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Spotlight

Understanding the Challenges of Immigration for Education Provision

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Contents

Editorial

In recent decades, migration policies and the particular challenges presented by immigration have risen to the forefront of the policy agenda in many countries.

Ireland's experience of immigration is relatively new, as the rate of immigration has increased in recent years. The arrival of immigrants with different ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds has increased diversity in Ireland and presented challenges for the delivery of public services, not least in education. This is a particularly important issue for policy makers and immigrants as education provides knowledge, shapes attitudes and acts as an important vehicle for social mobility and integration.

This *Spotlight* aims to present some of the key challenges that immigration raises for education provision. In particular, it focuses on **Ireland's experience** by assessing the nature of those educational challenges and examining the responses which have been introduced to address them.

To facilitate broader understanding of this issue, this *Spotlight* also draws on **international experience** and examines the ways in which other countries have sought to address the educational challenges presented by immigration.

The Social Science Research Team

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Irish schools teach over 48,000 migrant pupils of 160 different nationalities. These children and young people are culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse, unevenly distributed throughout the country, and are largely urban based. This diversity presents challenges for the delivery of primary and secondary education. These challenges arise in relation to the largely denominational nature of Irish schools, providing language supports, accommodating diversity, training teachers and monitoring and evaluation.

There is a current debate about the pros and cons of the unique, principally denominational management structure of Irish schools. A key issue relates to admissions to schools and school choice. Concerns about admissions to schools have caused a small number of Catholic schools in areas with large migrant populations to reserve a number of places for non-Catholic children. At the same time, limitations on parental choice and greater cultural and religious diversity have resulted in the growth of the number of multi-denominational Educate Together schools and the piloting of a new model of primary school managed by the City of Dublin VEC to provide for children of all religions and none.

A second issue relates to the *de facto* segregation in schools that may occur when the enrolment of a high proportion of migrant children is matched by the withdrawal of Irish students. This is likely to have a negative effect on community integration and inclusion.

About 60% of migrant children in Irish schools need English language support, for which extra posts or extra monies are allocated to schools depending on the numbers involved. At present, schools employ 1900 language support teachers. In addition, in some areas less formal programmes, funded by NGOs, are supporting parents to acquire English and children to maintain their mother tongue.

Issues of cultural diversity in school extend beyond language alone. The model promoted in Irish education is one of integration, an intercultural process that requires education authorities, majority and ethnic communities to work together to acknowledge diversity.

To this end, schools may mark the religious and cultural events of minority groups and the Department has translated some key information on its website into a variety of languages. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) has introduced guidelines on intercultural education to all schools at both primary and secondary levels. Commentators have called for the introduction of translation and interpretation services at local level and for the appointment of Intercultural Liaison Teachers in schools. Internationally, there is little known about how intercultural guidelines are employed and indeed, there has been some criticism that there were no supports in place to support the implementation of the NCCA guidelines.

In relation to teacher training, pre-service training in this area is not compulsory in Ireland, with intercultural modules compulsory in some colleges of education and not in others. Recent years have seen the introduction of some in-service training on intercultural education and related issues; specialist services provide training for language support teachers.

It is recognised internationally that robust monitoring and evaluation are needed to inform intercultural education policy. The Department of Education and Science's data strategy aims *inter alia* to improve data on the presence and progress of non-Irish pupils and the ESRI is

undertaking a major study on the effect of immigration on schools.

Despite the distinctive nature of the Irish education system, there is a similarity between the challenges faced in schools in Ireland and in other countries arising from immigration. The international literature shows that:

- An integrated approach that supports intercultural education and can improve educational outcomes is favoured. This approach can also make a strong contribution towards social integration and cultural understanding.

- If immigrant children become clustered in some schools and these schools are underperforming, experience in some jurisdictions suggests that extra resources aimed at the school is a better policy response than de-segregation measures alone.

- It is unclear whether pupils benefit from having their mother tongue taught at the same time as learning English. However, best practice in implementing language teaching policy has been identified.

- Measures to accommodate diversity in schools include written information about the schools system including pre-school in minority languages, provision of interpreters, special resource staff or councils, additional meetings with immigrant families.

- Teachers need a set of core-skills to provide intercultural education. These core-skills should be bolstered by ongoing in-service training.

