for 14-19 year olds. It is important that learners each have a 'parent' or 'anchor' learning organisation which takes responsibility for overseeing the coherence of their learning programme and their progression within it. Where schools offer link programmes with another organization, a proportion of the funding should follow the pupil to reflect the time spent in that other organisation
- Staff development is needed across the sectors to ensure high levels of mutual understanding about each others' curriculum and culture, to help those involved to value difference and diversity without the pressure of organisational self-preservation. There is a need too, to revise and review current teacher education arrangements (and related in-service training) to take cognisance of 14-19 developments.
- A reality check should be made on all proposals for collaboration. Recognition for example needs to be given to regional differences such as sparsely populated rural areas with poor public transport services or to the obstacles that may be encountered in crossing sectarian interfaces. Careful selection of local champions and active community support should be explored to minimise any sense of threat.

8. The Inspectorate recommends that whatever changes are agreed, it is essential that children, young people, parents and teachers are kept well-informed of the benefits which the changes are intended to have rather than on the deficits that exist in the current system. **Good communication is of critical importance.**