

04/11-15

AQW 3619/11 - 15

Daithí McKay has asked:

To ask the Minister of Education for an update on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Irish-medium Education Report.

Review of Irish medium education

Recommendation	Update
<u>Recommendation 1: Models of Immersion and School Structures</u>	The specific needs of the sector are already factored into the Development Proposal process because each case is considered within its own context. In line with my Autumn Statement to the Assembly all future school provision will focus on the needs of pupils and the area planning process will provide an opportunity to determine the future needs of the sector.
<u>Recommendation 2: Revising the Existing Policy on Funding for Pre-school Provision</u>	This change in policy is already in place.
<u>Recommendation 3: Necessary Pre-school Experience</u>	Already in place.
<u>Recommendation 4: Pre-school Settings – Voluntary vs. Statutory</u>	The Department’s policy is that both the voluntary and statutory sectors are equally valued with both following common curriculum guidelines and being subject to the same inspection standards. On 20 January 2011 the then Minister announced a funding increase for voluntary/private pre-school providers in the Pre-School Education Expansion Programme (PSEEP) in line with a commitment in the draft Early Years (0-6) Strategy to improving equity and access to early years provision. An additional payment of £200 per funded place was made to all private/voluntary pre-school settings in the PSEEP, for the 2010-11 school year, with a total commitment of £1.5m.

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<u>Recommendation 5: Research into the Educational Outcomes of Irish-medium Pre-school Education</u>	<p>The Department considered the recommendation for research with representatives of the Irish Medium sector. It was agreed that the research suggested would not provide value in terms of outcomes in comparison to the resources required for it to be undertaken. The Department is currently working with ALTRAM and Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG) on a project aimed at providing valuable resources for the professional development of those working in the Irish-medium pre-school sector and on the development of research on which particular approaches should be implemented in Irish-medium pre-school provision to ensure that children are prepared in the most effective way for the transfer to primary level.</p>
<u>Recommendation 6: Sustainable Irish-medium Primary Education –Developing New Provision through Federation</u>	<p>In line with my Autumn Statement, innovative and creative solutions such as federation will be considered as potential solutions for future provision.</p>
<u>Recommendation 7: Sustainable Irish-medium Primary Education – Centrality of Federation to Developing New Provision</u>	<p>As for Recommendation 6.</p>
<u>Recommendation 8: Existing Primary Schools’ Accommodation Issues</u>	<p>All schools have been scoped and accommodation needs identified. Substandard accommodation continues to be replaced through the minor works programme. Additional funding of £2m has been allocated to Iontaobhas na</p>

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	Gaelscolaíochta (InaG) for accommodation costs for the sector.
<u>Recommendation 9: Developing Sustainable Post-primary Provision</u>	In line with my Autumn Statement to the Assembly all future school provision will focus on the needs of pupils and the area planning process will provide an opportunity to determine the future needs of the sector.
<u>Recommendation 10: Units and Streams</u>	Protocols have been agreed in advance of all Units and Streams opening.
<u>Recommendation 11: Boards of Governors</u>	New on-line guide for governors published. Induction training provided by Education and Library Boards (ELBs) for all new governors in the 2010 / 2011 school year. Specific support for governors in raising standards, particularly schools in, or at risk of entry to the Formal Intervention Process.
<u>Recommendation 12: Leadership Training</u>	The Department has written to the ELBs, Regional Training Unit (RTU) and CnaG asking them to encourage principals and aspiring principals to undertake leadership training and to ensure that the needs of Irish medium educators are taken into account in delivering common leadership training and support services in a sectorally sensitive way.
<u>Recommendation 13: Training Teachers for Irish-medium Settings</u>	The needs of the sector have been taken into account as part of the determination of the Initial Teacher Education intakes and additional BEd places provided. Programmes of “Conversion Training” was delivered for teachers at the Irish medium Streams at St Joseph’s Donaghmore and St Malachy’s Castlewellan before they opened. A two week Gaeltacht experience is funded for

