

**POLICY REVIEW OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN  
NORTHERN IRELAND**

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## **1. THIS REPORT**

1.1 This report was commissioned by the Department of Education (DE) and the Department for Employment & Learning (DEL). It covers all aspects of teacher education and draws on 6 previously commissioned reports which focused on:

- demographic trends, the costs of initial teacher education (ITE) and the use of the ITE estate;
- the potential impact of the proposed new curriculum, of e-learning and of the longer-term effects of the post-primary review on teacher education;
- the balance between in-HEI (Higher Education Institution) and in-school training, in both PGCE and BEd courses, and the relevance, effectiveness and VFM of the support provided to beginning teachers during early professional development;
- the effects on ITE of existing diversification;
- the co-ordination, effectiveness and funding arrangements for continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers.

1.2 The reports made available were;

- The Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland
- The Impact of Statutory Curriculum and Assessment Change from September 2006 on Teacher Education and Training in Northern Ireland (CCEA)
- Aspects of Initial Teacher Education in Northern Ireland (Taylor/Usher).
- Empowering Schools in Northern Ireland
- GTCNI Reviews of Teacher Competences and Continuing Professional Development
- The Induction and Early Professional Development of Beginning Teachers (ETI)
- A Shared Future: Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations.

1.3 Although drawing on the research undertaken for these reports and at times commenting on or incorporating their conclusions, this overview does not rehearse or repeat the detail they contain and offers its own conclusions and advice. In addition, this report suggests decisions which need to be taken. Much of this report is concerned with *Initial* TE as decisions about entry requirements to ITE, course content and length influence the nature of induction, early professional development and continuing professional development.

1.4 This report is written as background for departmental officials and assumes, therefore, familiarity with the issues. Its purpose is to consider the aims, objectives and policies on which the current model of teacher education (initial, induction, early professional development, continuing professional development) in Northern Ireland is based, and to offer an opinion on how well current provision fits these, identifying gaps as necessary.

## 2. **TERMINOLOGY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN TEACHER EDUCATION**

2.1 Before considering ITE, it is worth commenting that it is preceded by another phase, the acquisition of qualifications for entry to higher education whether for the under- or post-graduate qualification to teach. These entry requirements are set with a view to recruiting candidates who have qualifications appropriate to teacher training and can be adjusted to suit the changing needs of the education system. That pre-ITE stage should be seen as presenting opportunities to change the nature of the teaching force prior to formal training.

2.2 In Northern Ireland, the broad field of teacher education is divided as follows;

- **Initial Teacher Education** describes the training of potential teachers in institutions of higher education who are either undergraduates pursuing a B.Ed degree or post-graduates taking a one year certificate in education (PGCE). These trainee teachers are the responsibility of their HEI. On

completion of ITE, teachers leave with a Career Entry Profile (CEP) intended to act as a bridge to the next stage, Induction.

- **Induction** covers the first year of a teacher's employment after qualifying. Teachers are required to register with their Education and Library Board (ELB) for induction which they should do no matter what their employment status. During induction, teachers are the shared responsibility of their school, where a teacher-tutor will have regular contact, and their ELB whose Curriculum Advisory and Support Service (CASS) will provide support, guidance and in-service training as requested by the schools. The HEIs may also provide support or in-service courses. A further, less direct accountability for these teachers lies with the DE which sets their employment conditions.
- **Early Professional Development (EPD)** describes the training given to teachers in their second and third years of teaching. The school is the lead partner and is responsible for obtaining continuing support for the teacher. The teacher is required to complete 2 Professional Development Activities during these years. The school completes a 'summative report' to link the induction year to this second and third year experience. Training, as in the Induction year, will be provided by the ELB/CASS and/or HEIs.
- **Continuing Professional Development** describes the training of teachers throughout their careers after completion of the first 3 years.

### ***COMMENT***

2.3 Underlying a modern approach to teacher training is the belief that a teacher is never trained but always in training.

2.4 The process starts with the setting of the entry requirements to ITE and ends with retirement. ITE, induction, EPD and CPD should be closely linked and, as the only continual presence in each, the individual teacher should accept responsibility for his/her own continuing development and for recording it. However, the individual needs the support, encouragement and professional training of others in school, HEIs, the ELB and the DE in the course of a career. It is best if the system the teacher

works within is as simple as possible and if the lines of accountability are clear at all stages and involve as few partners as possible in order to ensure continuity of provision and quality.

2.5 The Career Entry Profile (CEP) has potential as a means of bringing about continuity but, currently, its usage effectively ends after Induction. *It is recommended that the CEP, appropriately re-named, should be used as a career-long record, i.e. from ITE onwards - perhaps called simply the **Teacher Career Profile**.*

2.6 The recognition in Northern Ireland that ITE should be followed by Induction, EPD and CPD is a significant strength but the division into these 4 different stages can be confusing and, the more boundaries, the more opportunities for discontinuity. *Consideration should be given to rationalizing these divisions as recommended below (9.4).*

2.7 Different lines of accountability and responsibility present further opportunities for breakdowns in the system. The HEIs have responsibility for students in ITE but the services of HEIs could be retained to provide a seamless handover from ITE to Induction then to EPD. As soon as a teacher is appointed to a school, it is made clear that the school is responsible, with the teacher, for that appointee's continuing training and its recording. The school/individual responsibility should remain throughout the teacher's career. *Progress in professional development should be registered with the GTC (see 6.1).*

2.8 In order to discharge that responsibility, the school/teacher requires the support and professional contribution of HEI staff, other teachers, ELB/CASS staff, and possibly other IST providers. *This should be coordinated more effectively to ensure that resources are targeted fairly and efficiently and fulfill the needs of pupils, of the teacher and of the education system more widely. (see section 10).*

2.9 The acknowledgment in recent years that CPD is worth funding and finding time for in teachers' contracts, as both an entitlement and a requirement, is a major step forward towards the goal of improving the quality of learning and teaching. This means that everything does not need to be pressed into ITE. The Northern Ireland

approach to Induction and EPD gives an opportunity to look at that as an extended early training and there would be merit in seeing the ITE/Induction/EPD as a single stage of training followed by CPD.