- To improve policy in this area there should be on-going systematic monitoring and evaluation of intercultural education initiatives to examine outcomes and identify 'what works'.

In Ireland, stakeholders such as the Department of Education and Science, individual schools, local communities and community organisations are working to meet the challenges they face. Irish commentators emphasise the need for the Department of Education and Science to develop an intercultural education strategy. It is anticipated that such a strategy would provide a blueprint for accommodating diversity at all levels of the education system. Implementing this more systematic approach across the sector will present a challenge for the future.

Guide to Acronyms

CSO	Central Statistics Office	**INTO**	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
DES	Department of Education and Science	**NAPR**	National Action Plan Against Racism
ECRI	European Commission against Racism and Intolerance	**NCCA**	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute	**NCCRI**	National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism
EUMC	European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia	**NESC**	National Economic and Social Council
FRA	European Agency for Fundamental Rights (formerly the EUMC)	**NGO**	Non-governmental Organisation
IILT	Integrate Ireland Language and Training	**OECD**	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

While immigration provides economic and social opportunities for migrants and host countries alike, it is a contentious issue and presents challenges in terms of how the needs of migrants are addressed in the host country (NESC, 2006). The arrival of immigrants with different ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds, for instance, has increased diversity in Ireland and presented challenges for the delivery of educational services.

This *Spotlight* aims to aid understanding of the nature and extent of key educational challenges presented by immigration and to examine the responses that have been introduced. While the *Spotlight* focuses largely on Ireland, attention is also given to understanding the experience of other countries. As Ireland's experience of immigration is relatively new, this provides an opportunity to examine the issues other countries have faced in this regard and to examine what policies and practices they have implemented to address those challenges. The *Spotlight* does not attempt to address all issues, for example, it does not look at special educational needs or the social and emotional needs of migrant students.

In seeking to understand the challenges in Ireland and other countries, this *Spotlight* focuses on primary and secondary levels of education. Although the national and international literature does not draw any great distinction between the two levels, where possible, issues specifically pertaining to the primary or secondary level are highlighted. The document is divided into three sections, structured as follows:

- **Background – Profile of immigrants in Ireland:** this provides context by outlining definitions of different types of migrants and profiling immigration to Ireland. This includes analysis of the number of immigrants to Ireland, their demographic and religious profile, and an assessment of their spatial distribution.

- **Learning from international experience**: this section aims to examine the ways in which other countries have sought to address the educational challenges presented by immigration.

- **Understanding the challenges - Ireland's experience:** this section outlines and examines key challenges which immigration has presented for the provision of education in Ireland. In particular, the section assesses the nature and extent of these challenges and, where appropriate, analyses the responses which have been introduced to address those challenges.

Background:
Profile of immigrants in Ireland

In this section we present a profile of immigrants in Ireland by analysing the number of immigrants, their demographic and religious profile and their spatial distribution. Before this, however, it is important to have an understanding of the types of migrants by outlining the different definitions of the term.

Definitions

There are many different types of migrants residing in Ireland, with a range of rights and entitlements. The following definitions are taken from the Immigrant Council of Ireland[1].

The term **migrant** is usually understood to cover

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[1] http://www.immigrantcouncil.ie

all cases where the decision to migrate is taken freely by the individual concerned for reasons of 'personal convenience' and without intervention of an external compelling factor. This term therefore applies to persons, and family members, moving to another country or region to better their material or social conditions and improve the prospects for themselves or their family. This definition excludes individuals who have been trafficked.

Many of Ireland's migrants are from the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland and these migrants have the right to live and work here without a work permit. The exception is for citizens of Bulgaria and Romania who must hold a valid work permit before they can legally work in Ireland. Workers from outside these areas must apply for a work permit, green card or an intra-company transfer permit[2]. Students are allowed to work for pay for 20 hours a week (if they have a valid student visa). All these temporary migrants can remain in the country for definite periods as determined in a work contract or student visa.

Asylum seekers are persons who file an application for asylum in a country other than their own. They remain with the status of asylum seeker until their application is considered and adjudicated. If they are recognised as needing protection under the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and 1967 Protocol they become a refugee.

