

Strategic Plan For Education

April 2006 – March 2008

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Foreword By The Minister – Maria Eagle

As Minister with responsibility for Education in Northern Ireland I am delighted to present the Strategic Plan for Education 2006-2008.

The education system in Northern Ireland has much to be proud of, performing well against national and international benchmarks. However while many of our young people achieve excellence too many leave education without having fulfilled their potential, or having acquired the basic skills needed to function effectively in society. This must be addressed. The world is changing rapidly as technology continues to develop and new economies emerge and our education system has to adapt to these new challenges.

We are therefore undertaking a series of major reforms to the education system in Northern Ireland as we seek the highest educational standards for all our children and young people. We are striving to improve the quality and relevance of the education experience our young people receive and to ensure that our institutions serve the best interests of all sections of society. The Entitled to Succeed (e2s) strategy, encompassing reforms to the curriculum, post primary arrangements, ICT and schools estate will extend the choice and opportunities for young people in terms of both what, and how, they learn. I am determined that society in Northern Ireland will realise the full benefits from this extensive and important programme of reform.

We must make best use of the massive resources invested in learning. As a society we need to balance choice with cost. There are inefficiencies and duplication in our current structures, and the actions in this Strategic Plan will seek to address these and release resources to the frontline to ensure that teachers and support staff can deliver the learning experiences our children need and deserve.

We must also learn to work together more effectively. This Plan has been prepared in co-operation with education partners and sets out a clear direction

for the next two years. Successful implementation will require continued co-operation and increased collaboration among all those in the education service, from schools and further education colleges to managing and employing authorities and various Government Departments, to maximise the educational benefits to young people.

I am already aware of the commitment and professionalism of those who work in the Education Sector in Northern Ireland and am confident that together we can deliver a first class education system for all our young people.

Maria Eagle MP

Minister

The Planning Framework in Education

Vision

The vision of the education system is “To educate and develop the young people of Northern Ireland to the highest possible standards, providing equality of access for all”.

Realising this vision requires co-ordination across the education sector and alignment of effort toward the achievement of agreed outcomes. The aim of this Strategic Plan is to provide leadership and direction to all those within the education sector in Northern Ireland by setting out a clear and agreed agenda for action.

Public Service Agreement Targets

At the highest level Government sets out its priorities and spending plans for Northern Ireland in the annual Priorities and Budget document. The key outcomes to be achieved by each of the departments are set out in Public Service Agreements. The PSA targets for the Department of Education are set out in Section 4 of this plan.

Strategic Framework

In order to meet PSA targets the Education Sector must undertake a wide variety of actions. The Department of Education has worked with key education partners to develop a high-level Strategic Framework (see Figure 1) to help bring order to the complex planning environment. This is organised around 4 Strategic Themes: -

1. Valuing Education;
2. Fulfilling Potential;
3. Promoting Equality and Inclusion; and
4. Resourcing Education.

Within each Theme are set out Strategic Aims and Strategic Outcomes along with the key actions the education service will take over the next two years.

Alignment

This Plan sets out high-level actions for the education sector as a whole, and these can be delivered through contributions from the many organisations and individuals involved in educating our young people. To coordinate this complex and challenging delivery structure, organisations have aligned their individual annual business and spending plans to the Strategic Plan, and hence to the Strategic Framework.

The planning system for education showing the linkages from the Governments Priorities and Budget document to the annual business plans of the individual education bodies, is set out in the Strategic Framework diagram (see Figure 1).

Finance

A key aim in developing the Strategic Plan for Education has been to keep the education planning horizon in synchronisation with the Government's public expenditure planning time-frame, to ensure planning is linked directly to the allocation of resources.

The Strategic Plan was first developed to cover the years 2005/06 – 2007/08 in line with the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) 2004. This revised plan spans the remaining 2 years (2006/07 - 2007/08) covered by Budget 2005. It is intended to revise the plan next year to align with CSR 2007.

The actions in the Strategic Plan for Education have therefore been fully informed by the planned availability of resources.

Government Priorities and Budget

FIGURE 1

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

VISION

To educate and develop the young people of Northern Ireland to the highest possible standards, providing equality of access to all.

MISSION STATEMENT

We will work together as partners in education and youth services to ensure a high standard of education for all children and young people, which will put them at the centre of education, motivate them, build their confidence and enrich their lives, and provide the foundation for a strong and vibrant economy.

STRATEGIC AIMS

Valuing Education

- 1.1 To promote the value of education.
- 1.2 To create a desire for learning.

Fulfilling Potential

- 2.1 To provide flexible learning opportunities that meet the varying needs and abilities of all young people.
- 2.2 To raise educational attainment for all young people.
- 2.3 To foster the personal development of young people, including an understanding of their rights and responsibilities within society.
- 2.4 To foster creativity and provide young people with the knowledge and skills for life, employment and further learning.