2.10 Teacher Education in Northern Ireland involves many bodies at different stages. There are roles for the GTC, HEIs, 5 CASS/ELBs, TEPG, DE, DEL, ETI, Schools, NINE. There is a need to rationalize this in order to increase effectiveness, enhance quality and improve the use of limited resources. A supervisory role in teacher education throughout teachers' careers could lie with the GTC, which holds the individual registration that enables a teacher to work in NI (see 10.5).

2.11 The Teacher Education Partnership Group (TEPG) has been given responsibility to take an overview and seek to co-ordinate the process. That is recognition of the problem rather than a long-term solution. The ETI report on Induction and EPD says that the TEPG "helps to promote clarity and consistency in the arrangements for Induction" but that is only necessary because of the range of participants. That report also comments on the need for greater contact between the TEPG and the GTC. In fact, it might be appropriate for the GTC to chair the TEPG if that body is to continue.

### **3. INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION**

#### *The Providers*

3.1 ITE in Northern Ireland is provided by 5 institutions each with separate forms of governance; St Mary's University College; Stranmillis University College; The Queen's University, Belfast (QUB); The University of Ulster (UU) and The Open University (OU).

3.2 St Mary's and Stranmillis are colleges of the QUB which allows them degree-awarding status. They cater mainly for the primary sector, although they do provide certain courses directed at secondary level teaching. St Mary's states that it makes a particular contribution "within the Catholic tradition" to Higher Education in Northern Ireland. The 2 colleges retain financial and management autonomy but are

“academically integrated” with QUB in that they work “within QUB’s academic structures in developing new courses and maintaining existing programmes.” QUB provides for secondary education. These 3 institutions are based in Belfast.

3.3 The UU, operating at 2 geographically separate locations in Coleraine and Jordanstown, makes provision for the training of primary and secondary teachers.

3.4 The OU makes a distinctive contribution available across NI through provision of post-primary courses by distance learning. The subject specialisms on offer reflect those regarded as shortage subjects in England.

### *Diversification*

3.5 Following a study by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (1998), the 2 University Colleges embarked on programmes of ‘diversification’ which meant adding a limited number of courses to their portfolios enabling them to make provision for students other than trainee teachers, in the case of St Mary’s by adding liberal arts courses and at Stranmillis by developing health promotion and leisure studies.

3.6 The Taylor/Usher report comments on the consequences of diversification for teacher education. It records the Colleges’ views that diversification:

- has enhanced the ITE provision by providing a broader range of subjects and students in the institutions;
- ended any social isolation of trainee teachers by adding other disciplines;
- extended the professional expertise of teaching staff (and increased the number) and;
- enabled the Colleges both to make better use of existing resources and, because of the increased student numbers, to improve resources.

3.7 There is no reason to doubt that adding other courses to monolithic institutions will benefit staff and students although, despite the Colleges’ claims, their students

are still relatively isolated in an academic sense. Diversification is a distraction from the real issues concerning teacher education, born out of a need to find a short-term solution to an apparently intractable problem of over-provision in circumstances where rationalization will have political consequences. It is a means of making better use of the Colleges which are already there as separate entities rather than answering the question of whether their existence is the best, or proper, use of public funding or the most satisfactory way to train teachers for the future.

3.8 Multi-provision of ITE will, always, be the expensive option to be justified on policy grounds other than simple financial efficiency. The extension of the Colleges into other courses also creates an element of duplication of opportunities available elsewhere in HE in Northern Ireland thus misapplying resources. Diversification is a policy option predicated on a decision to maintain the status quo, not easily justified by any other policy consideration.

### ***Demographic Trends.***

3.9 Demographic trends are one of the influences on decision-making in ITE. Scrutiny shows that the population of compulsory school age pupils will decline significantly in the next 15+ years. That is a solid fact for the purposes of determining future policy. The projected, slight, increase between 2017 to 2030 is not sufficiently large to present an argument for maintaining, even mothballing, provision for that eventuality.

3.10 The reality is that the projected need for teachers will fall significantly, first in the primary sector then in post-primary. There is already a problem in over-supply with only 37% of newly qualified teachers obtaining a permanent post in their first year. However, a political determination to reduce class sizes would take up some of the overcapacity now present in the system; on the other hand, it is likely that teachers will find it necessary to work beyond the current average retirement age. There is evidence of shortage in certain specialist areas but that should be addressed by retaining capacity for full recruitment in these specialisms rather than an over-supply across the board. *In order to convince ITE institutions, the profession and other stakeholders, the Taylor/Usher report recommendation (P9.15ff) that “a more*



*developed analysis of expected trends” be undertaken would be wise. This should include an attempt to identify better means than currently exist of predicting teacher shortage in particular specialisms as well as overall requirements.*

### ***Effects of the Costello Report***

3.11 Re-organisation of secondary education as recommended in the Costello report and realignment of the curriculum from time to time may both result in a slight change in the specific qualifications in demand (e.g. resulting from a subject being given less time and another being allocated a larger place in the curriculum) but will be unlikely to result in an overall increase in the numbers of teachers required. At most, it might lead to some re-training.

