



School Development Planning Initiative

National Progress Report

2002



the boards of management of their schools, and partly to the fact that some schools chose to commence the SDP process by articulating or reviewing their mission, vision and fundamental aims.

Priorities Chosen

Schools were asked to list the areas of school life that they had prioritised for development. A wide variety of areas was listed. The top 10 priorities identified are in Table 5.2:

Priorities for Development	% of 209 profiled
1. Senior Cycle Curriculum	71%
2. Discipline/Behaviour	61%
3. Pastoral Care	51%
4. Remedial Education/Learning Support	51%
5. Junior Cycle Curriculum	50%
6. Staff Development	50%
7. School Building/Facilities	49%
8. Mission/Vision/Aims	46%
9. Educational Disadvantage	44%
10. Attendance	44%

Table 5.2 Areas of School Life Prioritised for Development

The list indicates that schools attended to both curricular and organisational needs in selecting their priorities. In relation to the Senior Cycle curriculum, schools' main focus was on diversification through the introduction of additional programmes – Leaving Certificate Applied, Leaving Certification Vocational Programme or Transition Year Programme. In relation to Junior Cycle a major concern was to find ways of accommodating the two additional compulsory subjects, CSPE (Civic, Social and Political Education) and SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education). In general, therefore, schools were focusing more on curriculum provision than on

teaching and learning processes during the Review stage, but they would adjust that focus when preparing for the implementation of the new programmes, assisted by the relevant Curriculum Support Service. The fact that fewer than 50% of schools prioritised the issue of attendance is perhaps surprising, given the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act in relation to school attendance strategies and records (see **Education (Welfare) Act, 2000**, sections 21 and 22). The Act was not commenced until July 2002, however, and feedback indicates that many schools may have been awaiting the guidelines from the National Education Welfare Board that are mentioned in the Act (section 22 subsection 7).

Policies put in Place

Schools were asked to identify the policies that they had put in place since September 1999. A wide variety of policies was listed, the most common of which were:

Policies in Place	% of 209 profiled
Discipline/Code of Behaviour	77%
Health and Safety	67%
Bullying	55%
Admissions/Enrolment	44%
Relationships and Sexuality Education	29%
Pastoral Care	29%
Homework	22%

Table 5.3 Policies put in Place since September 1999

It should be noted that the question did not address policies put in place prior to September 1999. Moreover, the answers provided by some schools may not have been comprehensive. Nevertheless, the pattern of responses would suggest that, by June 2002, a significant number of schools had not yet addressed legislative requirements for written policies in certain key areas of school life, despite the fact that 87% of schools

reported that they had been working on policy formulation. School leaders commented on the slowness of the policy formulation process and on the need to find time-effective ways of satisfying legislative requirements in order to prevent SDP from being dominated by policy-writing.

Planning Structures established

Schools were asked about the planning structures they had established to address the priorities and advance the planning process. 65% had established some kind of planning structure: 59% had established task groups; 41% had established a steering committee. When asked how these planning structures were established, 52% of the 209 profiled indicated that members had volunteered; 10% indicated that members were elected by the staff; 11% indicated that members were appointed by the principal; 9% indicated that members were appointed through the in-school management system. In some schools, a variety of methods was used. 15% of the schools profiled had allocated a full in-school management post to SDP and 12% had allocated part of a post.

Planning structures are essential to ensure the advancement of the planning process. Had IR considerations not prevailed, one would have looked for a higher incidence than 65%.



Involvement of Partners in SDP since 1999

Schools were asked to indicate the level of partner involvement in key aspects of the SDP process: school review; policy-formulation; and the formulation of a statement of mission/vision/aims. As previously indicated, of the 209 schools profiled, 78% had conducted a school review, 87% had formulated policies, and 75% had formulated a statement of mission/vision/aims during the period in question. The pattern of partner involvement is summarised in the following table (the percentages quoted are of the 209 schools profiled):

Partners Involved	School Review	Policy-Formulation	Mission/Vision/Aims
Principal	76%	85%	70%
Teaching Staff	74%	85%	68%
Support Staff	19%	20%	18%
Board of Management	33%	60%	49%
Trustees	23%	34%	31%
Parents	24%	53%	31%
Pupils	20%	39%	21%
Other	3%	1%	1%
No partners specified	2%	2%	4%

Table 5.4 Involvement of Partners in SDP

With regard to partnership structures, 92% of schools profiled had a board of management, 85% a parents' association, and 52% a students' council.

The pattern of partner involvement is better than might have been expected, given the IR situation during the period in question. Nevertheless, the pattern is far from ideal. The low level of involvement of boards of management is of particular concern, given the responsibility of the board in relation to school planning under the terms of the Education Act, 1998 (see **Education Act, 1998**, section 21). It is notable that parents'

main area of involvement is in relation to policy-formulation. Feedback would indicate that, while in some cases parents have been involved in the policy-formulation process from the outset through their representation on policy committees, in others their involvement has commenced at the consultation stage, with the circulation of draft documents prepared by members of the school staff for their consideration. With regard to pupil involvement, the levels that schools reported, while moderately low, are encouraging. The fact that more than half of the schools profiled had a students' council indicates that structures to facilitate and promote student involvement are already well-established in the system.

5.1.2 Schools' Progress in SDP over the course of the Initiative

The school profiles compiled through the SDPI consultative process enable comparisons to be drawn between schools' levels of engagement in SDP activities prior to the establishment of the Initiative and their record of engagement since the Initiative was launched.

Progress in SDP Engagement

The schools profiled reported a marked increase in their level of engagement in key aspects of School Development Planning since the inception of the Initiative. The pattern is revealed in Table 5.5.

Given the prevailing IR situation with particular reference to SDP during the period in question, the level of engagement reported by schools exceeds expectations and suggests that progress has been made in establishing the process within the Post-Primary system. It should be noted, however, that levels of engagement in the latter stages of the SDP cycle of operations – systematic monitoring and self-evaluation – have remained low, with no increase reported. (Only 3% of schools profiled indicated that they had engaged in evaluation since 1999. See Table 5.1.) Engagement in these operations is considered essential for school improvement.

Aspect of SDP	% of 209 profiled New to this aspect since Sept. 1999	% of 209 profiled Engaged in this aspect since Sept. 1999
School Review	32%	78%
Prioritising	32%	76%
Action Planning	26%	49%
Policy formulation	49%	87%
Mission/Vision/Aims	34%	75%

Table 5.5 Progress in SDP Engagement

Partners Involved/Consulted in Any Aspect of SDP	% of 209 Before Sept. 1999	% of 209 Since Sept. 1999
Principal	60%	91%
Teaching Staff	60%	90%
Support Staff	16%	33%
Board of Management	40%	73%
Trustees/VEC	29%	54%
Parents	33%	64%
Pupils	25%	47%

Table 5.6 Progress in Partner Involvement

Progress in Partner Involvement

Schools profiled reported a significant increase in the level of partner involvement in the School Development Planning process, as indicated in Table 5.6.

Overall, the level of progress reported in partner involvement is encouraging, but work must be done on identifying and promoting good practice with regard to the nature of the involvement. The reported level of involvement of support staff is significantly lower than that of other partners. The Initiative needs to explore ways of addressing this issue.

