



VISION

The NCCA will play a key role in providing an education system of the highest quality for learners to enable them to realise their full potential and to equip them for successful participation in, and contribution to, economic and civil society, and in so doing promoting the growth of a learning society.

MISSION

The role of the NCCA is to lead developments in curriculum and assessment and to support the implementation of changes resulting from this work. The NCCA works in a spirit of consensus and partnership. It seeks to promote an innovative and creative environment for all learners in schools and other educational settings.



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The background of the page is an abstract composition of overlapping, textured shapes. A large, dark purple shape dominates the left and center. Overlapping its top edge is a bright yellow shape that curves across the top. To the right, a light purple shape overlaps the dark purple one. The overall effect is a layered, painterly texture.

FOREWORD AND INTRODUCTION

FOREWORD

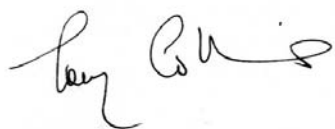
This Annual Report deals with the third year of the 2006-2008 strategic planning period of the NCCA. It is an occasion therefore to reflect not only on the achievements of this year, but on the achievements of the three-year period in its totality. It is of course also an opportunity to recognise the contribution of this particular Council which took office in March 06 and whose term ends in March 09.

Approaching the end of this three-year period it is evident that the context in which we now work is a greatly altered one to that which prevailed at the outset of this three-year period. The economic environment has changed from one of growth and expansion to one of decline and contraction. Resources for education and particularly for educational change, once relatively attainable have become greatly more restricted. It is likely that this less favourable environment will persist for some time.

It is imperative that against this background of economic decline, the enthusiasm and optimism for curriculum change and reform is not diminished. Over the past three years the NCCA has pioneered a range of initiatives which can mature in the more straitened economic circumstances of the coming years and can indeed make an important contribution to solving some of these current problems. Of most note here is Project Maths. This initiative is not only revising the entire second-level Mathematics syllabus but is doing it in a new way, involving an intense engagement by schools and teachers in the actual process of course design and development. The significance of Project Maths therefore lies not only in its outputs, but in its very processes. These processes reflect the wider commitment of the NCCA not only to finding new ways of engaging with schools and teachers in the task of on-going curriculum change but also build on the NCCA's key skills agenda in the reform of the Senior Cycle.

The new environment of education and schooling will inevitably come to rely more and more on the utilisation of ICT. As this report shows the NCCA continues to make significant strides in engaging with its key constituents – teachers, school leaders, parents, students and policy makers – through the use of ICT. It is inevitable and desirable that this momentum is built upon in the coming years.

It has been a privilege to chair this Council over the past three years. I want to thank all members for the generosity of their commitment, collegiality and contribution. I want to thank the Deputy Chairpersons, Ms Eilis Humphreys and Ms Catherine Byrne. I want to acknowledge the expertise and professionalism of all of the staff in the NCCA and to note my own personal gratitude to Dr Anne Looney, Chief Executive for the leadership conviction and insight which she singularly brings to the post.



Prof. Tom Collins
Chairperson



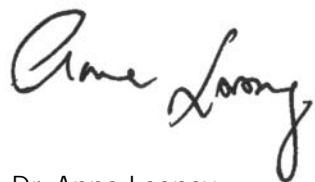
INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to introduce the Annual Report for 2008 and to highlight a number of the activities and achievements of the NCCA in that year. The chairperson has flagged the significant strategic developments for the Council, developments that will have a bearing on how the Council conducts its work into the future. For my part, I want to highlight a couple of developments that made significant demands on the organisation generally, and on the staff in particular.

The first, and by far the most challenging, was the move over the summer by a number of staff to offices in Portlaoise as part of the government's programme of decentralisation. Planning, organising and completing this move required staff to show flexibility and creativity, to take on tasks not usually associated with the business of curriculum development and to re-organise work practices and processes. That we were in situ, open for business at the beginning of September, is a credit to all staff, particularly to the decentralisation action group, led by Bill Lynch and Denise Harris.

The second organisational highlight is the development of what has come to be known as *virtual NCCA*. The chairperson has flagged the strategic impact of this new way of engaging teachers in the processes of change and review. But supporting and growing the new website, particularly the ACTION component has meant that staff have had to acquire new skills, and think in new ways as we move to generate less paper and more of the visual and interactive. As with the move to Portlaoise, the degree of staff flexibility and engagement has been remarkable, testimony to the fact that public servants can and do lead and direct change and innovation leading to tangible improvements!

In addition to thanking the staff for these and the other achievements presented in this report, I want to thank the many nominees from the education partners who participate in committees and working groups – as volunteers – and the members of the Council, led by Prof. Tom Collins who also gave so generously of their time, insight and expertise in support of the goals and objectives from 2006-2008.



Dr. Anne Looney
Chief Executive



THE ORGANISATION

ABOUT THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

The NCCA is a statutory Council and its brief is to advise the Minister for Education and Science on matters relating to curriculum and assessment for early childhood education and for primary and post-primary schools.

VISION

The Council's Strategic Plan 2006-2008 sets out its statement of vision:

The NCCA will play a key role in providing an education system of the highest quality for learners to enable them to realise their full potential and to equip them for successful participation in and contribution to, economic and civil society, and in so doing promote the growth of a learning society.

MISSION

The Council's approach to its work is summarised in its mission:

The role of the NCCA is to lead developments in curriculum and assessment and to support the implementation of changes resulting from this work. The NCCA works in a spirit of consensus and partnership. It seeks to promote an innovative and creative environment for all learners in schools and other educational settings.

COMPOSITION

The Council is a representative structure, the membership of which is determined by the Minister for Education and Science. The 25 members come from organisations representing teachers, school managers, parents, employers, trade unions and interests in education. Other members include representatives of the Department of Education and Science, the State Examinations Commission and a nominee of the Minister. The membership of the current Council, which was appointed for a three-year term to 31 March 2009, is as follows:

Prof. Tom Collins	Chairperson
Ms. Catherine Byrne	Deputy Chairperson
Ms. Eilis Humphreys	Deputy Chairperson
Ms. Antoinette Buggle	National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education
Mr. Oliver Donohoe	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Mr. Aidan Farrell	State Examinations Commission
Mr. Michael Freeley	Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland
Mr. Declan Kelleher	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Ms. Marion Lyon	National Parents Council Post-Primary
Mr. John MacGabhann	Teachers' Union of Ireland
Dr. Kenneth Milne	Church of Ireland Board of Education
Mr. Paddy Murchan	Catholic Primary Schools Managers Association
Ms Maria Murphy	National Parents Council Primary
Mr. Éamonn Murtagh	Department of Education and Science
Ms. Sheila Nunan	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Dr. Barney O'Reilly	Irish Vocational Education Association
Tomás Ó Ruairc Uas.	Foras na Gaeilge
Ms Sheila Parsons	Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland
Ms. Pat Quinn	Minister's Nominee
Ms. Bernie Ruane	Teachers' Union of Ireland
Ms. Eileen Salmon	Association of Community & Comprehensive Schools
Mr. Heino Schonfeld (to 6 th November)	The Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education
Mr. Frank Turpin	Irish Business and Employers Confederation
Mr. Paul P Tyrrell	Joint Managerial Body
Prof. Eugene Wall	Irish Federation of University Teachers

The functions of the Council are detailed in Appendix 1.



STAFF

The NCCA has a full-time executive staff led by the Chief Executive Dr. Anne Looney, and the Deputy Chief Executives, John Hammond and Dr. Sarah FitzPatrick. Together with the full-time staff members, there is a team of part-time Education Officers, who have particular expertise and who are appointed on a secondment or commission basis to the NCCA.

Details of the full and part-time staff are provided in Appendix 2.

COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

The Council progresses its work through a range of committees and working groups drawn from the organisations represented on the Council and other agencies as appropriate. Details of the committees and the numbers of meetings of each are included in Appendix 3.

FINANCE

The NCCA is funded by the exchequer through the Department of Education and Science (DES). Its allocation for the financial year 2008 was €4.749m.

The funds allocated to the NCCA cover:

- staff salaries
- costs related to the secondment and commissioning of specialist staff to support the work of the Council
- professional development
- publications including proofing, design, photography, printing and translation
- research
- costs of the meetings of Council, and its sub-committees including hire of conference facilities and travel and subsistence costs
- administration costs such as office maintenance and equipment, stationery, postage, telephone, rent, lighting and heating
- costs related to NCCA conferences and events
- IT maintenance and development
- international interaction including membership fees of international organisations such as CIDREE (Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe) and AEA (Association for Educational Assessment, Europe)
- advertising.

A detailed financial statement is provided in Appendix 4 on page 63.

HIGH LEVEL OBJECTIVES



HIGH LEVEL OBJECTIVE 1

To develop, monitor and review curriculum and assessment to improve the educational experiences of learners of all abilities including learners with special needs, exceptionally able learners, learners who experience socio-economic disadvantage, and learners whose first language is neither English nor Irish, and provide for their educational needs in the 21st century

Strategy 1.1 Develop a framework to support Early Childhood Education

Completed in 2008

Part 2 of the *Framework for Early Learning* was completed. This involved the development of guidelines on supporting children's early learning and development through interactions, play and assessment.

A User guide was developed to provide parents, childminders and practitioners with an overview of the Framework, and to illustrate how the Framework might be used alongside *Síolta* (2006) and the *Primary School Curriculum* (1999).

I've just gone through the evaluations and they're all really positive. Everyone has said how good they think the framework is...

**Noreen McGovern, Cavan County
Childcare Committee**

Congratulations to you and the team on progressing the framework to this stage and producing very worthwhile guidelines. We are impressed with the document and really like it.

**Martina Murphy, Early Childhood
Setting Manager, Blanchardstown,
Dublin**

Absolutely loved the appendix of resources for play...Every infant teacher should have this list now! Found the sample activities very beneficial, realistic, helpful, relevant, interesting and practical. Excellent throughout with great ideas that the children will learn huge amounts from, once they are being implemented.

Deirdre O'Donnell, Infant Teacher, Co. Galway

Well done to all involved! Excellent self-reflection boxes, exemplars are perfect for highlighting the points being made, particularly good that there are examples for each level (babies, toddlers and young children).

Leona Twiss, Primary School Teacher, Co. Kerry



Strategy 1.2 Continue rolling review of the Primary School Curriculum to identify and meet the needs of teachers and children using the Primary School Curriculum

Completed in 2008

Phase 2 of the review of the Primary School Curriculum was completed. This phase focused on Gaeilge, science and SPHE.

The final report and an executive summary of the review were published.

A leaflet for schools outlining the key messages from the review, and how the NCCA will respond to these, was developed for dissemination.

Strategy 1.3 Initiate and develop projects which are aligned with the Primary School Curriculum and informed by the findings of the Primary Curriculum Review

Completed in 2008

A primary school network was set up to explore and shape responses to the findings of the second phase of the Primary Curriculum Review. The first meetings of the assessment network, comprising 17 schools, took place in November.

The (information) session made me begin to realise that assessment can mean much more than the Friday spelling test or the Micra-T in May.

Teaching Principal

Strategy 1.4 Ensure direction and coherence in specific junior cycle developments by positioning these developments in the wider educational context

Completed in 2008

The rebalancing of the syllabuses for music, home economics, history, English, and art, craft, design, was completed following a comprehensive consultation process. This included online response formats and a series of meetings with teachers, parents, school management, and students.

It [rebalanced syllabus] will reduce overload considerably and I welcome and applaud the change in the syllabus.
Music teacher in consultation response



Strategy 1.5 Complete a programme of curriculum and assessment development arising from the review of senior cycle education

Completed in 2008

Draft syllabuses were completed for biology, chemistry and physics.

Following a consultation a draft syllabus was completed for the new subject politics and society.

Two short courses were completed in enterprise and psychology.

New transition units were developed and prepared for trialling in schools.

An information bulletin for schools and teachers was published and sent to all schools outlining progress in the developments at senior cycle.

An interim report on the key skills project with schools was published on the website.

On a professional development level writing up a TU with a colleague was great as it made you see things from different perspectives.

Mary-Rose Dowling, TU teacher

I found that learning is definitely more effective if you implement these skills and testing the students has verified this. New methodologies are leading to better learning.

Mathematics teacher

Everything in our daily lives is affected by politics, but sometimes a lot of politics just goes over your head.... It gets monotonous if you don't understand it..... Politics is not something that young people naturally talk about so young people need a forum to discuss it in school.

Student focus group participant in students' consultation on Politics and Society

The process of writing up Transition Units is excellent because it helps you focus and be and be clear about your aims.

Pat Faye, TU teacher

Strategy 1.6 Undertake the actions recommended in major reviews of the curriculum areas of guidance, mathematics, the classical subjects and languages (Irish, English and modern languages), aligned with the reviews of junior and senior cycle

Completed in 2008

The Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate syllabuses for Irish, and their related examinations, were reviewed to give increased emphasis on young people being able to speak the language with greater competence and confidence.

Work with post-primary schools on how the *Draft Curriculum Framework for Guidance* could be effectively introduced culminated in a report whose findings are being used to prepare a final version of the framework for implementation.

A new Junior Certificate syllabus for the classics was prepared for consultation. This syllabus combines classical studies, Latin and ancient Greek into a new integrated course with a range of options for studying classical civilisation and languages.



Strategy 1.7 Review the position of the Leaving Certificate Applied and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme in light of the broader senior cycle developments

Completed in 2008

The second phase of the ESRI research on participation in and progression from the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) was completed. This research is the first systematic and extensive research on the profile, school experiences and post-school outcomes of participants in the LCA. The second phase involved in-depth life-history interviews with young people who had taken the LCA. A report on the research will be published in 2009.

You kind of got closer to more people, because you didn't have to sit in the class and actually just listen to someone talking all day, you know, you got to integrate with people and you kind of made more friends through that like, I actually found I learned more, you know that way?

25-year-old student looking back at the experience of the LCA

As far as I was concerned I learned a lot more in that year, say, than I did in half a year in normal school but you were learning about different things...it wasn't all maths and all about this and that, you learn a lot about...how to talk to people and how to write letters and things, things that actually, that I still use today like, really make a difference in the working world.

25-year-old student looking back at the experience of the LCA

Strategy 1.8 Complete an ICT Framework for compulsory education

Completed in 2008

Ten sample activities were uploaded to exemplify Levels 1 and 2 of the ICT Framework on the ACTION website. The activities were generated by primary schools awarded Digital School status by NCTE.

I was delighted with the way the ACTION website is set up. It's a pleasure to look at such good quality photographs and the lay-out is really clear. I was particularly interested in the plans for Junior classes as it can be very difficult to source appropriate material for use of the internet for, say, second class. The Big Books are well thought through and, as always, it's great to get pointers for the more able pupils.
**Eleanor Ruddy, St. Colmcille's JNS,
Dublin**



HIGH LEVEL OBJECTIVE 2

To continue to work towards the development of assessment strategies that draw on national and international research and take account of individual learning needs, and thereby assist in planning educational experiences for all learners.

Strategy 2.1 Progress the development of assessment in the Primary School Curriculum

Completed in 2008

Copies of *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools* (2007) were disseminated to all primary schools in January/February.