3.12 The total number of teachers required is a different issue from the specific range of qualifications needed. The Teacher Demand Model is flawed in that it is difficult to be precise in predicting the number or specialisms likely to be required. This can only be tackled by retaining a capacity slightly larger than that predicted by the Model. An assurance that all newly qualified teachers will be placed in a post lasting through the first 2 years after qualifying, if necessary at public expense, would reassure potential recruits and ensure a well inducted cohort each year. Before any decision is taken on this, experience in other countries should be considered. For example, the willingness of government to fund newly qualified teachers (NQT) can tempt employing authorities to terminate their posts after the first year in order to benefit from the continuing supply of ‘free’ teachers. This disconcerts the new teachers, presents pupils with unnecessary changes of teacher and destabilizes the system.

## **4. ISSUES AFFECTING FUTURE ITE PROVISION**

4.1 It is hard to argue that an area the size of NI requires teacher training in 4 traditional institutions particularly when 3 of these are in Belfast. In determining future policy, a balance should be struck between the need for collegiate interaction and competition as a means of maintaining quality in ITE and overprovision that has

been inherited and is maintained out of respect for strong local loyalties. In reviewing the extent of ITE provision necessary in NI, there are a number of considerations.

### ***Educational***

4.2 In terms simply of the size of the population, it could be argued that one ‘traditional’ institution plus the OU (because of its ability to provide alternative forms of training) would be enough. However, educational considerations would dictate otherwise. More than one provider is necessary to:

- offer provision that is geographically accessible for trainees from different parts of Northern Ireland, to schools for overseeing placements and to teachers for post-initial training;
- provide the interaction between institutions essential to maintaining standards of quality in provision;
- provide collegiate contact for the training force.
- provide a career path for able lecturers in more than 1 institution without which entry to teacher training will not be a desirable career path;
- develop a distinctly Northern Irish culture in teacher training without which a single institution would be likely to look overmuch to examples outside the Province.

### ***Per-Capita Costs of Current Provision***

4.3 There is no evidence to suggest that training a teacher in Northern Ireland costs more, or less, than in any other part of the UK after a range of variables are taken into account. Of course, government departments must have regard to costs elsewhere but should not necessarily seek to match them as a main policy objective. The other parts of the UK have their own special characteristics in their education systems which make it impossible to find an exact comparison anywhere else. A small country such as NI needs a smaller number of teachers but that does not mean they can be trained in a single institution as sheer numbers might dictate. Geographical access, collegiate interaction, competition between providers and provision across subject and specialist disciplines, which are available elsewhere

because of the larger numbers being trained, are needed also in a smaller system. Providing for the Catholic and non-Catholic sector and for a different kind of grant-aided arrangement also makes NI different. Given these particular circumstances it is perhaps remarkable that training costs in NI are as similar to other parts of the UK.

4.4 However, government departments' duty to ensure efficient use of public money does not permit unnecessary overprovision. It makes doing nothing an unacceptable option, particularly in view of the existing and projected overcapacity. Public funding used to support expensive, duplicated provision could be used more effectively elsewhere in ITE or in the education system such as;

- financing DE support for teachers who do not get permanent employment in their first year to ensure that they complete Induction (3.12);
- releasing the time required for teacher-tutors to perform their duties effectively (9.15);
- allowing new teachers 10% of their timetables free from teaching to enhance the quality of their Induction experience.

*For these reasons, provision should be reviewed*

## **5. MODELS FOR FUTURE PROVISION OF ITE**

5.1 *I recommend that current provision be reviewed.* There are a number of possible outcomes. Those under consideration should be the subject of a *detailed risk assessment*.

5.2 *The status quo.* This would leave in place the existing number of teacher training institutions at a time when the demand for teachers will drop substantially. It will become increasingly costly and the only apparent way to absorb the spare capacity is diversification, a policy created to meet the current unsatisfactory position. Diversification will mean further expansion by 2 Colleges into courses which they were not established to provide and which can be provided more appropriately in the 2 universities. It would be difficult to find reasons to support the status quo.

5.3 ***Rationalise existing provision.*** The aim would be to satisfy future demand and be cost-effective. This would mean naming the 3 universities as the ITE providers (the Queen's University, the University of Ulster and the Open University) with the consequent closure of the 2 colleges as separate entities on their merger into a Faculty of Education in Queen's University. This has to be seen as the cost-effective option *if no other considerations are taken into account* and the one most likely to cater sufficiently for expected future teacher supply. However, this option would cause deep distress, particularly in the Catholic community and it would be important to consider whether the resulting controversy would help or hinder the transition to new arrangements for high quality teacher training in Northern Ireland. It is a matter for discussion whether a ring-fencing arrangement of particular characteristics in the training of Catholic teachers within the university faculty (along the lines of the merger of St Andrews College into Glasgow University) would relieve the concerns surrounding merger. The likely controversy should also be considered against a backdrop of increasing recognition in Northern Ireland of the importance of catering for and acknowledging the legitimacy of diversity. Essentially, this is an attractive option if all else was equal and one which ministers would be expected to consider.

5.4 ***A Federal System.*** The recommendation in the Taylor/Usher report for a federal system of training in NI has attractions as a means of bringing further coherence to provision. The report argues that this would create an opportunity to develop a single centre of excellence and bring together the best research, scholarship and educational thinking into one structure. It would enable a management strategy which encouraged each part of the organization to have a particular area of expertise e.g. in ICT, modern languages in primary schools, citizenship. There would be more work to be done on this, not least in ensuring that a single federal structure provided collegiate challenge and delivered quality in the absence of competition between institutions but it could be worth detailed study including risk assessment.

5.5 ***Extend the Role of Existing HEI Institutions.*** *This is my preferred recommendation.* One way of coping with current and projected spare capacity is not to close but to add new responsibilities to the existing institutions in order to

strengthen their role within the wider field of teacher education in Northern Ireland.

