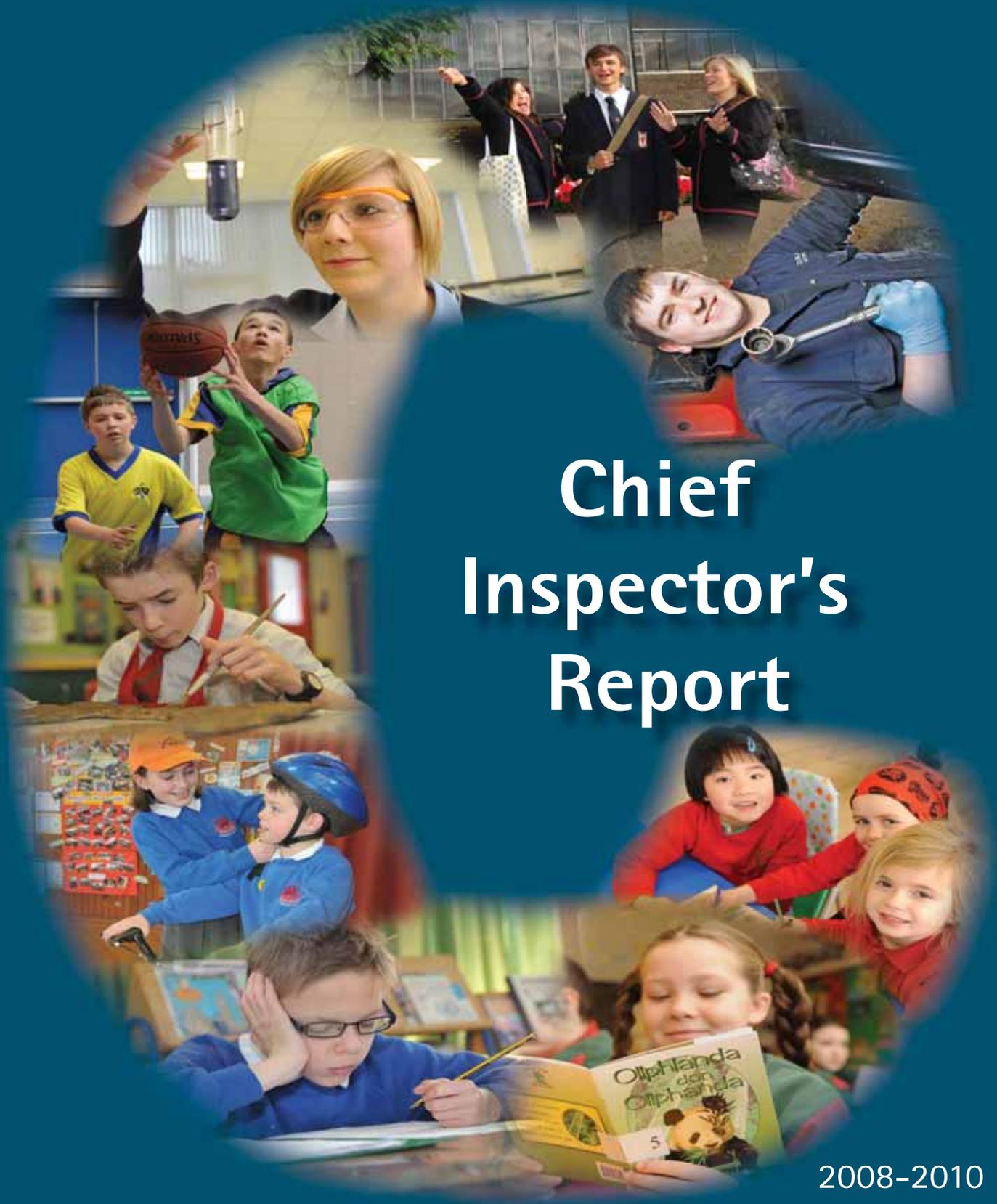


The Education and Training Inspectorate



# Chief Inspector's Report

2008-2010

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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for  
Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

## CONTENTS

Section		Page
1.	<a href="#"><u>THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN PASTORAL CARE AND CHILD PROTECTION/SAFEGUARDING ACROSS THE PHASES</u></a>	1
2.	<a href="#"><u>THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR SPECIAL NEEDS IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS</u></a>	3
3.	<a href="#"><u>THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN PRE-SCHOOL SETTINGS</u></a>	
4.	<a href="#"><u>THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS</u></a>	10
5.	<a href="#"><u>THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN IRISH-MEDIUM (IM) EDUCATION</u></a>	16
6.	<a href="#"><u>THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS</u></a>	17
7.	<a href="#"><u>THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS</u></a>	23
8.	<a href="#"><u>THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN THE FURTHER EDUCATION SECTOR</u></a>	27
9.	<a href="#"><u>THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN THE WORK-BASED LEARNING PROGRAMMES</u></a>	32
10.	<a href="#"><u>THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN THE STEPS TO WORK ADULT EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME</u></a>	38
11.	<a href="#"><u>INSPECTION SERVICES PROVIDED FOR THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSPECTION (CJI), AND FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (DARD)</u></a>	41
12.	<a href="#"><u>THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN TEACHER EDUCATION</u></a>	42
13.	<a href="#"><u>THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN THE YOUTH SECTOR</u></a>	44
14.	<a href="#"><u>THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN ORGANISATIONS SPONSORED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE (DCAL)</u></a>	48

## **Phase Reports**

These phase-specific reports contain the details of the main points made in the Chief Inspector's Report 2008-2010.

## **Inspection Evaluations**

A number of quantitative terms are used in the report. These terms should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	- more than 90%
Most	- 75% - 90%
A majority	- 50% - 74%
A significant minority	- 30% - 49%
A minority	- 10% - 29%
Very few/a small number	- less than 10%

In assessing the various features of provision, inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

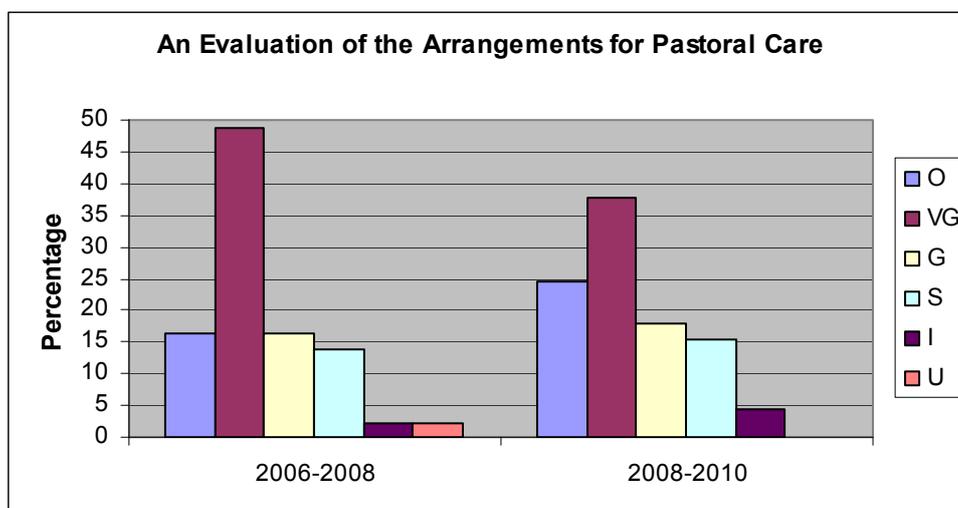
<b>DESCRIPTOR</b>
Outstanding
Very good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

## 1. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN PASTORAL CARE AND CHILD PROTECTION/SAFEGUARDING ACROSS THE PHASES

1.1 There continue to be many strengths in the quality of provision for pastoral care across the education, work-based learning and youth sectors. During the reporting period, over 11,600 parents responded to confidential questionnaires as part of the inspection process across the pre-school, primary and post-primary sectors. Almost all mentioned the high quality pastoral care; the commitment of the teachers, leaders and support staff to the health and well-being of the learners; the many opportunities provided to develop personal and social skills; the ongoing support to promote a positive attitude to learning; the good quality of the teaching, training and learning; and the quality of the care, guidance and support provided for the learners. In the further education colleges and work-based learning suppliers inspected, just over 1,700 students, trainees and apprentices responded to a confidential questionnaire. Most expressed their satisfaction with the quality of the teaching, training and learning, and with the support provided by staff to enable them to achieve their qualification.

1.2 Most of the organisations inspected during the reporting period were diligent in supporting learners to achieve their best. The commitment to the health and well-being of both the learners and the staff was identified as a strength in almost all of the pre-school settings and primary schools inspected. In 80% of post-primary schools inspected over the reporting period, the quality of the pastoral care was evaluated as good to outstanding, with a ten percent increase in those schools evaluated as outstanding.

**Figure 1: An Evaluation of the Arrangements for Pastoral Care**



1.3 In those organisations evaluated as outstanding, there was a distinctive, inclusive and caring ethos throughout the life and work of the various educational settings; these organisations afforded a high priority to the emotional well-being of both learners and staff; and there was an effective link between the academic and pastoral systems to inform and support target-setting, which contributed to improvement throughout the organisation.

1.4 A majority of the organisations inspected continued to work hard to include the learners in planning formal and informal aspects of the life of the educational setting. The learners had increased opportunities to develop their leadership skills, to enhance their sense of personal responsibility through 'buddying' and peer mentoring programmes, and to

make decisions through their membership of school and college councils, or of youth forums. The existing good practice needs to be disseminated further across all organisations to enable the voice of the learner and of parents to be heard more clearly in reviewing approaches to learning and teaching, and in other aspects of provision such as careers and pastoral care.

1.5 In a minority of the organisations inspected, personal development programmes organised between the formal and non-formal sectors, including the work of the youth sector, proved beneficial to learners in the delivery of more sensitive aspects of relationships and sexuality education, including gender issues and sexual health matters.

1.6 The Department of Education (DE) has responded positively to a more complex pupil profile through a full-service initiative for a small number of post-primary schools. Statutory and voluntary agencies provide additional support for those learners who are most in need of support for a range of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties to enable them to access the curriculum effectively and to break down barriers to learning.

## 1.7 CHILD PROTECTION/SAFEGUARDING

1.7.1 In almost all of the organisations inspected the arrangements for child protection and safeguarding ranged from very good to satisfactory. In support of their work, schools receive good, regular and consistent guidance through the Child Protection Service for Schools (CPSS). This arrangement remains, at present, unavailable to the Youth Service which has its own dedicated Child Protection officers. Greater collaboration between the CPSS and the Youth Sector within the relevant Education and Library Boards (ELBs) would provide a more coherent approach to this important area of work. The fact that cross-phase training for child protection remains unregulated raises questions in terms of quality and adequacy, particularly in the voluntary and private sectors.

1.7.2 The Safeguarding and Vulnerable Groups Scheme<sup>1</sup> will strengthen procedures for the recruitment and vetting of teachers, other staff and those who work in any capacity that involves intensive work with young people. The three Departments have been reviewing their guidance on the Safeguarding and Protection of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults. Evidence from inspection helped inform this review and development work. Staff in all of the six regional colleges have been updating and renewing their policies and procedural guidance. The supplier organisations inspected have, where appropriate, safeguarding policies and procedures in place to ensure that the participants are protected from harm while their training and other needs are met. The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) has issued lately comprehensive guidance for its staff and sponsored organisations; this guidance is being satisfactorily implemented<sup>2</sup> although, like all others, the organisations need to review and extend these procedures continually as further guidance emerges for vulnerable adults in Northern Ireland (NI).

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<sup>1</sup> The Safeguarding and Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Follow-Up Inspection to the Review of Child Protection Arrangements in Organisations Sponsored by the Department Of Culture, Arts and Leisure, Education and Training Inspectorate, 2010

## 2. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR SPECIAL NEEDS IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

2.1 Increasing numbers of learners with special educational needs (SEN) are educated in units or learning support centres in mainstream schools (currently 1,000 learners) and mainstream classes. A key issue for schools is the building of staff capacity to meet more effectively the needs of these learners. There is a growing complexity of need, and increasing numbers of learners with additional needs and a widening range of abilities. A minority of the schools inspected have categorised appropriately the level of need within the SEN register; the majority of the schools inspected provide support with limited analysis of need or through withdrawal support often with poor links with the teaching in the classroom. Too often there are narrowly focused intervention programmes, insufficiently robust targets set for individuals and the ineffective use of data to measure and assess the progress of learners with SEN. The outcomes for these learners are not as good as they need to be. More worryingly, increasing numbers of learners with social and emotional needs are finding school difficult to cope with and classroom management is becoming an issue. Resources by way of classroom assistants cannot continue to grow in the present climate without a measure of their impact.

2.2 By contrast, the improving provision at the foundation stage (FS), and the strong emphasis on Assessment for Learning<sup>3</sup> and play-based activities are helping to address the previously high level of language and communication needs among the youngest learners. Schools need to adjust to the changing population: they need to maintain and use accurate assessment profiles to inform planning of early intervention when required.

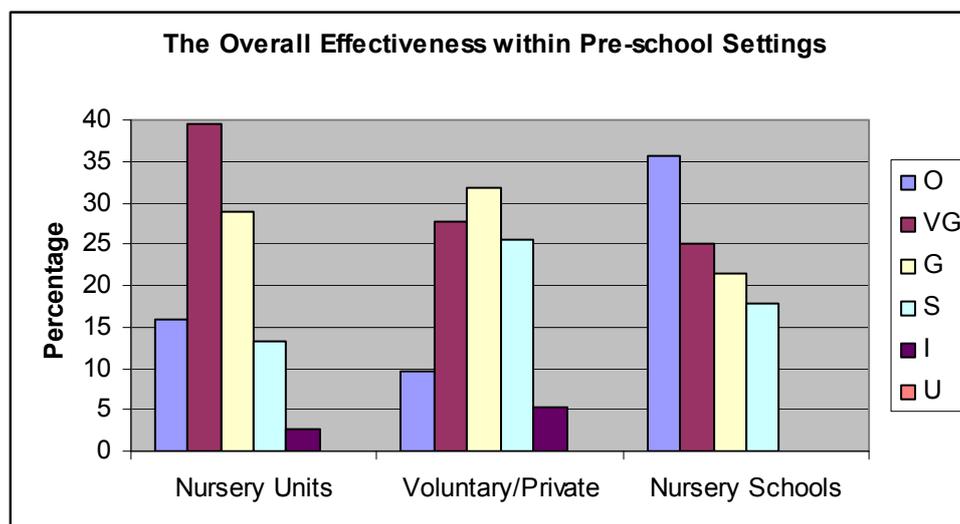
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<sup>3</sup> Assessment for Learning promotes four key elements of classroom practice: i) the sharing of clear learning intentions with the learners; ii) effective questioning; iii) feedback to learners to move the learning forward; and iv) the development of self-critical, reflective learners.

### 3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN PRE-SCHOOL SETTINGS

3.1 Almost all children in their final pre-school year attend funded pre-school provision as part of the Pre-School Expansion Programme. The overall quality of pre-school education has improved; in just over four-fifths of the pre-school settings inspected, the quality of provision was evaluated as good or better.

**Figure 2: The Overall Effectiveness within Pre-school Settings**



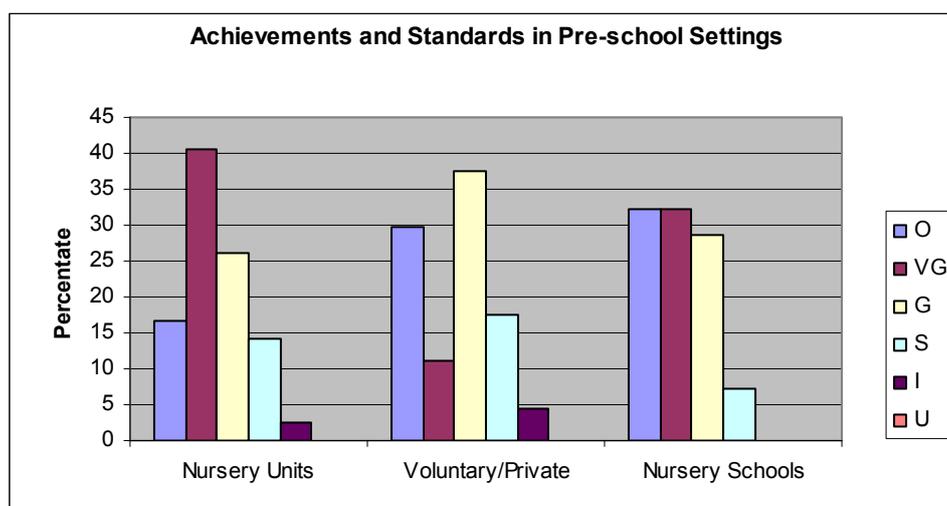
While the highest percentage of good to outstanding practice remained within the statutory nursery schools inspected, it is encouraging to note the improvement in the number of statutory nursery units and voluntary/private settings inspected which fell into this category.