5.1.3 Current School Situation re SDP

As part of the profiling process, schools were asked to rate the current level of staff openness to SDP, the extent of progress in SDP since September 2000 (when the first of the trade union directives affecting SDP was issued), and the school’s current location or take-up position within the SDP process.

Staff Openness to SDP

Schools were asked to rate the current level of staff openness to SDP on a four-point scale. Some schools insisted on converting the scale to a five-point one by inserting a middle value. The pattern of responses among the 209 schools profiled was as follows: Very High, 31%; Fairly High, 44%; Middling, 6%; Fairly Low, 11%; Very Low, 3%. 4% of schools did not provide a rating. Given the complexity of the IR situation in the post-primary sector since September 2000, the positive rating of staff openness to SDP by 75% of the schools profiled was encouraging.

Progress Rating re SDP since September 2000

Schools were asked to rate their level of progress in SDP since September 2000 on a four-point scale. The date September 2000 was chosen because it was at that point in the Initiative’s history that the first of the trade union directives against SDP was issued. The pattern of responses was as follows: A lot of progress, 10%; A fair amount, 24%; A little, 33%; None, 30%. 3% of those profiled did not provide a rating.

Given the IR situation that obtained during the period in question, the fact that 63% of schools considered that they had made little or no progress since September 2000 was not surprising.

Current Stage in SDP Process/Take-up Position in SDP Process

Schools were asked which category in a given list would best represent their current stage or their take-up position in the SDP process. The majority (73% of the 209 profiled) selected a combination. Accordingly, the total in Table 5.7 exceeds 100%.

Current Stage in SDP Process	% of 209 profiled
1. Start from scratch: introductory overview	20%
2. School review to identify priorities	36%
3. Action Planning	48%
4. Policy Writing	37%
5. Formulating statement of Mission/Vision/Aims	8%
6. Compiling overall School Plan	3%
7. Implementation of the School Plan	12%
8. Evaluation of outcomes of the School Plan	17%

Table 5.7 Current Stage in SDP Process

Schools seem to have interpreted the first category, “Start from scratch” as signifying total relaunch of SDP following a period of inactivity.

Most of the schools that chose this category had previous experience of SDP and so would not be commencing the process for the first time. In hindsight, it might have been more informative to offer two separate categories: “Start the process for the first time” and “Restart the process”.

With regard to the second category, “School Review,” many schools indicated that although they had already identified priorities for development, the list needed to be reviewed for confirmation or amendment because of the length of time that had elapsed since the initial review had taken place.

5.1.4 Future SDP Support Needs

Schools were asked to indicate the forms of support that they would find helpful in advancing the process of SDP and to rank those supports in order of priority. The responses are summarised in the following table. The percentages quoted are of the 209 schools profiled. Some schools gave equal priority to a number of forms of support. This suggests that they were unwilling to rely on a single support-option, preferring a multi-faceted system integrating a variety of complementary forms of support.

Forms of Support	Helpful	Priority 1 or 2
Consultations with an SDPI Coordinator	83%	60%
Services of an external SDP Facilitator	81%	57%
Inservice training seminars (off-site)	71%	36%
Access to expertise on particular priorities	64%	21%
Workshops focused on particular aspects (off-site)	63%	22%
Cluster meetings to share experiences (off-site)	53%	7%
Additional guideline materials	44%	9%
Other planning support	15%	4%

Table 5.8 Forms of Support Prioritised by Schools

Topics on which Support Required for SDP

In relation to future support, schools were invited to identify

- i.** the aspects of planning on which they would like workshops,
- ii.** the issues or priorities in relation to which they would like access to expertise,
- iii.** the topics on which they would like guidelines, and
- iv.** any other planning supports that they would find helpful.

Many of the schools profiled indicated that, because of their lack of recent experience of SDP, caused by the IR climate, they would find it difficult to be specific about their future support needs. Hence, 22% chose not to specify any support needs at that time. Only 8% of the 209 profiled identified support needs in all four categories offered. The pattern of responses is summarised in Table 5.9:

Main Topics on which Support Required for SDP	% of 209 profiled
School Plan as a legal document	39%
Development of Structures for SDP	17%
School Development Planning process stages	14%
Discipline/Behaviour/Bullying	10%
Staff Development/Affirmation/Motivation	9%
Learning	8%
Curriculum	7%
Teaching	7%
Special Needs	6%
Amalgamation	4%
Other Planning Supports Required	% of 209 profiled
Time for SDP	17%
Funding/resources	8%
Inservice on-site, not off-site	4%

Table 5.9 Topics on which Support Required

5.1.5 Profile Summary

- ◆ All schools profiled had engaged in SDP to some extent since September 1999. Largely because of IR issues, however, 63% of them considered that they had made little or no progress since September 2000
- ◆ The aspects of SDP in which most significant progress was made since September 1999 were policy-formulation, formulation of mission/visions/aims statement, and school review leading to the identification of priorities
- ◆ 91% of schools indicated that they had held at least one whole-staff planning session since September 1999
- ◆ 76% of schools had engaged external personnel to facilitate either alone or in collaboration with members of the school staff
- ◆ 65% of schools had established internal planning structures
- ◆ 64% of schools had consulted parents in relation to some aspect of the planning process
- ◆ Action Planning was the stage of SDP most often identified by schools as their current location or take-up position in the SDP process
- ◆ The forms of SDP support prioritised by most schools were consultations with an SDPI Coordinator and the services of an external SDP Facilitator
- ◆ The most common topics or aspects in relation to which schools identified the need for support were: the school plan as a legal document; the development of structures for SDP; time for SDP; discipline; and staff development.



5.2 Regional Coordinators' Progress Reports

5.2.1 Schools' Progress in SDP Activities

The pattern that emerges from Regional Coordinators' reports of the Initiative's work with schools during the year 2002 is largely consistent with the findings of the profiling process.

Regional Coordinators reported the following overall pattern of SDP activities during facilitated whole-staff planning sessions with individual schools:

For the most part, schools that requested introductory sessions had not previously availed of the Initiative's services. Those that requested Review sessions fell into two categories: schools that were new to SDP, and schools that had previous experience of the process but that wished to reconsider their situation in the light of changes that had taken place during the IR suspension of the process. (See **Issues** section below.)

SDP Process Activities	% of sessions
SDP Introduction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Introductory presentation on SDP ◆ Preliminary workshop – “Where are we now?” 	8%
From Review to Design: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Review of school's current reality ◆ Identification of development priorities ◆ Establishment of planning structures ◆ Initiation of Action Planning to address priorities 	54%
Design: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Fleshing out of Action Plans ◆ Preparation for monitoring implementation of Action Plans and evaluating outcomes ◆ Policy-writing 	31%
Staff Seminars on Specific Issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Planning seminars focused on specific whole-school issues (such as discipline, pastoral care, subject-department planning) 	7%

Table 5.10 SDP Process Activities in 2002

The pattern of schools' attendance at the concurrent workshops during SDPI Regional Seminars in November/December 2002 presents a slightly different picture of SDP progress at Post-Primary level. There were three levels of workshop:

- i. Formalising School Planning, for schools in the initial stages of the SDP process
- ii. Action Planning, for schools that had already identified their development priorities by means of a review process
- iii. Continuing the Planning Cycle, for schools with significant experience of the SDP process

49% of the 347 participants selected Workshop 1; 35% selected Workshop 2; 16% selected Workshop 3. These figures suggest that, by the end of 2002, more than half of the schools at Post-Primary level that had availed of the Initiative's seminars had moved beyond the initial stages of SDP. It is interesting to note that the corresponding figures for Regional Seminar workshops in the period January to April 2003 were: Workshop 1, 34%; Workshop 2, 41%, and Workshop 3, 25%.