An browsable copy of the guidelines was published on the NCCA website.

To support schools and parents in the process of sharing assessment information, leaflets on standardised testing were made available for download from the website.

In response to the findings of the Primary Curriculum Review (Phase 2) an assessment network of 17 schools was set up as part of the primary school network. This network will explore and shape responses to the challenges identified in the curriculum review.

In a further response to assessment challenges identified by teachers in the curriculum review the first set in a series of classroom videos in support of approaches in assessment for learning was uploaded to the ACTION website.

Let me congratulate you and your colleagues on 'Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum'. As soon as it arrived in our school there were sighs of relief. Much overdue, the document was well worth waiting for. I believe it is the most attractive and most teacher-friendly document to come into our school in a very long time.

**Dr. Rosalyn Brady, St. Joseph's NS
Dundalk**



Strategy 2.2 Support assessment practice in early childhood settings

Completed in 2008

The paper *Supporting children's early learning and development through formative assessment* was completed. This paper sets out some of the theory, research and practice which inform the *Framework for Early Learning*.

Guidelines on using assessment to support early learning and development were completed.

Strategy 2.3 Develop national report card templates for primary schools to support reporting to parents on their children's progress

Completed in 2008

The final report of the school-based developmental initiative on reporting to parents was completed.

The research report, *Reporting to Parents in Primary School: Communication, Meaning and Learning*, was published on the NCCA website. The research was conducted by a team led by Prof. Kathy Hall of UCC.

Report card templates were made available to download from the NCCA website in May.

Using one of the report card templates for my parent teacher meetings at the moment and finding it a great mix of ticks and narrative so pass on my congrats to the team.

Margaret Maxwell, Primary School Teacher

Strategy 2.4 Disseminate the outcomes of the Assessment for Learning Initiative as part of the review of junior cycle

Completed in 2008

Ten exemplars of student work along with detailed teacher feedback were placed on the NCCA website as part of the commitment to provide examples of Assessment for Learning approaches.

Strategy 2.5 Develop assessment tools to support the ICT Framework

Completed in 2008

This work was subsumed into the broader work on assessment that included the publication of *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools* and the planning for the assessment strand of the Primary School Network.

Strategy 2.6 Progress the proposals to widen the range of assessment approaches and methods used in senior cycle education as part of senior cycle developments

Completed in 2008

Proposals for new methods of assessment were developed for draft syllabuses for politics and society and the science subjects. These are being prepared for engagement with schools.



HIGH LEVEL OBJECTIVE 3

To support and improve change and development in curriculum and assessment in schools and other educational settings, and to take a leading role on advising on the professional development needs of teachers.

Strategy 3.1 Liaise closely with the support services working with primary and post-primary schools and teachers, with agencies in the early childhood sector, and with providers of pre-service and professional development for the education sector

Completed in 2008

The NCCA contributed to the work of the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP) through inputs at seminars and national meetings on standardised testing, and on assessment. The NCCA also contributed to the work of the newly established Primary Professional Development Service (PPDS).

The NCCA contributed to the work of the Special Education Support Service (SESS) through the SESS Advisory Group.

Through its involvement in management committees, the NCCA contributed to the work of the Second Level Support Service as well as to individual subject support services. The NCCA played a leading role in the management committees for Project Maths, and NCCA personnel worked closely with the Project Maths Development Team in providing support for teachers in the 24 participating schools.

The NCCA supported the work of the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) through the Centre's Consultative Committee, and contributed to the preparatory work for the National Childcare Training Strategy through the Sectoral Standards Sub-Group.

The NCCA supported the work of the network of county and city childcare committees through presentations at a national meeting in October, and inputs at local meetings of practitioners.

The NCCA collaborated with the Discover Science and Engineering/Forfás initiative in the development of the *Discovering Sensors* project for Junior Certificate science.



Strategy 3.2 Continue with the recently established practice of engaging directly with schools and other educational settings in the process of curriculum and assessment review and development

Completed in 2008

Work was completed on GOALL, a collaborative project with St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, on the use of Assessment for Learning – AfL– techniques in 2nd class English lessons in a school in Co. Louth. Involvement in this project has fed into the planning and establishment of a Primary School Assessment Network. The purpose of the assessment network is to use AfL techniques across all subject areas and to collect a bank of work samples with teacher feedback and comment to be placed on ACTION.

Planning, design work and preparation for the FÓN (Foghlaim ón Nuatheicneolaíocht / Learning through New Technologies) project was completed. FÓN follows as the second and extended phase of work from the 2007 MALL project. Work commenced with 420 second year/year ten students and 14 teachers in six cross-border schools on integrating mobile phones and networked computers into the teaching, learning and assessment of Irish.

Completion of the system design included a full specification of the software, the recording of celebrity voices as question prompts and a new website to support information sharing with the public and between teachers (<http://foghlaim.edublogs.org>).

This is the best year I've had professionally since I started teaching and it was a great experience for the children as well.

Teacher GOALL project school

I've never changed my practice so much, I can't believe how different it is.

Teacher GOALL project school

We're the talk of the school. Everyone's talking about 10J and their phones. Some very positive feedback from parents today. Everyone [was] on last night at 7.00 and I had them 1st period today and they were still hyper. Great to see the enthusiasm.

They are very enthusiastic about the project. Every night the majority of them are doing one or two sessions. We have now finished 'Mé féin' and it went well.

FÓN Project Teachers

The students have already tried to access their marks online at home which is a great plus for them as parents can be involved here too and see the positive points about it.

FÓN Project Teacher

The key skills initiative in 2008 focused on developing activities in key skills teaching and learning. The draft interim report on the key skills initiative along with reflection tools were web published.

Two schools started to implement key skills across the whole school.

Two teachers from the initiative presented on their experience of key skills teaching and learning at the Quest conference in Canada in November organised by the York Region District School Board.

This new culture has made us more open. My colleague visited my class twice this term, I returned the visit to her class, we now view one another as a resource that we can tap into to make our teaching better.

Natalie O'Neill, Key Skills teacher

My students are more independent learners now and do not look to me for all the answers.

Siobhan Coughlan, Key Skills teacher

Key skills are one of the best things to happen this school, everyone – teachers, students and parents – are now talking about learning.

Pat Power, School Principal

When a student asks her Geography teacher whether key skills would work in Geography because it is working in English, there is something significant going on. They're talking about their learning in one subject and relating it to another and in doing so, seeking and implementing change in our school, is this not personal effectiveness at its very best?

Karen Mcloughlin, Key Skills teacher

Class is now fun, I look forward to class, I think it goes by faster and I really know my stuff, this kind of learning helps it stick in your head.

Key Skills student

Great to hear from our own staff on what works for them, very motivating days work.

Mary Morgan, School Principal

This work is essential for our students, they need to have more of a say in what they do in senior cycle.

Michael O'Mahony, Key Skills teacher



Strategy 3.3 Liaise with the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Science and the State Examinations Commission as important sources of information for curriculum and assessment review and development

Completed in 2008

The NCCA continued to work closely with the SEC through regular meetings of an NCCA /SEC standing committee on examination issues and with the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit of the Department of Education and Science. It also liaised with the International Section of the DES as well as the Central Policy Unit.

Strategy 3.4 Contribute to the management and work of relevant support services

Completed in 2008

The NCCA participated in the management of Leadership Development for Schools, in addition to the work outlined at 3.1 above.

Strategy 3.5 Develop and publish guidelines, including web-based guidelines in support of the implementation of curriculum and assessment change

Completed in 2008

An online browsable version of *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools* was published.

HIGH LEVEL OBJECTIVE 4

To continue to provide for the education of all learners to enhance quality of access and participation, and attainment of outcomes for all.