A **refugee** is defined as someone who has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion; is outside the country they belong to or normally reside in and is unable or unwilling to return home for fear of persecution.

A person is an **irregular immigrant** if he or she resides in a country without formal permission. This would apply to failed asylum seekers and people who have overstayed work permits or visas, including student visas.   Often the irregular immigrants may be in possession of false identification or no documentation at all. According to the Immigrant Council of Ireland it is common for people seeking asylum to travel with false or no documentation. This is because they are frequently not in a position to seek the necessary documents from their own government or embassy.

A person can be **'trafficked'** into Ireland if they have been forced or deceived into coming into Ireland, so they are not 'willing participants'[3]. However, this definition only applies to adults. UNICEF guidelines for child victims emphasise that the often blurred distinction between 'coercion' as per the trafficking definition and being a 'willing participant' cannot be applied to a child. They emphasise that the best interests of the child are paramount and that immigration issues should be secondary. They also call for an immediate granting of humanitarian visas for child victims of trafficking.

Unaccompanied minors or **separated children** are children outside their country of origin and separated from their parents or legal guardians (Mooten, 2006). Between 2003 and 2006 there were 599 such children in Ireland, 13 of these children were aged 13 or under (Mooten, 2006). Finally, a child may be an Irish citizen but his or her parents may be in Ireland illegally.

Therefore, migrants can be in Ireland legally or illegally and with or without a right to work. For the purpose of this *Spotlight*, the term 'immigrant children' is used to encompass the range of migrant statuses outlined here. It is recognised, however, that this is an unsatisfactory term as many of the issues that arise for immigrant

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[2] In addition, from the 1st of February 2007 spouses or dependents of work permit holders can apply for a work permit.

[3] For a fuller definition see Library & Research Pilot Debate Pack No 2 2007 - Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Bill 2007.

children can apply to Irish born children of migrants. While not immigrants themselves, these children may not speak English, may be living without their families and be from diverse backgrounds.

Immigration in Ireland

Ireland has experienced a big increase in immigration over the last two decades. In 1996, just 7.5% of the resident population were recorded as having been born outside of the State. This had increased to 11.6% in the 2002 census and 17.4% in the 2006 census[4]. However, relative to other EU countries, the number of immigrants coming to Ireland per year is not very high, nor is the total immigrant population high (Eurydice, 2004).

Most children in the State are Irish. For instance, according to the 2006 census, 92.7% of all children aged 14 or under are Irish and 6.1% are non Irish (the rest do not state their nationality) (see Table 1). The non-Irish children come from a variety of countries; the biggest groups are children from the UK, followed by Poland and Nigeria. It is interesting to note that the 21.5% of the Irish population are aged 14 or under but that the corresponding proportion of the non-Irish population is considerably less at only 12.5%. We can speculate that this could indicate a reluctance of the population to form families here or that there is a demographic lag and in the future we might expect more migrants to have children.

Overall, there are fewer non-Irish children under the age of 5 than in older age groups (94.3% of this age group are Irish). In the age groups 5-9 years, 10-14 years and 15-19 years there are similar percentages of Irish children in each cohort (91.8%, 91.8% and 92.5% respectively).

Table 1: Persons usually resident and present in the State on census night, classified by nationality and age group, 2006

Nationality	0-4 years	5-9 years	10-14 years	15-19 years	Total Population
Total Irish	283,428	263,614	250,239	265,613	**3,706,683**
UK	2,528	5,773	7,350	6,506	**112,548**
EU15 excluding Ireland and UK	989	1,019	1,029	1,332	**42,693**
EU15 to EU25 accession states	4,198	3,398	2,411	3,821	**120,534**
Other European Nationality	697	1,351	1,201	1,196	**24,425**
United States	926	1,365	1,244	836	**12,475**
Africa	1,430	3,593	2,624	2,141	**35,326**
Asia	1,484	2,242	1,771	1,556	**46,952**
Other Nationalities	861	1,226	1,248	1,259	**22,422**
Multi Nationality	183	205	154	110	**2,358**
No Nationality	253	81	63	64	**1,318**
Not Stated	3,706	3,446	3,166	2,687	**44,279**
Total	300,683	287,313	272,500	287,121	**4,172,013**

Source: http://www.cso.ie/census/census2006results/volume_4, table 36

However, though the total number of non-Irish children is relatively evenly spread across the age-groups, there are interesting national variations. For instance, looking at the accession states, children from these states make up 1.4% of the under fives, 1.2% of the 5-9 years olds and 0.9% of the 10-14 year olds.