Promoting Equality and Inclusion

- 3.1 To ensure equality of access to education and youth service provision and to facilitate parental choice as far as possible.
- 3.2 To promote respect for, and value of, diversity, equality and human rights.

Resourcing Education

- 4.1 To secure the necessary funding to deliver a high quality education and youth service.
- 4.2 To use resources efficiently, effectively and equitably to support and improve learning.
- 4.3 To have highly skilled and motivated teachers, youth workers and support staff.
- 4.4 To have high quality leadership and governance across the education and youth service.

Strategic Plan for Education 2006-2008

Linked to Priorities and Budget 2006 - 2008

DE Annual Business Plan

Funded Education Bodies Plans

Desired Strategic Outcomes For The Education Sector

- ❖ Widespread recognition of the value and benefits of education to the individual, society and the economy.
- ❖ Motivated young people who enjoy and are engaged in learning, encouraged and supported by their parents or carers.
- ❖ All young people having access to an Education and Youth curriculum in settings that meet their individual learning needs.
- ❖ Education attainment levels for young people that are the best in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and reduced differentials between pupils from different circumstances.
- ❖ Young people with the self-esteem to be confident, happy and ambitious and contribute positively to their local community and wider society.
- ❖ Young people who are creative and have developed, to their full potential, the skills, attitudes and expectations needed to live, work, learn and play in a global society.
- ❖ Young people who have access to appropriate learning provision, and are educated, as far as possible, in accordance with their wishes and the wishes of their parents.
- ❖ Young people educated in a safe and caring environment where they are respected and receive the support they need.
- ❖ All those involved in the education and youth sectors demonstrating respect for those from different backgrounds and circumstances and valuing diversity as enriching society.
- ❖ Education and youth services organised appropriately and funded to meet the objectives agreed by government.
- ❖ Young people in all education and youth work settings having appropriately resourced and cost effective provision to allow them to benefit from learning and achieve their full potential.
- ❖ The varying learning and development needs of young people met by highly skilled and motivated teachers, youth workers, other staff and volunteers.
- ❖ Everyone in the education and youth sector fully understanding, appropriately skilled for and committed to their role in delivering high quality co-ordinated service and creating inspired, ambitious school communities.

The Challenges for Education

Raising Standards

The education system faces a series of complex challenges. Many of our young people achieve at the highest level, comparing favourably with other developed nations. However, too many young people, primarily from disadvantaged backgrounds, leave school with low or inadequate qualifications. Many pupils find the curriculum uninteresting, leading to disengagement and underachievement. Functional literacy and numeracy are essential for any economy, but one in five of the working age population of Northern Ireland have problems with these skills.

The challenge is to continue to raise overall educational standards while ensuring that this gap in achievement is reduced.

Schools' Estate

The current schools' estate has over 47,000 surplus places and the number is set to rise to over 80,000 over the next 10 years if action is not taken. This would threaten the viability of many existing schools. In addition, many schools are in poor condition, with facilities unsuited to the needs of a modern education system. The impact of demographic decline and the poor condition of many existing school buildings is compounded by the high number of different school types in Northern Ireland. This range of choice in schooling is also reflected in the complex administration arrangements for education and comes at a high price.

The challenge is to provide a fit for purpose schools' estate, appropriately sized and located and providing modern facilities. To achieve this in the face of finite resources and falling demography we need to look at innovative models of schooling - sharing across and between sectors - and at streamlining administration to achieve higher standards, better facilities and make better use of resources.

Early Years Provision

Early Years are vital years for children and their parents in providing appropriate opportunities for personal, social and physical development and enabling children to start school as confident young learners. Children don't separate their lives into segments, but the current system of service delivery does, with children from 0-3 the responsibility of DHSSPS and children above that age part of DE's remit through the pre-school education programme. The present arrangements do not deliver the integrated, child-centred approach that government seeks and which children and their parents need. Nor does it make best use of the expertise that exists within Sure Start and other Early Years initiatives, which could be linked into the pre-school education programme and the enriched curriculum, which forms the first two years of children's formal education.

The challenge therefore is to develop a coherent policy for 0-6 which improves co-ordination and delivery of integrated services to our youngest citizens.

Special Educational Needs and Inclusion

We must ensure that young people who require particular help receive the support they need and we must provide appropriate forms of education for those with special educational needs. The number of children with statements of Special Educational Need continues to grow year on year (with an increase of over a third over the period 2000-2005) and so too do the associated costs of provision. To meet these pressures we must examine our current arrangements, including the nature of support and the way in which it is provided, to ensure we are using our resources to best effect.

The challenge is to ensure continuity and quality of SEN provision whilst striving to improve the effective delivery of service within finite resources.