3.2 The factors that inhibit provision from becoming good or better include the following: a higher proportion of children in their penultimate pre-school year (in statutory nursery units); the wide range of differing educational needs; a poor level of resourcing; and, limited access to outdoor play areas. In the voluntary/private sector in particular, there continues to be a high turn-over of staff and a lack of consistent and effective support from an early years specialist. In addition, the lower minimum level of staff qualifications and the lack of opportunities for professional development often impede continuous and systematic improvement.

#### ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

3.3 In just over four-fifths of the pre-school settings inspected the achievements and standards across the curriculum were evaluated as good to outstanding.

**Figure 3: Achievements and Standards in Pre-school Settings**



3.4 The development of the children’s language and communication skills was promoted more consistently across all of the different pre-school settings inspected, reflecting a significant improvement in both the statutory nursery units and the voluntary/private settings. Many pre-school settings increasingly recognise the need for improved links with parents and are developing effective measures to engage the parents in the promotion of an interest in books and language in the home.

3.5 Most of the pre-school settings inspected provided good or better opportunities for the development of early mathematical experiences, with a significant improvement in almost one-half of the statutory nursery units. In most of the pre-school settings inspected the promotion of the children’s personal, social and emotional needs was good or better, with an overall improving trend of around one-tenth. Where there is a wide range in either age, or stages of development, or linguistic and cultural backgrounds, staff often find it difficult to meet the full range of differing needs. The pre-school settings in which there are appropriate ratios of staff with high levels of skill and professional expertise meet these challenges most effectively.

3.6 Almost all of the statutory nursery schools and nursery units, and a majority of voluntary/private settings inspected, provided good to outstanding opportunities for physical development. In an increasing number of pre-school settings, the development of the outdoor area is leading to improvements in the opportunities for learning outdoors in general, and for the development of physical and energetic play in particular. The benefits for the children include the development of healthy lifestyles, greater opportunities to engage with the natural environment and the increased motivation and engagement of boys.

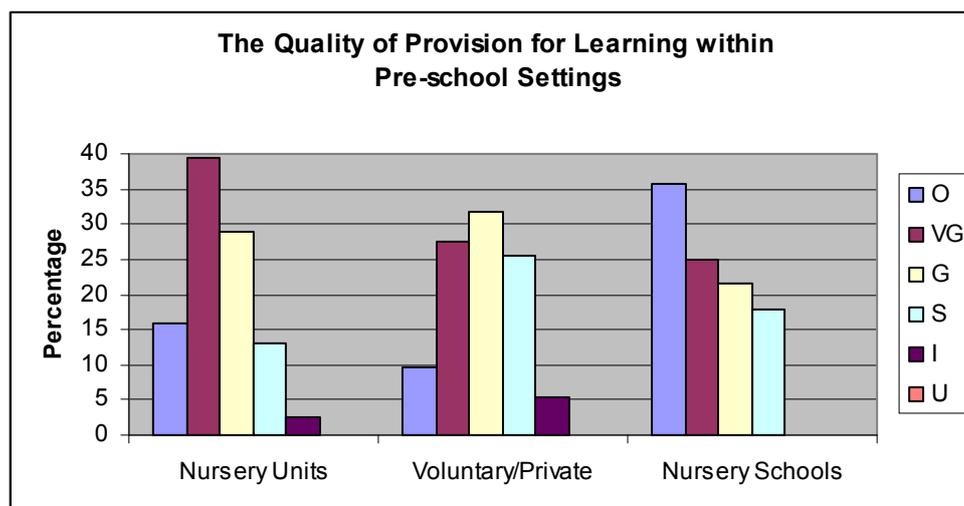
3.7 In many of the pre-school settings inspected there has been greater participation in training linked to the promotion of children’s creativity. The training has contributed to the improvement in the progression and development of children’s creativity; there are increased opportunities for children to explore a wider range of art materials such as clay, textiles, model-making and observational drawings and paintings both indoors and outdoors.

3.8 The World Around Us (WAU) remains the least well-developed area of the pre-school curriculum. It was identified as an area for improvement in a significant minority of the settings inspected. Children need increased opportunities to develop their observational, investigative and problem-solving skills.

## THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.9 The quality of the planning and assessment was the most frequently identified area for improvement, particularly within the voluntary and private settings inspected. Staff need to match the pre-school programme more appropriately to the identified needs and interests of the children. To improve their engagement with the children, the staff need to promote concentrated play more effectively, to extend the children's thinking and learning, and to provide activities and experiences which challenge and encourage progression, appropriate to the children's differing stages of development.

**Figure 4: The Quality of Provision for Learning within Pre-school Settings**



3.10 There is an increase in the number of children being admitted into pre-school settings with a range of additional needs. Staff report increasing numbers of children with under-developed speech and language, and with emotional and behavioural issues. Often these difficulties are identified for the first time in the pre-school setting. A small number of settings have a growing number of newcomer families who require additional support to integrate into the community and to overcome language barriers.

3.11 The overall provision for children with SEN remains stronger in the statutory sector<sup>4</sup>. There was a slight improvement in the voluntary/private settings inspected, with only one-tenth of the provision evaluated as less than satisfactory, as compared to one-fifth at the time of the initial SEN survey.

3.12 In around one-third of all the pre-school settings inspected, there was increasing co-operation between speech therapists and pre-school staff, with the dual advantage of supporting individual children and of building the staff's capacity to identify and support other children. Improved links with Sure Start projects in areas of disadvantage also help to develop more collaborative ways of working across various organisations, which aim to support young children and their families.

3.13 There are over 1,450 under-age children currently placed in statutory settings. On occasions, the length of the session for these younger children is inappropriate. There can be a negative impact on those children in their final pre-school year in those settings with significant numbers of younger children who require closer adult supervision and support for their personal care, and for the development of their language and social skills. The impact

<sup>4</sup> 'The Best for All Our Children' A Follow-up to the Inspection of Special Educational Needs in the Pre-School Sector: ETI December 2009

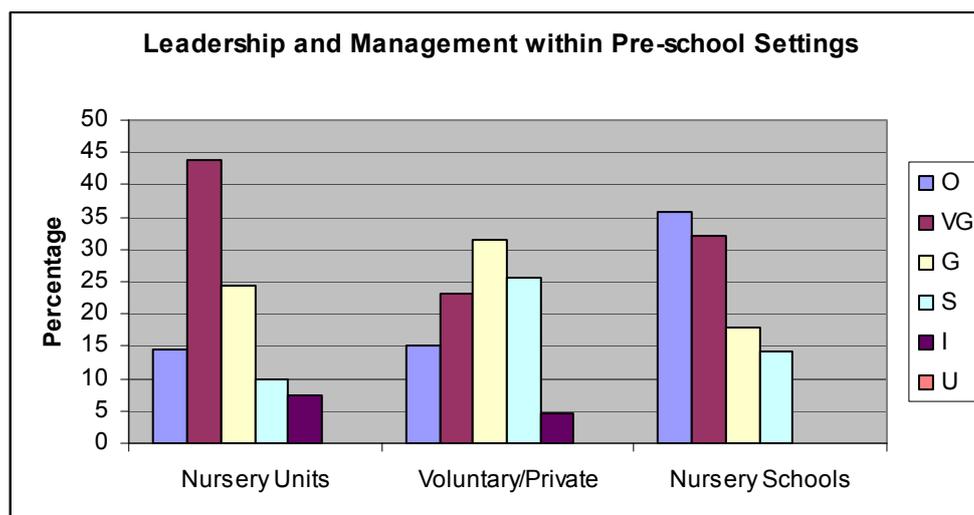
on the achievements and standards for the children in these mixed classes is particularly evident where there is not enough staff, or where the adults do not have the required skills to develop fully a programme which meets the wide range of the children's stages of development. In the best practice, the staff develop effective and age-appropriate strategies to meet the needs of these younger children, while providing a stimulating and progressive pre-school year for the older children.

3.14 The best practitioners within both the statutory and voluntary/private settings inspected are pro-active in accessing continuing professional development and training. There continues to be a disparity between the statutory and voluntary/private sectors in relation to the qualifications of the staff; and there is a need for a more strategic and coherent approach to the provision of continuing professional development for all early years practitioners to work towards a more consistently skilled work force.

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

3.15 The good or better quality of the leadership and management in three-quarters of the pre-school settings inspected is an improvement from the previous reporting period. There remains a close correlation between the effectiveness of leadership and management and the quality of overall provision in all pre-school settings.

**Figure 5: The Effectiveness of Leadership and Management in Pre-school Settings**



3.16 In the voluntary/private settings inspected, almost one-third of the support provided by the early years specialist was identified as having clear strengths. The poorer guidance and training observed have most often been a direct result of a high turnover of early years personnel, with a negative impact on both the effectiveness and the rate of continuous and systematic improvement for the settings concerned.

3.17 Children enter pre-school settings from an increasingly varied range and combination of experiences. In the best practice observed, the staff matched effectively the pace of the settling in arrangements and the support, and the educational experiences to the individual child's stage of development. There were improving pastoral links between many pre-schools and primary schools in managing the transition from the pre-school setting into year 1. There continues to be, however, room for improvement in many primary schools at the FS to build more effectively on the high levels of independence, self-management and quality learning through play-based activities which many children have already experienced in their pre-school setting.

3.18 The number of children aged four but under compulsory school age, and enrolled in a primary school reception class, has declined to approximately 600; the quality of provision for these children remains variable. The transfer from pre-school to reception class for children on their fourth birthday can have a series of negative impacts, including a disjointed pre-school experience for the child and financial implications for the original setting, if it is in the voluntary/private sector. In the best practice the Principal of the primary school ensures that the provision is in accordance with the pre-school curricular guidance and that the children continue to make progress.

3.19 The number of children attending nursery units has remained steady at almost two-fifths of all pre-school enrolments. In the most effective practice, the nursery unit is an integral part of the life and work of the primary school<sup>5</sup>.

3.20 There has been a decrease of around one-tenth in the number of pre-school settings of all types requiring formal follow-up inspections, due in part to the growing capacity to undertake self-evaluation in order to bring about sustained and continuous improvement. An increasing number of pre-school settings plan collaboratively, and share best practice and resources both within and across the statutory and voluntary pre-school providers and local primary schools. Such collaboration has enhanced the quality of provision.

3.21 The differences in the funding arrangements continue across the pre-school sector; the funding of statutory provision is allocated per child either for full- or part-time places; the funding for the voluntary/private sector is for part-time places. Smaller numbers of allocated funded places can often have a direct impact on the quality of the provision and can raise issues of sustainability, lack of appropriate resources to deliver a quality programme and sufficient numbers of children with similar age or stage of development. In addition, increasing numbers of statutory pre-school settings are submitting proposals to convert from part-time to full-time provision, or from a playgroup to a statutory nursery unit. The Department of Education (DE) needs to consider carefully the long-term impact of these changes on the financial viability of individual settings and the match of funded places to the need in an area.

## CONCLUSION

3.22 Among the strengths and improvements in the provision within the pre-school sector were: the good to outstanding achievements and standards across the curriculum in just over four-fifths of the settings inspected; the more consistent development of the children's language and communication skills linked to collaborative working with a range of professionals; the good or better opportunities for the development of early mathematical experiences; the improvements in the opportunities for learning outdoors, and for the development of physical play; and, the improving pastoral links between many pre-schools and primary schools.

3.23 The actions required to effect further improvement include the continuing need:

- to match the pre-school programme to the identified needs and interests of the children;

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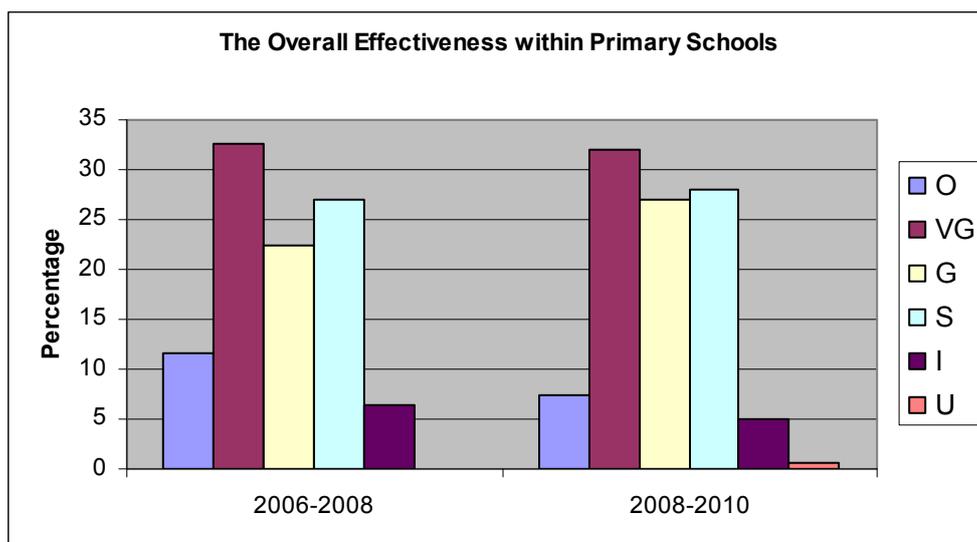
<sup>5</sup> The Evaluation of the Quality of Educational Provision in Nursery Units in Primary Schools: ETI May 2010

- to address the disparity in the qualifications of staff and the need for a more strategic and coherent approach to continuing professional development in all sectors; and
- to build more effectively at FS in many primary schools on the high levels of independence, self-management and quality learning which many children have already experienced in their pre-school setting.

#### 4. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

4.1 Since the previous reporting period, the revised curriculum has been phased in. There have been positive developments to learning and teaching approaches. The influence of the revised curriculum is evident through the effective use, in most of the schools inspected, of shared learning intentions and success criteria by both the teachers and the learners. While the impact of the revised curriculum on standards and achievements is difficult to assess at this early stage, curriculum developments have increased the learners' enjoyment.

**Figure 6: The Overall Effectiveness within Primary Schools**



4.2 The quality of provision in two-thirds of the cohort of schools inspected during the reporting period was evaluated as being good or better, although the proportion of schools evaluated as outstanding was lower. In one-third of the primary schools inspected, the quality of the education continued to be an area for improvement. The quality of provision was evaluated as less than satisfactory in just under one in ten schools inspected. During the reporting period, 13 primary schools entered the Formal Intervention Process.

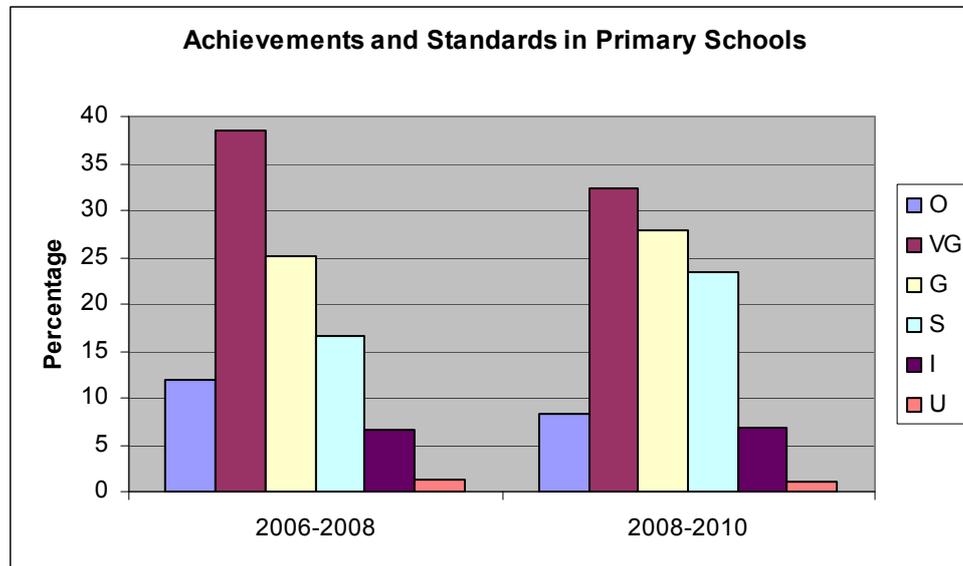
4.3 The two-fifths of the schools inspected which were evaluated as being very good or outstanding shared similar characteristics. They focused on improving the achievements and standards of all of the learners. An effective principal promoted a strong sense of collegiality with a collective responsibility focused on embracing change and on raising standards. The knowledgeable subject co-ordinators made effective use of quantitative data to monitor, evaluate and set targets both for individual learners and as part of the school development process. There was an effective school development plan (SDP) drawn up in response to rigorous and honest self-evaluation. The pastoral care was underpinned by a sense of value and respect for each member of the school community. The learners achieved high standards because of the excellent quality of the provision for learning evidenced by the high number of very good and outstanding lessons observed.

#### ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

4.4 The achievements and standards were evaluated as good or better in just over two-thirds of the schools inspected. However, across NI one child in five still leaves primary school with literacy and numeracy problems, an issue that needs to be resolved in order to improve their lives and life chances. Compared to the previous reporting period, the

proportion of schools in which the standards and achievements were not good enough and in need of improvement was higher, at approximately one-third of the schools inspected. These schools need to raise the achievements and standards of the learners with a strong focus on developing each learner's skills in literacy and numeracy.

**Figure 7: Achievements and Standards in Primary Schools**

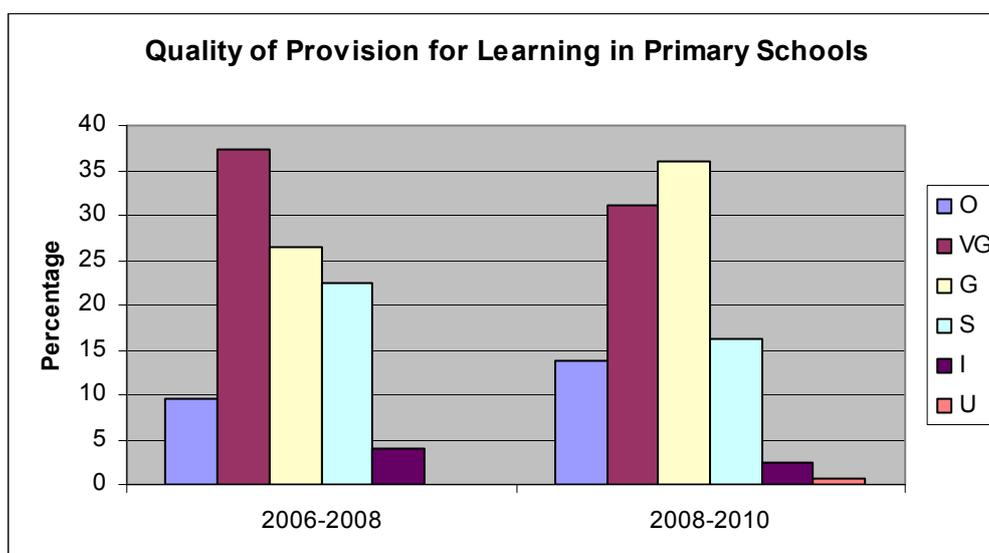


4.5 Over the reporting period, the percentage of learners identified as having SEN continued to show an upward trend. In the majority of the schools inspected, the provision made for these learners was evaluated as good or better. Key to this good provision was the inclusive ethos and the effective support which helped the learners to make progress. In a significant minority of the schools inspected, the provision was not good enough. The support provided was not matched sufficiently to the learners' identified needs. The effectiveness of such support needed to be monitored and evaluated more precisely to measure the improvement it brought to the attainment of the learners, and to identify any changes which should be made in the provision.

#### THE QUALITY OF THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

4.6 The quality of the provision for learning, which includes planning, teaching and assessment, was good or better in approximately four-fifths of the primary schools inspected, reflecting a slight improvement. In just under one-half of the schools, the provision for learning was very good or outstanding. To improve the quality of provision, the teachers need to have higher expectations of the learners, to place a greater focus on the intended learning outcomes in their planning, to plan for activities which encourage the learners' active participation, including involving them more in the assessment and evaluation of their own work and progress.

**Figure 8: Quality of Provision for Learning in Primary Schools**



4.7 The quality of teachers' planning was good or better in two-thirds of primary schools inspected. The majority of the schools had developed appropriate planning formats which connected successfully different areas of the curriculum and/or thematic formats, and which addressed more appropriately the requirements of the revised curriculum. Importantly, the planning included relevant evidence of the learners' contribution to the development of the theme.

4.8 The teachers analysed effectively the extent of the learners' understanding and progress to inform their planning in two-fifths of the primary schools inspected. They reviewed the quality and effectiveness of the learning and modified future lesson plans to meet better the needs of all of the learners. In three-fifths of the primary schools inspected, the teachers needed to develop better ways of analysing the success of a lesson and the implications for their planning for future work.

4.9 In just over four-fifths of the 3,611 lessons observed, the quality of the teaching was judged to be good or better, with almost one-half of the lessons evaluated as very good or outstanding. In almost one lesson in five, the quality of teaching was judged to be in need of improvement. The best teaching, in one-half of the lessons evaluated, was characterised by highly effective planning designed to meet the needs and abilities of all of the learners; the sharing of the intended learning outcomes with learners; activities which were engaging, practical and appropriately challenging; the use of success criteria to provide integral reference points throughout the lesson; and the effective consolidation of the learning at the end of the lesson with an indication of where the learning might be further developed in a series of future lessons.

4.10 In almost all of the lessons observed, the learners were highly motivated. In two-fifths of the schools inspected, the learners used the success criteria of the lesson well to assess their progress and to plan for future work. However, it was an area for development in a majority of the schools inspected. The ability of the learners to apply their skills and understanding to new situations was a strength in a majority of schools; it remained under-developed in one-third of the schools inspected.

4.11 In one lesson in five, the teachers needed to improve further the strategies in order to engage the learners more effectively and to raise the overall standards. There needed to be a more rigorous evaluation of planning to meet more effectively the needs of the learners; better feedback to the learners including the use of self-assessment and the setting of personal learning targets; and the greater development and progression of the learners' skills in information and communication technology (ICT).

4.12 The quality of the use of ICT to enhance learning was at least satisfactory in almost all of the schools inspected. It was very good or outstanding in just under one-third of the schools inspected, with very little change over the previous reporting period. Around one-third of the primary schools inspected required more support to make more effective use of ICT in teaching and learning.

4.13 Over one-half of the schools inspected implemented consistently an effective assessment policy; the use of assessment remained an area for improvement in one-fifth of schools. In the most effective practice, the co-ordinators and the school leadership monitored the learners' work regularly, and they analysed effectively the performance data from a range of standardised and non-standardised testing.

4.14 Schools need to make greater and more effective use of the performance data available to them. There is a range of good support including web-based staff development and workshops for teachers and principals organised by the Using School Information and Data (USID) group, and the developments in the use of performance data by C2k.

4.15 The quality of the teaching within the FS was evaluated as good or better in four-fifths of the lessons observed, a similar picture to the previous reporting period. The number of instances of inadequate lessons was lower by almost eight percent. The effectively established FS built on the work of feeder pre-school providers; the school leadership, teachers and classroom assistants understood and implemented effectively the pedagogy; and there was a strong emphasis on active, play-based learning which promoted independence and put the learning into a meaningful context. The teachers used regular contact with the parents to share how they might consolidate language development and learning.

4.16 The teaching of literacy was good or better in just over four-fifths of the lessons observed. The most effective literacy, in approximately one-half of the lessons, was characterised by activities which interested and engaged the learners, were well matched to their ability and provided adequate challenge. The lessons integrated meaningfully the three components of talking and listening, reading and writing. The teachers used skilful questioning to encourage the learners to speak at length and to justify and explain their comments and opinions; they provided them with opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and audiences making good use of real-life contexts; and, they established clear lines of progression for the development of reading skills, supported with appropriate methods to ensure that the learners were able to read at a level at least equivalent to their age and stage of development.

4.17 The less effective or ineffective practice, in one-fifth of the lessons observed, was characterised by teaching which was overly-directive with too much emphasis on the completion of worksheets, limiting the opportunities to practise, refine and improve the use of grammar, spelling and writing conventions. There were inadequate opportunities for the learners to develop and apply their reading skills through key stage (KS) 2 with a resulting decline in their ability to tackle new words and to develop their fluency, accuracy and understanding.

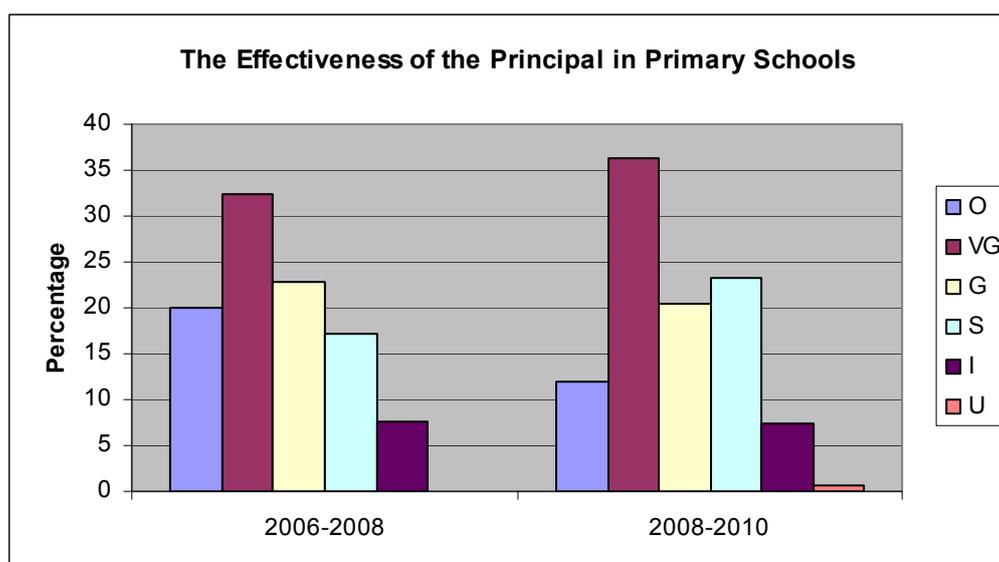
4.18 The development of a structured phonics programme has been a feature in the majority of the schools inspected. The most effective approaches ensured that phonics were skilfully woven into the reading and listening activities which formed part of the lesson topic, rather than being taught in isolation.

4.19 The teaching of numeracy was good or better in just over four-fifths of the lessons observed. In almost one-half of the lessons, where the teaching was very good or outstanding, the teachers had realistically high expectations of the learners; and they used open-ended questions, problem-solving tasks and investigative activities to develop the learners' capacity to reason logically. Additionally, the teachers gave the learners appropriate time and encouragement to communicate and explain their mathematical thinking, to articulate the processes they used, to ask questions and to talk about their learning.

4.20 In approximately one-fifth of the lessons observed the teaching of numeracy was an area for improvement. In these lessons the teachers directed the learning too much, and they did not place sufficient emphasis on the development of mathematical processes.

#### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Figure 9: The Effectiveness of the Principal in Primary Schools**



4.21 In almost three-quarters of the primary schools inspected, the leadership of the Principal was evaluated as good or better, slightly lower than in the previous reporting period. Just over one-half of the principals provided very good or outstanding leadership. These principals had a vision for the future development of the school supported by a sound strategy for realising that vision; they had developed an effective team spirit and collegiality amongst the staff; they had high expectations for the whole school community including, where appropriate, any unit within the school; and they placed a clear focus on raising achievements and standards, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

4.22 In just over one-quarter of the primary schools inspected, the leadership and management provided by the Principal was not good enough, a slightly higher proportion than in the last report. These principals did not plan adequately for improvement throughout the school; they did not communicate effectively with staff and parents; they did not analyse and use sufficiently performance data to inform and improve the quality of learning and teaching; and they did not place sufficient emphasis on improving the achievements and standards of the learners.

4.23 In just under one-third of the schools inspected the leadership provided by the area of learning co-ordinator continued to be an area for improvement. Key to this improvement was the need to develop further the role of the co-ordinators as lead practitioners and role-models; the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality and effectiveness of the planning, learning and teaching; the more effective dissemination of the good practice within the school; and the support made available for those learners with additional learning needs in literacy and numeracy.

4.24 In almost one-half of the schools inspected the use of self-evaluation to effect improvement was an area for development, an increase from the previous reporting period. These schools needed to agree and implement clear strategies to monitor and evaluate the quality of their curricular and pastoral provision; to link these strategies to a SDP focused on raising attainment in literacy and numeracy, and extending the learners' experiences across the curriculum; and, to provide meaningful opportunities for consultation and collaboration with governors, staff, parents and learners.

## CONCLUSION

4.25 Among the strengths and improvements in the provision within the primary sector were: the very good or outstanding quality of the teaching in almost one-half of the lessons observed; the good progress in the implementation of the skills-based revised curriculum; the development of the learners' thinking skills and personal capabilities through a whole-school approach to collaborative learning; and the good or better leadership of the Principal in almost three-quarters of the primary schools inspected.

4.26 The actions required to effect further improvement include:

- the further development and use of quantitative assessment evidence to enable principals, teachers and co-ordinators to monitor progression, to evaluate their own effectiveness and to raise standards in learning;
- the need to improve the teaching of reading skills for learners in KS2, and the coherent development of writing across the areas of learning throughout the primary year groups to improve standards in literacy; and
- the need for most primary schools to develop a more coherent understanding of the skills and attributes taught in feeder schools and centres, and to develop teaching strategies which provide purposeful progression in learning and build on the skills, knowledge and understanding which young children have already acquired.

## 5. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN IRISH-MEDIUM (IM) EDUCATION

5.1 During the reporting period, the IM sector has continued to expand and develop. In September 2009, there were 23 freestanding primary schools and nine IM units in English-medium (EM) primary schools. Irish-medium post-primary provision has remained at one freestanding school and two IM streams in EM schools. An independent, freestanding IM post-primary school failed to thrive and closed in September 2009 having operated for two years. Freestanding schools continue to be the preference of the sector generally and of most groups bringing forward development proposals for new schools.

5.2 Irish-medium schools continue to make a very distinctive contribution in the field of education. That the learners achieve a good level of spoken Irish and communicate with their peers and other Irish speakers with ease, demonstrates that a high level of competence in Irish is a realistic expectation for learners of all abilities.

5.3 Of the six pre-school settings inspected that deliver the curriculum through the medium of Irish, the quality of the provision in one-half of the settings was evaluated as good or better; three had significant areas for improvement. A key area for improvement was the staff's competency to deliver an immersion programme in the Irish language; there is a need for continued staff development in Irish. Overall inspection activity, including follow-up inspections and district visits, indicate that, in a significant number of pre-school IM settings, there remains insufficient progress.

5.4 Seven inspections of IM primary schools and of one IM unit in a primary school took place during the reporting period; there were no inspections of any of the IM post-primary providers. As was the case in previous inspections of IM units, the quality of the unit inspected was evaluated as good. The quality of provision in three of the seven primary schools inspected was evaluated as satisfactory or better; in the other schools it was evaluated as inadequate. The Department of Education has placed these schools in the Formal Intervention Process.

5.5 In less than one-half of the schools inspected, the achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy were evaluated as good or very good. The provision for those learners requiring additional support with aspects of their learning was evaluated as good or better in one-half of the schools. The quality of leadership and management, including the effectiveness of the structures for self-evaluation leading to improvement, was found to be less than good in more than one-half of the schools inspected.

5.6 The IM sector continues to respond well to the focused agenda for improvement that follows an inspection. In four follow-up inspections conducted during the reporting period, three of the schools had made good progress. The IM sector needs to develop and to engage more positively in the process of self-evaluation rather than depending on the inspection process to promote improvement.

### CONCLUSION

5.7 The strengths and improvements in IM provision were: the capacity to prepare confident, competent Irish speakers; the generally good response to inspection findings; and, the commitment of parents and teachers to the learners.

5.8 The actions required to effect further improvement remain much as in the previous reporting period, namely: the further development of the quality of leadership and management; the better assessment and support for those learners with SEN; and, the further development of a culture of self-evaluation leading to improvement and a raising of standards in learning and teaching.

