Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life
2011 – 2020

Interim Review
Ch. 2 What our young people should achieve

– Summary of the 2011 targets

- Improve our attitudes to literacy and numeracy
  - Key role of parents, family and community
  - Foster enjoyment of reading and create a more positive attitude towards Mathematics

- Improve outcomes at:
  - Early childhood level
    - Through improved communication and oral competence along with a readiness to develop early mathematical language and ideas
  - Primary and post-primary levels
    - Goals set for L and N and results monitored through School Improvement Plan
    - Increase awareness of importance of digital literacy
    - Increase % students taking Higher Level Mathematics at both Junior and Leaving Certificates
2011 targets (contd)

- Many of the targets have already been reached
  - Huge debt of gratitude owed to our teachers and parents in particular but also to organisations such as NALA, Teaching Council, AONTAS, libraries for their work and commitment to improvement
- Some actions have been delayed e.g. standardised testing at junior cycle
- Some bodies named in the 2011 Strategy no longer exist, while new bodies (e.g. SOLAS) have been established and areas (e.g. ECCE) reinvigorated
- BUT there is a need:
  - to “re-awaken the forces” to our L and N Strategy
  - to avoid complacency although many of the targets have been already reached
  - to re-emphasise and prioritise a number of key areas
Ch. 3: Enabling Parents and Communities to support Children’s L and N Development

Action 1 - National information campaign

- NALA adopted a multi-media approach:
  - website - www.helpmykidlearn.ie
  - TV programme “the Family Project” … with almost 190,000 viewers
  - Another TV series in the offing
    “The Strategy has provided a central policy context for connecting children, young people and adults in L and N discussions” (NALA)
- Libraries – “right to read” campaign
- AONTAS … developing adult literacy and basic skills – to empower adults to support their children’s learning
Ch. 3: Parents and Communities

Action 2 - Provide advice and information to parents

- Schools have L and N incorporated into their School Self Evaluation (SSE) procedures
  - Includes providing information and consultation opportunities to parents
- NCCA published materials for parents to support their children’s mathematical skills
- ERC, based on NAERM, recommends greater emphasis on role of parents in supporting L and N learning
- Parental support provides huge opportunity to further raise standards in L and N
Ch. 3: Parents and Communities

Action 3 - Parental engagement is integrated into School Improvement Plans (SIPs)

- In DEIS schools, the HSCL officer focuses on bringing parents closer to their child’s learning
- Parents need to fully realise the value of:
  - talk in the home
  - the links between oral literacy, the development of numeracy, problem-solving and writing skills
  - library usage
- BUT schools need to increase parental involvement in and support for their children’s learning
Ch. 3: Parents and Communities

Action 4 - Identify and learn from effective initiatives

- The work/practice of successful initiatives needs to be acknowledged/shared
- Family learning works as a bridge between home and formal education
- According to AONTAS
  - Parents need age-appropriate national guidance to enable them to support their children
- National event should showcase good practice
Ch. 3: Parents and Communities

Actions 5 & 6 - Target, coordinate and support initiatives that strengthen links between home and education settings

- Need for a more cohesive and coordinated national approach for initiatives to work well together e.g.
  - “Right to Read” Steering Group – good example of cross Departmental/agency work
  - Public Library Services to Schools – partnership between libraries and schools
  - Synergies between FET Strategy and L&N Strategy
- But:
  - Need for greater focus on educationally disadvantaged parents
  - Acknowledge the role of LGMA and Local Authorities
  - Develop partnerships within the FET Sector to enhance opportunities for their learners
Ch. 4: Improving teachers’ and ECCE practitioners’ professional practice

Action 1 - Encourage and support the upskilling of ECCE practitioners

- State-funded ECCE initiative being extended provides additional opportunities
- Aistear has clear emphasis on L and N
- Need to co-ordinate partnerships across all involved in ECCE, especially DES and DCYA
- New ECCE education inspectorate to promote and support improvement of standards
Ch. 4: Improving teachers’ and ECCE practitioners’ professional practice

