

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC ED 1 (11) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

EDUCATION SECTORAL FORMAT

**NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES,
ARMAGH**

21 JANUARY 2011

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The eleventh NSMC meeting in Education sectoral format was held in Armagh on 21 January 2011.
2. The meeting was attended by Mary Coughlan TD, Tánaiste and Minister for Education and Skills, Caitríona Ruane, MLA, Minister for Education, and Danny Kennedy, MLA, Minister for Employment and Learning. The Tánaiste chaired the meeting.

TEACHERS' QUALIFICATIONS AND TEACHERS' SUPERANNUATION

3. The Council thanked officials from the Professional Development Service for Teachers and the Curriculum, Advisory and Support Services for their joint presentation on the North/South Irish Medium Work Programme in the area of teacher education and welcomed the areas highlighted for joint action in 2010-2011.
4. Ministers noted the recent progress made by the joint Working Group on Teacher Qualifications including the special focus on Irish Medium Education

and the ongoing liaison between the two Teaching Councils about issues relating to the professional recognition and registration of teachers in both jurisdictions.

5. The Council noted the ongoing contribution of exchanges between the Inspectorates of both Departments of Education to support the continuing development of inspection practice in both jurisdictions including the particular focus of the 2009/2010 exchanges on the themes of good practice in literacy and numeracy education and early childhood education;
6. Ministers welcomed the very positive report on the eighth SCoTENS annual conference which took place in Belfast on 28-29 October 2010 under the title '*Teacher Education for Inclusion*'.

EDUCATIONAL UNDERACHIEVEMENT

7. Ministers welcomed the collaborative work being taken forward by both Departments on literacy and numeracy including:
 - Support for Maths Week Ireland 2010, a series of events, held between 9 and 16 October, aimed at promoting awareness, appreciation and understanding of mathematics for all;
 - the Children's Book Programme which took place during October 2010. Planning is now underway for a conference in February 2011 with the working title of 'Promoting Literacy within and beyond Schools';
 - a Time to Read pilot project is being established in the south during 2010/11; and
 - a Joint Report by the Education and Training Inspectorate and the Department of Education and Skills Inspectorate on 'How to Promote Literacy and Numeracy in our Schools' was published on 15 December 2010.

The Council noted that:

- officials will explore the potential to hold a Peer Learning Event on School Attendance in Spring 2011, with a focus on post primary pupils;
- Department for Education is planning to commission research to establish the underlying causes and influences on the non-attendance of looked after children at post-primary level, and to identify effective approaches and actions to tackle the issue; and
- the work of the Taskforce for Traveller Education is nearing completion and that Department for Education hopes to receive the Taskforce's final report early next year.

8. The Council also welcomed the collaborative work underway to develop a Toolkit for Diversity to support the professional development of middle management in schools.

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

9. The Council welcomed the continuing progress made by the Middletown Centre for Autism, particularly in relation to its delivery of training and building partnership relationships with relevant agencies in the area of research. Ministers continue to support the efforts of the Centre and the two Education Departments to develop a multi annual plan for the future development of the Centre.

SCHOOL YOUTH AND TEACHER EXCHANGES

10. The Council noted:
 - the completion of a scoping exercise on current and recent levels of educational cooperation and exchanges with the assistance of the Centre for Cross Border Studies and the North South Exchange Consortium;
 - that an evaluation of the first year of the pilot enterprise strand of the Dissolving Boundaries programme has been completed and looked forward to receiving a joint report from both Inspectorates upon completion of their formal evaluation of the programme;
 - the ongoing discussions on future cooperation on the endorsement of youth work qualifications to ensure and support best practice and facilitate professional mobility and exchange both on a north/south and east/west basis.
11. The Council also noted that the Causeway Programme, which strengthens and improves relationships between young people in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, has supported the activities of over 5,500 young people and youth workers since its commencement 1999 and that a celebration event for the Programme is planned for March 2011.
12. Ministers welcomed the proposals for the 2010-2011 North South Student Teacher Exchange Project.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

13. The Council agreed to meet again in Education sectoral format in Spring 2011.

**Joint Secretariat
21 January 2011**