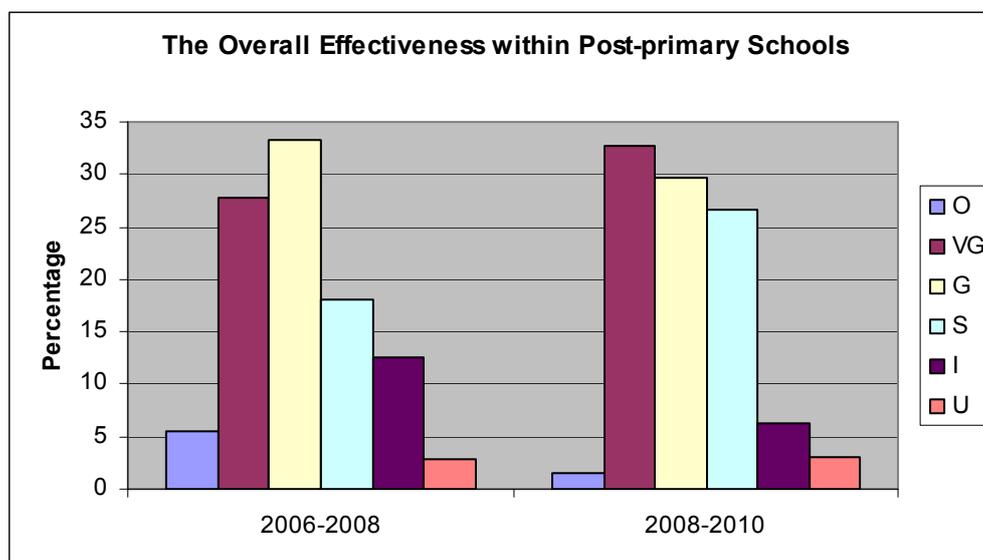
## 6. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS

6.1 Post-primary schools are increasingly collaborating together, and with further education colleges and work-based learning centres, through the network of Area Learning Communities (ALCs) which supports the implementation of the Entitlement Framework. Currently, more learners have access to a broader curriculum. The Department of Education's policy of Every School a Good School (ESaGS) seeks to promote improvement for all schools.

6.2 Post-primary inspection procedures continue to place a strong emphasis on the evaluation of the quality of leadership and management. There is also a higher profile in all inspections on the evaluation of the provision for SEN and inclusion, and, latterly, careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG). Four area-based inspections<sup>6</sup> during the reporting period focused on particular aspects of education: for example, transition across and within phases, and the support for self-evaluation.

6.3 Many post-primary schools, particularly in the non-selective sector, continued to experience the effects of demographic decline. The enrolment of non-selective schools dropped by over two percent and there was a slight drop in the numbers of learners in selective schools. The continued uncertainties surrounding the practical implications of DE's outlined proposals for the review of post-primary education, and the delay in the formation of the Education and Skills Authority (ESA), remain considerable concerns for school leaders, teachers, parents and learners.

**Figure 10: The Overall Effectiveness within Post-primary Schools**



<sup>6</sup> The area-based inspections were conducted across the range of formal and informal education provision within the area.

i) An Evaluation of the Adequacy, Accessibility and Integration of Services to Support the Emotional Well-being and Health of Children and Young People in the greater Enniskillen Area of Fermanagh.

ii) An Evaluation of the Quality of Strategic Planning, Learning and Transition Arrangements for Education and Training in the Ballymena Area.

iii) An Evaluation of the Quality of Strategic Planning, Learning and Transition Arrangements for Education and Training in the West Belfast Area.

iv) An Evaluation of the Support for Self-evaluation to Promote Improvement in the Outcomes for Children and Young People aged 3 to 19 in a range of educational settings in the Downpatrick Area.

## ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

6.4 In most of the cohort of schools inspected during the reporting period, the learners were well motivated. When given the opportunity to work independently and with others, they developed effective personal and social skills. In a significant minority of the schools inspected, the learners did not make sufficient progress relative to their prior attainment and potential. The proportion of learners who demonstrated very good or outstanding general skills and attributes in a variety of contexts fell by over ten percentage points since the previous reporting period. The teachers need to take account of the prior attainment of learners and to develop more effectively their critical and creative thinking skills.

6.5 Although the learners achieved good or better standards in English in two-thirds of the schools inspected, the proportion of schools in which standards were less than satisfactory increased to one in ten. There was a slight improvement in the standards achieved in mathematics. The overall standards were good or better in just one-half of the schools inspected; they were less than satisfactory in one-quarter of the schools. Year-on-year progression in the learning of mathematics was good or better in less than one-half of the schools inspected.

6.6 The standards in public examinations at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced levels continued to improve, although there were major areas of performance where the results were still not good enough. In particular, at GCSE, over 70% of the learners in year 12 achieved at least five subjects at grades A\* to C; this figure decreased to 57% when English and mathematics were included<sup>7</sup>. At GCE Advanced level, the percentage of learners achieving a grade A to C in three or more subjects increased slightly to 64%.

6.7 At KS3, the percentage of learners achieving Level 5 and above in English and mathematics increased slightly to 79% and 77% respectively.

6.8 There continued to be a steady reduction in the percentage of learners who left school with no qualifications: a decrease from 3.9% (just under 1,000 learners) in the previous reporting period to the current figure of 2.9% (just under 700). There was also a reduction to just over 5% in the number of boys who left school with no qualifications and who were eligible for free school meals. Nevertheless, schools and support organisations need to provide support that is more appropriate to the needs of this cohort of learners in order to improve their lives and life chances.

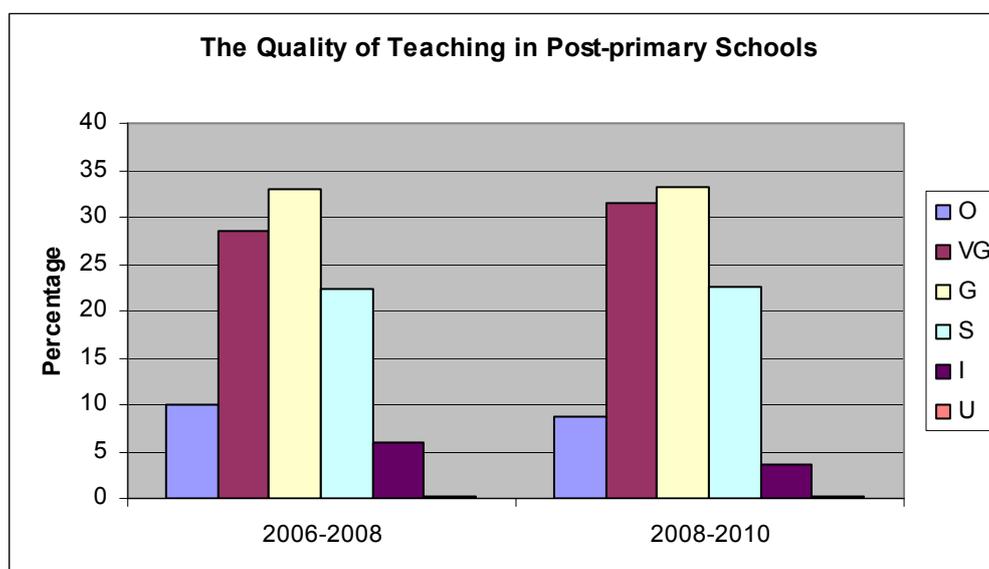
## QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

6.9 While there was no noticeable improvement in the overall quality of the provision for learning in the post-primary schools inspected, there were improvements in aspects of teaching and learning. For example, the quality of the teachers' planning was evaluated as good or better in two-thirds of the schools inspected. In particular, a review of the schemes of work at KS3 reflected the changes to, and key requirements of, the revised curriculum. The growing understanding of the requirements of a more skills-based curriculum has led to an improvement in the quality of learning and teaching reflected in, for example, the broader range of learning experiences and the more active engagement of the learners.

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<sup>7</sup> Year 12 & Year 14 Examination Performance at Post-primary Schools in N. Ireland.

**Figure 11: The Quality of Teaching in Post-primary Schools**



6.10 The overall quality of teaching observed in individual lessons did not change demonstrably; there were significant areas for improvement in more than one in four lessons. In the best practice, the teachers had appropriately high expectations and an informed understanding of the learners' needs. They used assessment for learning strategies effectively, made explicit connections in the learning process, and used a wide range of 'cutting-edge' learning and teaching approaches and resources to support and guide the learners. The learners made an active contribution, developed their higher order thinking skills and responded well to the effective and skilful questioning.

6.11 Despite the significant investment over a long period, the effective use of ICT in teaching and learning was underdeveloped in approximately three-quarters of the post-primary schools inspected. The majority of schools had not maximised the full potential of digital technologies and virtual learning environments to enhance the quality of the learning. There were examples of innovative practice in approximately one-quarter of the schools inspected. In those schools in which the use of the technology was more firmly embedded, the learners benefited from richer and more connected experiences; they developed more independent and informed skills and understanding compared with their peers in other schools.

6.12 There was a slight improvement in the use of Assessment for Learning techniques within the classroom, yet assessment remained satisfactory or worse in just under one-half of the schools inspected. While the teachers shared the learning intentions with the learners, they needed to improve the consolidation of learning through, for example, more effective use of plenary sessions. Furthermore, teachers needed to give more effective feedback to guide the learners in how they might improve the quality of their work.

6.13 The overall quality of the provision for English improved significantly. The effectiveness of over one-half of the English departments inspected was good, with a further one in six evaluated as very good. No department was evaluated as outstanding during the reporting period. The number of departments in which the provision was evaluated as inadequate or unsatisfactory remained at around one in ten. The quality of teaching observed in individual lessons improved; it was evaluated as good or better in approximately three-quarters of the lessons observed. There were significant areas for improvement in one-quarter of the lessons.

6.14 In order to improve the provision in mathematics, teachers in the post-primary schools inspected needed to take greater cognisance of, and build more effectively on, the prior learning and the range of teaching strategies that the learners had experienced at KS2, and the levels of attainment at the end of KS2. Teachers needed to engage more effectively in mathematical debate with the learners, and to promote their mathematical thinking.

6.15 School leadership at all levels and teachers need to make more effective use of data to identify appropriate teaching strategies and learning activities matched to the range of ability of the learners. An improvement in the transfer of learners' records between primary and post-primary school is needed to build on previous attainment in numeracy and literacy and to provide more coherence to the learning.

6.16 There was a slight improvement in the overall quality of the care, guidance and support provided for learners in the schools inspected. There was a reduction of one-half of those schools where the provision was evaluated as outstanding (16%). In almost one-half of the schools inspected, the identified strengths were the climate for learning, particularly where it was found to be purposeful and relevant; the quality of the working relationships between the teachers and the learners; and the positive attitudes and behaviour of the learners. The implementation of current child protection policy as required by DE circulars improved by more than ten percentage points, reflecting the greater emphasis which schools place on this important area of their work. Nearly all of the schools inspected had satisfactory or better arrangements in place for the implementation of current child protection policy as required by DE circulars; in four out of five schools the arrangements were good or better.

6.17 In just under two-thirds of the schools inspected, there were significant areas for improvement in the quality of the provision for CEIAG.

6.18 There was significant improvement in the proportion of the schools inspected demonstrating a very good or outstanding commitment to inclusion and diversity; this improvement represents an increase from two out of three schools being evaluated as good or better in 2006-08, to four out of five in the current reporting period. The most effective schools promoted a culture of inclusion and took consistent action at an early stage to identify and support those learners at risk of falling behind or dropping out of school. They made the emotional development of these learners a priority; they took positive action to improve attendance and to reduce suspensions; and, they pursued actively ways of re-integrating those learners educated off-site back into mainstream education.

6.19 In the least effective schools, there was little change in the culture of suspension and expulsion as a main strategy for addressing the behavioural challenges arising from those learners with social and emotional difficulties. These schools need to explore more fully the reasons why some learners are failing.

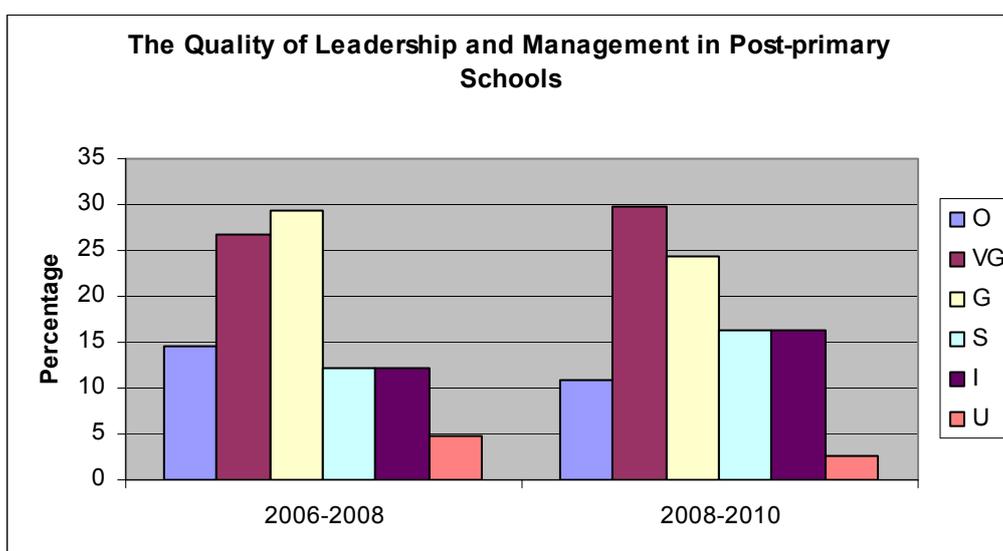
6.20 Links across the post-primary and Alternative Education Provision (AEP) sectors, while improving slightly, were not robust enough to ensure shared practice and joint accountability for the quality of provision or re-integration of learners. Schools need to recognise their responsibilities towards all learners on their register, including those educated off-site. They need to monitor the provision to ensure that the learners' needs are being met equitably and adequately. The majority of learners referred to AEP have special educational needs, yet they do not have access to the same quality of resources as learners in mainstream schools. A relevant policy for AEP has yet to be developed.

6.21 The overall quality of the experiences for those who require additional support with aspects of their learning was good or better in two-thirds of the schools inspected, demonstrating an improvement from just over one-half of schools in 2006-08. In the most effective practice, the SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) and the class teacher recorded and monitored the learners' progress regularly and with rigour; and there was a whole-school commitment to differentiated teaching, leading to improvement in the learners' levels of achievement. Furthermore, an effective programme for CEIAG supported the transition to adult and working life; the schools provided a wide range of appropriate accredited courses and suitable learning pathways matched well to the abilities and interests of learners; and well-planned teaching focused closely on the individual needs of the learners.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

6.22 In a majority of the post-primary schools inspected during the reporting period, the quality of leadership and management ranged from good to outstanding. In just over one-third of the schools, the leadership and management needed to improve, a declining profile since the previous reporting period. The quality of the leadership and management was evaluated as inadequate or unsatisfactory in around one-fifth of the schools inspected.

**Figure 12: The Quality of Leadership and Management in Post-primary Schools**



6.23 The most effective principals and senior management teams provided clear and realistic leadership based on an evidence-based knowledge of the work of the school. The planning for improvement was underpinned by the effective analysis and interpretation of relevant data and robust self-evaluation. By contrast, in just over two-fifths of the schools inspected, the actions to promote improvement were well informed. These schools needed to improve the arrangements for self-evaluation and the procedures for review, including the actions taken to promote improvement in the outcomes for all of their learners. A frequent issue in these schools was the poor communication between the Principal, senior leadership, governors and teachers and a lack of effective whole-school purpose to bring about improvement.

6.24 The quality of SDP remained a challenge for a significant minority of the schools inspected; in particular, the Board of Governors needed to be more fully involved in the SDP process, and there was a lack of effective strategies to set benchmarks and appropriate targets for improvement. There was a wide range of ability of intake. School leaders would endorse DE's stated intention, as part of the ESaGS policy, to introduce agreed, robust and manageable value-added measures to enable schools to demonstrate progress relative to their individual context.

6.25 The quality of middle management continued to be good to outstanding in almost two-thirds of the post-primary schools inspected. There was improvement in the quality of the strategic leadership at middle management and an increase in the effective actions to promote improvement. Such progress reflected the greater accountability expected of middle managers from school management. The more effective middle managers made greater use of links and external partnerships with, for example, local industry or practical projects to emphasise the application of their area of study to everyday life, and to promote successfully the interest and engagement of the learners. In almost two-fifths of the schools inspected, the middle management carried out their responsibilities less effectively.

6.26 The many deficiencies in post-primary accommodation have been noted in previous reports. In many schools the accommodation is detrimental to the implementation of the revised curriculum and of the Entitlement Framework; in some instances it is also potentially detrimental to the health and well-being of the learners. It is appropriate that DE has begun to review the current guidance for post-primary specialist accommodation in order to reflect more appropriately the changes in the curriculum, and the proposals for area-based planning.

## CONCLUSION

6.27 Among the strengths and improvements in the provision in post-primary education were: the steady improvement in examination standards; the decrease in the percentage of learners who leave school with no qualifications; the improvement in the provision for those learners who require additional support for their learning; the improvement in the quality of arrangements for child protection; the improvement in the number of schools demonstrating a commitment to inclusion and diversity; and, the improvement in the development of external links and partnerships in the interests of learners.