The World of Work

While Northern Ireland has been enjoying a period of economic growth, this must be balanced against economic activity rates among the lowest in the UK, relatively low skill levels in the workforce, and the need to close the productivity gap with the rest of the UK. The education service will continue to play a key role in addressing this situation, including focusing on skills for work in the local and global economy, enterprise and entrepreneurship. We need to produce the large number of well educated and highly skilled people our economy is going to need – a workforce able to compete with the best in the world. This will help to ensure that the education sector contributes to the achievement of the Economic Vision for Northern Ireland, set out by the Government and its main economic partner bodies:

Northern Ireland as a high value-added, highly skilled, innovative and enterprising economy which enables us to compete globally leading to greater wealth-creation and better opportunities for all.

The challenge is to provide young people with the knowledge and skills they need to live, work and learn in a global society and who develop to their full potential.

Meeting The Challenge:

Major Education Reforms

To address these challenges the education sector is taking forward a very significant programme of reforms.

➤ Curriculum Reform

The Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) has recently undertaken a major review of the curriculum. The revised arrangements will provide for a more skills based curriculum and will include specific provision for issues such as Personal Development (including Health Education) Citizenship, Employability and Information and Communications Technology. The new curriculum will be slimmer in content, whilst still ensuring that the educational fundamentals are well covered. It will place greater emphasis on key skills and on Learning for Life and Work. With reduced prescription of content, there will be greater flexibility for schools to tailor their curriculum to meet the needs of their pupils.

The necessary legislation to implement the revised curriculum will be in place by September 2006 and the new curriculum will be phased in over a number of years to allow schools adequate time to plan for and implement the changes effectively.

➤ New Post-Primary Arrangements (e2s Entitled to Succeed)

New post-primary arrangements are being introduced to abolish the Transfer Test and academic selection at age 11, and give pupils access to a wider range of courses and subjects that will meet their varying needs and abilities and enable them to reach their full potential.

Transfer Arrangements

From 2008 there will be no academic selection at age 11 using the Transfer Procedure Tests. Future transfer arrangements will be based on informed parental and pupil choice. There will be a wider range of good schools from which to choose, for example:-

- schools with an academic or a vocational emphasis in their curriculum;
- a mixture of both; or
- a specialist approach.

The aim will be to enable parents and pupils to choose the type of school that best meets the child's educational needs.

Pupil Profile

The Pupil Profile will provide a holistic picture of a child's progress, aptitudes and interests throughout their education. It has been piloted in a number of schools over the past two years. The Pupil Profile will be implemented for Year 5 pupils in 2007/08 and subsequently phased in for other year groups.

Specialist Schools

On 14 March 2006, Angela Smith announced Northern Ireland's first [12 specialist schools](#). Specialist schools will identify and build on their particular curricular strengths and, by sharing good practice, secure whole school development and contribute to the development of good leadership in schools. Requiring schools to take forward a community dimension, i.e. with other schools, FE Colleges, business and the wider community, will help them move from the current environment, characterised by competition, to one of co-operation and collaboration.

Entitlement Framework

The Curriculum Entitlement Framework will guarantee all pupils greater choice and flexibility by providing them with access to a wide range of learning opportunities suited to their needs, aptitudes and interests, irrespective of where they live or the school they attend.

Schools will have to offer pupils access to a minimum of 24 courses at Key Stage 4 and 27 at post-16, and at least one third of these courses should be general and at least one third applied. Individual pupils will decide upon the number and blend of courses they will follow.

Ensuring access for all to the entitlement framework will involve greater co-operation and collaboration between schools and with the Further Education (FE) sector. Collaboration arrangements will be developed at a local level to meet local needs, will be flexible and may change over time. Schools will retain their autonomy.

➤ **Improved Infrastructure and Facilities**

The recently published Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI) identified the need for £3.4bn of investment in schools and youth infrastructure over a ten-year period. In anticipation of additional investment DE and the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) undertook a review of procurement and delivery arrangements. Implementation of the new arrangements together with the estates component of the Review of Public Administration (RPA) will now be taken forward.

Organisation of the educational estate is also being considered by an independent Strategic Review of Education led by Sir George Bain. The review is due to be completed by November 2006 and the project will take account of any recommendations arising from the Review.

New long term planning of the schools' estate will involve the production of Strategic Investment Plans (SIPs) for local areas that will include rationalisation of the schools' estate. School authorities will also be expected to plan for cross sector collaboration in line with "A Shared Future". In line with the Government's policy on "Achieving Excellence in Construction Procurement" we will introduce more long-term relationships with fewer suppliers. To manage the new contracting regime and investment programme effectively we will also set up a single procurement and estate management service within the Education and Skills Authority.

➤ **Children and Young People's Funding Package**

The Secretary of State, Peter Hain, has provided a total of £100m for the Children and Young People Funding Package to reduce social, health and educational differentials and give children and young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds the best possible start in life.

One element of the package is “extended schools” where the aim is to widen the role of schools and allow them to become true centres of their community. The money may be used for breakfast clubs and after school activities and payments will be made direct to School Heads who are best placed to know what their communities and pupils need. The package will also support additional counselling, speech and language therapy and educational psychology for schools.