Action 2 - Co-operate with Teaching Council on entry requirements for ITE

- Very complex target for Teaching Council to achieve
  - ESRI’s help sought, report due soon
- Level of Irish proficiency at entry to ITE not sufficient, particularly for Irish-medium schools. Similar issues with Maths. Leaving Cert results alone are not seen as an optimum guide/measure
- Chief Inspector’s report found unsatisfactory teaching in Irish and Maths at both primary and post-primary in a significant minority of schools
- Additional CPD for teachers in Irish and Maths a requirement
  - Use multiple approaches e.g. on-line and school-based CPD
Actions 3 & 4 - Reconfigure ITE for primary and post-primary teachers

- All targets met. Both sectors have extended their ITE programmes
- L and N are mandatory areas of study
- Strain on supervisors with additional time spent by students in school placement
- Teaching in placement school may be out of step with expected practice
  - Co-operating teachers need training to support student teachers in their schools
- Competence in Gaeilge and Maths an area of concern, even when students graduate
- Need for a continuum of lifelong education for teachers
Ch. 4: Improving teachers’ and ECCE practitioners’ professional practice

Action 5 - Provide post-graduate courses to equip teachers for Irish–medium settings

- Teaching Council noted that, at both primary and post-primary, a standard of Irish is needed to:
  - teach Irish as a subject
  - use Irish as a means of communication and as a medium of instruction
- Disincentive for ITE students to study through Irish
  - Perception that it is easier for student teachers to perform well in their assessments by studying through English than through Irish
- Importance of numeracy when studying in Irish-medium ITE
  - Literacy gets greater attention than numeracy
Ch. 4: Improving teachers’ and ECCE practitioners’ professional practice

Action 5 (cont.d) - Provide post-graduate courses to equip teachers for Irish-medium settings

- Original strategy criticised for lack of emphasis on contribution of Irish to development of literacy skills
  - Further support is needed in ITE to prepare teachers for Irish-medium education and Gaeltacht schools
- Need meaningful immersion opportunities to ensure that student teachers’ standard of Irish, not only at entry but also on graduation, is sufficient to support Irish-medium settings
- A student’s time and commitment to becoming a teacher who is competent to teach in an Irish-medium setting should be formally recognised in their qualification
Ch. 4: Improving teachers’ and ECCE practitioners’ professional practice

Action 6, 7 & 8 - Continued support for teachers

- Support for newly qualified teachers is vital- acknowledge contribution of NIPT
- Teaching Council has:
  - established its Droichead initiative for mentoring and induction of NQTs with particular emphasis on L and N
  - proposed a continuum of CPD, as set out in Cosán - its national framework for teachers’ learning
- DES Maths postgrad programme & PDST dedicated advisors for L and N provide substantial professional development opportunities for teachers
- Teachers in special education, Youthreach and post-primary settings need more training in L and N
- New models, including communities of practice & collaborative learning, should be promoted
- Quality assurance of CPD is essential as is QA of resource materials
Actions 1, 2 & 3 - Improve the understanding and support for Principals and Deputy Principals, (including new and aspiring P and DPs) through SSE, to improve teaching and assessment of L and N

- Education Centres have supported P and DP training
- Establishment of Centre for School Leadership in 2015
  - To include a new post grad qualification that will focus on L, N, assessment and SSE for the purpose of school improvement
- IPPN and NAPD are key players in facilitating CPD
- Teaching Council suggests a broader definition of professional leadership when addressing L and N
- Leadership in ECCE settings also needs to be prioritised
Ch. 5: Building the capacity of school leadership

Actions 1,2 & 3 (cont.d) - Improve the understanding and support for Principals and Deputy Principals, through SSE, to improve teaching and assessment of L and N

- Success of SSE due to buy-in of school leadership
- Most schools began with Literacy initiatives, followed by Numeracy
- BUT school leaders are seeking:
  - more post-holders and
  - more time for meaningful engagement with CPD or in-school training
  - fewer new initiatives
    - to allow for embedding of current initiatives, building of synergies and balancing of and interpreting the relationship between the different initiatives
Ch. 6: Improving the curriculum and learning experience

Action 1 - ECCE settings

- In ECCE:
  - new education inspections to support the quality agenda
  - State provision for a 2nd pre-school year
  - there is the opportunity for:
    - Aistear to be appropriately implemented
    - SSE to become part of ECCE
  - Need to re-invigorate L and N in the curriculum of ECCE settings
Ch. 6: Improving the curriculum and learning experience - Primary