6.28 Actions required to effect further improvement include:

- the implementation of more rigorous improvement and self-evaluation processes at all management levels in one-third of the schools inspected, including the integral role of the school development planning process to raise the quality of provision and the outcomes for learners;
- a continued focus on raising further the standards of literacy and numeracy, and on ensuring that targets are suitably challenging; and
- the embedding of the significant work on the introduction of the revised curriculum through the identification of teaching and learning strategies matched to the specific needs of individual learners which will lead to sustained improvement in their standards and skills.

## 7. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS

7.1 The main focus of the work of special schools has been to embed the process of self-evaluation and to implement the revised curriculum. During the reporting period, there were strengthening relationships across special education and mainstream sectors, and with further education colleges to the benefit of the learners. Special schools continued to raise the standards which learners with special educational needs achieve, and to develop the capacity of the staff to address complex needs, including profound and multiple learning difficulties.

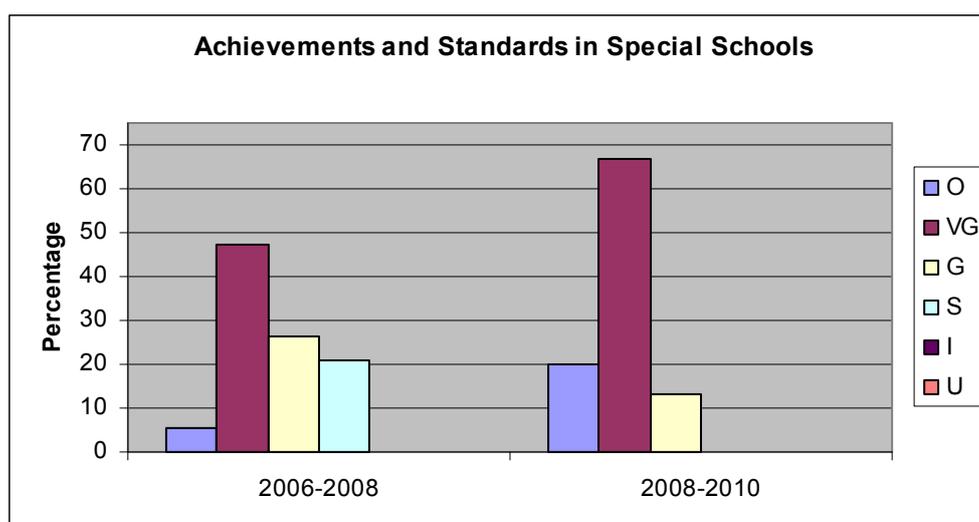
7.2 The quality of teaching and learning has improved with an ongoing commitment to valuing the learners, and to building effectively on their attainment. Reflective of the commitment across the sector was the improvement in play-based learning in the early years, identified as a short-coming in the previous reporting period. In short, learners in special schools continue to experience a good, rewarding education.

7.3 The provision in three of the 14 special schools inspected was evaluated as outstanding. These schools are sector leaders and have created best practice models in areas such as outreach support for literacy, intensive support for learners with severe learning difficulties, including autism, and behaviour support. The outstanding leadership identified includes a broad investment in professional skills and knowledge suited to the future role of the special school. By contrast, there were areas for improvement in over one-third of the schools inspected.

### ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

7.4 The expected outcomes for the majority of the learners across the sector is to gain admission to a further education course or to learn alongside peers in a mainstream setting or leisure activity. There were well-structured programmes for school leavers and, for the majority of the learners, successful transition pathways to further education and employment. The progress in partnership working between special schools and further education colleges included an improvement in access to accredited courses.

**Figure 13: Achievements and Standards in Special Schools**



7.5 Those learners with profound and multiple learning difficulties are less likely to find appropriate post-school placement, and a minority of learners with significant autism and challenging behaviour difficulties require continuous support. The few remaining challenges to raising achievement for all learners are daunting. Education and allied health disciplines are coming together in practical working arrangements to achieve the transition of learners with severe and complex needs and profound disability, or to intervene in incidences of challenging behaviour.

7.6 The lack of sufficient post-school provision results in parents, learners and staff feeling less positive about the future well-being of these learners. Crucially, in the practice observed, teaching and therapy staff worked together better as teams in classrooms to engage learners more fully. More significant and ambitious strategic planning between education and health, with a particular focus on post-school provision, is required to improve the lives and life chances of these learners and their families.

7.7 The long-established practice of prioritising and progressing actively pastoral and social provision for the learners underpins best practice in the sector. All of the young people with whom members of ETI spoke during the reporting period said that they felt safe, secure and respected in their school; most demonstrated progress in their learning, had made friends and faced the future with confidence.

#### QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

7.8 The schools inspected exploited fully active and collaborative learning; they shared practice through effective school development planning; and they had placed a greater focus on developing communication, and the use of mathematics and ICT. As they prepare to leave school, increasingly, the common goal is to ensure that the learners have the skills needed for adult life and continued education.

7.9 In over 630 lessons observed, most were evaluated as good or better, and one-fifth as outstanding. Across the key stages, the performance levels for literacy and numeracy remained consistently high with almost two-thirds of lessons evaluated as very good or outstanding. In those schools where the quality of literacy was of a high standard, the programme was specifically designed to meet the differing needs of the learners. The teachers built effectively on the levels of language and communication of the learners; they made good use of visual presentation and a wide range of supportive and practical material.

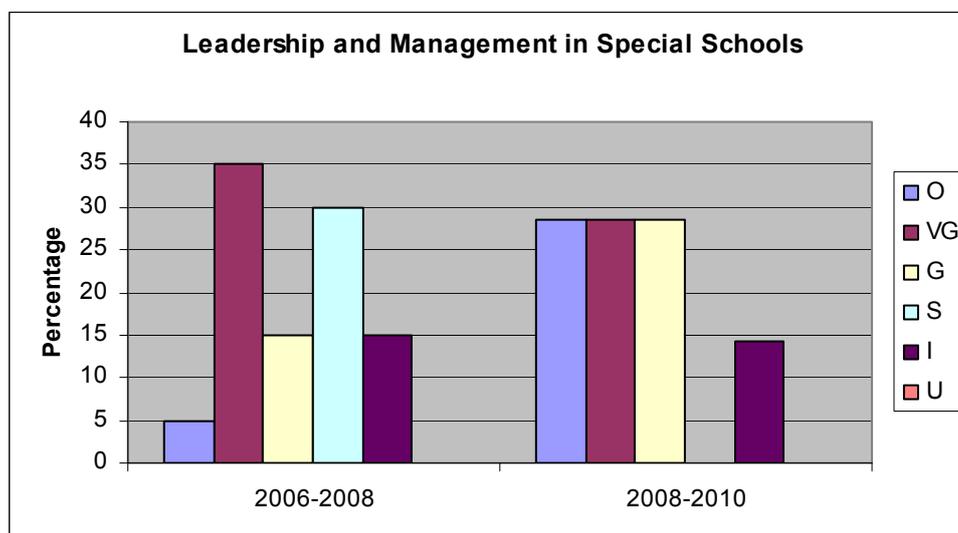
7.10 The teachers made more appropriate assessments of the learners' needs to inform planning and to set individual targets. Across the year groups, there was more thorough and consistent planning, with a commitment to personalise the learning and to support learners in mainstream education. Teachers capitalised on the learners' interests, developed their social skills and made better use of the wider community as a learning environment.

7.11 There was insufficient use of collated data to inform the setting of longer-term outcomes, to monitor the overall impact of the work of the school, and to promote a whole-school culture of self-evaluation. Teachers needed to challenge further the most able learners through the setting of longer-term goals.

#### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

7.12 In over two-fifths of the schools inspected, the leadership and management were evaluated as very good or outstanding. The main areas highlighted for improvement were the strategic leadership of the Principal and the effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school. In a few of the special schools inspected, the quality of leadership was evaluated as inadequate; the quality of school development planning was also inadequate.

**Figure 14: The Quality of Leadership and Management in Special Schools**



7.13 A main characteristic of the most effective practice was the school's capacity to evaluate its work and to implement a system to collate, analyse and track the progress of the learners. In the best practice, the staff used agreed standards to provide benchmarks of best practice; they participated systematically in professional discussion and policy development; and, a feature of the developing provision was the dissemination of expertise to support mainstream schools. Those schools where the provision was evaluated as not good enough needed to develop a more rigorous system of self-evaluation within a climate of building confidence and promoting greater inclusion.

## CONCLUSION

7.14 Among the strengths and improvements in the provision within the special education sector were: the continued capacity of the special schools inspected to raise standards and to meet individual needs; the high quality of pastoral care across the schools; the outstanding leadership identified in one-fifth of the schools inspected; and the progress in partnership working between special schools and other schools, and further education colleges, including the improved access to accredited courses.

7.15 The actions required to effect further improvement include:

- the increased use of data to inform overall school improvement and to promote a whole-school approach to self-evaluation;

- an increase in the currency of the work of the special school in mainstream schools through the creation of a cohesive model of collaborative support and outreach participation; and
- greater strategic co-operation across education and health and social services to include and to meet more effectively beyond school the needs of those learners with more profound needs.

## 8. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN THE FURTHER EDUCATION SECTOR

8.1 The last reporting period witnessed a period of major transition in the further education (FE) sector. The merger of the colleges presented wide-ranging strategic and operational challenges: the revision of leadership and management structures; the standardisation of staffing and resource levels; and the establishment and consolidation of standard management information and quality improvement systems.

8.2 The current economic challenges, and the associated difficulties in the employment market, contributed to a significant increase in student enrolments for the 2009-10 academic year across all of the six area-based colleges. There was an increase in the number of full-time students by 14% to 22,636. In meeting this increase in demand, the colleges have worked hard, and with some degree of success, to respond to a range of challenges, including the provision of suitable and sufficient resources, and the allocation of additional teaching accommodation.

8.3 All of the colleges are actively involved in at least one ALC and are committed to supporting their partner schools in providing a broad and balanced curriculum. The number of school pupils enrolled on programmes in the colleges for 2009-10 continued to rise from 11,271 to 11,615 pupils. These pupils account for almost 10% of the total college enrolments.

8.4 In 2008-09, inspections in the colleges focused on the quality of provision across the six priority skills areas<sup>8</sup> at Level 2, including the essential skills of literacy and numeracy. In 2009-10, there were follow-up inspection activities of the priority skills programme areas at Level 2, and, where appropriate, of the provision for essential skills, evaluated in the original inspections as satisfactory, inadequate or unsatisfactory.

8.5 The overall quality of the provision for the priority skills areas at Level 2 was very good in one college, good in three colleges and satisfactory in the remaining two colleges. The quality of provision in hospitality and catering was evaluated as good or better across all of the six colleges: in one college the provision was outstanding, and in three it was very good. In contrast, the quality of the provision in travel and tourism in the priority skills areas at Level 2 was evaluated as inadequate or unsatisfactory in two of the colleges.

8.6 The overall quality of the provision for the essential skills of literacy and numeracy across the priority skills areas inspected at Level 2 was evaluated as good in two colleges; it was satisfactory in three colleges and inadequate in one college.

8.7 The follow-up inspections in 2009-10 reported that all of the Level 2 provision, including the essential skills, which was evaluated as satisfactory, inadequate or unsatisfactory, has improved by at least one performance level to satisfactory or better. In almost three-quarters of the areas, the follow-up inspection evaluated the provision as having improved to be good or very good.

8.8 The focus in 2009-10 was to consolidate the Level 2 work by evaluating the quality of provision across a sample of the priority skills areas<sup>9</sup> at Level 3.

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<sup>8</sup> The six priority skills areas include construction and the built environment; manufacturing and mechanical engineering; electrical and electronic engineering; computing and ICT; software engineering and hospitality and tourism.

<sup>9</sup> The priority skills areas inspected included construction and the built environment; manufacturing and mechanical engineering; electrical and electronic engineering; and computing and ICT.

8.9 The overall quality of the priority skills areas inspected at Level 3 was very good in one college, good in three colleges and satisfactory in two colleges. Notably, while the quality of provision in electrical and electronic engineering was evaluated as satisfactory in one college, it was good or better in five of the colleges; in one college the provision was outstanding.

8.10 During the reporting period, ETI also evaluated the second and third phase of the operational and strategic approach to Information and Learning Technologies (ILT), the second and third phase evaluation of ICT as an essential skill, phase one of the dissemination of best practice in cultural diversity, phase one of the effectiveness of the arrangements for the admissions advice guidance and support for students, and the Deloitte Employability Programme<sup>10</sup>.

8.11 There has been good progress in taking forward the key strands of the DEL's Quality Improvement Strategy - *Success through Excellence*. In 2009-10, ETI evaluated the whole-college, self-evaluation reports and quality improvement plans for all of the colleges. There was a particular focus on the role of the student, and the extent to which each college used evidence-based judgements to evaluate the quality of the students' learning.

## ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

8.12 The standards of the students' work were evaluated as good or better in most of the priority skills area courses inspected. The majority of the students were well motivated, enthusiastic to learn and committed to achieving their award. In the best practice, the students worked beyond the minimum requirements of their vocational units and, through their project work, applied effectively their knowledge and problem-solving skills to develop solutions in a range of industrially-relevant activities. There was discernible improvement in student retention rates, in particular, on full-time courses in priority skills areas at Level 2.

8.13 The majority of the students made good progress in the Deloitte Employability Programme; they had an improved understanding of the importance of employability skills to access and sustain employment. However, the overall impact of the employability initiatives was underdeveloped because of a lack of integration within the students' learning programme, and the limited account taken of their prior learning and experience.

8.14 The achievement rates for most of the part-time priority skills area courses inspected were good. They were, however, low on the priority skills Level 3 two-year full-time courses inspected.

8.15 There are good progression routes from Level 2 to Level 3 courses, particularly for full-time students. Students who successfully complete their Level 3 courses have good progression pathways in their host colleges to relevant higher education courses.

## THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

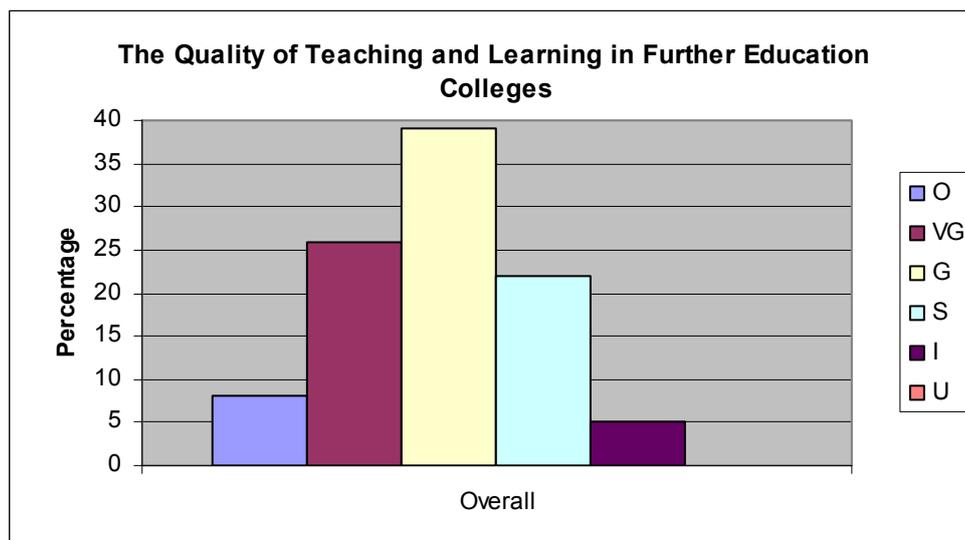
8.16 In half of the colleges, there are gaps in the provision of full-time courses for the priority skills at Level 2, particularly in construction and engineering. Where these courses are provided, they offer good progression routes to technician and STEM-related courses, and to ApprenticeshipsNI programmes for those school leavers who achieve less than four GCSE passes at grades A\* to C. Across all of the colleges there is a good range of full-time Level 3 priority skills courses.

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<sup>10</sup> An Inspection of The Deloitte Employability Programme: March 2010

8.17 Overall, across the priority skills areas inspected, the quality of teaching and learning in almost three-quarters of the lessons observed was good or better; in one-third of the lessons it was very good or outstanding. Across the priority skills areas inspected at Level 2, however, there continues to be considerable variation in the quality of teaching and learning of the essential skills of literacy and numeracy. In literacy, for example, the quality of the teaching and learning in approximately one-half of the lessons observed was evaluated as satisfactory or inadequate.