➤ **Early Years**

Improved integration of provision for children from 0-4 will be achieved through the transfer of Early Years policy and funding from DHSSPS to DE under the lead of a senior official. This will enable Sure Start and other early years activities to link more effectively to the pre-school education programme and help provide a seamless service to very young children and their parents.

➤ **ICT**

There has been significant investment in the ICT infrastructure through the Classroom 2000 (C2k) programme ensuring that NI schools, covering primary, post-primary and special schools will have advanced facilities – including Broadband and internet access – that match any part of the UK.

The em-Powering Schools Strategy developed in partnership by the education sector sets out a vision for transforming learning, teaching and leadership through education and technology change in the coming years.

The new curriculum will ensure that ICT is embedded in all subjects as an integral element of teaching, learning and assessment, thereby ensuring that young people are well prepared for life and work in the information economy of the 21st Century.

➤ **Special Educational Needs and Inclusion**

The new Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (SENDO), came into effect in Northern Ireland from September 2005. The order strengthens the right of children with SEN to be educated in mainstream schools where their parents wish it and the interests of other children can be protected. Special schools will continue to play a vital role in supporting pupils with significant and complex needs.

The Department of Education commenced a review of Special Education and Inclusion in April 2006. The aim of the review is to bring forward comprehensive and cost effective recommendations having particular regard to continuity and quality of provision; equality of access; consistency of assessment and provision; delivery and funding and accountability mechanisms; value for money; affordability; and monitoring arrangements. It is hoped to complete the review by late 2006 for implementation by 2007, subject to the legislative timetable.

➤ **Review of Public Administration**

The Review of Public Administration has been driven by the need to improve the efficiency and delivery of public services. Within Education the challenge is to provide more streamlined services to children and young people, teachers, Boards of Governors and Principals that will raise the standards of service and release resources for re-deployment to front-line services.

The current education system is costly, with significant duplication. At a time when there are ever increasing demands on services and competing priorities

for limited resources, it is critical that we reduce the administrative burden and free-up valuable resources for frontline services in schools.

An **Education and Skills Authority** will be established to support the operational delivery of Education across Northern Ireland and across all sectors of Education.

- It will have responsibility for the functions currently performed by the five Education and Library Boards (ELBs), the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment, and the Regional Training Unit.
- It will have responsibility for the front-line support and related functions currently undertaken by the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education and Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta.
- It will be the employing authority for all teaching and other support staff employed in grant-aided schools.
- Some operational functions currently performed by the Department of Education will also transfer to the new Authority.
- The ownership of the controlled schools' estate, currently with the ELBs, will transfer to the new Authority.
- A Director of Children's Services will be appointed to co-ordinate the Authority's responsibilities for children.
- The Authority will have a key role in taking forward the curriculum for 14-19 year olds.

In addition a new **Statutory Advisory Forum** will be established to act as a unified advisory interface between the Department and the education sector, and responsibility for libraries will transfer from the ELBs to a new **regional Library Authority**.

Department of Education - Public Service Agreement

Objective	Planned outcome for citizen	Targets
<p>To ensure that all young people, through participation at school, reach the highest possible standards of educational achievement, that will give them a secure foundation for lifelong learning and employment; and develop the values and attitudes appropriate to citizenship in an inclusive society.</p>	<p>A high quality education system that allows all young people to reach their full potential.</p>	<p>1. To promote improvement in educational attainment so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2008, 80 per cent of primary pupils will achieve level 4 or above in Key Stage 2 in English and 83 per cent in Maths (compared to 76.6% and 79% Maths in 2004/05). • By 2008, 63 per cent of year 12 pupils to obtain 5 or more GCSEs (or equivalent at grades A* to C (compared to 61% in 2004/05). • By 2008, 60 per cent of year 14 pupils achieving 3+ A levels at grades A to C (or equivalent) (compared to 61% in 2004/05). <p>2. To reduce differentials in educational attainment so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2008, 70 per cent of pupils in the most disadvantaged primary schools will achieve level 4 or above in Key Stage 2 in English and in Maths (compared to 64% English and 67% Maths in 2004/05). • By 2008, 83 per cent of year 12 pupils in secondary schools will obtain 5 or more GCSEs at grades A* to G (or equivalent) (compared to 82% in 2004/05). • By 2008, 94 per cent of year 12 pupils in the most disadvantaged post-primary schools will gain 1 or more GCSEs at A* to G (or equivalent) (compared to 91.9% in 2004/05). <p>3. By end 2006, develop and commence implementation of a strategy, with comprehensive plans and associated targets, for a fit for purpose education estate that is modern, meets the changing needs of learners and is cost effective.</p>

Objective	Planned outcome for citizen	Targets
To promote through the Youth Service, the personal and social development of children and young people and assist them to gain knowledge, skills and experience to reach their full potential as valued individuals: and through community relations measures for young people, to encourage the development of mutual understanding and promote recognition of and respect for cultural diversity.	A Quality Youth Service	<p>4. To ensure equality of access to Youth Service, promote understanding and enhance and complement broader education aspirations so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2008, 42 per cent of youth population aged 4-18 years to participate in youth activities (compared to 34% in 2004/05).