The circumstances which support such a move are the;

- need to look at over-capacity, as described above;
- wider implications for acceptance of change arising from any closure of the dedicated Catholic provision;
- concerns over fragmentation of and lack of continuity in provision across ITE, Induction, EPD and CPD referred to elsewhere in this document;
- will to build centres of excellence in teacher training in Northern Ireland;
- likely implementation of the proposal for a single employing authority and the resulting need to place services offered by the 5 CASS elsewhere in a manner best suited to supporting teachers (see The Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland, Chapter 6);
- emergence of the GTC as a body able to monitor a registered teacher's involvement in CPD from initial training onwards and to monitor the quality of the courses taken.

## **6. EXTENDING THE ROLE OF HEIs IN TEACHER EDUCATION.**

6.1 The policy described above (5.5) would mean that all 5 ITE providers (but see 6.4 for a possible modification) would continue but would become responsible for providing training to support many of the needs of the single employing authority for Induction, EPD and CPD. The employing authority would determine its needs across an agreed period (probably one year ahead in detail and 2 further years in outline) and the institutions would bid for the commissions. In such a free market, there would be strong pressure on the providing institution to maintain high standards of quality or be left with surplus staff and resources. The employing authority as the agency responsible for securing training for its teachers and the GTC as the body responsible for ensuring that Northern Ireland's registered teachers conform to the CPD requirements laid down by DE would both exercise a monitoring role over the quality of training provided.

6.2 However, **an essential element of this policy** is that it must be complemented by an acceptance by the HEIs that, if they are given this extended role, existing staff and those who come to them from the CASS will be contracted to have a commitment to teaching duties in schools parallel with their role as teacher trainers and that the initial training and CPD which they will provide will be taught in part by high quality serving teachers seconded by the employing authority for this purpose. It is envisaged that this could be almost cost-neutral if properly organized. This would be a contractual commitment. (See para 8.6 for further comment.)

6.3 Although this proposal is predicated on an assumption that 5 units would continue to provide teacher training, *the governance of the 3 parts of the provision at QUB could be reviewed as a variation on this option*. Whether or not the 3 separate pieces of estate are required is a decision for Ministers taking into account local feeling, effective use of public resources and the facilities available in QUB if use of one or both of the college buildings was discontinued but a rationalisation could take place which enabled other recommendations of this report to be achieved, in particular;

- more training of primary and post-primary teachers together for core elements of their training (see 8.1);
- more opportunities for trainee teachers to share some parts of training with other relevant trainees in social work and community education;
- access to other university courses e.g. ICT and languages to be taken in parallel;
- maximise and co-ordinate the contribution of the selected ITE providers to induction and continuing professional development.

6.4 The implications of the above are that, even if Ministers choose to retain ITE provision in 3 different locations within Belfast, the 2 Colleges could be fully integrated into the Queen's University as a single Faculty of Education with one administration and one budget. Within such a structure it would be possible to safeguard the provision of training within a Catholic tradition which is a hallmark of

St Mary's. However, this is a *modification of the overall recommendation*, desirable but not essential.

6.5 This proposal would resolve a number of difficulties in provision identified elsewhere in this report. In particular, implementation would:

- make better use of existing provision;
- improve the quality of training by widening the roles of HEIs and adding CASS staff with their expertise in post initial training;
- ensure that present and future HEI staff providing initial and in-service training have current teaching experience to update their expertise and heighten their credibility;
- offer high quality classroom teachers the opportunity to contribute to teacher training thus extending their experience and enhancing the quality of TE;
- encourage the development of centres of excellence;
- give the single employing body the flexibility to commission and select training without being tempted to establish its own, permanent in-service body of advisers;
- put HEIs under competitive pressure to achieve excellence in provision;
- give responsibility for quality evaluation of training to bodies outside the HEIs, namely as befits their different responsibilities, to the employing authority and to the GTC;
- envisage teacher training as a whole not as the sum of separate stages, differently administered;
- put Northern Ireland in the position of concentrating expertise drawn from all aspects of teacher education and rationalizing some of the many participants currently involved;
- offer diversification to the 2 colleges, albeit within a structure more closely tied into the QUB but, as that university currently awards degrees through the Colleges, it has already a responsibility to take an interest in the quality of the provision made there;

- enable HEIs to draw on other relevant staff, e.g. from social work or community education training, to contribute to courses;
- maintain the special provision made by St Mary's but, in expecting that College to bid for commissions across a much wider field, offer its management and its staff an opportunity to broaden their expertise and offer, in courses for all teachers, elements of courses devised specifically for Catholics which have wider interest and application e.g. in Values Education or in Citizenship.

6.6 It should be noted that this proposal differs from the recommendation in the Review of Public Administration that there should be a Curriculum & Teacher Support body to bring together the functions currently carried out by the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), the Curriculum Advisory Support Service (CASS), C2K (Classroom 2000) and the Regional Training Unit (RTU). In particular, see Annex C, P94. This body could still be constituted as the curricular advisory body to ministers and, possibly, the commissioning and evaluating body for the single employing authority. Ministers are likely to want the former but the latter would be best placed within the single employing authority.

## **7. INFLUENCES ON THE CONTENT OF ITE PROVISION**

7.1 A healthy curriculum is constantly changing. The ability to adapt to and accommodate change must be built in as one of the capacities of teacher education as in other aspects of the national education system.

7.2 The changes likely to emerge in the next few years from the review of the Statutory Curriculum and Assessment fall well within the level of adjustments that should be catered for easily in a vibrant system of ITE. They are commented on in the report by CCEA, *The Impact of Statutory Curriculum and Assessment Change from September 2006 on Teacher Education and Training in Northern Ireland*.