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[4] Those born outside the state include Irish citizens such as offspring of returning migrants.

This indicates that demand for schooling from this group will gradually increase, first at primary level and then, as this group ages, at secondary level. This of course, presumes that these children remain in the State. Data on children from Africa show a different pattern, they make up 0.5% of the under fives, 1.3% of the 5-9 years olds and 1% of the 10-14 year olds. This suggests that primary schools are experiencing the peak demand for schooling of African children and that second-level schools will experience this peak demand over the next few years. A similar but less pronounced pattern is discernable for Asian children.

Language and religion

This diversity of nationalities means that there is probably also a diversity of language and religious belief. While we can assume that the first language of the majority of children from the UK is English, there is less certainty about children from other countries. However, as noted above, even for children who are Irish citizens, their first language may not be English or Irish[5] (for instance the children of people who have been granted asylum). We have some information about this from the Department of Education and Science (DES, 2007 and 2008a). According to the Department, there are over 48,000 'newcomer' pupils of 160 different nationalities in primary and post-primary schools in Ireland. Approximately 60% (or 28,800) of these do not have English as a first language.

In relation to religious differences, the non-Irish population is much less likely to follow Roman Catholicism than the Irish population. Only 50.8% of non-Irish residents define themselves as Roman Catholic compared to 92% of Irish nationals (see Table 2). The non-Irish population is five times more likely to define themselves as non-catholic Christians or as Muslim.

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[5] This *Spotlight* focuses on English language needs and supports and English as the language of instruction in school.

Table 2: Population classified by religion and nationality, 2006		
Religion	Irish	Non-Irish
Catholic	92.0	50.8
Church of Ireland (incl. Protestant)	2.3	7.4
Other Christian Religion	0.4	2.7
Presbyterian	0.4	1.8
Muslim (Islamic)	0.3	5.1
Orthodox	0.1	4.0
Methodist	0.1	1.3
Other Stated Religions	0.6	7.4
No Religion	2.8	16.3
Not Stated	0.9	2.9
Total	3,706,683	419,733

Source: http://www.cso.ie/statistics/popnclassbyreligionandnationality2006.htm

Clearly, for a school system based on patronage of the main churches and built on the assumption that most children speak English, this presents challenges. However, these challenges may vary from place to place as the migrant population is not spread equally around the country.

Spatial distribution

If we look at the non-Irish population, they are disproportionably concentrated in Dublin, Galway and Clare. Indeed, within counties there are pockets of migrants. Thus, at one extreme over 40% of Gort's (Co. Galway) population are foreign nationals but at the other extreme less than 4% of Clara's (Co. Offaly) population are foreign nationals. Table 3 (on page 7) shows the population of a number of towns, selected to demonstrate the variation in the migrant population. Both the percentage and absolute figure are important for education policy. For instance, Newtownmountkennedy in Co. Wicklow has only 147 non-Irish individuals but it is the age profile of these people rather than the

numbers that will indicate whether or not this presents issues for local schools.

While good data exists on the number of migrants, how old they are and where they live, information about the first language of migrants and how long they will stay in the country is more limited. For instance, a child born to a Polish couple in Kilbarrick today may or may not be in Kilbarrick in five years time, they may be in another part of Ireland or have left the State.

While evidence suggests that a significant proportion of migrants from the 10 new EU Member States do not stay for very long in Ireland, the extent to which this is occurring has not yet been adequately measured (NESC, 2006). This makes school planning particularly problematic. A projected school population based on the 2006 census may under- or over-estimate the potential school attendance figures.

Table 3: Persons usually resident (and present in their usual residence on Census Night) in selected cities or towns of 1,500 or more inhabitants, classified by nationality, 2006 (selected for highest and lowest immigrant populations).