In addition the Department shares in the achievement of :-

- The NICS reform targets “Introducing a modern HR service for the NICS by 2008”, “Implementing the Strategic Development Plan for rationalising the Government Office Estate (Workplace 2010)” and “Completing the migration of NI Departments to a Single Shared Centre by 2009, (Accounting Services Programme)”
- The Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister’s targets: “To underpin improved public services by continuing to deliver the increase in public sector infrastructure investment, as set out in the long-term Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland”.
- The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety’s target: “To stop the increase in levels of obesity in children by 2010”

Technical Notes

PSA Target 1:

1. Key Stage 2 data is supplied by the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) and is validated in DE against School Census information that is collected annually from all schools in NI. Validation checks are also carried out by CCEA. The data is based on Year 7 pupils i.e. those pupils aged 10 on 1 July at the start of the academic year. The Key Stage 2 data is based on teacher assessment and excludes special and independent schools. Pupils are assessed in both English and Maths. Key Stage information is based on level achieved by the pupil and level 4 is deemed to be the level that Year 7 pupils are expected to achieve. Percentages are based on those pupils who are eligible for assessment at Key Stage 2.

2. Year 12 pupils are those pupils in the final year of compulsory education. This information is based on the Summary of Annual Examination Results which is an annual exercise carried out by DE based on information supplied by schools. GCSE information also includes equivalent qualifications such as GNVQ Intermediate qualifications. All post-primary schools in NI are included in the data collection exercise with the exception of special and independent schools. Pupils with a statement of special education need are also excluded. Rigorous validation checks are carried out on the data and each school principal is responsible for agreeing and signing off data before it is included in the final database.

3. Year 14 pupils are those pupils in the final year of A level (or equivalent qualification) course. This information is based on the Summary of Annual Examination Results which is an annual exercise carried out by DE, based on information supplied by schools. A level information also includes equivalent qualifications such as VCE qualifications. All post-primary schools in NI are included in the data collection exercise with the exception of special and independent schools. Pupils with a statement of special education need are also excluded. Rigorous validation checks are carried out on the data and each school principal is responsible for agreeing and signing off data before it is included in the final database.

PSA Target 2:

1. Key Stage 2 data is supplied by the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) and is validated in DE against School Census information that is collected annually from all schools in NI. Validation checks are also carried out by CCEA. The data is based on Year 7 pupils i.e. those pupils aged 10 on 1 July at the start of the academic year. The Key Stage 2 data is based on teacher assessment and excludes special and independent schools. Pupils are assessed in both English and Maths. Key Stage information is based on level achieved by the pupil and level 4 is deemed to be the level that Year 7 pupils are expected to achieve. Percentages are based on those pupils who are eligible for assessment at Key Stage 2. The most disadvantaged primary schools are defined as being the 25% of primary schools with the highest free school meal entitlement.

2. Year 12 pupils in secondary schools are those pupils in the final year of compulsory education in a non-grammar school. This information is based on the Summary of Annual Examination Results which is an annual exercise carried out by DE based on information supplied by schools. GCSE information also includes equivalent qualifications such as GNVQ Intermediate qualifications. All post-primary schools in NI are included in the data collection exercise with the exception of special and independent schools. Pupils with a statement of special education need are also excluded. Rigorous validation checks are carried out on the data and each school principal is responsible for agreeing and signing off data before it is included in the final database.

3. Year 12 pupils are those pupils in the final year of compulsory education. This information is based on the Summary of Annual Examination Results which is an annual exercise carried out by DE based on information supplied by schools. GCSE information also includes equivalent qualifications such as GNVQ Intermediate qualifications. All post-primary schools in NI are included in the data collection exercise with the exception of special and independent schools. Pupils with a statement of special education need are also excluded. Rigorous validation checks are carried out on the data and each school principal is responsible for agreeing and signing off data before it is included in the final database. The most disadvantaged post-primary schools are defined as being the 25% of post-primary schools with the highest free school meal entitlement.

PSA Target 3:

1. The Investment Strategy for N Ireland identified the need for £3.4bn of investment in the schools' estate over the next ten years. In order to ensure that investment is directed at the highest priority needs and that the number of schools provided for the future takes account of the fall in pupil numbers, it will be necessary to develop Strategic Investment Plans for the schools' estate. The investment will be delivered in phases over the ten-year period and would involve some rationalisation of the estate to cope with the fall in pupil numbers and surplus capacity. The Strategic Investment Plans are scheduled to be completed by December 2006 and would be subject to regular review thereafter. The Department will provide guidance to school authorities on the approach to be adopted in developing these plans.