**Figure 15: The Quality of the Teaching and Learning in Further Education Colleges**



8.18 The quality of the pastoral care across all of the colleges was evaluated as good or better. The induction process, in almost all of the colleges, provided the students with a comprehensive introduction to the range of available support services. The arrangements for the provision of learning support in all of the colleges were good. However, the prompt identification of the students' needs was often hindered by a lack of appropriate information provided to the college from their previous schools.

8.19 There was variation in the extent to which the staff used the tutorial programme for students developed by all of the colleges. There was insufficient structure to the programme of personal and social development; and, it was not well integrated within the tutorial system. In addition, there was significant variation in the degree to which the colleges prioritised the provision of extra-curricular activities for their students. Only a minority of the colleges had a well-planned programme in place.

8.20 There was variation in the quality and provision of CEIAG. Key areas remain under-developed in the majority of the colleges; they include individualised career planning, relevant industrial visits, the use of guest speakers, and access to work-related learning opportunities to assist learners in the setting of appropriate career goals and the identification of suitable career pathways.

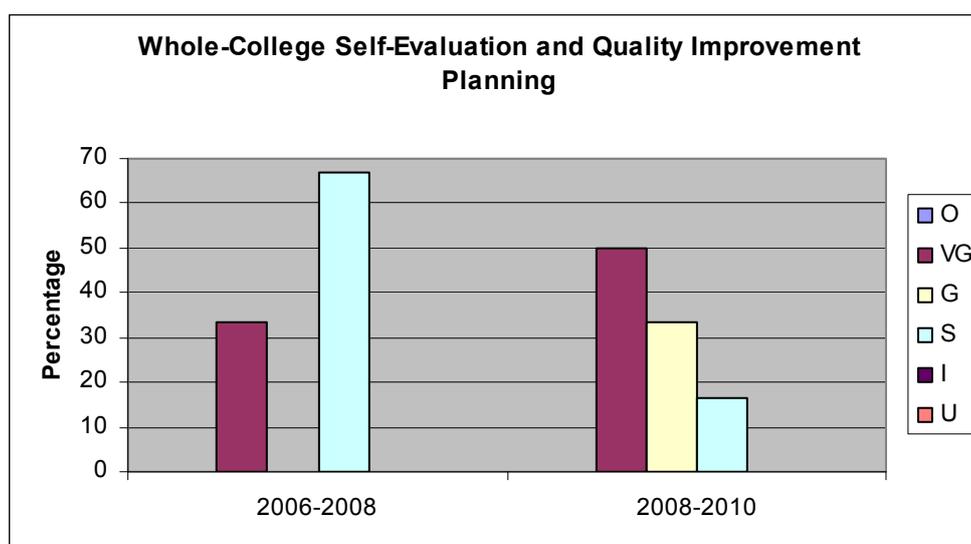
## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

8.21 In the inspections and evaluations carried out across the colleges during the reporting period, the overall quality of the leadership and management of the curriculum, and specifically of the professional and technical areas inspected, varied from satisfactory to very good: it was very good in two colleges, good in two colleges and satisfactory in the remaining two colleges.

8.22 Over the reporting period, the colleges made good progress in supporting economic development and enterprise in the local and wider regional areas. In the best practice, strong industrial links enhanced the quality of the provision and contributed well towards improving the quality of the students' learning and the standards of their work.

8.23 The quality of whole-college self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes across the colleges improved over the two-year period, although the quality continues to vary from college to college. Three of the colleges have made excellent progress in developing coherent approaches to whole-college self-evaluation and quality improvement planning. However, all of the colleges still need to make better use of benchmarked data to inform the decision-making process.

**Figure 16: The Quality of Whole-College Self-evaluation and Quality Improvement Planning**



8.24 The undue variation in the quality of teaching and learning of the essential skills of literacy and numeracy across the priority skills areas inspected at Level 2 reflects the need for management to integrate the provision more effectively into wider curriculum planning.

8.25 There was an improvement in the quality of the planning for, and use of, ILT across the colleges to enhance teaching and learning, and to support college management functions. The majority of colleges continued to improve the use of online reporting tools, managed learning environments, and knowledge management systems to aid strategic and

operational planning, and to improve the quality of provision. College management teams still need to develop further the ILT competencies of all staff, and to work towards the more consistent use of ILT to enhance and improve the experiences, skills and achievements of the students.

8.26 The effectiveness of the senior management of the colleges in disseminating best practice in cultural diversity ranged from satisfactory to very good: it was very good in one college, good in three colleges, and satisfactory in the remaining two colleges. Amongst the strengths identified were the development of appropriate policies and procedures, the effective embedding of diversity and equal opportunity into student induction programmes, and the good use of established links with a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies to inform future planning for social inclusion. The use of data on ethnicity to inform curriculum planning was under-developed. College management teams need to integrate cultural diversity more effectively throughout the curriculum, and to implement more effective quality assurance arrangements.

8.27 All of the colleges make a significant contribution to the delivery of the key aims of the Entitlement Framework by providing a wide range of education and training programmes for 14-19 year olds.

8.28 In most colleges, the quality of the general teaching accommodation and workshops is good or better. The students have excellent opportunities to use industry-standard equipment to develop the skills and technological awareness of up-to-date resources. By contrast, the quality of the accommodation for use by the students varies widely across the colleges' campuses; in most colleges, the areas in which students may socialise are inadequate.

## CONCLUSION

8.29 Among the strengths and improvements in the provision within the FE sector were: the improvement in the quality of the planning for, and use of, ILT; the overall improvement in the whole-college self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes; the good or better quality of teaching and learning in the majority of the colleges; the positive action to promote inclusion and cultural diversity; and, the increasing participation with partner schools across the 14-19 phase, to help provide a broad and balanced curriculum.

8.30 Many of the key areas for improvement identified in the 2006-08 report have been, or are being, addressed. The actions required to effect further improvement include:

- the further embedding of quality improvement processes across all college provision, including better use of benchmarked data to inform decision-making;
- an improvement in the quality of the teaching and learning, and the management of, the essential skills; and
- the further development of the use of, and access to, ILT to enhance teaching and learning, to raise the level of student achievement and to improve the students' overall learning.

## 9. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN THE WORK-BASED LEARNING PROGRAMMES

9.1 The work-based learning programmes were subject to further change and review over the reporting period. The Level 2 and 3 apprenticeships were uniformly branded as ApprenticeshipsNI, which included all-age apprenticeships for the first time. Training for Success continues to cater for those trainees not in employment; a further review of this provision is currently underway.

9.2 The severe economic circumstances that characterised the reporting period decreased significantly the numbers of new apprentices employed by firms. Within the construction, engineering and automotive industries, in particular, the opportunities for apprentices to continue their employment and associated training were reduced.

9.3 In August 2009, DEL responded to the economic situation through the introduction of a number of initiatives, including a Level 2 Programme-Led Apprenticeship. This strand of Training for Success, aimed at those young people who wish to be apprentices but who are not yet in employment, was catering for almost 3,000 apprentices at the end of the reporting period. It is an appropriate, but temporary, intervention measure during the economic downturn to provide the opportunity for unemployed young people to achieve a Level 2 apprenticeship qualification over two years.

9.4 Over the reporting period, there was an increase in the occupancy rates across the various work-based learning programmes funded by DEL; for example, between 2008 and 2009 they increased by around 14%. A significant proportion of the increase in apprenticeship numbers has been amongst adults, particularly those aged 25 and over, most of whom were existing employees. The recent increase in apprenticeship numbers has not been evident in all occupational areas. There was an increase in areas such as health and social care, retailing, administration, and hospitality and catering. However, there was a reduction in occupational areas such as construction and electrical installation<sup>11</sup>.

9.5 The Department for Employment and Learning has demonstrated a strong commitment to the further improvement of quality and standards across the work-based learning provision. The successful embedding of its Quality Improvement Strategy – Success Through Excellence - has been a key driver for improvement, and has led to more effective partnership working between ETI and DEL's Quality and Performance Branch. There is an enhanced focus on the promotion of self-evaluation and self-improvement among suppliers, more robust contract management and follow-up inspection arrangements, revised inspection models to reflect better the changing nature of the contracted programmes funded by DEL, and more effective identification and inspection focus on under-performing supplier organisations.

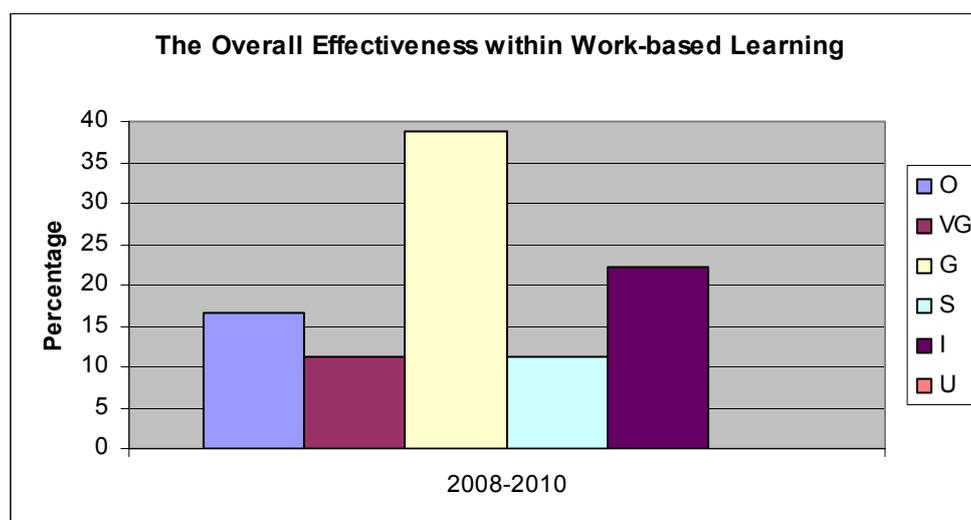
9.6 During the reporting period, there were inspections of around one-half of the suppliers contracted under the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes, with follow-up inspections of a further 12 suppliers. There were also scrutiny inspections of all of the suppliers' self-evaluation reports and quality improvement plans.

9.7 The quality of the provision was evaluated as satisfactory or better in just over three-quarters of the suppliers inspected; it was not good enough in the remaining suppliers. It was good or better in around two-thirds of the suppliers inspected, and very good or outstanding in just over one-quarter. Just under one-third of the work-based learning provision inspected during the reporting period was evaluated as satisfactory or inadequate.

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<sup>11</sup> DEL Quality and Performance: A Baseline Analysis, October 2009.

**Figure 17: The Overall Effectiveness within Work-based Learning**



9.8 The very good or outstanding provision was characterised by well-informed strategic leadership which promoted high expectations and standards, good quality experiences in training and learning for trainees and apprentices in directed training and in the workplace, flexible training based upon rigorous initial assessment, and an effective personal training planning process. In addition, there were productive partnerships with employers, good outcomes, and high standards in the practical skills, technical knowledge and essential skills of the trainees and apprentices. A key recurring strength was the rigorous self-evaluation process which lead to clear actions for improvement, and which was underpinned by the effective monitoring and analysis of reliable data. The good experiences of the trainees and the apprentices in these suppliers contrasted sharply with those where the provision was less than satisfactory.

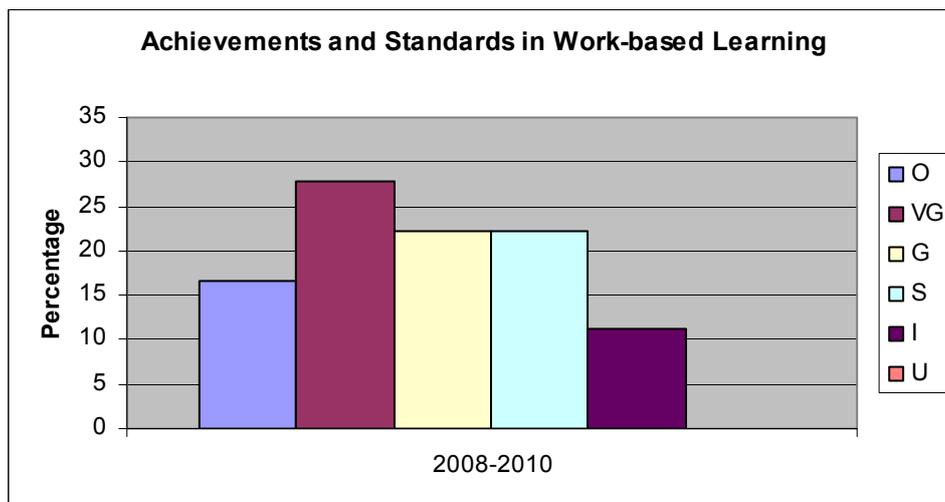
9.9 The follow-up inspection processes, along with the targeted quality improvement and support activities funded by DEL, were effective in driving up improvements in quality and standards. The revised performance levels awarded to the suppliers demonstrated that all of them improved the quality of their provision, with over 40% of them improving by two performance levels.

9.10 Overall, there remains room for improvement. The provision evaluated as satisfactory or less than satisfactory was characterised by an over-emphasis on the assessment of existing occupational competences and by a lack of improvement in the practical skills, technical knowledge and essential skills.

#### ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

9.11 Over the reporting period, the achievements and standards improved; they were good or better in around 67% of the suppliers inspected, compared with 44% in the last report. The achievements and standards were evaluated as inadequate or unsatisfactory in fewer suppliers. The proportion of suppliers awarded good or very good performance levels more than doubled.

**Figure 18: Achievements and Standards in Work-based Learning**



9.12 The academic profile of the trainees registered on the Training for Success programme is mostly low; most of them have few or no qualifications on entry to the programme and, many have significant impediments to learning. This low academic profile presents the suppliers with significant challenges to address, particularly in the improvement of the trainees' essential skills in literacy and numeracy, and in their readiness for work. The transfer of important information on the trainees from their previous schools is inadequate, and, as a consequence, most of the suppliers find it challenging to determine the extent of some of their additional training and learning needs. Nevertheless, most of the trainees make good progress in their programmes, demonstrating good levels of motivation and acquiring appropriate occupational skills.

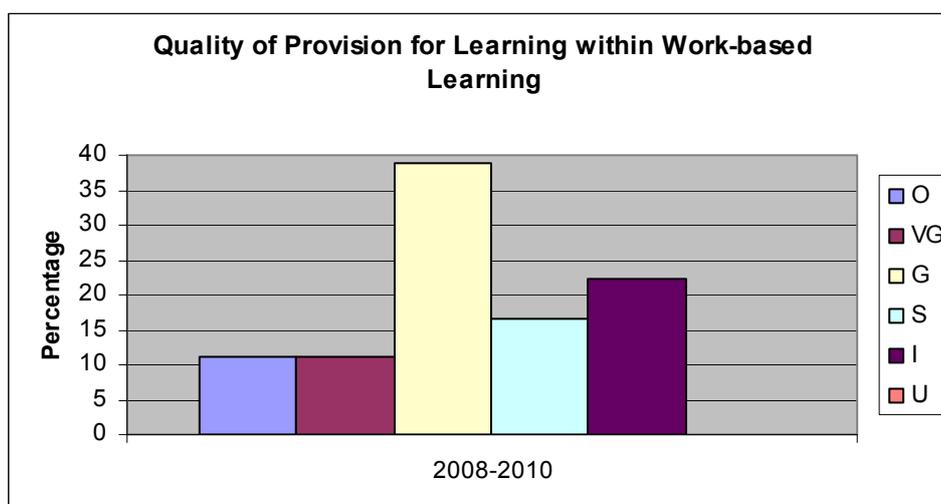
9.13 Across the ApprenticeshipsNI provision, the standards of work achieved by most apprentices are good to excellent. The range of skills developed generally supports well the needs of business and industry. Most apprentices are well-motivated, enthusiastic and able to meet deadlines set by their employers.

9.14 The average rates of retention varied across the suppliers; they were good or better for the majority of the ApprenticeshipsNI suppliers; on the Training for Success programmes, they were generally poor. The success rates for trainees and apprentices who completed their programmes were mostly good or better.

#### THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

9.15 Overall, the quality of provision for learning remained broadly similar to the previous reporting period; in around 80% of the suppliers inspected, it was evaluated as satisfactory or better. Notably, in over 60% of the suppliers inspected, the quality of provision was evaluated as good or better, compared with 54% in the previous period.

**Figure 19: The Quality of Provision for Learning within Work-based Learning**



9.16 Around 70% of directed training and workplace training sessions were evaluated as good or better. The main features of good practice included: well-planned and organised sessions, good variety and levels of challenge in the activities which interested and engaged the trainees and apprentices, effective and wide-ranging support to meet individual needs and a clear emphasis on monitoring and reviewing the progress of the trainees and apprentices.