5.2.2 Issues

Arising from the Initiative's work with schools on both an individual and a group basis, Regional Coordinators highlighted the following issues:

- ◆ In many schools that had commenced SDP in the first year of the Initiative (1999–2000), momentum was lost and progress eroded during the period of IR difficulties. Regional Coordinators found that it was more difficult for schools to restart the process when it had become stale than to start it for the first time, especially when morale was low. It was

generally necessary to conduct a further review in order to confirm or amend the selected priorities and to establish an appropriate starting point for addressing them. Motivation for planning was an issue in some schools that had undergone repeated reviews without ever having experienced follow-up action. Regional Coordinators working with such schools were sensitive to their particular need to make early progress with action planning and implementation.

- ◆ If SDP is to become established as an ongoing process rather than as a transient event, schools need to find ways of maintaining the momentum after facilitated planning sessions. Regional Coordinators reported that schools found it easier to maintain momentum where a schedule for the process over an extended period was agreed at the first pre-planning meeting and where the time-lapse between full planning sessions (especially in the early stages of the process) was relatively short. Schools found it particularly helpful where the facilitator was available to work with task groups or steering committee between planning days. These approaches to maintaining continuity and momentum have resource implications if they are to be applied across the Post-Primary system. In relation to time, they would require that schools be enabled:

- i. to devote the equivalent of at least two days per year⁶ to whole-staff planning work, and
- ii. to timetable task group and steering committee meetings between whole-staff planning sessions⁷

⁶ Some schools suggested an allocation of the equivalent of three days per year for whole-staff planning work, at least until the first full cycle of development planning (review, design, implementation and evaluation) had been completed. A number of schools emphasized the need for local flexibility in relation to the way in which time might be scheduled for School Development Planning. Some schools, for instance, would prefer to schedule planning time in two-hour or half-day blocks, whereas others would find planning sessions of such duration impractical because of local circumstances.

⁷ Some schools suggested an additional allocation of teaching staff or part-time teaching hours to enable small-group planning meetings to be structured into teachers' timetables.

In relation to expertise, they would require the availability of sufficient trained personnel to support and facilitate the work of task groups and steering committees. In relation to finance, they would require revised arrangements for the payment of facilitation costs. These points were articulated repeatedly by principals at the Regional Seminars.

- ◆ Schools requested clarification regarding the timeframe for completion of a full cycle of SDP. No time-frame is specified in the Education Act, 1998 or in DES Circulars M20/99, M40/99 and M39/00, which deal with School Development Planning. The general guideline provided by the Initiative is three to five years, based on the normal term of office of a school board of management (because of the board's responsibility in relation to the school plan – see **Education Act, 1998**, section 21), and on practice among schools in the system with considerable previous experience of School Development Planning. Some schools expressed the need for more specific guidance on this issue, and suggested that DES issue a circular detailing its expectations in relation to timeframe.
- ◆ School representatives found Regional Seminars helpful as a means of accessing information and skills training and of sharing experiences with others. Many advocated more frequent cluster meetings with schools of similar size or type, or at similar stages in the planning process, to facilitate the sharing of experience. Yet they also highlighted the difficulties posed for schools by off-site inservice provision. This issue is not particular to the Initiative. The progressive coordination of all inservice provision at Post-Primary level may perhaps enable the Initiative to facilitate the benefits of clustering without discommoding schools.
- ◆ In all forms of contact with Regional Coordinators throughout 2002, principals emphasised the pressure on schools to produce policy documents required by legislation and the need for assistance to respond to that pressure. As already noted, they commented on the slowness of the policy formulation process and on the need to find time-effective ways of satisfying legislative requirements in order to prevent SDP from being dominated by policy-writing. Towards that end, they requested legally-proofed sample policies and access to free legal expertise. The SDPI Team is compiling resource materials to support the policy-formulation process in relation to specific issues. In some areas, principals have proposed intensive cluster workshops focused on the drafting of particular policy documents. SDPI is to cooperate in the implementation of this proposal.
- ◆ The partnership dimension of SDP was raised both during school visits and at Regional Seminars. Schools requested clarification of the relative roles, rights and responsibilities of the various partners in relation to SDP, information and training sessions for boards of management and parents' associations, and exemplars of good practice. Regional Coordinators have facilitated sessions on SDP for a small number of individual boards of management and are compiling exemplars of good practice in cooperation with the National Parents' Council (post-primary). The Initiative and the National Centre for Partnership and Performance are also cooperating in a consultative capacity with Marino Institute of Education in a DES-funded project promoting partnership as a school improvement strategy. Further work needs to be done in promoting the partnership dimension of SDP.

- ◆ During the year 2002, the vast majority of schools that availed of the Initiative's services were engaged in Review and Design – the first two operations of the SDP cycle. Few had advanced to the Evaluation stage. The full benefits of SDP will not accrue until schools develop a capacity for systematic self-evaluation as the impetus for ongoing improvement. The challenge for the Initiative is to support schools in building that capacity. The recent DES publication, **Looking at our School: An aid to self-evaluation activity in second level schools**, will be a valuable resource to that end. It is intended that the Regional Seminar programme for 2003/04 will include workshops focused on approaches to and skills for school self-evaluation. The Initiative will also need to assess schools' support needs in moving beyond the evaluation stage into the next cycle of development planning.
- ◆ As already indicated (in **section 5.2.1** above), a small proportion of schools that attended Regional Seminars had considerable previous experience of SDP. Some questioned whether the model suggested by the Initiative for establishing SDP within a school was applicable to schools with extensive experience and well-established structures. The fact that such a question was raised highlights for the SDPI Team the need to give greater prominence to one of the basic principles of the Initiative: *As every school is unique, the operation of the planning process will vary considerably from school to school. The School Development Planning process is flexible. It is not a set of rules to be followed blindly but a framework for collaborative creativity. Each school must adapt the framework to suit its own particular circumstances.* (**School Development Planning: An Introduction for Second Level Schools**, p. 13) The SDPI Team should also develop a portfolio of case-studies outlining a range of approaches and structures that experienced schools have found fruitful.
- ◆ Schools requested clarity on the link between School Development Planning and Whole School Evaluation. The Initiative will work with the Inspectorate to articulate how external evaluation can validate and support the school's internal process of review, design, implementation and evaluation in the promotion of school improvement.
- ◆ Schools highlighted the need for SDP skills development and facilitation training for school personnel. The Initiative must address this need if it is to fulfil its aim of building the capacity of schools to implement development planning as a means of quality enhancement. Strategies under consideration include
 - i. expansion of the current programme of facilitator training (see **section 3.2**) and
 - ii. provision of local courses, in Education Centres where possible. Resource implications for the Initiative are being researched.
- ◆ Schools welcomed the provision of support through the Initiative for the implementation of the SDP process. They pointed out, however, that they also required resource support to enable them to implement their plans for addressing prioritised needs that could not be met from their current resources.