7.3 It is clear from the report that:



- The changes affect *style* rather than *content* or the *time* needed for training; it is a change of emphasis not an increase in content (but see comment on modern languages (7.10) and citizenship 7.11);
- Much of what is recommended must, surely, be there already in a sophisticated ITE system;
- ITE staff may not be equipped to deal with the change (see 8.6).

7.4 In that report, there is a list (pp13/14) of “aspects of curriculum change that may have particular relevance to the structure of teacher education”. Some of these are for CPD rather than ITE. For example, the proposal that ITE should be able “to provide all post-primary teachers with the capability to contribute to career planning processes” is clearly for CPD not ITE.

### *ICT*

7.5 Much has been written about the likely effects of ICT on teaching. A lot of this should be viewed with caution. The current structure of school-based provision with the predominance of the teacher as facilitator and the emphasis on meeting individual needs, which requires a teacher’s judgment, is likely to remain the standard pattern.

7.6 ICT features in education both as a means of improving teaching and learning and as a tool to manage learning, assessment and administration. Teachers, therefore, need;

- an advanced facility with the use of ICT per se as one of their armoury of skills immediately on entering training;
- training in the use of ICT as a teaching/learning/assessing technique;
- update training throughout their careers as technical advances occur and as knowledge of the place of ICT in learning/assessing develops.

7.7 Much has been done in NI already, as documented in the ‘*em*Powering Schools’ report to introduce ICT as an effective part of learning and teaching and to

train the existing teaching force in its use. Pp6-13 is exemplary in their presentation and ambition. One dividend is that future cohorts of trainee teachers will be more familiar with ICT from their schooldays and its use will be second nature. It should not be necessary to give trainees lessons in the use of ICT as a skill (separately from its application in the classroom) and it is an unreasonable imposition on the time available for ICT within ITE to expect that.

7.8 There should be an expectation that all entrants to ITE will have reached a determined level in the use of ICT prior to entry or, if there are highly desirable candidates unable to demonstrate that they have reached that level, they should be given one term of their first year to reach the required level in their own time using a specially tailored university course. It should be offered on each of the 2 university campuses. This would ensure a minimum level of entry. The content of ICT within the ITE course would then be about the use of ICT in teaching and learning not about gaining the basic skills.

7.9 Consideration should be given to developing on-line help for teachers as part of assisting their continuing professional development. An on-line surgery for teachers would be innovative and save some training. This is proposed in the ETI report (p37, 3.9) for 'beginning teachers' but there is room to consider it going much beyond that.

### ***Modern Languages in Primary Schools***

7.10 Another issue for ITE is the introduction of modern languages in primary education and the apparent decision that this should be taught by primary teachers not by visiting specialists. The argument is finely balanced. If all pupils are required to take a modern European language, they will eventually apply to train as teachers with a working knowledge of a language. It is reasonable to assume that possession of an A level in a modern language is a sufficient basis for teaching to primary level. The addition required would be training in the methodology of language teaching. However, the ITE course is already full and the notion of equipping each prospective teacher with the ability to teach a language will be difficult. Therefore teaching a modern language in primary should be seen as a specialist choice and schools will use

their appointed teachers who have this specialism to teach the languages. Knowledge of the language should be acquired prior to entry to ITE or by a parallel university course.

### ***Citizenship Education***

7.11 Citizenship is expected to be in the curriculum of all secondary pupils. The suggestion has been made that this should be taught by all teachers although I understand this is not DE policy. This certainly could have implications for ITE as any 'subject' of importance should be taught by teachers who have been appropriately trained. Unless that is so it will have no status in the minds of teachers alongside other subjects or parts of the curriculum. The proposed curricular area covered by Citizenship should be analysed in terms of content to establish the knowledge and skills necessary to teach to a level of high quality. It should then be offered as an additional qualifying course thus relieving ITE of the need to build this extra demand into an already overcrowded course.

### ***Mainstreaming Special Educational Needs***

7.12 It is the task of ITE to ensure that courses equip teachers to understand how children learn and to recognize a range of impediments to learning. They are also trained to assess individual ability and progress and to adapt teaching and learning to suit individual needs. Beyond that, it is not for ITE to offer detailed instruction on the nature of response to specific disabilities. On appointment, it is for the receiving school to equip a teacher to cater for individual pupils with specific learning difficulties who will be in the teacher's classes. These cannot be predicted before appointment. The mainstreaming of pupils with special educational needs should not have an undue impact on pre-service training but certainly impacts on Induction training and, indeed, on every subsequent appointment to a new school.

## **8. OTHER ISSUES RELATING TO ITE**

### ***Generic Teaching skills***

8.1 In reviewing the content of ITE, those teaching skills (as opposed to the knowledge-base required for specialist teaching in primary or post-primary) common to all teachers should be identified. This will be helped by the GTCNI work on competences. It will be found that the basics of understanding how children develop and learn, the skills of classroom and behaviour management, the ability to assess as part of teaching, the skills of direct and indirect teaching can be distilled into a course common to all trainee teachers irrespective of their intended destination in the school system. The subsequent delivery of that core to primary and post-primary trainees together will strengthen their understanding of each others' sectors by sharing training, will deepen their understanding of where their pupils are going or have come from and create a delivery-effective structure. From that base, they will then branch into specialist post-primary work or specialisms within primary. The CCEA report (P14) refers to the need to improve respect between primary & secondary.