9.17 As in the last reporting period, around 10% of the directed and workplace training sessions observed were evaluated as inadequate. In these sessions, there was an over-emphasis on the assessment of existing competences, little account taken of the diverse range of abilities leading to lower levels of trainee engagement, an over-reliance on narrow and whole-class activities, lack of challenge and too little use of appropriate workplace contexts.

9.18 Many suppliers face difficulties in maintaining the motivation and interest of those trainees who do not have significant or regular contact with the workplace. They struggle to meet the additional resource requirements resulting from the need to provide trainees with increased directed training.

9.19 The use of ILT remained under-developed in work-based learning. Most of the supplier organisations inspected made only limited use of ILT to support the trainees' and apprentices' independent learning through virtual learning environments (VLEs) and access to good online resources.

9.20 The suppliers inspected were more aware of the importance of the personal training plan process over the past year. The quality and use of personal training plans varied considerably across the suppliers and remains an area for development. The overall quality of the personal training plan process was good or better in just over one-third of the suppliers inspected; it was inadequate or unsatisfactory in around one-fifth of suppliers and satisfactory in the remainder.

9.21 The quality of the provision for the essential skills of literacy and numeracy remained much too variable. It was good or better in just under 60% of the organisations inspected, but inadequate or unsatisfactory in a further one-third of organisations. In the less effective practice, the management did not give the essential skills provision a sufficiently high

priority. As a result, the planning was poor and there were missed opportunities for the integration and application of the essential skills within the professional and technical programmes for the trainees and apprentices.

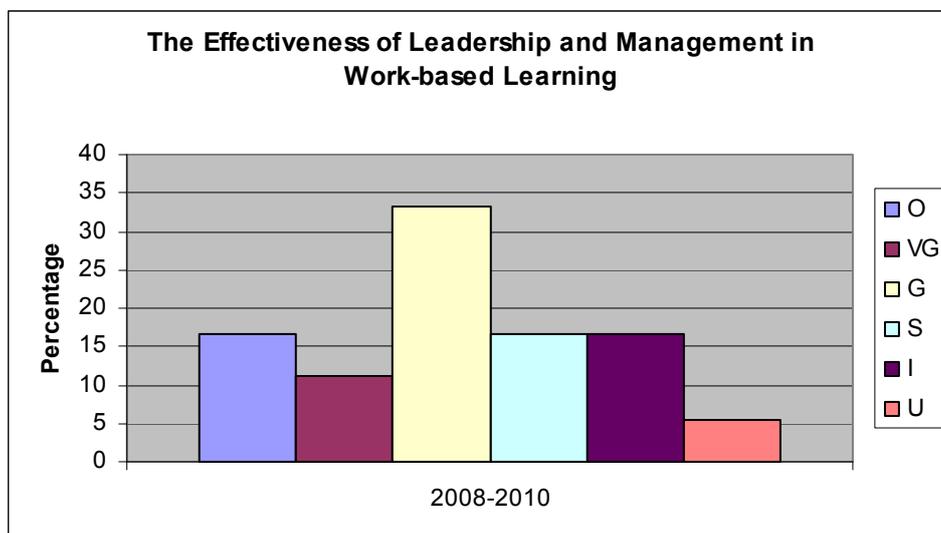
9.22 Most of the suppliers inspected have developed and use appropriate policies and procedures to support the well-being of the trainees and apprentices. Because of their increased awareness, they implemented appropriate risk assessment and other arrangements for the safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

9.23 Across the suppliers inspected, there remained too much variation in the quality of leadership and management of the work-based learning provision. Just over 60% of the suppliers were evaluated as good or better, which is similar to the previous reporting period. There was an increase in the number of suppliers inspected where the quality of the leadership and management of the work-based learning provision was outstanding. In contrast, it was inadequate or unsatisfactory in just under one-quarter (22%) of the suppliers inspected.

9.24 The characteristics of the quality of the leadership and management of the work-based learning provision inspected, which was evaluated as inadequate or unsatisfactory included: poor co-ordination between the directed training and the workplace training experiences for trainees, the poor use of personal training plans to set meaningful targets, and low or inconsistent outcomes for the trainees and apprentices.

**Figure 20: The Effectiveness of Leadership and Management in Work-based Learning**



9.25 The supplier organisations would benefit from the more effective collation and analysis of data to enable them to compare and benchmark their performance against similar suppliers and to set more meaningful targets for further improvement.

9.26 The quality of the self-evaluation and quality improvement processes, in most of the suppliers inspected continued to improve. In 2009, the self-evaluation reports and quality improvement plans of 90% of the suppliers inspected were evaluated as satisfactory or better. Almost 40% of them were very good or outstanding, compared to 34% in the previous year.

9.27 The Certificate in Teaching programme, provided by the University of Ulster, was evaluated during the reporting period. This pilot programme is offered on a one-year part-time basis to tutors from the work-based learning sector. The overall aim of the course is to prepare and support tutors in their teaching, and to raise the quality of practice in terms of curriculum planning, teaching and learning strategies, and the management of learning. It is a challenging but very good programme of professional development for the tutors involved.

## CONCLUSION

9.28 Among the strengths and improvements in the provision for work-based learning were: the clear focus by the supplier organisations inspected on increasingly effective self-evaluation and improvement planning processes, the mostly good quality of the directed training and workplace experiences, the high standards of work and skills of most of the trainees and apprentices, the success and progression rates for those who complete their programmes, the good arrangements for pastoral care and safeguarding, and the more effective identification of under-performing supplier organisations.

9.29 The actions required to effect further improvement include:

- an enhanced focus by some of the ApprenticeshipsNI suppliers on improving the skills of the apprentices;
- an improvement in the quality of the planning and provision for the essential skills; and
- the more effective collation, analysis, and use of data to provide reliable benchmarks of performance across the sector and to set targets for further improvement.

## 10. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN THE STEPS TO WORK ADULT EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

10.1 In September 2008, DEL introduced *Steps to Work*, its adult employment provision, which subsumed and replaced the main New Deal programmes. The primary purpose of the programme is to help participants who are unemployed or economically inactive to find and sustain employment. *Steps to Work* has been devised to ensure a more flexible approach targeted at reducing the personal barriers to employment of participants.

10.2 A longitudinal, two-phased model of inspection was used at the commencement of the *Steps to Work* programme. The first phase of the inspection gave the lead contractor an indication of the quality of the provision across the contract area, and of the areas for improvement to be addressed before the second phase of the inspection. During the reporting period, three of the nine lead contractors had both phases of the longitudinal inspection completed and a further four had a phase one inspection.

10.3 The adverse economic climate is impacting significantly on the *Steps to Work* programme. During the reporting period, there was a large increase in the adult unemployment rate, and a decline in the availability of work experience placements for the *Steps to Work* participants. Between March 2009 and March 2010, the number of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimants reaching the *Steps to Work* mandatory threshold almost doubled to just over 10,000. As a result, there were backlogs of referrals across some of the contract areas, with associated waiting lists of participants for work experience placements.

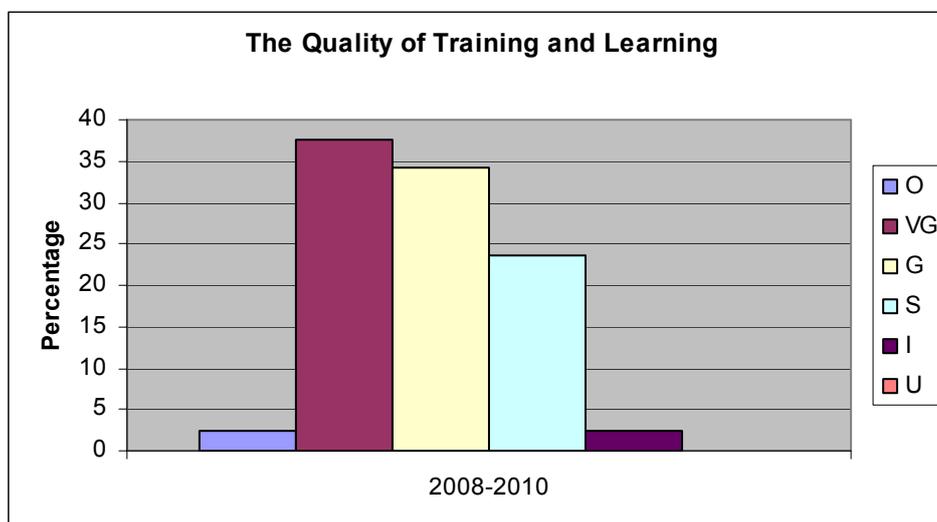
10.4 Across the contract areas inspected, the quality of the *Steps to Work* provision was good in two of the lead contractors and satisfactory in one; many participants are acquiring appropriate work skills and achieving additional qualifications.

10.5 The good provision was characterised by positive working relationships between the lead contractor, sub-contractors and staff in DEL. The mostly good quality and varied work experience placements were matched well to the participants' abilities and aspirations. In addition, local labour market opportunities provided the participants with a good means of improving their employability skills. In these contract areas, the personal care and support for participants was a consistently high priority; the participants increased their self-confidence, self-esteem and career aspirations.

10.6 A significant issue was the progression of participants into sustained employment, which was well below the departmental target. Across the contract areas inspected, the number of participants progressing into sustained employment varied from 5% to 18%. Despite the challenges of a significant reduction in the availability of work experience placements and in the number of job vacancies, the better lead contractors responded well through an enhanced focus on securing placements with public sector organisations and agencies, and an increased emphasis on improving levels of employer engagement. Too often, for example, across the lead contractors and sub-contractors there is an over-reliance on the small, local employers where there is little chance of participants moving successfully into sustained employment.

10.7 Almost all of the participants benefited from the Jobsearch<sup>12</sup>, curriculum vitae (CV) preparation, interview skills and careers guidance as part of their programmes. Just over 70% of directed training, Core Gateway<sup>13</sup> and Jobsearch sessions were evaluated as good or better.

**Figure 21: The Quality of Training and Learning**



10.8 The evidence from the inspections undertaken during the reporting period indicate that the arrangements for the quality assurance of the *Steps to Work* provision need to be strengthened across the majority of the contract areas, to ensure that areas for improvement are identified and addressed more effectively. In addition, the lead contractors need to collate, analyse and use performance data more effectively to inform planning and to promote improvement.

## CONCLUSION

10.9 Among the strengths in the provision for *Steps to Work* programmes were: the mostly good working relationships between lead contractors and sub-contractors; the clear and effective focus on improving the participants' readiness for work and employability skills; the mostly good work experience placements; and, the sound quality of the Core Gateway and Jobsearch provision.

10.10 The actions required to effect further improvement include:

- an increase in the number of participants finding sustained employment, and to identify and secure a wider range of work experience placements and job opportunities;

<sup>12</sup> The various elements of Jobsearch, Employability and Interview Skills and CV building are available for participants to take together or individually. They provide information on suitable jobs; help on completing application forms, letters of application and a CV; and help to prepare for job interviews including how to keep a job once they find one.

<sup>13</sup> Core Gateway is a period of training and development lasting up to two weeks which provides participants with some of the skills they will need to find and keep a job.

- improved arrangements for the quality assurance of the provision across the contract areas; and
- the collation, analysis and use of data to inform planning and promote improvement.

## **11. INSPECTION SERVICES PROVIDED FOR THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSPECTION (CJI), AND FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (DARD)**

11.1 During the reporting period 2008-10, ETI provided inspection services for CJI and for DARD. The work for CJI is guided by a Protocol, for DARD by a Memorandum of Understanding, and, on a yearly basis for each, by a Service Level Agreement.

### **11.2 THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND SKILLS PROVISION IN THE NORTHERN IRELAND PRISONS**

11.2.1 The CJI unannounced inspections of Maghaberry and Magilligan prisons were carried out in 2009 and 2010 respectively, and included an evaluation of the quality of the education, training and skills provision in both. The provision in Maghaberry and Magilligan prisons was evaluated as being inadequate and satisfactory respectively.

11.2.2 Among the strengths in the provision of training and skills in the prisons were: the good or better quality of the majority of the teaching; the effective partnership link between Magilligan prison and the local further education college; and the good standards of the learners' work in a majority of the programmes inspected.

11.2.3 The actions required to effect further improvement:

- a strategic direction for education and skills at prison senior management level; and
- improved arrangements for the quality assurance of education, skills and work at all levels.

### **11.3 THE QUALITY OF FURTHER EDUCATION PROVISION IN THE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL ENTERPRISE (CAFRE)**

11.3.1 CAFRE was inspected in 2009 and in 2010, covering the further education provision across its three campuses at Enniskillen, Greenmount and Loughry. The quality of the further education provision inspected was evaluated as very good in all of the campuses.

11.3.2 Among the strengths in the CAFRE provision were: the very good management at all levels; the good overall retention and success rates; the excellent progression rates to employment and to higher level courses; the very good standards of most of the students' work; and, the high quality of the links with industry.

11.3.3 The actions required to effect further improvement:

- an improvement in the limited range of teaching and learning approaches deployed in a minority of classes; and
- a better timetabling structure for the provision of the essential skills.

## 12. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN TEACHER EDUCATION

### 12.1 INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

12.1.1 The primary and secondary Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) programmes provided by the University Colleges of Education (the colleges) were evaluated, with a specific focus on literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. The quality of provision for learning was evaluated as good or better; the standards achieved by the students were very good; the effectiveness of leadership and management in securing improvement by raising achievement and enhancing quality was also good or better.

12.1.2 A feature of the B.Ed programmes inspected was the appropriate focus on the core skills of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, through which the students gain valuable insights into the difficulties that arise for learners at the transition stage between primary and post-primary schools. The colleges placed a suitable emphasis on all aspects of the teaching of reading and writing to increase the potential of the students to develop literacy skills and personal development. They gave high importance to the link between the students' own mathematical confidence and competence, and their ability to teach numeracy effectively. There was also an appropriate focus on investigation and problem-solving within the taught numeracy sessions. An identified area for improvement was the need to ensure that student teachers understand better the learning and progression of the learners, and the need to promote consistently literacy and numeracy through the teaching of their main and subsidiary subjects.

### 12.2 CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS

During the three-year period of the implementation of the revised curriculum (2007-10), the bulk of in-service training (INSET) provided for teachers focused appropriately on supporting the implementation of the revisions in the curriculum. The providers sought to meet the needs of schools on a more individual basis. The final report<sup>14</sup> recommended that the future professional development of teachers should be provided in the context of a whole-school approach to improvement. A further recommendation was to bring together the INSET on assessment with the use of assessment evidence to enable teachers to monitor progression, to evaluate their own effectiveness and to raise standards in learning through well-founded target-setting as a priority over the three years, 2010-13.

### 12.3 TRAINING FOR LEADERSHIP<sup>15</sup>

School leaders face a widening set of leadership and management roles, encompassing, for example, those of 'lead learner', chief administrator, finance and human resource director, and public relations consultant. In a changing educational landscape, there is a growing recognition that schools cannot become more effective without a much closer engagement with both the local and the wider community. Such engagement requires a better liaison between educators and all of the other professionals in statutory and voluntary agencies, especially youth services, health, social services, juvenile justice, the library service and, where appropriate, local neighbourhood renewal groups, all of whose work impinges on the lives and life chances of learners and their families.

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<sup>14</sup> A Follow-up Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the Northern Ireland Curriculum in Primary, Special and Post-Primary Schools: 2009 (March 2010). ETI, Bangor

<sup>15</sup> School Leadership: a baseline evaluation (2006/7-2008/9) (December 2009). ETI, Bangor

## 12.4 THE REVIEW OF TEACHER EDUCATION

The review of Teacher Education<sup>16</sup> was launched for consultation in mid-June 2010. It sets out a number of very significant challenges for the providers of initial teacher education, early teacher education and continuing professional development, and for both DE and DEL in a climate of resource constraint. A major challenge is to bring together the professional learning which takes place throughout each stage of a teacher's career in a more coherent, continuous and effective manner. Furthermore, teacher education has to equip all teachers to respond more effectively, in terms of the growing recognition of the individual and different needs of all learners, through teaching which is more inclusive.