Actions 2-7 - Primary Schools

- New Primary Language Curriculum:
  - will be implemented in Junior Infants to second class from September 2016
  - includes both English and Irish (for L1 and L2 learners)
  - offers an exciting opportunity not just for language learning but for literacy development
  - allows for revisiting Aistear to strengthen the messaging around L and N

- Planned between 2016 and 2020:
  - developments in Maths
  - a more general review of Primary Curriculum
  - guidance to teachers regarding integration of L and N across the curriculum
Action 8 - Increasing the amount of time spent on L and N

- Circular 56/2011 requested schools to increase amount of time spent on L and N from January 2012 onwards
  - for L1 by one hour and for Maths by 70 mins/week
- But concern raised that:
  - L2, usually Gaeilge, has been suffering
  - teachers find it difficult to integrate numeracy across the curriculum
- NAERM, 2014 – Performance report
  - Identifies that a stronger emphasis is needed on numeracy
  - Will this mean more time is needed for Maths?
- Role of digital literacy and of digital media needs to be prioritised to support development of digital literacy and numeracy skills
Ch. 6: Improving the curriculum and learning experience – Post Primary

Actions 9 & 10 - Prioritise Junior Cycle English and Irish

- JC English specification:
  - implemented since Sept. 2014
  - emphasis is on reading, writing and speaking
  - L and N skills are prioritised
  - first JCPA in autumn 2017
  - CPD by JCT for school leaders and teachers
  - JCSP statements being aligned with JC English learning outcomes

- Development of JC Irish specification is being advanced
  - A two-track approach differentiating between schools that have Gaeilge as L1 or L2
  - It will have a particular focus on oral skills
  - ITE concerned that the specific literacy needs of students in IMS will be catered for, including their cognitive and higher-order thinking skills
Action 11 - Developments in Mathematics

- New JC and LC Maths syllabuses (Project Maths) in-situ
- Increased time provision for L and N has been achieved via Department Circulars
- Increase in % of candidates taking HL LC Mathematics from
  - 17% in 2010 to 26% in 2015
  - the target is 30% by 2020
- Increase in % of candidates taking HL JC Maths from
  - 45% in 2010 to 55% in 2015
  - the target is 60% in 2020
- International assessments highlight a relative under-use of ICT to support teaching and learning of numeracy
- Research findings need to guide future work in Maths
Actions 12 & 13 - Senior Cycle developments follow on from JC and increase time for further development of L and N skills

- Due to focus on JC, work on revision of SC specifications is progressing but at a slower rate
- All new subject specifications should enable students to further develop subject-specific L and N skills
- JC subject specifications already highlight role of L and N as key skills of JC
- Greater focus needs to be placed on numeracy between now and 2020
Ch. 7: Helping students with additional learning needs to achieve their potential

Action 1 - Importance of enhanced L and N provision for students from disadvantaged backgrounds

- New ECCE provision opens significant possibilities for tackling disadvantage earlier
- DEIS programme, launched in 2005, has targeted measures for L and N, priority access to L and N programmes, Maths and reading for enjoyment initiatives
- NAERM 2014 highlights gap between DEIS urban band 1 schools and pupils in other schools in both reading and Maths –
  - specific targets should be developed for these in DEIS urban band 1 schools
- ERC found high turnover of DEIS post-primary principals – this creates difficulties in gaining consistent progress in areas such as L and N
Ch. 7: Helping students with additional learning needs to achieve their potential

Actions 2 & 3 - Needs of EAL and SEN students

- Limited evidence of progress to date for EAL cohort
- EAL students:
  - Prioritise not just first generation but also second generation students
  - Prioritise their needs at ECCE and in other educational settings
- NABMSE highlights the particular requirements of EAL students who also have special educational needs
- GAM model breaking distinction between resource and learning support
- New Level 2 and 1 Learning Programmes in JC offer new learning opportunities for SEN students
- Emphasis on L and N, through SSE, in special schools is positive
- No evidence found of increased national emphasis for students with exceptional ability – they need to be prioritised.
Action 4 - Improve the quality of L and N provision in Youthreach and CTCs

- Youthreach and CTCs are being assisted by resources such as:
  - NEPS guidelines (2013) on best practice in teaching basic L and N skills
  - Operator Guidelines for the Youthreach Programme (2015)
- The 2011 L and N Strategy and Further Education and Training Strategy (2014 – 2019) have shared values and objectives relating to L and N to improve outcomes for their learners
- CPD on appropriate approaches to L and N is needed for staff in the centres
- FET sector needs to be prioritised in L and N Strategy from 2016 - 2020
Ch. 7: Helping students with additional learning needs to achieve their potential

