

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC ED 1 (16) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

EDUCATION MEETING

**NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES,
ARMAGH**

21 SEPTEMBER 2016

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The twenty second NSMC Education meeting was held at the NSMC Joint Secretariat Office in Armagh on 21 September 2016. The meeting was attended by Peter Weir MLA, Minister for Education, Richard Bruton TD Minister for Education and Skills and Megan Fearon MLA Junior Minister of The Executive Office. Minister Weir chaired the meeting.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE UK REFERENDUM

2. Ministers had an initial discussion on the implications of the UK EU Referendum result.

EDUCATIONAL UNDERACHIEVEMENT

3. The NSMC noted that an external provider has been appointed to progress teacher professional development in the area of educational achievement in both jurisdictions.
4. The contract has been awarded to Cooperation Ireland who will lead the project and it is envisaged that all work will be completed and the final report submitted by July 2017.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

5. The Council welcomed the progress being made by the two Education Departments and Middletown Centre for Autism to facilitate and maintain the delivery of the Centre's range of services since the completion of the expansion project in March 2015.
6. The positive findings from the follow-up joint inspection of the Centre, which was carried out during 2016, were also welcomed.
7. Ministers noted that new appointments had been made to the Board of the Middletown Centre for Autism and that the Centre has been considering the potential implications of the recent EU referendum decision.

SCHOOL YOUTH AND TEACHER EXCHANGES

8. Ministers noted the ongoing activities of the North South Education and Training Standards Committee for Youth Work (NSETS) in the professional endorsement of Higher Education programmes in youth work.
9. The Council also noted the commitment of the National Youth Council of Ireland and the Youth Council for Northern Ireland to the optimisation of ICT for effective youth work in a rapidly changing environment. In particular the Council recognised the determination of the Youth Councils to implement the recommendations of 'Screenagers'. This international research report explores the use of ICT, digital and social media in youth work and provides evidence-based recommendations to promote the development of ICT in youth work.

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Teacher Mobility

10. The Council welcomed the joint update report from the two Teaching Councils and the continued cooperation between the Teaching Councils on measures adopted to reduce obstacles to the mobility of teachers.
11. The Ministers noted that the Teachers Council of Ireland (TCI) is in the process of introducing mechanisms to address qualification shortfalls which arise as a result of the introduction of the 2 year Professional Master of Education (PME). They also noted that the North South Teacher Qualifications Working Group (NSTQWG) in conjunction with the two Teaching Councils will be considering the impact of the outcome of the UK referendum on EU membership on teacher mobility at its next meeting which is being scheduled for late October 2016.

Irish Language Requirement

12. The Council welcomed the progress made with the proposal from St Mary's University College (SMUC), Belfast, and Marino Institute to collaborate to support access to the SCG by applicants accredited by the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland. It also welcomed the decision by the Department of Education (DE) to fund the upfront cost of training a local tutor(s) and, where necessary, to give consideration on an annual basis to funding the costs of invigilators/supervisors.
13. The joint proposal is now with the SCG Steering Committee at Marino Institute, for its consideration and decision.

North/South Project: History and Digital Storytelling

14. Ministers welcomed the continuing commitment to a cross border professional learning collaboration between the Professional Development Service for Teachers and the School Development Service.
15. The Council also noted the successful completion of the first year of the three year History and Digital Storytelling Project which culminated in a showcase of films made by the 12 schools involved, in the Irish Film Centre, Dublin, on 18th May 2016 and that the NSTQWG has recommended the commencement of the second year of the project.

Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS)

16. The Council was advised that the 14th Annual Conference on the theme of 'Communities of Practice: Learning Together to Teach Together' will take place in the Armagh City Hotel on the 13th and 14th October 2016.

COOPERATION BETWEEN EDUCATION INSPECTORATES

17. The Council welcomed the continuing collaborative work of the Inspectorates covering :
- capacity building for the Education and Training Inspectorate's inspection of Irish-medium education;
 - the ongoing programme of inspection exchanges and joint working on inspections; and
 - co-operation between management of both Inspectorates with a joint senior management group meeting scheduled for November.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

18. The Council agreed to hold the next NSMC Education meeting in spring 2017.

**Joint Secretariat
21 September 2016**

Website www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org