### ***Primary Training: Stage Specific?***

8.2 In training for primary education, further consideration could be given to the nature of the qualification pursued. It is good school practice, particularly as children grow older, to expose them to learning in different groupings with specialist primary-trained teachers. So part of the curriculum would be delivered by their class teacher but they would regroup, possibly for English, mathematics, music and maybe in ability groupings with a class teacher who was also a specialist in one of these. That argues for a review of ITE for primary education which identifies specialisms in primary education and trains the teaching force accordingly.

8.3 Primary education is a broad field in terms of the curriculum covered by one teacher and the broad age range for which teachers are prepared. It is unreasonable and certainly not conducive to the highest standards of attainment to expect one teacher to be conversant with the full curriculum to the depth required to teach able pupils. That is why a degree of specialism within a general primary education

teaching curriculum is recommended. Also, it should be noted that the job undertaken by a teacher of 5 or 6 year olds is quite different from the skills needed by a teacher of 10 or 11 year olds. There should be specialisation in early or later primary education as well as within curricular fields. However, staffing emergencies or small schools might require a teacher to work beyond his/her area of qualification which makes the common core identified above of further significance.

### *Assessment for learning*

8.4 An area of particular importance within the core area will be training teachers to work under conditions of less prescription and more discretion to match the curriculum to the perceived needs of learners. ITE must therefore be more focused on formative assessment; that is Assessment For Learning (see also CCEA report P11ff). That is heralded as a major change but it has long been the task of a teacher, even within the framework of a statutory curriculum, to match content and teaching to children's ability, to use assessment as an integrated part of teaching planning and delivery and to guide the pace of pupils' progress. Nevertheless, there is now an opportunity to put that centrally in the ITE curriculum and should feature as a very important aspect of the common core. It should be noted that this is a major change in approach for teachers who have been traditionally reluctant to make judgments of this kind and be held accountable for them to parents.

### *Developing creative thinkers*

8.5 An aspect emphasised for the future is the importance of presenting learning in such a way as to make children into critical and creative thinkers. This requires further thought - and detail - if it is to be anything other than rhetoric. Unlike ICT, the generation of trainees to be charged with developing this approach in schools will not themselves have studied within such an ethos. They will have been shaped by their experience in schools working in the very way that is now to change. Before teaching them how to give their future pupils the opportunity to be critical and creative, they will need to develop that attitude in their own approaches to problems.

### ***Readiness of ITE staff***

8.6 The increased demands on staff in ITEs, many of whom will have been out of full-time teaching for many years, is an issue requiring serious attention. The fact that their lecturers talk about teaching without recent school experience can quickly disillusion students. It would strengthen their influence and improve their ability to do the job if they had parallel school experience. There could be positive integration between classroom teachers and ITE lecturers. The latter should be expected to teach in a school for a period of not less than 4 weeks every year and should have a sabbatical on full time attachment to a school staff, filling a post, every 5<sup>th</sup> year. There should be much more use of high quality teachers (possibly those receiving students in school placements) as part-time contributors to the ITE theory in college. For example, advice on taking responsibility for adapting the curriculum and methods to suit the individual learner or instruction on assessment as part of teaching would come most authoritatively from serving teachers. The necessary professional development of ITE staff should include mentoring by high quality professional teachers.

### ***Post-graduate training (PGCE)***

8.7 With any additions to courses, there is an issue affecting the one-year post graduate primary course. The fact that the graduate trainee has a respected academic qualification does not mean that he/she can absorb what it takes to become a teacher in one session when B.Ed trainees have much more time. This could be said about secondary post-graduate trainees but their qualification has a much more direct bearing on the job they will do whereas a primary teacher on the PGCE will be expected to absorb the course core and acquire expertise across the full primary curriculum as well as declare a specialism (see 8.3). This could be tackled as follows:

- ETI should consider whether evidence suggests any difference in readiness to teach between inductees coming from the B.Ed course and the PGCE.
- the length of the PGCE should be extended by 4 weeks as has been proposed;

- the induction period for post-graduates should be adjusted.

### ***Length of school placements***

8.8 Questions have been raised about “the balance of university work and school placement”. No strong case has been made for altering the balance. It should be recognized that school placements during ITE have the dual purpose of whetting the student teacher’s appetite and underlining the relevance of the university-base experience. If the recommendation (9.9) is adopted, to achieve greater integration of ITE and Induction, the ITE period will be seen as mainly university-based with some school experience and the first professional year as mainly school-based with some continuing training. However, rather than reducing the amount of time in university, consideration should be given *to extending* it for post-graduate trainees (see 8.7).

## **9. INDUCTION, EARLY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

9.1 The ETI report *The Induction and Early Professional Development of Beginning Teachers* is positive and optimistic in its evaluations. It provides a detailed analysis of the experiences of teachers in the first 3 years of their experience and makes recommendations intended to enhance arrangements already in place. These do not need to be repeated here but are part of the recommendations of this report.

9.2 The detailed attention given to the first year induction of teachers is a strength of provision in Northern Ireland. It leads to a further 2 years of managed support called Early Professional development. The fact that this is an established expectation makes it possible to build an even stronger process of professional support covering ITE, Induction and EPD.

### ***Induction***

9.3 The demanding content of ITE and the fact that teachers’ earliest experience of schools, in teaching placements, is monitored by ITE staff all argue for the

Induction period to be seen more as a continuation of pre-employment training than of future CPD. This would enable a 2-year plan for ITE/Induction which would relieve some pressure on ITE and allow reinforcement of the ITE once teachers are in post.