Action 5 - Promote better understanding of role of speech and language therapy for students with special educational needs

- Research, by NBSS and University of Limerick, highlights
  - importance of speech and language needs of students with behavioural challenges
  - need for a whole-school focus on oral language as well as written language skills
  - importance of students being involved in decision making about their own learning
- Support should focus on links between speech, language and communication needs and the educational engagement of students with SEN
Ch. 8: Improving assessment and evaluation to support better learning in L and N

Action 1 - Improve ability of teachers and ECCE practitioners to use assessment approaches and data

- Assessment and evaluation are key to the delivery of quality ECCE
  - Supports are required... Síolta Quality Assurance Programme – a way forward and it complements the Aistear and Síolta Practice Guide

- At primary and post-primary:
  - Assessment for learning is an important aspect of teaching and learning practice in primary and post-primary curricula
  - A new report form to support transfer from ECCE to primary schools is to be created by NCCA
  - NCCA education passport allows for transfer of data from primary to post-primary schools
  - A special educational needs transfer form- primary to post-primary- is also available
  - A new system of reporting that culminates in the awarding of the JCPA is being introduced
  - Standardised testing at 2nd, 4th and 6th classes allows for tracking of student progress BUT the frequency of such testing is under consideration
Ch. 8: Improving assessment and evaluation to support better learning in L and N

Action 2 - Improve use of assessment information to support better teaching and learning in L and N for individual students

- Early intervention and prevention of learning difficulties is key
- In Irish-medium schools, should expectation of STs in English in 2\textsuperscript{nd} class be removed (i.e. have STs in English in 4\textsuperscript{th} and 6\textsuperscript{th} classes only)?
- With new language curriculum, should English-medium schools not have to do STs in Irish in 4\textsuperscript{th} and 6\textsuperscript{th} class?
- STs are not being implemented in 2\textsuperscript{nd} year JC in the short to medium term
- Formative alongside summative assessment should be used together to support learning in JC and SC
- Certificate exams should consider a marks’ weighting for L and N, depending on the subject being examined
Action 3 – Ensure that all schools use assessment data to inform their 3-year school improvement plans (SIPs)

- Since 2012, all primary and post-primary schools are required to
  - engage in SSE and develop a SIP
  - L and N are key elements of this process
- SSE requires use of assessment data and the setting of specific targets in a 3-year L and N plan.
  - By Sept 2015, 95% of primary and 88% of post-primary schools responded to an online SSE survey
  - Of these, 95% of primary and 79% of post-primary schools had prepared SSE reports
  - 95% of primary and 61% of post-primary schools had compiled a SIP
  - 66% of primary and 40% of post-primary schools have made SSE and SIP available to whole-school community
- Data needs to be disseminated to parents
  - This needs to be prioritised for remainder of L and N Strategy
Ch. 8: Improving assessment and evaluation to support better learning in L and N

Actions 4 and 5 - Improve availability of assessment data on L and N achievement at both national and international levels so as to benchmark with other developed countries

- Participation in national and international assessment surveys helps guide inputs, interpret outcomes and compare with international peers
  - TIMSS and PISA – survey in 2015, results by end 2016
  - ePIRLS – survey in 2016
  - Performance in reading and Maths compares favourably internationally but Ireland’s performance is below the highest performers, particularly in Maths

- NAERM 2014 shows:
  - first significant improvement in reading by primary pupils in 30 years
  - fewer at lower end in reading levels and more at the higher end
Actions 4 and 5 (cont.d) - Improve availability of assessment data on L and N achievement at both national and international levels so as to benchmark with other developed countries

- Results from national and international assessments and other reports, such as CHIRP, are quite encouraging BUT do highlight areas of weakness to be worked on:
  - Improve students’ competence in numeracy, particularly ability to reason, apply learning and engage in problem-solving processes
  - Enhance the performance of higher performing students in literacy and numeracy and increase expectations re their achievement
  - Strengthen achievement of boys in reading and girls in Maths
Ch. 8: Improving assessment and evaluation to support better learning in L and N

Actions 4 and 5 (cont.d) - Improve availability of assessment data on L and N achievement at both national and international levels so as to benchmark with other developed countries