Selected Towns	Total Population	Non-Irish Population	% of Population
Gort	2646	1065	40.2
Ballyhaunis	1632	588	36.0
Ballinrobe	2021	518	25.6
Ballyjamesduff	1603	408	25.5
Ballaghaderreen	1631	410	25.1
Killarney	11846	2936	24.8
Monaghan	6378	1521	23.8
Carrick-on-Shannon	2990	705	23.6
Cahir	3256	762	23.4
Kenmare	1445	337	23.3
Kinsale	3680	859	23.3
Roscommon	4762	991	20.8
Carrickmacross	4267	853	20.0
Newtownmountkennedy	2488	147	5.9
Rathnew	1825	108	5.9
Portmarnock	8691	506	5.8
Portrane	1451	82	5.7
Castlecomer-Donaguile	1494	84	5.6
Newmarket-on-Fergus	1509	81	5.4
Kill	2445	115	4.7
Clara	2946	111	3.8

Source and for full table see: http://www.cso.ie/census/Census2006_Volume4.htm

Given that Ireland's experience of immigration has been relatively new, this section aims to identify what challenges other countries have faced in providing education to immigrant children, and to outline and examine different approaches that have been employed to address those challenges.

Identifying international experiences that are relevant to Ireland, however, is not straightforward as other states employ a range of migration polices which can produce different immigrant population profiles. For example, Entorf and Minoiu (2004) suggest that Australia, Canada and New Zealand have immigration policies that are designed to admit selected applicants with high education levels and good language skills.

Within Europe, migration policies and patterns also vary from country to country. For example, countries can be divided into European states with post-war labour recruitment, those states with colonial histories, and what are often termed the new immigration countries, among which Ireland is numbered (OECD, 2006). Different immigrant profiles can have diverse effects; such as on the educational level of parents or on the likelihood of children being able to speak the host country language.

These difficulties aside, this section draws primarily on the experience of EU countries as these are more relevant and comparable to Ireland. From a review of the literature, the section identifies a number of key challenges which other countries have faced in providing primary and secondary education to the children of immigrants. These are outlined below and examined in the subsequent paragraphs:

- Segregation or integration?
- Spatial clustering of immigrants.
- Language supports.
- Accommodating diversity.
- Teacher training.
- Monitoring and evaluation.

Segregation or integration?

Research shows that the challenges arising from greater national, ethnic, racial and linguistic diversity are heightened because migrants tend to be directed towards schools with lower performance expectations. Evidence suggests that they tend to be overrepresented in vocational schools, special education and schools situated in deprived neighbourhoods (Luciak, 2006)[6].

How the school system should provide education for immigrant children and how their educational performance can be improved are key questions for the education sector. In this regard, there is some debate on whether immigrant pupils should be integrated into the mainstream school structure by supporting an intercultural approach[7] or whether they should be provided with separate education.

Some commentators are critical of forced efforts to integrate immigrant pupils and highlight the importance of parental/pupil choice in the selection of schools, specifically for social and

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[6] In all but four countries reviewed in an OECD study, at least 25% of second generation immigrant children attend schools where immigrants make up more than 50% of the school population (OECD, 2006).
[7] Note that interculturalism differs from multiculturalism. While also acknowledging the need for recognition and celebration of different cultures in a society, the term multiculturalism has been criticised as it has allowed the growth of parallel communities with little interaction between them. Interculturalism, by contrast, is about interaction between majority and minority cultures to foster understanding and respect. It is about ensuing that cultural diversity is acknowledged and catered for (NCCRI, 2007).

ethnic reasons (Karsten, 1994). Some also argue that separate education for immigrants can be more effective for enhancing educational outcomes (see Luciak, 2006).

Rather than implementing anti-segregation measures, some Dutch researchers, for example, argue that it is more effective to keep investing in 'Black' schools with funds to combat learning disadvantages of ethnic monitory students (cited by European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, EUMC, 2006). Research on the experience of the Hungarian minority in Romania, argues that this group has benefited from separate minority education and that integration into the general educational system is not always a necessity for a minority group's educational success (Luciak, 2006). However, while not advocating forced integration, Luciak questions the implications of separate schooling on intercultural dialogue and understanding. Verkyten and Thijs (2000) support this point and maintain that segregation can jeopardise the social integration of different groups of pupils.