Looking Forward

This chapter summarises the strengths of School Development Planning support to date. It then presents a range of issues for consideration in the context of promoting good practice in SDP implementation. The views presented in this closing chapter take account of a variety of stakeholder interests and are intended primarily to stimulate broad discussion on policy options for the future development of school planning. Such options should be carefully weighed in the context of available resources for the future direction of School Development Planning.

6.1 Support Programme at Primary Level

6.1.1 Strengths

The key elements of the support programme at Primary level have been successful in stimulating a culture of School Development Planning in school communities:

- ◆ **Regional Information Seminars:** The seminars have proved a successful means of introducing schools to the rationale for, approaches to, and processes involved in School Development Planning, and of encouraging schools to begin SDP. Between 1999 and 2002, 220 Information Seminars were held throughout the country and were very highly rated in all their aspects, as was shown in Chapter 2.
- ◆ **Facilitated Planning Days:** During 2001/02, facilitated planning days were made available to 2,364 schools. Participants valued the provision of an external facilitator, the usefulness of the planning process adopted, and the manner in which the school's chosen areas were addressed. (See **Chapter 2**.) As a result of facilitation, there was a significant increase in schools' level of engagement in particular aspects of school-based planning: review of current practice, prioritisation of areas in need of development, action planning, involvement of all teachers in planning activities, and strategic planning. (See **Chapter 4**.)
- ◆ **Preplanning visits** to schools to enable them identify their priorities for the planning day as well as ensuring preparation for the day itself were very successful.
- ◆ **Post-planning Visits:** The provision of visits by facilitators to schools six to eight weeks after their planning day has been very successful in maintaining contact with schools, assisting the continuation of planning initiatives begun on planning days and providing additional assistance and advice as required.
- ◆ **Clustering:** Schools with 1 to 6 teachers that were facilitated in clusters appreciated the opportunity to share experiences and expertise. For the vast majority, planning

in clusters was a new experience. Similarly, schools in particular categories were facilitated in planning together e.g. hospital schools.

Accordingly, these support strategies represent strengths which can be built on in the future.

6.1.2 Issues

The ultimate goal of SDP support is to ensure that the process of development planning becomes embedded in school communities as a strategy for optimising the quality of education for all pupils. Experience of working with schools has enabled the identification of a number of issues and challenges that have implications for the future development of school planning:

- ◆ **Focus on the Quality of Teaching and Learning:** This is the core issue, to which all others are subservient – to be judged a significant success, School Development Planning must have a positive impact on pupil learning. Enhanced learning outcomes for pupils will be more likely to occur if schools are enabled to
 1. Evaluate and articulate their existing strengths and identify the specific challenges involved in improving the quality of teaching and learning provided
 2. Clearly identify necessary developments, focused on enhanced outcomes in teaching, learning and standards of work
 3. Identify success criteria and put in place action plans to reach these criteria
 4. Establish clearer procedures for the evaluation of the impact the school development plan is having on pupil learning outcomes. This will include using internal and external assessments and testing as progress indicators.

Attention must be directed to the core issue of improving the quality of teaching and learning. Schools must be enabled to incorporate enhanced pupil learning as one of the outcomes of all their development planning activities.

- ◆ **Continuing Support:** Schools will maintain a positive attitude towards SDP if they continue to experience success in development planning activities. The challenge is to identify and, within the limitations of available resources, provide the supports required by schools to ensure a positive outcome. Three broad categories of support should be considered:

1. Resource materials, including templates and exemplars, to ensure that schools have appropriate information and guidelines to enable them to continue effective planning. Such resources could be accessible to schools through publications and also available for download via the Internet. In this regard, the Internet is a particularly suitable medium for ensuring that resources can be continuously revised, updated and made immediately available to schools.
2. Targeted advice for schools that require guidance in organising and managing their on-going planning processes.
3. Facilitation support for school planning occasions.

Differential support for schools, taking account of their varying levels of identified support need, would enable successes in the stimulation of SDP to be maintained.

- ◆ **Coordination of support:** Inservice training aimed at the professional development of teachers is currently provided by a number of agencies. The contribution of professional development to the progress of SDP is crucial. Teachers need significant background knowledge, including a wide

range of new pedagogical skills and familiarity with new approaches, methodologies, emphases and resources, to enable them to plan effectively on a whole school basis. Greater coordination of professional development provision would enhance its effectiveness in promoting and supporting school improvement.

- ◆ **Partnership dimension of SDP:** Stimulation of interest in School Development Planning has been most successful among teachers. Much more needs to be done to establish the inclusion of other partners as a normal part of development planning in schools. The low level of involvement of boards of management in the SDP process needs to be addressed, in cooperation with management bodies, through provision of information and resources dealing with the specific responsibilities, roles and needs of boards. The role of parents in the SDP process needs to be strengthened and expanded, in cooperation with parent organisations, through provision of information and resources addressing the specific needs of parents.
- ◆ **Role of the Principal, Deputy Principal and Middle Management:** The role of the principal and the school management team in supporting and promoting SDP is crucial. A significant predictor of success in School Development Planning is the leadership and vision of the principal and management team in creating a school climate of review and development. Accordingly, future support strategies should take account of the particular needs of the principal and management team. Links between relevant support providers should be extended and strengthened as a means of meeting the needs of principals and deputy principals with regard to fostering and directing

development planning in schools. The key competencies of principals as identified in the HayGroup Report⁸ – leadership, teaching and learning, resource management, human resource management, administration, policy formation and external relations – should inform professional development provision to assist principals in delivering on their role as the pivotal person in each school's development planning.

Consideration should also be given to the role of the principal in the context of the overall management structures and activities of the school. A clearer definition of management roles, including those of the principal, board of management and middle management team, would be helpful.

- ◆ **Development planning skills:** Embedding of development planning is more likely to be successful if teachers, parents and boards of management have acquired the necessary skills to continue independently. Evidence suggests that a majority of schools have not, as yet, acquired all these skills. The hands-on experience of most teachers in relation to the process has occurred during pre-planning meetings and on planning days and, as such, has amounted to approximately twelve hours over a period of three years. This period of involvement is insufficient to ensure that a majority of teachers have acquired all the necessary planning skills. Future policy direction on SDP should include provision for skill development.

⁸ HayGroup Management Consultants (2003) **Defining the Role of the Primary Principal in Ireland**

- ◆ **Facilitation:** Embedding of SDP is most likely to be sustained in the longer term if schools become self-sufficient with regard to facilitation. This would entail one or more staff members per school acquiring the skills necessary to promote, coordinate, facilitate, and sustain school-based development planning activities. The implementation, monitoring and evaluation of each school's development planning activities would also need to be addressed in this context. Approaches to building these capacities in schools could include: leadership training and middle management development (see **Role of the Principal, Deputy Principal and Middle Management**, above); direct provision of inservice training for teachers with key roles in facilitating and coordinating SDP in their schools; and liaison with other providers, such as 3rd level institutions, concerning the design and delivery of accredited courses relevant to SDP. The feasibility and resource implications of these approaches should be explored, in consultation with the appropriate agencies.



- ◆ **Consolidation/Development of Planning Clusters:** The organisation and promotion of planning clusters of similar sized schools has been a major success. The collegiality and mutual assistance that has emerged from these clusters has been of enormous benefit to all schools and has been of particular benefit to smaller schools. Experience has shown that, in the absence of continuing promotion and organisation, clusters tend to fracture and disintegrate. There is a need for strategies to enable planning clusters to continue to operate effectively with minimal external assistance. The roles of the Education Centre network and of other inservice providers should be considered in this context.