Strategy 4.1 Develop curriculum, assessment and certification to meet the needs of students with special educational needs

Completed in 2008

A draft report on the feedback on *Exceptionally Able Students: Draft Guidelines for Teachers* was completed and published on the NCCA website.

The first meeting of the Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe (CIDREE) expert group took place in Dublin. This group is working on a collaborative project *curriculum design to use in the mainstream classroom for exceptionally able students*.

A draft discussion paper, *Junior Cycle Curriculum Framework for Students with Special Educational Needs*, was completed. A group of education practitioners was established to guide the work on the development of this curriculum framework. The group will also generate a range of sample learning programmes in a variety of scenarios.

Strategy 4.2 Support primary and post-primary schools in addressing the needs of students with special educational needs

Completed in 2008

A short video demonstrating how best to navigate and access the *Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities* on CD-ROM was produced and is available on the NCCA website.

It is interesting to note that scores on the special education needs efficacy scale were much higher for those who used the guidelines in comparison to those who were unaware and did not use them. The use of the guidelines also significantly impacted on scores of personal teacher efficacy suggesting that the difficulties experienced and reported by teachers, such as differentiation, knowledge of pupils needs, approaches and strategies, assessment and planning are well supported through access to the guidelines.

Margaret O' Donnell, researcher



Strategy 4.3 Provide materials for parents of primary school children which provide information about the curriculum, and demonstrate how parents can support the work of the school in implementing the Primary School Curriculum

Completed in 2008

Linked to the publication of the Report Card Templates an information sheet for parents was produced, which provided an outline of the main features of written reports and explained terms frequently used in report cards. These are available, in English, Irish, French, Polish and Lithuanian, on the NCCA website.

The Information for Parents section of the NCCA website was re-vamped to make it easier to navigate. This Information for Parents section received 142 hits in the final quarter of 2008 following the revamp. This compares with just 65 hits on the parents section of the primary site in the first quarter.

Two new tip sheets were added for use by parents of primary school children. These are entitled *Helping your young child to read and write* and *Helping your young child with maths*.

An online version of the DVD for parents *The What, Why and How of Children's Learning in Primary School* was published on the website. This DVD is available on the website in English, Gaeilge, Polish, French and Lithuanian.

I liked the list of ways to help my child by using the library more, supervised use of the internet, shared reading especially during the summer months.

Parent, Limerick

I found the key achievements very positive. It's nice to read good comments about my child.

Parent, Dublin

What I liked most was knowing how I can help my son going into 4th class.

Parent, Dublin

I would like to congratulate you on the presentation of material for parents on your website.

Susan Butler, Parent, Dublin

Strategy 4.4 Contribute to improved access to, participation in, and outcomes of post-primary education through work on curriculum and assessment for students who disengage from the educational system, and who experience educational disadvantage

Completed in 2008

A curriculum framework for Children in Detention and Care (CiDC) settings has been completed following a consultation with principals, teachers, care workers, health professionals and students. Copies of the framework and guidelines together with an outline plan of work for an implementation initiative have been forwarded to the DES.

The framework is available through the NCCA website.

A set of guidelines on how to use and implement the framework has been completed. The process of developing these guidelines has given the schools involved an opportunity to examine their current programmes and consider changes to them in light of the framework.

To support the implementation process, an information leaflet on the framework and guidelines has been designed for dissemination to the sector.

The curriculum must be flexible, adaptable and appropriate to the length of sentencing. This framework allows for this flexibility, and allows for programmes to be adapted to meet individual learner needs.

Comment from consultation

The framework should provide a good basis for planning going into a period of major change and development within Children Detention Centres.

Children Detention School Principal

Great framework of diverse opportunities for learning experiences of all kinds for a wide range of pupils.

Comment from the consultation

A model adopting the individual learner needs as education priority and policy is vital and very welcome to standardise the principles/ ethos behind these schools. It will enhance the role of educational coordinators in guiding staff, addressing individual needs of learners and reporting to stakeholders.

Health professional



Strategy 4.5 Promote and support the embedding of intercultural education in the curriculum for primary and post-primary schools

Completed in 2008

NCCA facilitated a workshop on the intercultural guidelines for the directors of education centres.

Strategy 4.6 Support the needs of teachers and schools working with students for whom English is an additional language

Completed in 2008

The revised *English as an Additional Language: Guidelines for Teachers* and supporting materials (e.g. videos and photos) gathered in schools were made available in a new browsable and interactive format on the ACTION website.

Support materials for primary and post-primary language support teachers, which were developed by Integrate Ireland Language Training, were made available on the NCCA website.

Congratulations on the further development of the [English as an Additional Language] Guidelines, these exemplars - particularly those in video format will be of great benefit to classroom teachers and college lecturers. These are an excellent resource.
Lecturer, College of Education

Strategy 4.7 Support the effective transfer of students at all points from early childhood education to primary school, from primary school to post-primary school, from junior cycle to senior cycle and from post-primary education to further and higher education

Completed in 2008

As part of *Project Maths*, work began on developing a bridging framework to provide better continuity between junior cycle and primary school mathematics. The bridging framework links the various strands of mathematics in the primary school to topics in the Junior Certificate mathematics syllabuses.

A bank of subject factsheets was developed to support the transition of students from sixth class in primary school to first year in post-primary. These factsheets provide information about the different subjects available in junior cycle in a colourful and easy-to-read format, and are available on the NCCA website.

Research on students' experience of science in first year at post-primary and their reflections on how this compared with their experience of the subject at primary, was completed by a team from St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra. This will inform the Council's work on transition.

A final report on the consultation with schools on the draft *Curriculum Framework for Guidance* was completed in September.

The Guidance Framework is a good idea and a school can, and should, follow most of what is included.

Participating School, Consultation on the Curriculum Framework for Guidance



Strategy 4.8 Contribute to improved access, transfer and progression for all learners in gaining school-based qualifications

Completed in 2008

As part of the review of the implementation and impact of the National Framework of Qualifications during the first five years of its existence, the NCCA conducted a consultation process and produced a *Report of the School Sector*. This was undertaken in collaboration with the Department of Education and Science and the State Examinations Commission. The report was fed into the broader study being conducted by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) which will produce final recommendations arising from the study in 2009.

A comprehensive qualifications framework, which gains currency and use in the education and training systems over time, is a pre-requisite to underpinning the principle of lifelong learning for everyone and to improving the learning choices and opportunities of those who currently fail to derive adequate benefit from education and training.

Comment from The Implementation and Impact of the National Framework of Qualifications: Report of the School Sector (2008)

HIGH LEVEL OBJECTIVE 5

To engage in, commission and review relevant research so that the NCCA's work is informed by best practice in relation to curriculum, assessment and learning, and by emerging understandings and experiences of educational change.

Strategy 5.1 Commission research to support prioritised strategies and actions, and integrate the findings of such research into the work of curriculum review and development

Completed in 2008

In May, a team from St Patrick's College, Drumcondra presented the final report on Phase 1 of their research *Science in the Primary School*. The report was published online.

In June 2008 the St Patrick's College research team and two members of the NCCA executive presented papers on the research and the data on science from the PCR Phase 2 at the annual conference of the Irish Association for Social Scientific and Environmental Education at Queen's University, Belfast.

Well-Being and Post-Primary Schooling: a review of the literature and research was published. The research, commissioned by the NCCA, was carried out by a team led by Dr. Maeve O' Brien, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra.

Research into *Parental Involvement in Post-Primary Education* was completed for the NCCA by Dr. Delma Byrne and Dr. Emer Smyth of the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI).

Research into transition to senior cycle was completed for the NCCA by a team of researchers from the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) led by Dr. Emer Smyth.