9.4 It is important that, when the teacher is first employed, he/she should be the responsibility of the school which manages the induction year but the other natural mentor is from the ITE institution. Consideration should be given to integrating the Induction year, in planning and delivering, more seamlessly with ITE but with responsibility moving from the institution to the school. This would result in:

- a better planning model for ITE if it was seen to straddle year 1;
- continuity of style in training;
- maximizing the influence in the early weeks of teaching of mentors already known to new recruits
- underlining the importance of ITE staff having parallel school experience;
- support to those new teachers who do not have a permanent post by funding their induction year through the ITE institution;
- a different approach to induction for those (see 8.7) whose post graduate teacher training has been more brief.
- an enhanced role for the Career Entry Profile.

9.5 To participate in induction arrangements, a new teacher is required to register with an ELB and, on completing training, to register for EPD on the NINE. It is not clear why procedures of this kind, which appear to be bureaucratic, are needed. When a new teacher is appointed, the GTC at least (and presumably the ELB) will know of the appointment. In addition, CASS “collect and analyse statistics on the beginning teachers who register at the start of the induction year.” There is scope to make more use of information already held by the GTC and to make that body responsible for ensuring that registered teachers take training appropriate to their stage and that training is recorded. This would tackle the criticism in the ETI report (P34 3.3) that “in a small minority of schools, the managers do not check with sufficient rigor whether the new teachers joining their schools have actually achieved successful



induction.” This would ensure also that, when teachers change jobs, their training record would follow them.

9.6 The ETI report says that Induction is generally overseen effectively by schools. It also comments on the quality and enthusiasm of new recruits. The challenge is to ensure that Induction, EPD and CPD develop their confidence and refresh their enthusiasm throughout their careers. The responsibility for overseeing Induction lies with a teacher-tutor in each school who is often a member of the senior management group. While there are clearly advantages in giving such an important responsibility to a senior member of staff, there is a danger that the weight of other duties reduces the time given to overseeing Induction. *It is recommended that consideration be given to creating a promoted post solely concerned with Induction, EPD and arrangements for CPD or, if the preference is to continue with a member of SMT to ensure that job descriptions are reviewed to ensure that adequate time is made available.*

9.7 Most teachers have individual Induction programmes. This is an important strength as it gives an opportunity to build on strengths, observe progress in areas of weakness identified during training and to allow different programmes, for example, for post-graduates in ITE. This would also meet the ETI recommendation that, on appointment of a beginning teacher, the stage the teacher has reached on the continuum of early teacher education should be established.

9.8 The induction folio is a positive part of the Induction process although not all schools ensure its completion. The role envisaged for the GTC would ensure consistency. The portfolio should be included in the re-named Career Entry Profile. Given the increasing emphasis in Northern Ireland on self-evaluation by schools, the portfolio should concentrate more on the new teacher’s self-evaluation across the competences, monitored by the teacher-tutor. The ETI report comments on there being no information on the completion of Induction. Again, the GTC should record this information as it would become a condition of continued registration.

9.9 As currently constituted, EPD covers the second and third years of a teacher’s service. There is considerable room for confusion. The ETI report suggests that

(P37. 3.9) “it would be beneficial for the beginning teachers if the online support integrated the initial, induction and EPD phases.” If that is true of online provision, it is equally true of other aspects of provision. The period from entry to ITE to completion of year 3 should be seen as a single period of preparation divided into pre- and early- training with Induction as part of EPD. At present, there is a Career Entry Profile, an Induction portfolio and summary report, Professional Development Activities and a suggestion by ETI that there should be a Professional Development Portfolio. This could be simplified. *This reinforces the recommendation that a single personal profile, following from the Career Entry Profile, should follow a teacher from entry to ITE and throughout the teaching career.*

### ***Early Professional Development (EPD)***

9.10 EPD is based on a teacher competence model. In its report (GTCNI REVIEWS) the GTC reduces the competences from 92 to 27. This is helpful, bringing greater clarity and focus to this important base for TE in NI. The report notes (Exec Summary p.iv) that “These competences may never be fully mastered and should be viewed as a continuum informed by context and practice”. For that reason, the model should be updated regularly by the GTC in the light of the changes discussed above. As in current practice, the competences should form the basis of the Career Entry Profile which, re-named, would be the document which recorded a teacher’s training from ITE throughout the career. This would demonstrate the extended training or reinforcement taken throughout a teacher’s career and serve as an overview of professional development.

9.11 The Professional Development Activities (PDAs) are undertaken, in theory, one in each year of EPD. There is evidence to suggest that these are of varying quality and it is reasonable to assume that the demands of a full timetable impinge on teachers’ enthusiasm for these exercises. There is also a view that the concentration on PDAs prevents teachers from looking more widely at their development needs. There should certainly be objectives for each year of EPD, negotiated with the teacher-tutor, but these should involve work stemming from perceived needs recorded in the Career Entry Profile (to use its current name) and arising from ITE and the Induction year.

### ***Continuing Professional Development (CPD)***

9.12 The significance of continuing professional development as a career long commitment by individual teachers and by their employers is fully accepted in Northern Ireland. It constitutes the single most important innovation in the management of change in the educational system. It upgrades the status of teachers by putting their professional development on a par with that in other employment and professions. It guarantees to young people and their parents that their professional educators will be teachers who not only have demanding initial training but are up to speed with developments in their specialist areas as well as in current thinking on how children learn and also have opportunities to acquire additional relevant qualifications such as training to be behavioural counselors or experts in careers advice.

9.13 To be effective, CPD does need to be allied to a system of Performance Review and Development. Performance Review should start with the individual teacher's self-assessment of current practice and development needs. These personal needs should then be placed along side the needs of the school as a learning institution and decisions taken about relative priorities. Ideally, although CPD will include opportunities to acquire additional qualifications, it should not include specialized training for promoted posts such as principal.

9.14 The current difficulties in providing CPD are outlined in the GTC report (P23/4 Para 3.1). The problems are lack of time for teachers and lack of overall co-ordination. The former is a matter for political decision; the latter would be best tackled by the role envisaged in this report for the GTCNI.