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<sup>16</sup> Teacher Education in a climate of change: the way forward. Department of Education (June 2010)

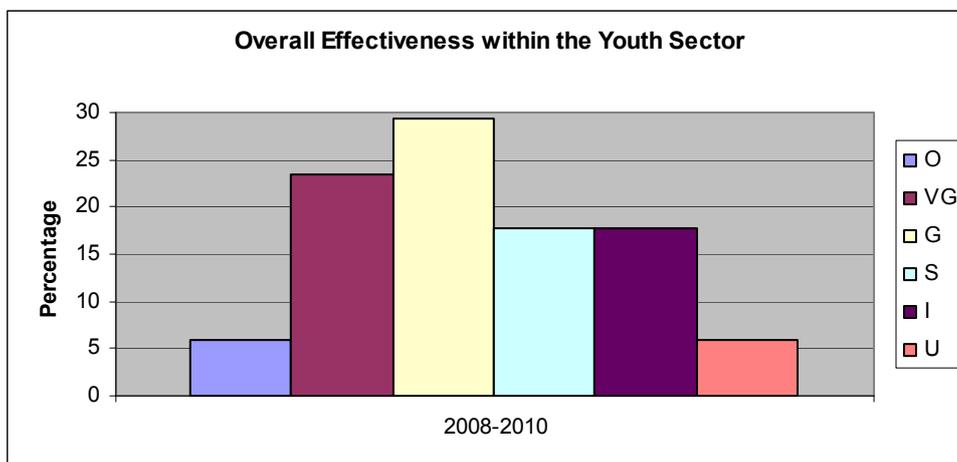
### 13. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN THE YOUTH SECTOR

13.1 The beginning of this reporting period saw the Youth Work Strategy 2005-08, which had been agreed by the Youth Service Liaison Forum (YSLF)<sup>17</sup>, come to an end. While the strategy had been the focus of, and had guided much of the work within, the youth sector, there had been a variation in the progress made on the various targets. There has been much preparation towards a replacement policy for youth work based on the Priorities for Youth in Education after extensive consultation with management, workers and young people. The revised policy will be subject to public consultation later this year.

13.2 There were continuing discussions between ETI and the youth sector on the Quality Indicators (QIs) used in inspection, and their possible use to measure outcomes and to inform planning. As the formal education sector implements a more skills-based curriculum, the intended outcomes of both the schools' and the youth sector curricula are becoming more aligned. The increase in the use of youth workers in just over 100 post-primary schools, and the continuation in some areas of the use of youth tutors, needs a much clearer strategic rationale based on shared educational values.

13.3 There is a need within the formal education sector for a greater recognition of the educational value of youth work; a greater understanding of its ability to work with young people in different environments and to use different methodologies which keep them engaged in learning; and, in both the formal and non-formal sectors, a greater means of measuring the extent to which youth work '*ensures that every learner fulfils his or her full potential at each stage of his or her development.*' The growing challenge for those who fund and who lead youth work continues to be the development of structures to monitor and evaluate the overall coherence and progression in the young peoples' learning, and to share and disseminate the good practice.

**Figure 22: The Overall Effectiveness within the Youth Sector**



<sup>17</sup> The aim of the YSLF is "To assist the Department of Education in formulating and implementing youth service policy proposals and strengthen the effectiveness of the provision of services to young people through improved coherence between the major stakeholders". The membership comprises representatives from DE, NI Youth Forum, YouthNet, the Youth Services of the five ELBs, ETI and the Youth Council for N. Ireland.

## ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

13.4 During the reporting period, there were increasingly high levels of active participation by young people as a result of the well-conceived participative structures in the majority of the organisations inspected. The young people enjoyed much of what the organisations provided, and many of them built on their skills, or acquired new skills, in areas which interested them. A significant minority of the young people achieved appropriate accreditation in a range of youth work courses; many progressed to leadership roles within their centres or other youth organisations.

13.5 In most of the area inspections, the young people were involved in a local youth forum and took responsibility for organising youth conferences and other youth events. The level and quality of participation was very good and the young people made a valuable contribution to their local community, as well as at national, and on occasions, at international level. There were good examples of young people involved in inter-generational projects, building purposeful relationships with older people and working alongside them to learn new skills, such as digital imaging.

13.6 In the majority of the youth service provision inspected, the young people participated in the management and development of their own programmes. The participative structures allowed young people from a variety of urban and rural backgrounds to develop their self-confidence, leadership skills and effective team-working, where they had to make decisions and solve a range of practical problems. Youth forums provided very good opportunities for young people to work collectively and to have their voice heard. However, there was no evidence that the experience of the area youth councils informed and contributed to the growing number of pupil councils in schools.

## QUALITY OF PROVISION

13.7 More than two-thirds of the quality of the practice observed during area youth inspections was evaluated as good or better. In the youth centres inspected, just over one-half of the quality of the provision for learning observed was evaluated as satisfactory or better, with just under one-quarter evaluated as outstanding. Almost one-third of the quality of the provision in youth centres was inadequate. The outstanding practice in two of the youth settings was characterised by strategic leadership which developed programmes based on evidence and feedback from the young people, and the high quality of the creative and challenging programmes. The planning reflected well the central theme and core principles of the youth work curriculum, and the young people demonstrated consistently high levels of active participation and enjoyment.

13.8 In those centres in which the provision was evaluated as inadequate, the quality of planning by the staff and the management was poor; the programme was not well matched to the needs or interests of the young people. The young people were not involved in the process of identifying or addressing their own needs; they had little sense of ownership of the programme or the work of the centre. In the least effective practice, there was insufficient support for the young people to challenge or test their own values and behaviour. In the centres where the quality of provision did not support adequately the personal and social development of young people, staff and managers had not developed adequate processes of self-evaluation to improve the quality of the outcomes for the young people. The quality of the youth work practice across the sector is wide-ranging and there is a need to disseminate good practice more effectively.

13.9 The majority of the youth organisations inspected provided a very good quality of care, guidance and support for the young people. The supportive ethos was reflected in the positive working relationships with the staff built on mutual trust and respect. In most of the organisations inspected, the quality of the pastoral care for the young people was very good. Child protection requirements in most of the settings were rigorous. The young people who talked to members of ETI spoke highly of the support and guidance they received from their youth workers.

13.10 In the youth work observed, there was an effective range of approaches that were matched well to the young people's differing interests, needs and abilities. Many youth workers responded in an effective and creative way to different groups. There were good examples of project-based youth work, in particular, to meet the needs of marginalised young people, of inclusion and the active promotion of the equality of opportunity, and of outreach work in urban and rural areas. It is important not to under-estimate the role of such youth work in building the self-esteem of the young people concerned, in removing the barriers to learning, and in creating within them a positive attitude to the contribution they can make to the community.

13.11 A good start has been made in opening up youth environments to all young people. In many of the youth centres inspected there were individual programmes which promoted inclusion and access to activities. The centres welcomed young people with disabilities and organised programmes which were mutually beneficial to young people with and without disabilities. However, there is a need to further develop this contact by including and integrating more fully young people with disabilities within the everyday general youth work programmes, and not solely encouraging their participation through 'stand-alone' programmes.

13.12 The Big Lottery funded Big Deal programme<sup>18</sup> is in its final year of operation. Many young people have benefited from the range of participatory youth work programmes, which it has supported and developed. The small grants programme has continued to provide young people with the experience of organising, and making decisions about, the funding of youth programmes in their area.

13.13 In rural areas, young people and youth work staff raised consistently the issue of transport. The lack of regular and affordable transport is clearly a barrier to young people participating in both evening and after-school programmes. Limits on transport budgets make it difficult for rural youth services to engage and support young people living outside larger towns.

13.14 The use of ICT in the youth sector, and in particular as a management tool, continues to be under-developed with limited support for developing an infra-structure fit for purpose. The majority of the youth centres inspected used ICT primarily to support programmes such as drama or cultural awareness, as opposed to focusing on improving or accrediting the skills of the young people. There were good examples, within both the voluntary and controlled sectors, of the effective use of ICT to manage systems of registration, or to communicate with staff. There is need for the further development of the use of data to inform planning at a strategic and local level. There is also a need for sector-wide guidelines and support to promote and encourage youth workers and young people to use the Internet safely and confidently to network and communicate with each other.

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<sup>18</sup> The Big Deal is a £4 million programme funded through Big Lottery under its Northern Ireland Young People's fund. The aim of the four-year programme was to increase the level and quality of participation for children and young people.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

13.15 The quality of leadership and management, in just over three-quarters of the youth provision inspected, was evaluated as satisfactory or better. In almost one-half of the provision inspected, there was good collaboration and strategic planning with a range of other agencies to secure additional funding and services to enhance the experiences of the young people. The leaders provided effective curricular leadership and management to ensure good quality provision which met the needs of the young people. There remains the need to provide more coherent, strategic leadership and management; managers, at all levels, need to decide on priorities through the development of more effective methods of evaluation, including self-evaluation and action-planning processes, to promote and sustain improvement. The planning for youth provision at ELB level is still too discrete from the planning for formal education, including Extended Schools and AEP.

13.16 The level of staffing was at least good or better with, in the majority of the organisations inspected, appropriate systems in place to provide opportunities to undertake continuing professional development.

## CONCLUSION

13.17 Among the strengths and improvements in youth provision were: the increasing levels of active participation by young people which allowed them to develop their self-confidence and leadership skills; the numbers of young people who progressed to leadership roles within their centres or other youth organisations and who made a positive contribution to their communities; the quality of practice observed in more than two-thirds of area youth inspections which was good or better; and the good examples of effective and creative project-based youth work to meet the needs of marginalised young people and of outreach work in urban and rural areas.

13.18 The actions required to effect further improvement are:

- the development of agreed structures to monitor and evaluate the overall coherence and progression in the young peoples' learning experiences;
- the further development of self-evaluation processes, including the more rigorous use of data, to inform planning and to improve the quality of the outcomes for the young people; and
- improved quality planning, in almost one-third of the youth centres inspected, to match the programme better to the needs and interests of the young people, and to include them in the planning process.

#### **14. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN ORGANISATIONS SPONSORED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE (DCAL)**

14.1 The organisations sponsored by DCAL (the organisations) continued to make an important contribution to life-long learning during the reporting period. Within their range of rich and diverse cultural language, sport, and scientific resources, they have a wide range of nationally-recognised, and, in some instances, internationally-recognised expertise to support both learners and teachers. In response to a growing demand for their services, the organisations have placed an increasing emphasis on life-long learning, widening access and increasing participation, in particular for those groups and individuals who would not historically have accessed the DCAL services. The organisations continued to produce a wide range of activities, performances, displays and exhibitions to engage the interest of, and increase the knowledge, understanding and skills of, the general public and young people both in formal and informal education. Their work has the potential to make a significant contribution to a shared and better economic future in NI.

14.2 The formal education sector has not exploited fully the potential of the DCAL organisations in support of the revised curriculum and the youth curriculum. There are particular opportunities available to enhance learning through such initiatives as Extended Schools, specialist schools and STEM.

14.3 The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure issued 'Guidance on Safeguarding Children' (the guidance) to the sponsored organisations in June 2009. The guidance is currently comprehensive and supports appropriately the development of policies and procedures within the organisations. Two workshops included input from internal and external agencies to support the organisations in the development and understanding of rigorous safeguarding policies and procedures. In response to the introduction of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007, DCAL also developed interim guidance on the protection of vulnerable adults, in advance of guidance being prepared by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS). In due course, this guidance will need to be reviewed and updated. In a follow-up<sup>19</sup> inspection of the arrangements for Child Protection across the sponsored organisations, in all of those inspected the quality of safeguarding arrangements was satisfactory.

14.4 During the business year 2008-09, DCAL commissioned ETI to develop a Learning Strategy. The Department also commissioned the further development of the QIs used by ETI, in consultation with the organisations, to support the organisations in evaluating and sharing their practice. The aim was for the organisations to use the ensuing strategy and QIs to review, develop and quality assure their educational provision. The Inspectorate appointed subsequently to each of the main organisations a link inspector with specialist knowledge of the area represented. During 2009-10 the link inspector's role has been to assess and support the extent to which the organisations have embedded these QIs.

14.5 The understanding of the relevance of the Learning Strategy and the associated QIs remains uneven both within DCAL and across the sponsored organisations. There is a variation in the extent to which the organisations have embedded the QIs into their practice. The majority have made a satisfactory start in considering them as part of a more focused quality assurance process. A few organisations need to give the use of the QIs, and the development of their learning policy, more serious consideration.

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<sup>19</sup> Follow-up Inspection to the Review of Child Protection Arrangements in the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and its Sponsored Organisations: June 2010.

14.6 All of the organisations find it difficult to articulate in measurable terms the value they add to the experiences and achievements of those who use their facilities and participate in their programmes. There is general agreement that the Learning Strategy and the QIs make an important contribution to the education of those who use their expertise, and that the development and implementation of both are an opportunity to strengthen the corporate identity of the organisations.

14.7 The process in some organisations is more difficult than others. The arts, sports and museums councils, and the language organisations, for example, play a significant role in funding and co-ordinating the work of a large number of other semi-autonomous organisations to provide programmes on their behalf. These organisations need to develop rigorous and systematic quality systems that are integral to their funding contracts.

14.8 All of the organisations have their own business objectives, which derive from the corporate business plan of their parent department. These targets and the associated accountability procedures drive much of their work. The targets are almost exclusively quantitative, with a minimal focus on the quality of the outcomes for participants and learners. There is currently a dissonance between the Learning Strategy and the use of QIs to inform and guide the governance of the different organisations and the business objectives as set out by DCAL, which continue to reflect more quantitative, rather than qualitative, data. The Quality Indicators and the Learning Strategy, endorsed by DCAL, need to feature within the DCAL business plan and to inform the Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets.

14.9 During the reporting period ETI also carried out inspections or follow-up inspections, in the areas of sports, libraries, museums in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), W5, the Armagh Planetarium, and the Armagh Observatory.

14.10 The report on sport and physical recreation<sup>20</sup> found that almost one-half of learners did not receive the recommended two hours of required physical education per week in schools. Team games were the most popular reported activity, with family interest in sport and the opportunity to take part in school as the main reasons for initial participation. A worrying trend was that approximately one-quarter of the young people interviewed, within the 11-15 age group, reported themselves as not fit enough to participate in sports and physical activities. As they grow older, their interest in sport and physical activity declines, in favour of socialising with friends. Given the importance of sport and physical recreation in the health and well-being of young people, and in the social cohesion of our society, these findings give cause for some concern. It is vital that the relevant Departments work more closely together to implement DCAL's strategy, Sports Matters, in conjunction with the 'Fit Futures' agenda and existing curricula for the school and the youth sectors.

14.11 There were many important strengths in the very good education service provided by the National Museums, Armagh Planetarium, Armagh Observatory and W5. The management teams demonstrated a high level of commitment and vision; and the well-qualified staff were highly motivated. A common area for improvement, identified during the inspections, was the need to plan for programmes which provide progression in learning in place of one-off or discrete activities. Each of these organisations has a more significant contribution to make to the continuing professional development of teachers and to the STEM agenda.

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<sup>20</sup> An Evaluation of the contexts in which Children and Young People Engage in Sport and Physical Recreation, the Extent of their Engagement, and their Attitudes to Sport and Physical Recreation: July 2009.

14.12 Since the last reporting period, there has been a major change in the governance of the public libraries, which have been disaggregated from the ELBs to form a new library authority for NI - LibrariesNI. The business plan of the new authority gives a clear strategic direction to the service. It addresses the issues identified in the original survey report of 2008, especially with regard to staff development and quality assurance arrangements. The network of public libraries is playing an increasing role in providing greater access to the resources of the Ulster Museum, the Armagh Planetarium and Northern Ireland Screen. Together these organisations have demonstrated the value of the more corporate approach set out in the Learning Strategy.

14.13 The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, a division of DCAL, is a key educational and research resource, as well as the main archive of public and private records. The senior management team demonstrated their commitment to the Programme for Government and life-long learning objectives in the strategic plan, including an understanding of PRONI's role in cultural tourism and its contribution to the wider economy and society. There has been considerable improvement in the quality of learning experiences for users through the increased digitisation and access to a wider range of sources prior to entry to PRONI, including the very good website, and the increased efficiency in accessing records afforded by the development of the electronic catalogue for NI (eCATNI) project. The formal education sector does not exploit the potential of the resources well.

## CONCLUSION

14.14 Among the strengths and improvements in the provision by DCAL sponsored organisations were: the important contribution which the organisations make to life-long learning; the increasing emphasis on widening access and increasing participation; the wide range of activities to increase the knowledge, understanding and skills of learners of all ages; the more robust arrangements for Child Protection across those sponsored organisations inspected; and, the satisfactory to good start made by the majority of the organisations in embedding the QIs into the evaluation of their work.

14.15 The actions required to effect further improvement are:

- a more co-ordinated and even response across the organisations to the embedding of the QIs into their practice and to the development of a learning policy, in particular in those organisations which fund others;
- a more appropriate balance between quantitative and qualitative data in the accountability meetings between DCAL and the organisations to in order to reflect the importance of the Learning Strategy, and to record the progress being made, and any gaps in provision or in support; and
- the regular review of the interim guidance on the protection of vulnerable adults developed by DCAL in response to the introduction of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007.



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