Strategy 5.2 Participate in national and international research initiatives to inform ongoing curriculum review and development

Completed in 2008

In addition to the research commissioned by NCCA and detailed elsewhere, staff participated in educational networks supporting research. These included the CIDREE special education initiative, and a European teaching and learning network at senior cycle.

Strategy 5.3 Provide staff with professional development opportunities to support their engagement with current research and relevant research networks

Completed in 2008

Seven staff pursued post-graduate studies which involved developing research skills.

Staff had opportunities to attend and present at national and international research conferences including that of the British Educational Research Association, the European Early Childhood Education Research Association, the Educational Studies Association of Ireland, and the OMEP - the World Organisation for Early Childhood Education Ireland - research conference.



Strategy 5.4 Ensure that research reports and other relevant resource materials are available and accessible

Completed in 2008

In May 2008 the Primary Curriculum Review Phase 2 Final Report was published online. Hard copies of the report were sent to all of the schools involved in the review.

In December 2008 a launch was held at St Patrick's College, Drumcondra to mark the publication of *Well-Being and Post Primary Schooling: a review of the literature and research*. The research was conducted by a team at St.Patrick's College led by Dr. Maeve O' Brien. The report was launched by Emily Logan, the Ombudsman for Children.

Internally, the NCCA ReSources blog continued to be developed to provide access to research reports and act as a portal to online materials.

HIGH LEVEL OBJECTIVE 6

To develop structures and processes to improve NCCA's corporate capacity, effectiveness and communications, and to strengthen relationships between the NCCA and its stakeholders.

Strategy 6.1 Continue to promote a culture of continuing professional learning and development across the organisation

Completed in 2008

Staff took part in a range of professional development activities to support work across the six High Level Objectives. This involved skills-based training in areas such as accounting and finance, ICT, web-development and publishing, and presenting. Staff also participated in and presented at a number of national and international conferences and seminars.

New staff completed an induction programme. This programme was revised mid-year based on staff feedback.

Full-time staff participated in the first cycle of Performance Management. Staff received 'just-in-time' training to support this work.

The NCCA organised a conference in October, on *Leading and Supporting Change*, to support the Council's work in developing curriculum and assessment advice by working closely with schools and other educational settings. Professor James Spillane, Northwestern University, Chicago provided the keynote address.

The entire day was useful as a welcome opportunity to become more familiar with the structure of the NCCA, its operating procedures and the I.T and general resource assistance available ... It might be useful to have a printed document for new staff which would detail the 'what I need to know' type information ... The booklet would act as a welcome reference point especially during the first few months.

Participant, September staff induction programme

Session on Post-primary overview was great. Because the work of the NCCA is so diverse and some many different projects going on at the same time, it is good to see or at least be made aware of the bigger picture ... one of the good things to experience was meeting so many people within the organisation and putting names and faces with projects and places. What struck me most about the organisation was how positive everyone was about the work being done.

Participant, October staff induction programme

I think it was very well planned, laid out and delivered in a very easy to follow manner. There was also an atmosphere of openness whereby one would feel comfortable to ask questions without feeling silly. I wish I had the opportunity to do it a long time ago. The information on putting documents together was really beneficial to me.

Participant, October staff induction programme

The keynote speaker posed some challenging issues about implementation of change. He gave us a lot to think about ... The choice of speakers, and the message they sent was all that I needed as an Education Officer to feel excited about what we do, and to give me fuel for thought in how I will work in the future to harness that enthusiasm, and move forward. Thanks to all the team for a great couple of days.

Participant, NCCA Conference 2008

I enjoyed my experience of the conference and feel more empowered about change and fostering change ... More use of workshops, group discussions...thus capitalising on the experience and skills of a wider group. The range of speakers was excellent. I would have liked to have a copy of their Powerpoint presentations.

Participant, NCCA Conference 2008

I've been to a number of EO conferences, and this was the more coherent and best so far. I like the fact that the conference days are not crowded with lengthy inputs. This one had a very nice balance of input and workshop sessions.

Participant, NCCA Conference 2008



Strategy 6.2 Implement workplace policies and value the contributions of all staff to the running and development of the organisation

Completed in 2008

The NCCA drew upon its workplace policies over the course of the year including:

- Recruitment and selection
- Conditions of employment
- Dignity and respect at work
- Employee relations

Strategy 6.3 Continue to improve the quality of NCCA enabling committee structures and its consultation processes

Completed in 2008

The NCCA continued to consult with the various partners in education on curriculum and assessment reform, through written consultations, face-to-face meetings and, increasingly, through online surveys. There were 684 responses to the online consultation on five rebalanced junior cycle subjects

A second edition of COMET was prepared for publication in January 2009.

Appendix 3 contains a full list of committee and working group meetings held in 2008.

Strategy 6.4 Further develop the NCCA IT environment in line with emerging technologies

Completed in 2008

A terminal services server was added to the NCCA system to provide full and secure access from the NCCA's Portlaoise offices to the main server. The new server also enabled improved remote access for off-site users.

A full telephone extension system was installed in the Portlaoise offices, which also acts as an extension of the system in the Dublin offices.

Additional IT hardware and software were purchased to facilitate greater use of computer technology in conducting and communicating the work of the NCCA. Some desktop and laptop computers were replaced as part of a rolling upgrade of equipment.

Improved IT maintenance is provided through remote/online support as well as through site visits.



Strategy 6.5 Maximise the use of financial and human resources to meet legislative requirements in relation to corporate governance

Completed in 2008

A **plan of work** was formulated for each unit from the strategic plan and key milestones were set. Performances against these milestones were measured and reviewed on a six weekly basis.

NCCA staff members continued to **work on a flexible basis** on cross sectoral teams and accommodated atypical working hours and arrangements to the benefit of the organisation.

All Council members signed **declarations of interest** and all new full-time employees signed the Civil Service **Code of Standards and Behaviour**.

Competitive tendering continued to be the normal procedure in NCCA procurement processes.

The Comptroller and Auditor General completed an audit of the NCCA Financial Statements for 2007 and commented favourably on the running of the accounts section in NCCA.

All the legislative requirements in relation to corporate governance have been met.

NCCA staff members continue to meet the requirements of Towards 2016 agreement.

While I am naturally disappointed at not winning (the tender), I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your team for the care and attention given to the tendering process. I believe the process was fair and gave everyone a chance to win the business.

Your speed of response to queries and letting potential tenderers know their status has meant we have not had to wait around for news.

My only regret is that all other bodies do not treat tenderers with the respect you have clearly shown!

Correspondence from a participant in the tendering process

Strategy 6.6 Prepare for decentralisation to Portarlington

Completed in 2008

Temporary offices in Portlaoise were fitted out by the OPW for NCCA and Equality Tribunal staff. Agreement was reached with the Equality Tribunal on some shared services and facilities, and a local liaison person was identified by each agency.

An advance NCCA party consisting of 4 administration staff, a Deputy CEO, a Director and 5 Education Officers moved to Portlaoise on Monday 25th August 2008.

Two meeting rooms are available and a number of meetings have taken place in the Portlaoise offices since August.

No decision has been made in relation to the planned decentralisation to Portarlington. The situation will be reviewed in 2011.

Strategy 6.7 Plan for and report annually on NCCA progress

Completed in 2008

The annual report for 2007 was published in Irish and English online and on CD.



Strategy 6.8 Develop and implement a comprehensive communications strategy

Completed in 2008

The shift to online communications continued in 2008. New approaches to consultation and engagement were implemented.

Strategy 6.9 Develop *info@ncca* to inform primary and post-primary teachers and early childhood practitioners of the ongoing work of the NCCA, and to support teachers in curriculum implementation

Completed in 2008

info@ncca continued to be circulated to all schools, education centres and many professional organisations at a rate of 22,500 copies per issue.