Recent research on faith based schools in London suggests that segregation in the education system based on religious lines, as opposed to the specific needs of individual immigrant groups, can lead to social segregation along class and race divides (Pennell *et al*, 2007). In the study, many religious secondary schools in London were found not to be serving the most disadvantaged. Some commentators have also voiced concerns that faith based schools are turning into 'white citadels' which has created implications for their role in promoting social cohesion (*The Observer*, 12 February, 2006).

Taking this forward, it is argued that immigrant pupils should be integrated into the school structure by supporting an intercultural approach which aims to prepare pupils for living in a culturally diverse society (see Eurydice, 2004). Going beyond the simplistic one way process

where minority communities are expected to adapt or change without any expectation of change from the state or majority communities (i.e. assimilation[8]), integration is based on an intercultural process that requires education authorities, majority and ethnic communities to work together to acknowledge and accommodate diversity (NCCRI, 2007).

In cases where the teachers receive appropriate training in intercultural issues, Luciak (2006) suggests that an integrated approach, which supports intercultural education, can help to improve the educational outcomes of minority students and also improve intercultural understanding[9]. Under this approach, intercultural education targets both migrants and host country pupils together and is centred on deepening knowledge and appreciation of different cultures, reducing prejudice and facilitating critical awareness of discrimination and inequalities.

It is also appreciated, however, that intercultural education cannot solve all problems and other initiatives for immigrants are needed such as promoting equal opportunities in employment and housing. In addition, it is recognised that intercultural education cannot treat cultures as 'uniform wholes' - cultural diversity needs to be promoted and different perspectives should be considered other than just teaching the majority view (Luciak, 2006)[10].

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[8] According to the NCCRI (2007) assimilation was an unsuccessful policy aiming to absorb minority ethnic groups into the majority community, with an expectation that communities, their needs and their culture would become invisible or would expire.
[9] Important for maxmising the outcomes of intercultural education are: appropriate training for teachers in intercultural issues, smaller school classes; pre-school and afterschool programmes; and, well trained bilingual team-teachers.
[10] However, highlighting diversity within the classroom can assume cultural conflict and may make minority immigrant pupils feel highly vulnerable (Mac an Ghaill and Haywood, 2005).

Text box 1: Pilot intercultural education projects in Greece

In Greece, the 87th Primary School of Athens has piloted intercultural education projects which are aimed at creating a different environment for minority children. The school is located in a poor district of Athens and more than 50% of its pupils are from ethnic minorities, such as Turkish speakers from Thrace and Roma. Rather than being regarded as disadvantaged, the pupils' knowledge of different languages and cultures as well as their survival techniques were considered an advantage.

The projects have developed a holistic approach by using parental involvement and offering individual treatment for pupils by providing them with psychological and social support. While not commenting on the extent to which the pilot projects enhanced educational outcomes of the pupils, the EUMC has provided a positive indication of the initiatives by stating that during the two years of the projects, the school became very popular and the number of pupils increased.

Source: European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) (2004)

To date, there has been little evaluation of how schools actually implement curricular instructions regarding intercultural education within the EU. From the evaluations that have been conducted, evidence suggests that implementation has been mixed. Issues highlighted include that provision of intercultural education has not been sufficiently widespread across schools, and that the majority population and socio-cultural customs of the middle class are overrepresented in teaching material (Eurydice, 2004).

Studies have also found that promotion of effective intercultural education depends on the ethos of a school which values cultural diversity and challenges racism. Text Box 1 provides an example of an intercultural educational project that is being piloted in Greece which aims to recognise and promote cultural diversity[11].

Spatial clustering of immigrants

While the enrolment of high proportions of immigrants into some schools may reflect parental/pupil choice, the spatial clustering of immigrant populations within certain areas can also be regarded as an important factor in the selection of schools. Across the EU, analysis shows that the geographical distribution of immigrant pupils and their parents tends to be concentrated in urban environments[12]. This clustering creates challenges for education authorities as it contributes towards creating the conditions in which immigrants tend to be directed to schools with lower performance expectations which are also often characterised by disadvantaged student intakes (Karsten *et al*, 2006).

How the performance of immigrant pupils who are concentrated in certain schools should be addressed is a complex issue. Some responses have centred on providing schools with additional financial support, while other responses emphasise the importance of encouraging desegregation.