Further areas of weakness to be worked on:

- Improve or extend some aspects of provision in schools including teachers’ planning, use of assessment strategies, use of ICT and in the case of Maths, use of teaching approaches such as discovery based learning, problem solving in real life contexts
- Provide additional measures to strengthen literacy and numeracy provision in DEIS schools
- Develop awareness among adults of the importance of literacy and numeracy in their working and personal lives
- Provide opportunities to adults to develop their proficiency in literacy and numeracy
Ch. 8: Improving assessment and evaluation to support better learning in L and N

Action 6 - Use self-evaluation and external inspection to support improvements in L and N achievement

- SSE is becoming embedded in school practice
- L and N feature in the evaluation of English, Irish and Maths in all WSE inspections in primary schools
- At post primary, cross-curricular development of L and N is a focus of school inspections
Action 6 (cont.d) - Use self-evaluation and external inspection to support improvements

- Since 2012, inspections, at both primary and post-primary:
  - show high levels of satisfaction with learning outcomes in English BUT need for improvements in assessment practices were highlighted
  - teaching and learning approaches for numeracy were satisfactory at primary BUT at post-primary, satisfaction levels were not as high
  - at both levels, potential for improvement in planning and assessment practices was noted
- Inspectorate is finalising a report on analysis of ST data for 2011/12 and 2012/13
- Need to ensure that there is not assessment overload e.g. review frequency of standardised testing
Draft priority areas for L & N Strategy 2016-2020

- Embed L and N - acknowledge and build on the work to date and the commitment of our teachers

- Raise standards in L and N, by adopting more fully the partnership approach:
  - schools, parents, national and local agencies from early years through to FET
  - use the many excellent community initiatives to promote good practice - showcase e.g. at national event

- Strengthen numeracy provision in all sectors, particularly in relation to reasoning, application and problem solving skills
  - Strategy should be renamed the Numeracy and Literacy Strategy to emphasise this message
Draft priority areas for L & N Strategy 2016-2020

- Strengthen literacy provision for Gaeilge, in ITE, in IM and Gaeltacht schools, but also in schools where it is L2, as discrete area and across the curriculum
- Focus on development of digital literacy skills and use of digital media
- Additional support for students in DEIS schools, particularly Urban DEIS Band 1 and for EAL students in English literacy
- Enhance the achievement of higher performing students
- Strengthen the achievement of boys in reading and girls in Maths
Draft priority areas for L & N Strategy 2016-2020

- Provide additional support for adults where necessary
  - Awareness, involvement in and support for children’s learning
  - Improving adult proficiency
    - Harness potential of support from FET sector and community initiatives
- Consolidate the implementation of AISTEAR in the ECCE sector
- Within ITE, Droichead and Cosán structures, enhance competence of teachers to teach Maths, Irish & digital literacy ( & through Irish) and to differentiate their teaching
  - A multi-faceted approach to L & N supports during ITE and career in teaching
  - Review entry and exit levels for ITE students in L (English and Irish) and N. Also examine additional potential measures to support Irish-medium sector
Draft priority areas for L & N Strategy 2016-2020

- Enhance support for leadership in ECCE settings - implementation of AISTEAR and use of SSE
- Continue support for leadership of schools via Centre for School Leadership
  - Preparation of prospective principals
  - CPD for existing principals
- Consolidate the cross curricular implementation of literacy and numeracy in all sectors - additional guidance and CPD support etc.
- Continue the development and implementation of new language (English and Irish) and maths curricula at primary and post-primary
Draft priority areas for L & N Strategy 2016-2020

- Prioritise both formative and summative assessment and sharing of data, particularly with parents and learners
- Continue involvement in national and international surveys and review the national targets for improvement in L&N in these surveys
- Review expectations re standardised test assessments in English, Irish and Maths for English medium and Irish-medium primary schools
- Embed practices regarding transfer of assessment information between educational settings and formative use of such information
- Embed the SSE process in primary and post-primary schools
Now, over to you

What we’d like you to consider:
Workgroups

- Table 1 Partnership
- Table 2 Gaeilge
- Table 3 Students with specific needs - EAL, DEIS ..
- Table 4 Enhancing performance of all students in L & N - Curriculum, Cross curricular development, Entry & Exit levels of student teachers
- Table 5 Assessment
- Table 6 Leadership