The importance of clustering for principals of smaller schools was identified in the HayGroup report. The potential of planning clusters as a means of dealing more effectively with issues which have significant commonalities among schools (e.g. enrolment policy, learning support etc.) should be exploited. While clustering by school size and location has been very successful, consideration should also be given to the development of clusters based on commonality of purpose or need, such as clusters for special schools, hospital schools, school principals, resource teachers, etc.

Consideration should be given to increasing the uses and effectiveness of clusters through expanding the range of activities involved. Such expansion might include the sharing of secretarial expertise, resources and other supports via clusters. The sharing of principals' administrative time/workload, and ways of addressing issues of teaching and learning could also be explored through clustering of appropriate personnel.

- ◆ **Assistance for Schools in Addressing New Issues:** In their planning activities, schools need to address issues that arise from new legislation, new guidelines and curricular change. Emerging issues include new educational welfare provisions, substance use policy requirements and the ability to address the needs of school self-review and external evaluation. Further issues will arise as educational innovation continues to occur. There is a need for methodologies by which standard approaches to common emerging issues can be developed and made available to schools.

The publication by the Department of **Looking at our School – An aid to self-evaluation in schools** is a significant development. SDP is focused on addressing school needs identified in the initial stages of school self-evaluation (SSE). Accordingly, **Looking at our School** can provide a useful springboard for development planning. Schools must be enabled to use this publication to identify priority planning areas and draw up development plans to deal with these areas over time.

SSE and SDP can be supported and validated by the development of whole-school evaluation (WSE). The interrelationship of internal and external processes should be clarified so that schools can respond positively to this development

- ◆ **Differentiated Support:** There is a need to design appropriate responses to schools with particular difficulties, e.g. schools which have amalgamated, schools with particular staff difficulties/staff turnover as well as very large schools and special schools.

- ◆ **Compliance with Legal and Departmental Requirements:** As indicated in Chapter 4, the organisational areas addressed most frequently on planning days suggest that schools were evaluating organisational issues in the light of their compliance with legal or departmental requirements, rather than their impact on teaching and learning. Similarly, curricular issues were dominated by the demands of the Revised Curriculum. Because schools feel obliged to respond to external demands, many feel constrained in their ability to use the learning needs of their pupils as the starting point for School Development Planning activities.

Ways must be found of assisting schools to deal expeditiously with these external obligations so that more time is available for addressing the quality of teaching and learning. Some planning and policy areas are so governed by legislation and/or directives, as to provide for little or no local autonomy. The provision of clear guidance and generic exemplars of best practice would enable schools to deal quickly and correctly with these areas. More time could thus be made available for schools to explore and plan for local needs.



- ◆ **Addressing Disadvantage and Special Needs:** Based as it is on the design of appropriate school responses to pupil learning needs, SDP can provide a useful methodology for addressing the particular needs of pupils in schools designated as disadvantaged and those with special needs. A review of current practice and current support provision would inform the design of better focused approaches to addressing these areas of need.
- ◆ **Multiculturalism:** As Ireland becomes a multi-cultural country, schools must serve the needs of pupils and parents of increasingly diverse cultural backgrounds. Some schools have already used development planning to better address these needs. The issues that arise when dealing with a multi-cultural school community should be examined from an SDP perspective, with a view to identifying best practice in this area and enabling schools to devise appropriate responses to the specific needs of their international pupils and parents.
- ◆ **Using ICT in School Development Planning:** A website was launched in 2000 as a means by which teachers, parents and boards of management could access information on SDP and download planning frameworks and guidelines. The website needs to be expanded and updated to reflect the continuing refinement of planning information and instruments. Consideration should be given to the design and delivery of means whereby schools can plan more effectively by using ICT. Development planning software packages in use in other countries should be examined as to their suitability/adaptability for use in Ireland. The potential of e learning as an inservice tool should also be explored, in consultation with the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE).
- ◆ **Time for School Development Planning:** Schools repeatedly expressed concerns about the time necessary to engage with the School Development Planning process.



6.2 Support Programme at Post-Primary Level

6.2.1 Strengths

Following two years during which progress was hindered by IR difficulties, 2002 saw a major increase in the level of SDP activity in the Post-Primary sector and a concomitant increase in the level of schools' engagement with the Initiative. The increase was especially marked in the second half of the year, when circumstances allowed for the resumption of the Regional Seminar programme.

The main strengths of the support programme in 2002 were as follows:

- ◆ **Regional Seminars:** As three years had elapsed since the previous programme of Regional Seminars at Post-Primary level, the 2002 series proved an effective means of updating school representatives in relation to current patterns of SDP practice, drawing their attention to key principles of development planning, and providing them with skills training appropriate to their level of progress in implementing SDP. The concurrent workshop model enabled the seminars to address the widely-differing needs of a large number of schools within a short space of time while creating fora for the sharing of experiences and the discussion of common concerns.



- ◆ **Facilitation:** The facilitation model, involving pre-planning, facilitated planning days, and post-planning follow-up, was successful in promoting SDP as an ongoing process rather than as a transient event. Schools found it particularly helpful where the facilitator was available to work with task groups or steering committee between planning days. Schools found it easier to maintain momentum where a schedule for the process over an extended period was agreed at the first pre-planning meeting and where the time-lapse between full planning sessions was relatively short.
- ◆ **Capacity-Building:** The provision of training in SDP facilitation was welcomed by school personnel. The response of participants in the current training course has been extremely positive and there is a waiting list for future programmes. The strategy of involving members of school staffs in co-facilitation with external personnel worked well in the instances where it was adopted and has significant potential for the future.
- ◆ **Advisory Service:** School visits by Regional Coordinators proved an effective means of introducing or reviving the SDP process in schools where circumstances had precluded progress between 2000 and 2002, and of maintaining the momentum in schools where the process had already been activated. As indicated in Chapter 5, access to advice and assistance from a Regional Coordinator was prioritised by schools as a support need. The structured consultation process was of value in enabling support personnel to gain an overview of schools' progress and support needs in relation to SDP, to identify emerging issues, and to develop relationships with individual schools in their respective regions.

6.2.2 Issues

Many of the issues identified in **Section 6.1.2** are relevant at Post-Primary level also, but the impact of the IR situation has created an additional challenge. This section outlines the considerations that should inform future policy on SDP.

- ◆ **Focus on the quality of Teaching and Learning:** The overriding consideration is the need to ensure an appropriate focus on the quality of teaching and learning in all development planning activities. (See **Section 6.1.2** above.) This focus is essential if SDP is to achieve its core purpose: school improvement. To date, although issues relating to teaching and learning have been prioritised by a significant proportion of Post-Primary schools, they have tended to be overshadowed in the SDP process by legal and organisational concerns. There is a need to find ways of redressing the balance, through cooperation among support providers in the development of strategies, where appropriate.
- ◆ **Continuing Support:** Because of IR factors, the implementation of SDP in many Post-Primary schools has been sporadic rather than sustained and the delivery of the support programme up to mid-2002 has perforce been random rather than systematic. A major challenge is to devise a support strategy that will promote continuity and progression in SDP implementation, so that schools gain experience of the full planning cycle, not merely of the early stages. The strategy should provide for a high level of differentiation to cater for the wide range of levels of SDP experience currently to be found in the Post-Primary sector. Revitalising SDP in schools where momentum was lost and progress eroded is a particular concern. As school improvement is an ongoing process, there should be a

thorough assessment of schools' support needs in moving beyond the evaluation stage into the next cycle of development planning.