To enhance the educational provision for immigrants, in Slovakia for example, the formula for financing primary schools has been adjusted as a means to increase financial aid for immigrant education. For each immigrant pupil who is placed in mainstream education, primary schools are entitled to receive 250 per cent of funds they receive for regular pupils.

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[11] As a further example, a guidance and advice document

has been published for schools in Scotland to assist in the development of intercultural education. This document also includes good practice case studies (Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2007, http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/GlobalEd4Escot.pdf).

[12] Research conducted by Eurydice, shows that the relative proportion of immigrant pupils in urban areas with populations of over 100,000 is higher than that of native pupils in the majority of EU25 countries. Conversely, in many countries the proportion of native pupils is relatively stronger than that of immigrants in areas in which the population is not as dense - villages and towns with under 100,000 inhabitants (Eurydice, 2004).

In the Netherlands, different measures have been introduced to promote de-segregation and curb the growth in the number of white and non-white schools. Karsten *et al* (2006), however, argue that, to date, these measures have not been very effective.

In one local authority area, for example, an initiative which transported immigrant ethnic children from the poorest neighbourhoods by bus to schools in more affluent areas was discontinued after a number of years. This was because school boards believed that giving extra resources to schools with large numbers of disadvantaged ethnic minority pupils was a better option than de-segregation and new generations of migrant parents did not wish for their children to commute to school outside of their locality (Karsten *et al*, 2006).

As an alternative approach, local authorities in some small towns in the Netherlands have also entered into voluntary agreements with school boards to agree specific quotas for schools for immigrant children in a particular neighbourhood. In these cases, if a school is at risk of exceeding the agreed percentage, they will talk to the parents to see if they are willing to choose a different school. Karsten *et al* (2006), however, cite a number of criticisms of this approach that include:

- It is only possible to implement in areas which have a low concentration of ethnic minorities.

- It is a voluntary agreement; each school and parent can opt out of the arrangement.

- It is very expensive to contact all the parents.

- Non-white schools are afraid that if they lose some of their ethnic-minority pupils that they will not be replaced by majority pupils.

In Denmark, the authorities have adopted a dual approach to improving the educational performance of schools. This has involved encouraging a process of de-segregation and, at the same time, increasing support for schools which have a high concentration of immigrants. This approach is highlighted in Text Box 2.

Text Box 2: Improving financial support and promoting de-segregation. Aarhus City Council, Denmark

In Aarhus, the educational authorities introduced the Magnet School Plan which aimed to strengthen the quality of education in eight schools with a high number of bilingual pupils. The Plan focused on providing additional resources in order to improve the quality of teaching and on linking the schools to a number of initiatives that would enable pupils to enjoy the same opportunities as children from other schools in the municipality.

The second element of the policy approach aims to encourage immigrant children to enrol in schools where there is a majority of pupils whose native language is Danish. To this end, legislation was introduced to ensure a free choice of schools across school districts and municipal borders and promote a greater balance in the school population between pupils whose native language is Danish and those from an ethnic background.

In response to the legislation, Aarhus City Council has worked to introduce in-service staff training programmes in an effort to attract immigrant children to schools which are predominately comprised of native pupils.

Source: European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

Note: The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) became the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in 2007.

Language supports

Language instruction is a key issue for educational systems, since the evidence strongly suggests that children who do not speak, read or write the language of instruction to the level of their peers perform less well in school (Christensen and Stanat, 2007)[13]. Therefore, of the various types of school supports which countries provide for immigrant children, it is not surprising that language supports are the most common (Eurydice, 2004). Across the EU and OECD countries, however, there is wide variation in the ways in which these supports can be delivered, as well as debate about what kind of supports are most effective (Eurydice, 2004; OECD, 2006). Stanat and Christensen's report for the OECD (OECD, 2006) identifies five different types of language supports:

- **Immersion**: students receive no specific language supports but are immersed in the language of instruction in mainstream classrooms.

- **Immersion with systematic language support:** students are taught in mainstream classrooms, but receive instruction in specified periods to increase proficiency.

- **Immersion with a preparatory phase:** students participate in a preparatory programme before making the transition to the language of instruction.

- **Transitional bilingual:** students initially learn in their native language before teaching gradually shifts to the language of instruction.

