

North South Ministerial Council  
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta  
Thuaidh Theas  
An Chomhrúnaíocht

**PAPER NSMC ED 1 (13) JC**

**NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

**EDUCATION MEETING**

**NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES,  
ARMAGH**

**27 FEBRUARY 2013**

**JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ**

1. The sixteenth NSMC Education meeting was held at the NSMC Joint Secretariat Office in Armagh on 27 February 2013. The meeting was attended by John O'Dowd, MLA, Minister for Education, Ruairí Quinn, TD, Minister for Education and Skills and Nelson McCausland, MLA, Minister for Social Development. Minister O'Dowd chaired the meeting.

**OPENING REMARKS**

2. Ministers commented on the participation by both Education Ministers in a recent event entitled, "Integration, Innovation and Improvement – the Professional Identity of Teacher Educators" held in Dublin Castle as part of Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS**

3. The Council noted that progress is being made by the two Departments and Middletown Centre in facilitating the expansion of the Centre's range of services. Minor refurbishment works, to accommodate the staff involved in the

service expansion and the development of a model classroom to be used in the training of educational professionals, are to be completed to allow for the expansion of services from April 2013.

4. The Council noted continued progress being made by the Centre in delivering its Training and Advisory Service and Research and Information Service to children, professionals and parents on a flexible basis in venues across both jurisdictions. To date, the Centre has delivered training to approximately 20,700 delegates.
5. The Centre continues to develop links and co-operation with key agencies and stakeholders across the island working with third level education partners to develop appropriate in-service professional development for autism specialists in education.
6. Ahead of the planned expansion of services, the Middletown staff continues to work with a small number of children referred by the Inter-Board Autism Group. These children receive specialist assessment and subsequently tailored interventions on an outreach basis.

## **PROGRESS REPORT**

### **Education Underachievement**

7. The Council noted that both Inspectorates are progressing the production of a report focussing on Best Practice Guidelines in Literacy Provision at Post-Primary Level. Both Inspectorates are working collaboratively to produce a report focussing on Best Practice Guidelines in Numeracy Provision at Post-Primary Level, which should be ready for publication in late 2014.
8. Ministers welcomed the support given by the Education Departments in 2012 - on the recommendations of the Educational Underachievement Working Group to all-island initiatives promoting literacy, and numeracy and noted the Group's :
  - commendation of the Department of Education's advertising campaign to promote the value of education;
  - agreement to consider the potential for further joint Departmental co-operation through the medium of web based linkages; and
  - agreement to explore the use of information by both Departments for policy formulation and targeted interventions in order to develop best practice in addressing educational underachievement.
9. Ministers welcomed the current research on school attendance which will provide the opportunity to share best practice on school attendance strategies and on school guidance both North and South.

### **SCHOOL, YOUTH AND TEACHER EXCHANGES**

10. Ministers noted the recent launch of a Dissolving Boundaries Programme DVD featuring both Education Ministers which helps to show how teachers are using

information and communications technology to assist community cohesion. They also noted that the DVD showcases how experiences gained within the Dissolving Boundaries Programme have assisted the development and expansion of a similar programme in Israel where teachers from different faith schools help young people to work together.

## **PART 2 OF JOINT STUDY OF NORTH SOUTH COOPERATION IN EDUCATION**

11. Ministers affirmed the intention of the Education Departments to work to broaden and deepen their co-operation in education matters, and that the stated intentions of part 2 of the joint study on North/South co-operation in education can be achieved as a result of the proposed high-level engagement at official level.
12. Progress towards identification of potential further co-operation will be reported to a future NSMC meeting.

## **OTHER MATTERS**

13. The Council approved the Food Safety Promotion Board Business Plan and Budget 2012.

## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

14. The Council agreed to hold the next NSMC Education meeting on 23 October 2013.

**Joint Secretariat**  
**27 February 2013**

**Website [www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org](http://www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org)**