- ◆ **Development Planning Skills:** To date, the support programme for schools at Post-Primary level has focused largely on the skill-requirements of teachers in relation to review, action-planning, and policy-formulation. There is a need to address the development of monitoring and evaluation skills within schools as they reach the implementation stage of the SDP process.

The recent DES publication, **Looking at our School – An aid to self-evaluation activity in second level schools**, will be a valuable tool to assist schools in applying development planning skills. Schools would benefit from guidance on its use within the overall process of SDP. There is also a need to articulate for schools how external evaluation can validate and support their internal process of review, design, implementation and evaluation in the promotion of school improvement.

- ◆ **Internal School Management:** As at Primary level, the principal's role is crucial to the success of SDP in the school. Accordingly, approaches to the provision of SDP support for principals should continue to be developed in cooperation with relevant providers. As participative or dispersed leadership is a key aspect of SDP, there is a need for models of good practice for relating in-school management posts to SDP structures. The provision of SDP training for holders of in-school management posts and for school planning coordinators, steering committees and task group convenors should be a priority. Support service personnel have already facilitated a number of such workshops at the request of VEC and Trustee Education

Offices. More widespread training for these groups could be arranged through the Education Centre network, or in association with relevant education organisations, or through Regional Seminar workshops.

- ◆ **Facilitation:** Future approaches should build on the progress that has been made in developing capacity for SDP facilitation and coordination within schools. The co-facilitation option should be availed of where appropriate, that is, where a school is open to it and where there are members of the school staff with the requisite interest and skills available to undertake it. With regard to the future development of external facilitation services, it should be noted that schools have benefited considerably from access to their facilitator for task group and steering committee meetings between full planning sessions. The implications of this model of good practice should be explored.
- ◆ **Partnership Dimension of SDP:** Although schools at Post-Primary level have reported some progress in developing the partnership dimension of SDP (see Chapter 5), much remains to be done. Consultation has sometimes been perfunctory, giving partners other than the teaching staff little meaningful input to decisions about priorities. Exemplars of good practice in the system should be identified in order to inform the development of fruitful approaches to the involvement of partners. Further, the relative roles, rights and responsibilities of the various partners in relation to SDP should be clarified. Consideration should be given to the question of how best to cater for the SDP training needs of partners' representatives – boards of management, parents' associations, and student councils.

- ◆ **Assistance for Schools in Addressing Prioritised Issues:** Every issue that emerges for schools is potentially relevant to School Development Planning. There is a need to identify expertise and resources relevant to the issues that emerge as planning priorities, and to develop approaches for dealing with those issues, through inter-agency cooperation where appropriate. (Agencies that have provided support relevant to School Development Planning are listed in **Appendix 3**.) Progress already made in devising approaches to major issues such as educational disadvantage, special needs, and interculturalism should be built on.
- ◆ **Specific Planning Information:** Schools at Post-Primary level complain about change overload and lack of opportunity to research the development options and resource materials available to them. There is a need to ensure that support personnel are kept up-to-date in their knowledge of the system, so that they are fully cognisant of the changing context for development planning. There will be a continuing need for the compilation of digests of information, resource materials and exemplars relevant to specific planning issues.

- ◆ **Using ICT in School Development Planning:** The website has proved a useful means of disseminating information and materials relevant to SDP at Post-Primary level. It should be further developed to enable personnel involved in SDP in any capacity to discuss issues of common concern and to share experiences. The use of ICT as a planning tool for schools should be investigated. The possibility of adapting SDP software packages from other countries for use in Ireland should be explored. The potential of e-learning and video-conferencing in the provision of inservice training should be examined, in consultation with the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE).
- ◆ **Compliance with Legal Requirements:** As indicated in Chapter 5, schools involved in the consultative process prioritised assistance in the production of documents required by legislation as a future support need. Similarly, principals at the Regional Seminars indicated that they felt obliged to give priority to policy-writing in order to comply with legislation, and expressed an urgent need for access to legal expertise and legally-proofed sample policies to assist them in this task. Accordingly, a major challenge for the system is to find ways of meeting these needs, through inter-agency cooperation where appropriate, while ensuring that schools' concerns about compliance with legal requirements for documentation do not distort the SDP process. The development of generic templates to cover legal issues would expedite policy-writing, thereby enabling schools to focus on teaching and learning issues.
- ◆ **Planning Clusters:** In general, clustering schools for full planning sessions is not a practical option at Post-Primary level, primarily because of the size of school staffs. In a number of cases where amalgamation has been agreed, however, support service personnel have been engaged to facilitate joint planning sessions for the schools involved. This approach to preparing for amalgamation is worth developing where circumstances are suitable. The cross-sectoral clustering of schools in a catchment area to address particular needs (as practised in projects to combat disadvantage) is a model that should be explored.
- ◆ **Logistics:** During the consultative process and again at Regional Seminars, schools repeatedly expressed concerns about the time necessary to implement the School Development Planning process. The difficulties posed for schools by off-site inservice provision were also highlighted.



6.3 Links between Primary and Post-Primary

As sections 6.1 and 6.2 clearly indicate, there is much similarity between the Primary and Post-Primary sectors in relation to SDP issues facing schools. It is appropriate, therefore, that support personnel at both levels should work together on matters of common concern:

- ◆ Primary and Post-Primary schools serve the same pupils at different stages in their education. Accordingly, cooperation between support personnel at both levels should address issues related to the transition from Primary to Post-Primary, to ensure the provision of a continuous, progressive journey for pupils through school.
- ◆ Joint Primary/Post-Primary approaches to policy areas such as interculturalism, disadvantage, special educational needs and substance use should be explored.
- ◆ Support personnel at both levels should collaborate in meeting the SDP support needs of special schools that offer elements of the Post-Primary curriculum.
- ◆ Liaison between Primary and Post-Primary support personnel should be strengthened through the development of closer connections at regional level.
- ◆ A more structured procedure should be devised for the sharing of experiences and resources, the development of common or complementary approaches to key cross-sectoral issues, and the preparation of guideline materials on matters of relevance to both sectors (such as legislative requirements).
- ◆ Support personnel at both levels should work together to find ways of building schools' capacity for rigorous self-evaluation, focused on the core issue of the quality of teaching and learning.



6.4 Summary

The fundamental challenge in relation to SDP at both Primary and Post-Primary level is to ensure an appropriate focus on the quality of teaching and learning in all development planning activities. This focus is essential if SDP is to achieve its core purpose: school improvement.

A number of issues have been identified that have implications for SDP development in schools. The challenges include:

- ◆ Providing differentiated forms of support to cater for widely-varying levels of experience and success in implementing SDP
- ◆ Providing skills training relevant to SDP for those involved in the leadership of the process – principals, post-holders, planning coordinators, steering committees and task group convenors
- ◆ Developing capacity for SDP facilitation within schools
- ◆ Strengthening the partnership dimension in schools' implementation of SDP
- ◆ Developing supports on an ongoing basis to assist schools in addressing emerging priority issues
- ◆ Deepening cooperation among the various support programmes and agencies that serve schools
- ◆ Maintaining up-to-date resource banks of specific planning information, including digests, templates, and exemplars
- ◆ Extending the use of ICT to support SDP
- ◆ Devising methods of addressing schools' concerns about legislative requirements in order to ensure that the development planning cycle is not neglected
- ◆ Addressing schools' logistical concerns about planning time.