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	PGCE students. No unqualified staff are now employed in the Irish medium sector.
<u>Recommendation 14: Teachers' Continuing Professional Development</u>	Irish medium North / South programme of work agreed and being implemented; Two Irish medium Masters Modules have been developed by St Mary's University College; a Bursary scheme for Irish medium teachers is in place to enable them to participate in a range of development opportunities; the Department funded CnaG to set up a North / South Language Committee on Irish medium education.
<u>Recommendation 15: Classroom Assistants and Pre-school Educators</u>	A Bursary scheme has been developed for classroom assistants to avail of language skills training in St Mary's University College of North West Regional Institute; a skills needs analysis has been sent to all Classroom Assistants in IM schools and the results will be reviewed; The Department has funded ALTRAM to develop a specific training course for Irish medium pre-school educators which is accredited by the University of Ulster.
<u>Recommendation 16: Curriculum and Teaching Resources</u>	CCEA has been engaged in a major support programme on behalf of DE since March 2009 aimed at bringing greater equity between IM and EM sectors in terms of curriculum support materials available. This programme supports all IM primary and post primary schools/units in NI. Since 2009 a wide range and substantial volume of resources have been developed, including some in collaboration North/South and East/West. This programme is ongoing and CCEA continues to meet with COGG and other Groups to discuss opportunities for co-operation in order to increase the range

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	<p>and availability of curricular resources. Other curriculum support recently provided include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -investment in additional SEN IM curricular materials; - the appointment of an additional IM Inspector wef September 2010 on a temporary basis for two years; - support to An tÁisaonad in the development of an IM early reading programme.
<p><u>Recommendation 17: Support for Special Educational Needs</u></p>	<p>DE established a “Think Tank” to consider improvements to SEN provision in the sector; an Action Plan for 2010-2012 has been agreed to address a range of issues such as building the confidence and knowledge of teachers, SENCOs and senior management in Irish medium schools in relation to the SEN code of practice through a package of training funded by DE in 2010/2011; DE has funded a feasibility study to determine the viability of high level diagnostic tools for the sector.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 18: Informal learning through Irish</u></p>	<p>Encouraging and supporting informal opportunities for learning through the medium of Irish will be considered as part of Priorities for Youth (PYF) and CnaG is represented on the PFY stakeholders group to represent the interests of the sector; In 2011/2012 DE allocated £30,000 to the Youth Council and £102,000 across the ELB Youth Service to assist in the implementation of this Recommendation; the Extended Schools Inter Board Steering Group includes CnaG to represent the interests of the sector.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 19: Irish-language support for</u></p>	<p>A North / South Language Committee established by CnaG has sharing best practice as a key objective; the Bookstart</p>

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<u>children at home</u>	Programme, supported by DE, provides free books in Irish, as well as English.
<u>Recommendation 20: Multiple Translations of Examinations taken in Irish</u>	CCEA explored various options to engage additional Irish medium examiners / markers but it was not possible to find personnel with expertise in Irish and sufficient subject knowledge in individual subjects. Officials are continuing to liaise with their counterparts in the south on this matter. I see much merit in CCEA and the State Examinations Council (SEC) working together and I have sought the support of the Minister for Education and Skills in the south for this joint working.
<u>Recommendation 21: Policy Development and Delivery</u>	A Monitoring Group chaired at Deputy Secretary level and including representatives from CnaG and InaG, has been established to oversee all matters on Irish medium education. This Group ensures that considerations relating to Irish medium education are embedded in the policy development process from the outset; an Irish medium sector support Project Manager was appointed to the ESA Implementation Team. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategy is an example of a policy developed with the needs of the sector embedded from the outset.
<u>Recommendation 22: Research</u>	The needs of the sector are considered as part of the Department's process of determining its analysis and evidence agenda.
<u>Recommendation 23: Increasing Access to Irish-medium Education</u>	CnaG is taking this forward on behalf of the Department.

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<u>Recommendation 24: All Ireland and Trans-regional opportunities for Irish-medium Education</u>	<p>The Department and the Department of Education and Science are involved in a scoping study of North / South Collaboration; Part 1 of the report is completed and both departments are considering the contents of this report. Part 2 will commence over the coming months and make recommendations on the way forward for North South Co-operation CnaG has established a North / South Language Committee; CCEA meets with DES, COGG and other Irish medium Groups on a regular basis.</p>