2. New procurement and delivery arrangements will be required to handle the additional investment in the estate. The Department will work with the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) to implement the new arrangements to ensure that the Strategic Investment Plans and estate rationalisation are delivered in a managed way over the ten-year period of the Investment Strategy for N Ireland.

PSA Target 4

- The Youth Service Population includes all young people aged 4-25 years. However, those aged 19-25 are classed as members and/or Leaders and have a separate participation target.

Young people aged 4-18 years includes:

- Those in Education and Library Board registered youth organisations, funded or otherwise, following a personal and social development programme as outlined in "Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice" document. This does not include single activity groups.
- Those accessing funding in non-registered groups through the Youth Service Community Relations Scheme.
- Those involved in programmes of 6 or more sessions which are issue/area based projects which do not have a fixed membership base.
- Those involved in social and personal development programmes for 6 or more sessions, including, Duke of Edinburgh Award, Princes Trust Volunteers, Youth Councils, XL* Clubs and school projects.

*Personal Development for Key Stage 4 (Years 11 and 12) pupils.

Theme 1 - Valuing Education

Strategic Aim	Strategic Outcome	Education Service Objectives by 2008	Actions by 2008
1.1 To promote the value of education.	Widespread recognition of the value and benefits of education to the individual, society, and the economy.	A communication strategy that promotes the benefits of education at all stages.	1.1.1 To have in place a Communication Strategy which will address the issues arising from the research undertaken in 2006.
1.2 To create a desire for learning.	Motivated young people who enjoy and are engaged in learning, encouraged and supported by their parents or carers.	Assist parents and carers to support their children's learning.	1.2.1 Pupil Profile introduced for Primary 5 by 2007, and for Years 1,2, 5,6, 8 and 9 by 2008.
		Develop the role of schools and youth organisations as learning hubs for the community.	1.2.2 To develop and implement Extended Schools Policy from September 2006.
		Provide more opportunities for young people, parents and service deliverers to influence the development of policy and the design of services.	1.2.3 To have in place effective arrangements to ensure meaningful engagement of young people, parents and key stakeholders, including the voluntary and community sector, in all major policy consultations by 2008.

Theme 2 – Fulfilling Potential

Strategic Aim	Strategic Outcome	Education Service Objectives by 2008	Actions by 2008
2.1 To provide flexible learning opportunities that meet the varying needs and abilities of all young people.	All young people have access to an Education and Youth curriculum in settings that meet their individual learning needs.	Improve the quality of learning and increase the range of courses by implementing the revised curriculum and the new post primary arrangements.	2.1.1 Schools have implemented appropriate phases of revised statutory curriculum for Foundation Stage – Key Stage 4 (KS4) in accordance with agreed timetable.
			2.1.2 By 2008, structured programmes in place to support collaboration between schools, FE Colleges and other providers to support delivery of the Entitlement Framework.
			2.1.3 To develop, in conjunction with Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), a coherent framework of provision and qualifications for 14-19 year olds.
			2.1.4 Implement a Specialist Schools pilot from September 2006.
		Address the needs of children and young people experiencing, or likely to experience, difficulties in accessing the statutory curriculum.	2.1.5 Establish new English as an Additional Language (EAL) centralised service in 06/07 and a system to monitor achievements of EAL children by 2007/08.
			2.1.6 Implement agreed recommendations from the Autistic Spectrum

Strategic Aim	Strategic Outcome	Education Service Objectives by 2008	Actions by 2008
			Disorder Task Group Reports on Dyslexia and Autism by March 2008 in line with agreed action plan.
		Improve the education of young people through greater access to, and use of, e-learning technologies.	2.1.7 Achieve key milestones for implementation in the emPowering Schools Strategy by 2008.
		Enhance the youth work curriculum.	2.1.8 To have an appropriate curriculum for youth work that reflects the priorities of the Youth Work Strategy and the needs of relevant age groups.
2.2 To raise educational attainment for all young people.	Education attainment levels for young people that are the best in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and reduced differentials between pupils from different circumstances.	Raise attainment by improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.	2.2.1 To increase from 90% to 95% the number of schools in Northern Ireland with significant strengths or strengths outweighing weaknesses, following the outcome of inspection.
			2.2.2 To implement new assessment arrangements progressively, from 2007 onwards.