Future policy direction on SDP should take account of these challenges, prioritising in accordance with available resources so that a clear focus is maintained on the core development planning support needs of school communities.



School Development Planning Initiative: Structures and Personnel

1. Primary

Support Team (SDPS)

National Coordinator:	Eileen Flynn
Regional Coordinators:	Seán Balfe Mary Culhane Tom Feeley Catherine Hennessy
Facilitators:	19 full-time facilitators (to August 2002) 29 full-time facilitators (from September 2002) 28 part-time facilitators
Administrative Officer:	Linda Gorman (from May 2000)

Internal Management Committee (IMC)

The Internal Management Committee at Primary level is composed of representatives of the Inspectorate, the In-Career Development Unit, and the Primary Administration Section of the Department of Education and Science (DES), and of Drumcondra Education Centre (which hosts the Initiative at Primary level), together with the National Coordinator of SDPS.

The members of the Internal Management Committee in 2002 were:

Lorcan Mac Conaonaigh, Príomhchigire Cúnta, DES (Chairperson)
Patrick B. Diggins, Director, Drumcondra Education Centre
Patrick Bennis, In-Career Development Unit, DES (to March 2002)
Ciarán Rohan, In-Career Development Unit, DES (from May 2002)
Colette McNulty, Primary Administration, DES
Mícheál Ó Conghaile, Roinnchigire, DES
Eileen Flynn, National Coordinator, SDPS (Primary)

Consultative Group

The Consultative Group is composed of representatives of the partners in education, together with the National Coordinator and the two Inspectors on the IMC, who are ex officio members.

The members of the Consultative Group in 2002 were:

Lorcan Mac Conaonaigh, Príomhchigire Cúnta, DES (Chairperson)
Maria Spring, Catholic Primary Schools Managers' Association
Anne Colgan, National Parents' Council (Primary):
Deirbhile Nic Craith, Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Patrick B. Diggins, Director, Drumcondra Education Centre:
Mícheál Ó Conghaile, Roinnchigire, DES
Eileen Flynn, National Coordinator, SDPS (Primary)

2. Post-Primary

Support Team (SDPI)

National Coordinator:	Sinéad Breathnach
Regional Coordinators:	Mary Forde Jean Geoghegan Joe Harrison Mark Fennell (from November 2002) Paul Fields (from April 2002) Dolores Mullins (from June 2002) Jim O’Leary (from September 2002)
Facilitators:	No full-time facilitators (but the role of the Regional Coordinator at Post-Primary level encompasses aspects of the role of the full-time facilitator at Primary level) 30 operational part-time facilitators
Administrative Officer:	Jacqueline Daly (from June 2000)
Administrative Assistant:	Patricia O’Connor (from September 2001)

Internal Management Committee (IMC)

The membership of the Internal Management Committee at Post-Primary level includes representatives of the Inspectorate, the In-Career Development Unit, and the Post-Primary Administration Section of the Department of Education and Science, and of Marino Institute of Education (which hosts the Initiative at Post-Primary level), together with the National Coordinator of SDPI.

The members of the Internal Management Committee in 2002 were:

Lorcan Mac Conaonaigh, Príomhchigire Cúnta, DES (Chairperson)
Luke Monahan, Marino Institute of Education
Patrick Bennis, In-Career Development Unit, DES (to March 2002)
Ciarán Rohan, In-Career Development Unit, DES (from May 2002)
Christopher McCamley, Post-Primary Administration, DES
Bríd Uí Ríordáin, Cigire Sinsearach, DES
Sinéad Breathnach, National Coordinator, SDPI (Post-Primary)

Consultative Group

The Consultative Group is composed of representatives of the partners in education, together with the National Coordinator and the two Inspectors on the IMC, who are ex officio members.

The members of the Consultative Group in 2002 were:

Michael Corley, Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland
Pádraigín Uí Ríordáin, Teachers’ Union of Ireland (to June 2002)
John Mac Gabhann, Teachers’ Union of Ireland (from September 2002)
Michael McCann, National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals
Brian Cannon, Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools
Charles Mc Manus, Irish Vocational Education Association
Eilís Humphreys, Joint Managerial Body
Barbara Johnston, National Parents’ Council (post-primary) (to November 2002)
Connie Carolan, National Parents’ Council (post-primary) (from November 2002)
Dermot Morris, Congregation of Religious of Ireland

3. Cross-Sectoral Coordination

To facilitate coordination in addressing issues of relevance to the Initiative at both Primary and Post-Primary level, the two National Coordinators and the Inspector-members of the respective IMCs liaise closely. As an additional coordinating measure, the IMC and the Consultative Group at both Primary and Post-Primary level have a common Chairperson.



Grant Aid for School Development Planning

SDP Grant Aid for Schools 1999–2002

Primary

At Primary Level, grant aid has been provided each year to schools included in the Initiative. In 2002, grant aid totalling €367,500 (excluding facilitation costs) was paid to a total of 2,835 schools. €100 per school was issued to schools with 1–7 mainstream teachers, while €250 per school was paid to larger schools.

Post-Primary

At Post-Primary level, start-up grant aid for two years in succession was provided on a phased basis to all schools during the period 1999–2002. A school with fewer than 400 pupils received €1270 per instalment; a school with 400 pupils or more received €1905. In 2002, grant aid totalling €631,825 (to cover SDP-related expenses, including facilitation costs) was paid to a total of 393 schools.

Grant Aid Schedule

The schedule of grant payments to schools since the inception of the Initiative is summarised in the table below:

Year	Level	No. of Schools	Grant per School
1999/2000	Primary	442	£500 (1–8 teachers) £750 (9+ teachers)
	Post-Primary	276	£1,000 (<400 pupils) £1,500 (400+ pupils)
2000/2001	Primary	1772	£215 (1–8 teachers) £415 (9+ teachers)
	Post-Primary	361	£1,000 (<400 pupils) £1,500 (400+ pupils)
2001/2002	Primary	2610	€273 (1–8 teachers) €527 (9+ teachers)
	Post-Primary	478	€1,270 (<400 pupils) €1,905 (400+ pupils)
2002/2003	Primary	2,835	€100 (1–7 teachers) €250 (8+ teachers)
	Post-Primary	393	€1,270 (<400 pupils) €1,905 (400+ pupils)

Cooperation with Other Agencies

1. Primary

During 2002, the Initiative's Support Team at Primary level linked with the following agencies:

Department of Education and Science

- ◆ **Inspectorate:** Ongoing communication at national and regional level; provision of inservice on SDP for newly appointed inspectors
- ◆ **Social Inclusion Unit:** Cooperation in the formulation of guidelines for schools on the development of Substance Use Policy, in accordance with action 43 of the National Drugs Strategy
- ◆ **Gender Equality Unit:** Contribution to National Plan for Women.