Plans to distribute an electronic-only version in 2009 were advanced.

A new database of email addresses for all schools was completed.

The total number of subscribers to the electronic version of info@ncca increased to 474.

Thirty seven schools emailed newsletter@ncca.ie requesting extra copies.

Strategy 6.10 Develop content for the website, the content of which is accessible to a wider audience

Completed in 2008

Work continued on the development of the three websites, **www.ncca.ie**, **www.curriculumonline.ie** and **www.action.ncca.ie** and their respective Irish language mirror sites.

Traffic on the sites for November 2008 – as an example - was reported at: ncca.ie: 20, 265 hits or an average daily rate of 675; curriculumonline.ie: 13,997 hits or an average daily rate of 466; action.ncca.ie: 1,001 hits or an average daily rate of 33.

The internal web team was re-organised with section editors put in place, workflows established and protocols agreed.

The new NCCA Action web site is an impressive and extremely useful addition to the resources available to teachers to help them be proactive and reflective professionals. The information is well structured and easy to access, and the suggestions are practical, well thought out, and clearly the work of teachers who are enterprising, creative and focussed on implementing the principles of the curriculum. The practical activities will resonate with many teachers, who will appreciate the clarity and focus they provide. These activities, in addition to providing practical suggestions to put good ideas into practice, also provide a useful framework to help teachers plan, implement and assess rich learning opportunities.

**Robbie O' Leary, Sacred Heart SNS,
Killinarden, Dublin**



Working with other sectors of the education system

High Level Objectives 3 & 6

In 2008 the executive continued to work with other sectors of the education system, giving presentations on the work of the NCCA and on current issues and trends in curriculum and assessment, and providing briefings for organisations who work with the Council and with schools and teachers. This work, although directly connected to HLOs 3 and 6, also contributes to the Council's work in the generation of consensus on curriculum and assessment matters.

The table below outlines a sample of presentations made during 2008.

ORGANISATION/GROUP	THEME OF PRESENTATION
Albanian delegation to Ireland, Dublin, May 2008	The work of the NCCA and developments at Senior Cycle
ASTI Conveners, Dublin, January 2008	Current developments in post-primary senior cycle
ASTI Seminar. Representatives on NCCA committees. Dublin, September 2008	Curriculum Provision and Qualifications for Students with General Learning Disabilities
ATECI, Directors of Education Centres. Kerry, November 2008 Sligo, September 2008	NCCA Intercultural Education Guidelines Current Initiatives in NCCA
Cavan County Childcare Committee, Cavan, December 2008	The <i>Framework for Early Learning</i>
Centre for Talented Youth in Ireland, National Conference, DCU, January 2008	Exceptionally Able Students; Draft Guidelines for Teachers
Church of Ireland College of Education, Dublin, November 2008	Developments in Early Childhood Education in Primary Schools
Citizenship Education Network	Key Skills
Computer Education Society of Ireland (CESI) Annual Conference, Dublin, February 2008	Teachers using ICT. Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) project
Dáil na nÓg, Dublin, February 2008	Education Reform and Emotional & Mental Health for Young People
DES Inspectorate. Regional Group Meeting, Gort, June 2008 Cavan, January 2008	Supporting Assessment for Learning in Primary and Post- Primary Schools. The Future of Learning – Voices of Teachers and Students
Dublin City Childcare Committee, October 2008	The <i>Framework for Early Learning</i>
Dublin Institute of Technology BA students, February 2008	The <i>Framework for Early Learning</i>
Educate Together Seminar, Dublin, October 2008	Directions in Post-primary Curriculum and Assessment
Educationalists from Macedonia in collaboration with the Educational Research Centre/School of Education TCD, Dublin, April 2008	Assessment in primary schools in Ireland
European Forum for Freedom in Education Conference, Brussels, May 2008	Participation in colloquium: From early childhood curiosity to early school leaving



Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN), Dublin, February 2008	Project Maths – an overview
Forbairt Naíonraí Teoranta, Comhdháil Bhliantúil, Áth Luain, Deireadh Fómhair 2008	The <i>Framework for Early Learning</i>
Froebel College of Education, undergraduate students, Dublin, April 2008	Guidelines for Teachers: Special Educational Needs
Guatamalan Education Department, Dublin, April 2008	The work of the NCCA and developments at Senior Cycle
IPPN Information seminars for principals, Castlebar and Letterkenny, September 2008	Current work in the NCCA
Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education, Annual Conference, Dublin, June 2008	Enabling Communication. Exceptionally Able Students; Draft Guidelines for Teachers
Irish Mathematical Society. IMS annual meeting, Cork, September 2008	Developments in post-primary mathematics education – <i>Project Maths</i>
Irish Maths Service Teaching Conference, maths lecturers, Waterford, May 2008	Developments in post-primary mathematics education – <i>Project Maths</i>
Irish National Teachers' Organisation, Early Start Summer Course, Dublin, July 2008	The <i>Framework for Early Learning</i>
Irish Vocational Education Association, Annual Conference, Galway, September 2008	A Junior Cycle Curriculum Framework for Students with SEN Flexible Learning Profiles Changing Curriculum and Qualifications: More equality or more of the same
Irish Youth Justice Service (IYJS), April 2008	Curriculum framework for Children in Detention and Care (CiDC)
Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Education Office, February 2008	NCCA Intercultural Education Guidelines
Kerry Education Services, October 2008	Flexible Learning Profiles
Library Association of Ireland, Dublin, November 2008	Recommending with Confidence: Public Libraries and the Primary School Curriculum Working Together

Marino College of Education, Online EAL course, Dublin, April 2008 undergraduate and postgraduate students, Dublin, December 2008	EAL 'expert' for CPD video The What, How and Who of NCCA
National Parents' Council, Primary – North Dublin Branch Meeting, October 2008	The What, Why and How of your children's learning in primary school
NUI Maynooth Teaching Methods, May 2008	Key Skills and Continuous Professional Development
Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO), July 2008	Curriculum framework for Children in Detention and Care (CiDC)
PGDE students NUI Maynooth, April 2008 December 2008	Senior Cycle Developments and Key Skills Key skills and active learning
Primary Curriculum Support Programme, January and March 2008	Assessment in Primary Schools
Primary Professional Development Service, (PPDS) Trim, September 2008 Dublin, November 2008 Dublin, December 08	Primary Curriculum Review, Phases 1 and 2 and ACTION website NCCA Intercultural Education Guidelines English as an Additional Language: Guidelines for Teachers
Region 6 Futures exchange, LDS, SDPI, SLSS, June 2008	NCCA key skills initiative
SDPI Summer School, Dublin, August 2008	Planning on Purpose: Assessment and School Development Planning
T4 Support Service, Galway, April 2008	Assessment for Learning
VEC-CEEEOA. CEEEOA Annual conference, Waterford, April 2008	Developments in post-primary mathematics education – <i>Project Maths</i>



In addition to these presentations or workshops, a number of staff presented papers or gave keynote addresses at conferences and seminars, both in Ireland and abroad. Some examples are presented in the table below:

SEMINAR/CONFERENCE	TITLE OF PAPER
Childcare Network Loch Garman, Wexford. The Great Outdoors, Supporting Children in Exploring their Natural Environment, March 2008	<i>The Framework for Early Learning: Promoting the physical and psychological well-being of children</i>
Educational Studies Association of Ireland (ESAI), Annual Conference, March 2008	<i>Primary Curriculum Review, Phase 2 Making their voices heard: students perception of senior cycle teaching and learning</i>
European Early Childhood Education Research Association's (EECERA) 18 th International Conference, <i>Reconsidering the Basics in early Childhood Education</i> , Stavanger, Norway, September 2008	<i>Symposium: Assessment in the Framework for Early Learning: Ireland's National Early Years Curriculum The Framework for Early Learning – Ireland's national early years curriculum Supporting early learning and development through formative assessment: what the literature says Supporting early learning and development through assessment: guidelines for practice Sharing assessment information with parents using Report Card Templates</i>
European Education Research Association (EERA) Conference, Sweden, September 2008	<i>School Based Curriculum Development: The Irish Context Curriculum development through the lens of three school based projects</i>
Irish Association of Social, Scientific and Environmental Education (IASSEE), ScoTens conference, Belfast, June 2008	<i>Primary Curriculum Review 2: Teachers' Experience with the Science Curriculum</i>
NQAI Consultative Forum on the NFQ Implementation and Impact Study, November 2008	<i>The implementation and impact of the National Framework of Qualifications: Report of the School Sector</i>
OMEP Conference, Cherishing Childhood, University College Cork, April 2008	<i>The Framework for Early Learning – background and contents</i>

Quest Conference, Toronto, November 2008	<i>Unlocking Learning: Key skills, teachers and learners; an Irish experience</i>
The National Childcare Investment Programme, National Seminar, Dublin, October 2008	<i>The Framework for Early Learning</i>
Third National Symposium on PISA, April 2008	<i>PISA Science and Junior Certificate Science – first cousins or distant relatives?</i>

ESRI presentations 2008

The following presentations made by the ESRI education team during 2008 have drawn on research funded or part-funded by the NCCA:

Key influences on academic performance within lower secondary education: a longitudinal analysis, American Educational Research Association annual conference, New York, March.

The experiences of students in junior cycle, University of Limerick education seminar, April.

The experiences of Junior Certificate students, Colleges of Education Research Consortium conference, Dublin, November.

Moving through the junior cycle: findings from the ESRI longitudinal study, NEPS Annual Conference (two sessions), Galway, December.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

The detailed functions of the statutory Council under the terms of the Education Act, 1998, can be summarised as follows:

- To periodically review the curriculum, or any part of the curriculum, for schools and the syllabuses taught and to advise the Minister
- To advise the Minister on appropriate methods for the assessment of the effectiveness of the education provided in schools, with particular regard to mechanisms whereby students who have problems achieving their potential may be identified as early as practicable and assisted
- To advise the Minister on strategies which will assist students to make a successful transition from primary school to post-primary school
- To periodically advise the Minister on the standards of knowledge and skills which students at various age-levels should attain and on the mechanisms for assessing the achievement of such standards, having regard to national and international standards and good practice in relation to such assessment
- To periodically review the in-service training needs of teachers, including needs arising from the introduction of new curricula, subjects or syllabuses in schools, and to advise the Minister in relation to those needs
- To advise the Minister on the requirements, as regards curriculum and syllabuses, of students with a disability or other special educational needs
- To advise the Minister on strategies which have as their objective the enhancement of the effectiveness in the teaching and use of the Irish language in schools
- To maintain, manage, administer and invest all the money and assets of the Council
- To promote research and development in education and to conduct or commission such research and development where appropriate to its objects and functions
- To promote equality of access to education generally and to instruction in any particular subjects between male and female students
- To accept gifts of money, land or other property upon such trusts and conditions, if any, as may be specified by the donors
- To do all such acts and things as may be necessary to further the objects of the Council, including such functions in relation to review and reform of the curriculum in schools and the assessment of the outcomes of the education provided in schools as the Minister shall from time to time direct.



APPENDIX 2

NCCA Staff

The full-time staff in 2008 was as follows:

Chief Executive

- Dr. Anne Looney

Deputy Chief Executives

- John Hammond
- Dr. Sarah FitzPatrick
- Arlene Forster (in an acting capacity from 1 May)

Directors, Curriculum and Assessment

- Arlene Forster (to 30 April)
- Peter Johnson (to 31 October)
- Bill Lynch
- Hal O'Neill
- Majella O'Shea
- Kathryn Crowley (from 1 September)

Administration

- Paul Brady, Assistant Principal
- Denise Harris, Higher Executive Officer
- Jackie O'Brien, Higher Executive Officer
- Morgan Lockhart, Executive Officer
- Patricia Cassidy, Clerical Officer
- Bernie Gallagher, Clerical Officer
- Ursula Corcoran, Clerical Officer
- John Connors, Services Officer
- Roy McMullen, Services Officer
- Ultan Macken, Temporary Clerical Officer
- Angela Farrell, Temporary Clerical Officer
- Maeve Stokes, Temporary Clerical Officer (from 28 April)

Education Officers

- Majella Dempsey
- Susan Dennison
- John Halbert
- Katrina Keogh
- Pierce Nolan
- Clóna O'Keeffe
- Janet Rooney
- Anna Walsh
- Rachel Linney (from 14 January)
- Noel Loftus (from 1 September)
- Judith Ní Mhurchú (from 1 September)
- Shane Scanlan (from 1 September)
- Maire Riney (from 29 September)

The following Education Officers were retained by the NCCA on a part-time or occasional basis:

Early Childhood and Primary Education

- Karin Bacon, Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE): Geography
- Paul Brennan, Arts Education: Drama
- Dr. Mary Daly, Early Childhood Education
- Dr. Lorraine Harbison, Assessment
- Frances Murphy, Physical Education
- Regina Murphy, Arts Education: Music
- Geraldine O'Connor, Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE): History
- Valerie O'Dowd, Mathematics

Post-Primary Education

- Silvia Bertoni, Languages
- Sarah Bonar, Physical Education
- Paul Brennan, Music
- Colette Brophy, Home Economics
- Cahil Doherty, Technical Graphics/ Technical Drawing

- John Dredge, History
- Brendan Duane, Chemistry
- Brian Farley, Classical Subjects
- Lorraine Gillespie, Religious Education
- Ger Halbert, Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE)
- Michael Halton, Physics/ Chemistry (combined)
- Annette Honan, Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), Interculturalism
- Bríd Kennedy, Special Educational Needs
- Pat Lynch, Engineering
- John McCarthy, Modern Languages
- Celine McGuinness, Business
- Sr. Enda McMullen, Art
- Deirdre Matthews, Leaving Certificate Applied
- Kevin Maume, Biology
- John Mulcahy, Geography
- Declan O'Neill, English
- Noel O' Neill, Construction Studies/Architectural Technology
- Dr. Roland Tormey, Social and Political Education
- Pat Younger, Economics



APPENDIX 3

List of Committee Meetings 2008

COMMITTEE	TOTAL
Early Childhood and Primary	
Early Childhood Committee	4
Early Childhood and Primary Committee	7
Language Committee Primary	3
Working Group on Assessment Primary	3
Junior Cycle	
Junior Cycle Review Committee	6
Junior Cycle Art	3
Junior Cycle Business Studies	5
Junior Cycle CSPE	2
Junior Cycle English	1
Junior Cycle Environmental Studies	1
Junior Cycle FÓN Advisory Committee	3
Junior Cycle Gaeilge	6
Junior Cycle Geography	1
Junior Cycle Home Economics	3
Junior Cycle History	2
Junior Cycle Materials Technology Wood	1
Junior Cycle Mathematics	9
Junior Cycle Metalwork	1
Junior Cycle Music	3
Junior Cycle Technical Graphics	4
Junior Cycle Technology	1
Cross Sector	
Special Education Steering Committee	2
Detention Schools High Support Units Committee	2
Short Course Committee	2
Transition Unit Committee	3