### ***The teacher-tutor***

9.15 *The role of the teacher-tutor could be developed further.* First, attention should be given, as recommended in the ETI report, to requiring teacher-tutors to attend training as a pre-condition of their role. One part of that training would be to advise on structured classroom observation. The ETI report shows that only a minority has done so. This should be certificated so that becoming a teacher-tutor is

seen as a responsible, trained function not just a pastoral duty. Indeed, teacher-tutors would be well placed to be a pilot group for Chartered Teacher status as recommended by the GTC. Secondly, this cohort of teacher-tutors could be a resource from which part-time contributors to ITE could be drawn and who could also be the group from which trainers of ITE staff are taken (see 6.2 and 8.6). It is also important that teacher-tutors be given ring-fenced time to do the job and that, as recommended in the ETI report, inductees have 10% of their time freed to ensure a good induction experience and to complete the induction portfolio.

## **10. THE ROLE OF CASS / ELBs and the GTCNI**

10.1 It is evident from the ETI report that the training provided by CASS officers is, mainly, of high quality and appropriately targeted. The report offers helpful advice on improving further the contribution made by CASS if their role is to continue.

10.2 Implementation of recommendations for improving the quality of in-service training offered by CASS officers and monitoring the effect of implementation is likely to be hampered by the existence of 5 CASS. The skills which they hold and nurture are similar in demand to those required by teacher trainers in HEIs. Given the size of Northern Ireland, it is excessive to have 5 separate CASS/ELBs and to have training in HEIs as well. In reviewing the need for so many HEIs training teachers, consideration should be given to the possibility of transferring to HEIs the current functions of CASS (see 6.0ff).

10.3 The GTC report “GTCNI Reviews of Teacher Competences and Continuing Professional Development” offers a means of coordinating provision for all stages of teacher education in Northern Ireland.

10.4 The executive summary of the report claims that the teaching profession itself “is best placed to identify the key issues that must be addressed, and the nature of the changes required”. While the profession must clearly take the lead in ensuring teachers are fully equipped throughout their careers to meet the changing needs of the education system, *the part that can be played by employers and the business community is significantly omitted in reports reviewing teacher education in NI.* The

nature of training for other professions and jobs, the skills available, the techniques in use are all worth considering. TE should not be reviewed in isolation.

10.5 It has been noted above that there are many, too many, stakeholders in teacher education in NI. The GTC is uniquely placed to give oversight to the process. It is a body elected by teachers with powers delegated by government ministers; it receives the registration of teachers emerging from ITE and has an interest in these recruits being trained to a high level of quality; it is best placed to ensure that all teachers registered receive induction training, to monitor the individual's progress and to record completion; it is well placed to control the quality of continuing professional development made available and to record teachers' progress through it and to withdraw or suspend registration if the requirements for CPD are not completed as laid down. The recommendation in its report (Exec Summary p.v) should be agreed, namely where it proposes "the assumption by the profession, through its regulatory body, of a strategic role in respect of teacher education and professional development." There are precedents for this role in the GTCs in Scotland and England; Scotland would provide a useful parallel for Northern Ireland.

## **11. SUMMARY OF MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- a) The Career Entry Profile, appropriately re-named, should be used as a career-long record, perhaps called the Teacher Career Profile. (2.5, 9.9)
- b) In order to ensure that schools and new teachers receive the professional support needed, the contributions of HEI staff, other teachers, ELB/CASS and others should be coordinated more effectively. (2.8)
- c) In order to convince ITE institutions, the profession and other stakeholders of the need for change, an analysis of expected demographic changes should be undertaken. This should include an improved model for predicting teacher shortage in particular specialisms. (3.10; 3.12)
- d) Provision of ITE in 4 centres (excluding the Open University) should be reviewed. Alternatives should be accompanied by a full risk assessment. (4.4)
- e) This report's preferred recommendation that the role of existing ITE institutions be extended should be examined. (5.5; 6.0)

- f) As part of recommendation (e), existing and future staff of ITEs should be contracted to undertake parallel teaching experience, and some initial training and CPD should be delivered by selected serving teachers. (6.2; 8.6)
- g) All entrants to ITE should have evidence of ICT skills to an agreed level or should acquire these within one term. (7.8)
- h) The teaching of modern languages in primary schools should be treated in ITE as a specialist choice. (7.10)
- i) The curricular area covered by Citizenship should be an additional qualifying course. (7.11)
- j) Consideration should be given to joint primary/secondary training of teachers and to stage-specific qualifications for primary teachers. (8.1, 8.2)
- k) The move to greater discretion for teachers in the assessment of pupils' learning will require specific pre- and in-service training. (8.4)
- l) Prospective teachers taking the one-year PGCE may be less well prepared due to the duration of their course. This should be corrected by an extension of 4 weeks to the ITE course and should influence their induction. (8.7)
- m) The Induction year should be seen as an extension of ITE. (9.4)
- n) GTCNI should be responsible for recording the training taken by teachers including ensuring completion of induction. (9.5)
- o) A promoted postholder in schools should be responsible for all aspects of teacher training from Induction to CPD. (9.6)
- p) The GTCNI competence model should be the basis for all aspects of teacher training. The model should be updated regularly and be the foundation of the renamed CEP. (9.10)
- q) The role of the teacher-tutor should be further developed. (9.15)
- r) The GTCNI report offers a means of coordinating provision for all stages of teacher education in Northern Ireland and should be adopted and its role enhanced in relation to the new single employing authority. (10.3, 10.5))
- s) The contribution of employers to teacher training should be encouraged. (10.4)

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