Partner Organisations

- ◆ **Catholic Primary School Managers' Association/Religious Education Offices:** Ongoing communication at national and regional level to coordinate approaches; provision of inputs at training seminars for boards of management
- ◆ **Irish National Teachers' Organisation:** Ongoing cooperation; provision of inputs to training programmes for principals; contribution of article on SDP to INTO publication
- ◆ **National Parents' Council (Primary):** Cooperation at national level in planning for a publication on SDP for parents; cooperation with local parent associations
- ◆ **Irish Primary Principals' Network:** Ongoing communication; provision of information on SDPS for newsletter and website enquirers; facilitation of workshops in Education Centres for principals and deputy principals.

Fellow Support Services

- ◆ **Primary Curriculum Support Programme:** Ongoing communication between the two coordinating teams; provision of training input on SDP for PCSP personnel
- ◆ **Leadership Development for Schools:** Representation on LDS Advisory Committee; joint discussions on professional development needs of principal teachers
- ◆ **Primary Sports Initiative:** Communication at national level; briefing for SDP facilitators
- ◆ **Visiting Teachers for Travellers Service:** Facilitation of session at VTTS Annual Conference.

Third Level Institutions

- ◆ **Colleges of Education involved in Primary Teacher Training:** Provision of workshops for two colleges; joint research on publication for probationary teachers with one college; provision of access to SDP Regional Seminars for college personnel
- ◆ **St. Angela's College, Sligo:** Provision of input to the college's facilitation training programme.

National Education Agencies

- ◆ **National Council for Curriculum and Assessment:** Meetings for mutual briefing; review of NCCA draft curriculum guidelines for teachers of students with mild and moderate general learning disabilities by SDPS team
- ◆ **National Centre for Technology in Education:** Meeting re ICT planning in schools; NCTE inservice on ICT planning attended by SDP facilitators
- ◆ **National Educational Psychological Service:** provision of input on SDP to induction course for new psychologists.

Education Centres

- ◆ **Education Centre Directors:** Ongoing communication with Education Centre Directors re SDPS programme and personnel within each area; cooperation in the organisation of SDP Regional Seminars and clusters; delivery of summer courses by 20 SDPS facilitators; provision of SDP modules to Centres' inservice programmes; participation in meeting of regional support personnel hosted by Navan Education Centre.

Initiatives and Agencies focused on Addressing Educational Disadvantage

- ◆ **Forum to End Educational Disadvantage:** Participation by SDPS in the forum in St. Patrick's College of Education, Dublin, in July 2002
- ◆ **Bridging the Gap:** Cooperation in implementation of UCC-DES project focused on alleviating educational disadvantage in Cork City
- ◆ **Galway Rural Development:** Supporting three clusters of County Galway schools in combating rural educational disadvantage.

2. Post-Primary

During 2002, the Initiative's Support Team at Post-Primary level linked with the following agencies:

Department of Education and Science

- ◆ **Inspectorate:** Ongoing communication at national and regional level; provision of inservice on SDP for newly appointed inspectors
- ◆ **Social Inclusion Unit:** Cooperation in the formulation of guidelines for schools on the development of Substance Use Policy, in accordance with action 43 of the National Drugs Strategy; liaison re National Anti-Poverty Strategy
- ◆ **Gender Equality Unit:** Contribution to National Plan for Women; cooperation in the provision of inservice on Gender Mainstreaming for the Inspectorate.

Partner Organisations

- ◆ **School Management Representative Organisations:** Ongoing communication at national and regional level with representatives and members of ACS, IVEA and JMB; cooperation by request in devising approaches to interculturalism, adult education; facilitation of SDP workshop at ACS conference; provision of inputs on SDP for individual boards of management
- ◆ **Religious Trustee Bodies/Vocational Education Committees:** Ongoing communication with education offices of individual religious trustee bodies and with the CEOs of individual VECs on issues relevant to SDP; provision of seminar inputs on request
- ◆ **Teacher Unions:** Communication at national level with education offices of ASTI and TUI; cooperation in researching equality issues

- ◆ **National Parents' Council (post-primary):** Liaison at national level both with umbrella body and with a number of individual constituent groups; cooperation in researching best practice in parental involvement in SDP
- ◆ **National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals:** Regular communication at national and regional level on issues relevant to leadership roles in the SDP process; facilitation of SDP workshop at NAPD seminar.

Fellow Support Services and Education Services

- ◆ **Second Level Support Service:** Regular meetings between the two teams of Coordinators for mutual briefings and development of collaborative strategies to support school improvement; cooperation in provision of professional development opportunities for support personnel
- ◆ **Physical Sciences Initiative:** Input for Support Team on SDP in the context of curriculum and subject department planning
- ◆ **SPHE Support Service:** Regular mutual briefings and consultation on issues of common interest
- ◆ **Leadership Development for Schools:** Representation on LDS Advisory Committee; joint discussions of school leadership needs in the context of SDP
- ◆ **Youthreach:** Presentations on SDP to meetings of Youthreach Coordinators; briefings on SDP for National Coordinator and Coordinator of Quality Framework Initiative
- ◆ **Senior Traveller Training Centres:** Briefing meetings on SDP with National Coordinator and Directors of individual centres; provision of input on SDP for Association of Directors of Senior Traveller Training Centres.

Third Level Institutions

- ◆ **Education Departments of Universities:** Provision of inputs on SDP to graduate programmes for teachers in the following third level institutions: NUI, Galway; NUI, Maynooth; UCC; UCD; collaboration with NUI, Galway, in piloting of diploma programme
- ◆ **Marino Institute of Education, Dublin:** Cooperation in DES-funded project promoting partnership as a school improvement strategy.

National Education Agencies

- ◆ **National Council for Curriculum and Assessment:** Meetings for mutual briefing; SDPI representation on Junior Cycle Review and Senior Cycle Committees of NCCA; collaboration on design of curriculum review materials; consultation on planning sections of draft curriculum guidelines for teachers of students with mild general learning disabilities
- ◆ **National Centre for Technology in Education:** Meeting re ICT planning in schools; NCTE inservice on ICT planning attended by SDPI Coordinators
- ◆ **National Centre for Guidance in Education:** Facilitation of workshop on SDP for principals of schools involved in Guidance Enhancement Initiative
- ◆ **National Educational Psychological Service:** Provision of input on SDP to induction course for new psychologists
- ◆ **Commission on School Accommodation Needs:** Cooperation in supporting SDP in schools preparing for amalgamation.

Education Centres

- ◆ **Individual Education Centres:** Support from Education Centre Directors and staffs in provision of accommodation for Regional Coordinators and assistance in the organisation of SDPI Regional Seminars; cooperation with a number of Centres at regional level in organisation of inservice seminars relevant to schools' planning priorities
- ◆ **Association of Teachers'/Education Centres of Ireland:** Facilitation of planning seminar for ATECI; cooperation with ATECI and all post-primary support services in progressive coordination of inservice programmes.

Initiatives and Agencies focused on Addressing Educational Disadvantage

- ◆ **Forum on Educational Disadvantage:** Participation in the forum in Dublin Castle in November 2002
- ◆ **Bridging the Gap:** Cooperation in implementation of UCC-DES project focused on alleviating educational disadvantage in Cork City
- ◆ **Galway Rural Development:** Cooperation in multi-agency project supporting three clusters of Co. Galway schools in combating rural disadvantage
- ◆ **Irish Learning Support Association:** facilitation of planning workshops for learning support teachers at national and regional level.



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