COMMITTEE	TOTAL
Senior Cycle	
Senior Cycle Committee	6
Senior Cycle Biology	3
Senior Cycle Chemistry	5
Senior Cycle Economics	1
Senior Cycle Gaeilge	8
Senior Cycle Mathematics	8
Senior Cycle Physical Education	2
Senior Cycle Physics	2
Senior Cycle Religion	2
Senior Cycle Technical Drawing	2
Senior Cycle Technology	1
Transition Unit Committee	3
Short Course Committee	2
Boards of Studies	
Board of Studies for Arts and Humanities	2
Board of Studies for Classics	6
Board of Studies for Mathematics	5
Board of Studies for Science	4
Total number of meetings in 2008	135

APPENDIX 4

EXTRACTS FROM THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE NCCA FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

Extracts from the Financial Statements of the NCCA for the year ended 31 December 2008
These statements are subject to audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General

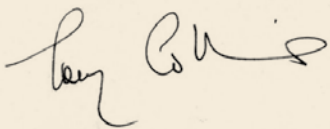
Bank: Bank of Ireland
Lr. Baggot Street
P.O. Box 3131
Dublin 2

Accountants: Crowleys DFK
16/17 College Green
Dublin 2

Introduction: In accordance with my obligations under the Code of Practice for the Governance I confirm that in respect of the financial year 2008:

- all appropriate procedures for internal audit (as set out in Appendix A, section 4 of the Code) have been complied with
- the procurement procedures as set out in the Code were complied with
- no asset disposals or access to assets by third parties have taken place
- the NCCA had no capital expenditure proposals
- Government policy on the pay of Chief Executives and all NCCA employees has been complied with
- no directors fees were paid to Council members
- the NCCA has complied with its obligations under tax laws.

On behalf of Council



Dr. Tom Collins
Chairperson

12 March, 2009



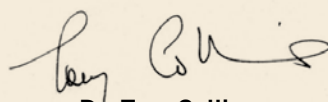
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

	Notes	2008 €	2007 €
Income			
Department of Education and Science grants and other income	1 & 1a	4,820,591	3,941,714
Transfer to/(from) capital account	6	12,964	23,705
		<hr/> 4,833,555	<hr/> 3,965,419
Expenditure			
Staff Costs	2	3,100,215	3,166,995
Administration	7	1,533,240	2,023,527
		<hr/> 4,633,455	<hr/> 5,190,522
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year		200,100	(1,225,103)
Accumulated (deficit) / surplus at 31 December		(174,497)	1,050,606
		<hr/> 25,603	<hr/> (174,497)

The Council had no gains or losses in the financial years other than those dealt with in the income and expenditure account. The Statement of Accounting Policies and Notes 1 to 12 form part of these Financial Statements.

On behalf of the Council


Dr. Anne Looney
 Chief Executive


Dr. Tom Collins
 Chairperson

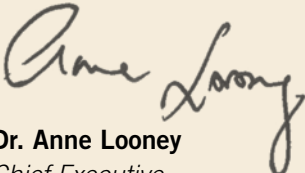
12 March, 2009

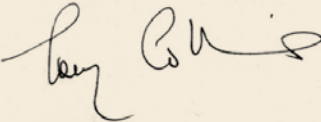
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2008


	Notes	2008 €	2007 €
Fixed Assets	3	58,666	71,630
Current Assets			
Cash at Bank		33,924	23,983
Debtors	4	40,306	37,606
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		74,230	61,589
Current Liabilities			
Creditors and Accruals	5	(48,627)	(236,086)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net Current Assets		25,603	(174,497)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net Assets		84,269	(102,867)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Financed By:			
Capital Account	6	58,666	71,630
Income and Expenditure Account		25,603	(174,497)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		84,269	(102,867)
		<hr/>	<hr/>

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Notes 1 to 12 form part of these Financial Statements.

On behalf of the Council


Dr. Anne Looney
Chief Executive


Dr. Tom Collins
Chairperson

12 March, 2009 

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

	2008	2007
	€	€
1 Income		
Department of Education and Science (DES) grants	4,749,000	3,939,123
Included in the above are the following grants:		
• Research grant from Gender and Equality unit, DES	-	91,123
1a Other Income	71,591	2,591
Included in the above are the following grants:		
• Foras na Gaeilge (MALL)	17,500	
• Foras na Gaeilge (FÓN)	50,000	-
• Ombudsman for Children's Office	3,750	-
• Deposit interest	341	2,591
2 Staff Costs		
	2008	2007
	€	€
The staff costs of the Council comprises		
• Salaries and wages	2,645,947	2,657,616
• Travel and subsistence	303,412	340,730
• Recruitment advertising	30,289	46,320
• Staff development, health and safety expenses	120,567	122,329
	3,100,215	3,166,995

The average number of persons employed by the council during the period was 35 (36 in 2007).

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

3 Fixed Assets	Office F&F	Office Equip	IT Equip	Total
Cost	€	€	€	€
1 January 2008	62,774	77,254	213,461	353,489
Additions	1,007	6,982	26,909	34,898
As at 31 December 2008	63,781	84,236	240,370	388,387
Depreciation				
1 January 2008	31,789	63,727	186,343	281,859
Charge for the period	6,378	7,869	33,615	47,862
As at 31 December 2008	38,167	71,596	219,958	329,721
Net Book Value				
At 31 December 2008	25,614	12,640	20,412	58,666
At 31 December 2007	30,985	13,527	27,118	71,630
4 Debtors and Prepayments				
		2008		2007
		€		€
Prepayments		40,306		37,606
		40,306		37,606
5 Creditors and Accruals				
		2008		2007
		€		€
Trade creditors		20,899		164,151
Other creditors		1,039		6,443
Accruals		26,689		65,492
		48,627		236,086



NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

6 Capital Account	2008	2008	2007	2007
	€	€	€	€
Balance at 1 January		71,630		95,335
Transfer (to)/from income and expenditure account				
Funds allocated to acquire fixed assets	34,898		7,390	
Amortisation in line with depreciation	(47,862)	(12,964)	(31,095)	(23,705)
Balance at 31 December		58,666		71,630

7 Expenditure	2008	2007
	€	€
Administration Costs		
Rent rates, security and storage	349,755	339,594
Office equipment and repairs and maintenance	48,671	46,875
Telephone, postage, stationery	130,798	173,629
Room hire and catering	60,297	56,413
Accountancy	16,620	16,307
Audit	17,790	19,660
Bank charges	1,196	453
Information technology	71,638	161,111
General advertising	4,050	22,588
Reference books, documents and subscriptions	12,528	19,021
Light and heat	15,569	20,012

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

Cleaning	48,584	48,300
Conference expenses	13,789	17,933
Special projects	151,000	50,920
Publications	239,228	655,678
Research fees	303,865	343,938
Depreciation	47,862	31,095
	<u>1,533,240</u>	<u>2,023,527</u>

8 Council members' interests

The Council adopted procedures in accordance with guidelines issued by the Department of Finance in relation to the disclosure of interests by Council members and these procedures have been adhered to in the year. There were no transactions in the year in relation to the Board's activities in which Board members had any beneficial interest.

9 Operating Lease

The Office of Public Works holds a 25 year tenancy agreement from 13 August, 1998 in respect of the lease of NCCA office accommodation at 24 Merrion Square. The annual rent is €235,300 subject to a 5 year rent review.

The Office of Public Works also holds a tenancy agreement for 4 years and 9 months from 16 January, 2007 in respect of the lease of NCCA office accommodation at 24A Merrion Square (The Mews). The annual rent is €68,210.

10 Capital Commitments

There were no capital commitments at 31 December 2008.

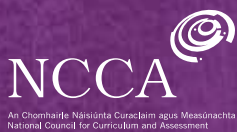
11 Contingent Liabilities

No contingent liabilities existed at 31 December 2008.

12 Approval of Financial Statements

The financial statements were approved by the Council on 12 March, 2009.





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