Strategic Aim	Strategic Outcome	Education Service Objectives by 2008	Actions by 2008
			2.2.3 To transfer responsibility for early years policy and funding from Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety to the Department of Education and improve integration of early years service delivery.
		Enhance the capacity of young people to learn by promoting their physical, mental and emotional welfare.	2.2.4 To have in place new nutritional standards in all schools by March 2008.
			2.2.5 Implement actions set out in the Children and Young People's Package.
			2.2.6 To implement the programme to expand school based counselling in targeted schools by January 2007.
		Improve access to appropriate educational provision for young people with special educational needs or a disability.	2.2.7 Review and further develop policy on special education and inclusion by late 2006 for implementation by 2007, subject to legislation timetable.
		Improve the performance of schools and of groups of pupils who are regarded as underachieving.	2.2.8 Complete the Review of School Improvement policy by December 2006 and commence implementation from September 2007.

Strategic Aim	Strategic Outcome	Education Service Objectives by 2008	Actions by 2008
			2.2.9 To implement the proposals within the “Renewing Communities” Action Plan by 2008.
2.3 To foster the personal development of young people, including an understanding of their rights and responsibilities within society.	Young people who have the self esteem to be confident, happy and ambitious and who contribute positively to their local community and wider society.	Improve the life skills of young people by fostering their personal development through the curriculum and through Youth Service programmes.	2.3.1 Phased implementation of the revised curriculum, incorporating Learning for Life and Work, commencing September 2007.
			2.3.2 Increase the number of youth groups that are operating effective arrangements to enable young people to participate in shaping youth provision delivered to them.
2.4 To foster creativity and provide young people with the knowledge and skills for life, employment and further learning.	Young people who are creative and have developed, to their full potential, the skills, attitudes and expectations needed to live, work and learn in a global society.	Ensure that all school leavers have at least basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.	2.4.1 Take forward recommendations of Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) Report on Literacy and Numeracy.
		Develop young people’s creative talents in school and youth work	2.4.2 Take forward the key actions of the Unlocking Creativity Report relating to the curriculum by 2008.

Strategic Aim	Strategic Outcome	Education Service Objectives by 2008	Actions by 2008
		settings.	
		Increase awareness of career opportunities and skills required in the workplace.	2.4.3 Phased introduction of careers education and guidance, as part of the Learning for Life and Work element of the revised curriculum, from 2007.
			2.4.4 To put in place new arrangements for the promotion of business / education activities in support of the curriculum with Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) and Department of Enterprise, Trade and Industry (DETI) by 2008.
		Increased range of vocational and applied courses and qualifications available in schools.	2.4.5 The majority of post-primary schools to offer at least 1/3 vocational subjects in line with Entitlement Framework by 2008.

Theme 3 – Promoting Equality and Inclusion

Strategic Aim	Strategic Outcome	Education Service Objectives by 2008	Actions by 2008
3.1 To ensure equality of access to education and youth service provision and to facilitate parental and pupil choice as far as possible.	Young people who have access to appropriate learning provision, and are educated, as far as possible, in accordance with their wishes and the wishes of their parents.	Commence implementation of a strategy for a fit for purpose education estate that is modern, meets the changing needs of learners and is cost effective, and takes account of specialist resources in further education and the conclusions from the Strategic Review of Education.	3.1.1 Circulate interim guidance on sustainable schools by summer 2006 and finalise policy by March 2007.
			3.1.2 Develop initial plans for a strategy for a fit for purpose education estate, with comprehensive plans and associated targets, and begin implementation by December 2006.
			3.1.3 Complete Strategic Review of Education by December 2006.
			3.1.4 Publish draft admissions criteria regulations by 2007.
			3.1.5 Provide centralised services for Autism at the Middletown Centre during 2006/07.
		Ensure equality of access to the Youth Service, in line with the Youth Work Strategy.	3.1.6 Develop further Youth Outreach provision in disadvantaged areas by 2008.

Strategic Aim	Strategic Outcome	Education Service Objectives by 2008	Actions by 2008
3.2 To promote respect for, and value of, diversity, equality and human rights.	Young people educated in a safe and caring environment where they are respected and receive the support they need.	Ensure child protection and anti-bullying policies, within an overarching pastoral ethos, are operated effectively in schools and youth work settings.	3.2.1 To have a full time child protection support service for schools in operation by December 2006.
			3.2.2 To have in place a system for sharing information and best practice on tackling bullying, accessible by all schools, in partnership with the Anti Bullying Forum by December 2007.
			3.2.3 To develop, implement and evaluate a cohesive child protection strategy in the youth sector by 2008.
		Ensure health and safety arrangements are operated effectively in schools and youth work settings.	3.2.4 To ensure there are effective systems for the monitoring of health and safety in schools and youth settings.
	All those involved in the education and youth sectors demonstrate respect for those from different backgrounds and circumstances and value diversity as enriching society.	Contribute to building equality and community cohesion.	3.2.5 To promote "A Shared Future" in education and youth policies and practices by 2008.

Theme 4 – Resourcing Education

Strategic Aim	Strategic Outcome	Education Service Objectives by 2008	Actions by 2008
4.1 To secure the necessary funding to deliver a high quality education and youth service.	Education and youth services are organised appropriately and funded to meet the objectives agreed by government.	Develop strategic and corporate plans and related outcome measures for the education service to support case for resources.	4.1.1 All business and resource allocation plans for funded education bodies are clearly aligned to the Strategic Plan for Education.
			4.1.2 To develop robust outcome measures for the Education Service by 2008.
4.2 To use resources efficiently, effectively and equitably to support and improve learning.	Young people in all education and youth work settings have appropriately resourced and cost effective provision to allow them to benefit from learning and achieve their full potential.	To ensure sound financial oversight and monitoring within the education sector.	4.2.1 All DE funded education bodies remain within budget.
			4.2.2. All accounts for education funded bodies submitted by statutory timescales and certified in timely manner (by December of following financial year).
			4.2.3 Improve financial outcome related monitoring and reporting frameworks within the education sector by March 2008, in

Strategic Aim	Strategic Outcome	Education Service Objectives by 2008	Actions by 2008
			preparation for the creation of the new strategic education authority.
			4.2.4 Deliver the agreed annual efficiencies of the Priorities and Budget Document of £41.9M in 2006/07 and £63.6M in 2007/08.
			4.2.5.To have begun consultation on new, affordable solutions on home to school transport that effectively and efficiently support learning by Autumn 2006.
			4.2.6 Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) and Public Accounts Committee (PAC) recommendations implemented within agreed timescales.
		To implement a procurement and delivery strategy for the education estate.	4.2.7 Improved procurement arrangements for the schools capital investment programme with strategic partnership arrangements by 2008.
		To put in place improved governance of ICT in support of learning and administration.	4.2.8 New governance in place for ICT by December 2006.
		An improved organisational framework, in line with RPA, to ensure more efficient and effective service delivery.	4.2.9 New education administrative structures operational by April 2008 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Policy proposals to give effect to RPA decisions developed and approved by Ministers by October 2006

Strategic Aim	Strategic Outcome	Education Service Objectives by 2008	Actions by 2008
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Primary legislation in operation by April 2008 ▪ Education and Skills Authority operative by April 2008 ▪ CEO designate and key senior management team in place by end of November 2006
4.3 To have highly skilled and motivated teachers, youth workers and support staff.	The varying learning and development needs of young people are met by highly skilled and motivated teachers, youth workers, other staff and volunteers.	Enhance the professional skills and standing of teachers, youth workers and support staff.	4.3.1 Develop and implement strategic workforce plans for teaching staff; non-teaching staff and youth workers to include recruitment, retention, pay and conditions and professional development.
			4.3.2 Agree innovative ways of addressing recommendations relating to teacher workload and bureaucratic burden in the Independent Inquiry report on teachers' conditions of service ("Curran2") by 2008.
			4.3.3 Develop, implement and evaluate a teacher health and wellbeing strategy by 2008.
			4.3.4 Reduce teacher absenteeism to England and Wales level by 2008.
			4.3.5 To implement the revised pension scheme for teachers from

Strategic Aim	Strategic Outcome	Education Service Objectives by 2008	Actions by 2008
			January 2007.
			4.3.6 Take forward agreed proposals arising from the Teacher Education Review by Spring 2007.
4.4 To have high quality leadership and governance across the education and youth sector.	Everyone in the education and youth sector fully understands, is appropriately skilled for and is committed to their role in delivering a high quality co-ordinated service and creating inspired ambitious school communities.	Improved planning and accountability arrangements throughout the education sector.	4.4.1 Ensure implementation of agreed recommendations of the Planning and Accountability Review Report.
		Enhance the capabilities of those in leadership roles throughout schools and youth sectors.	4.4.2 During 2006/07 and 2007/08, reduce vacancies on school Boards of Governors, attract more governors with professional skills in business, finance and HR; and increase support and training to governors.
			4.4.3 Promote the implementation of the Voluntary Sector and National Training Organisation agreed governance standards by regional youth groups.

Annex A : Glossary of Terms

C2k	Classroom 2000
CCEA	Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (NI)
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DE	Department of Education
DEL	Department for Employment and Learning
DETI	Department for Enterprise, Trade and Industry
EAL	English as an Additional Language
e2s	Entitled to succeed
ELBs	Education and Library Boards
FE	Further Education
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ISNI	Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland
NI	Northern Ireland
NIAO	Northern Ireland Audit Office
NICS	Northern Ireland Civil Service
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
PSA	Public Service Agreement
RPA	Review of Public Administration
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENDO	Special Educational Needs and Disability Order
SIB	Strategic Investment Board
SIPs	Strategic Investment Plans
UK	United Kingdom

Key stages

The 12 years of compulsory education are divided into 4 key stages. They are:

Key Stage 1	Primary 1-4 (school years 1-4)
Key Stage 2	Primary 5-7 (school years 5-7)
Key Stage 3	Post –primary form 1-3 (school years 8-10)
Key Stage 4	Post –primary form 4-5 (school years 11-12)