- **Maintenance bilingual:** students receive significant amount of instruction in their native language, with programs which aim to develop proficiency both in the native and the second language.

From their review of 14 immigrant-receiving OECD countries, Christensen and Stanat (2007)[14] found that although all types of programmes are likely to be found in one form or another, immersion with systematic language support is the most prominent approach, at least within primary education[15].

Much debate also surrounds the issue of whether teaching both the language used at home and the language of instruction, or teaching solely the language of instruction, is a better base for academic achievement[16].

In their analysis, Christensen and Stanat (2007) conclude that the evidence is unclear on which approach is best[17]. However, they do provide examples of practices that seem to be effective, based around contrasting language support programmes in countries with small achievement gaps between immigrant (first and second generation) and host country pupils, and those with larger achievement gaps. In particular, they focus on Australia, Canada and Sweden as representing three examples of narrower achievement gaps than elsewhere[18].

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[13] From a review of 14 OECD countries with large immigrant populations, Christensen and Stanat (2007) found that, if the average across OECD countries was considered, immigrant students (first and second generation) who speak the language of instruction at home were roughly a half-year of learning behind their non-immigrant peers in mathematics, while immigrant students who do not speak the language of instruction at home are about a year behind.

[14] The citations of OECD, 2006 and Chirstensen and Stanat, 2007 refer to different publications on the same study.

[15] Immersion with a preparatory phase was also widespread, particularly at secondary level. In addition, some countries provide language supports at pre-primary level. For example, Denmark, some German *Länder* and Norway specifically require children with limited proficiency in the language of instruction to participate in pre-primary programmes (OECD, 2006).

[16] See, for example Luciak, 2006 and Slavin and Cheung, 2005.

[17] They point out, however, that there may be reasons apart from reducing disadvantage in educational achievement why countries may wish to foster and maintain a student's native language and links with their community of origin.

[18] They note that Australia and Canada (where immigrant students and non-immigrant students have similar achievement levels) have more selective immigration policies, which may help account for their PISA outcomes. In Sweden, the achievement level between second-generation students and non-immigrant students is smaller than the gap between first-generation immigrant students and non-immigrant students.

The programmes in these three countries have a number of factors in common, which are identified below[19].

- Systematic programmes with explicit standards and requirements.

- Curricula that may be determined at the local level but are based on centrally developed key curriculum documents including language development frameworks and progress benchmarks.

- High standards for the programme, which allow ease of integration into mainstream programmes.

- Time-intensive programmes.

- Continued support in both primary and lower secondary school.

- Specialised training for teachers of second-language learners.

- Cooperation between teachers of second-language learners and class teachers.

The Text Box 3 (opposite) provides an example of a 'best practice' language programme in Sweden.

Accommodating diversity

Beyond language support, the arrival of immigrants who have different nationalities, languages, religions and ethnic backgrounds presents challenges in terms of how an educational system manages and adapts to diversity.

Text box 3: Language support in Sweden

In Sweden, recent immigrants may attend a six to twelve month preparatory programme that introduces them to the language and the school system. Newly arrived pupils who have moved into a mainstream class are taught with the same national subject syllabuses as other pupils. If they need additional support to follow lessons, they are entitled to extra help from a support teacher. This may be provided in Swedish or in the student's mother tongue.

Immigrants who are not proficient in Swedish take Swedish as a second language (SSL) as a subject. SSL has an explicit curriculum and aims to provide the students with language skills necessary to express complex ideas through speech and writing.

There is also some provision for offering students lessons in some subjects in their mother tongue, especially in schools with a high proportion of immigrant students. In addition, students with a mother tongue other than Swedish have the right to receive tuition in their native language as a school subject, Mother Tongue Studies. Mother Tongue Studies are taught in approximately 60 languages and each has its own syllabus, which also covers the literature, history and culture of the country of origin.

Source: Eurydice (2004) and OECD (2006)

Across the EU, different approaches to accommodating diversity can be identified with some countries adopting a formal approach and others leaving discretion to the local school. As an example of a formal approach, in Belgium, legislation provides for absence from school for the 'celebration of festivals constituting an inherent element of a pupil's philosophical beliefs if recognised by the constitution' (Eurydice, 2004).

In recent years, much attention has focused on the extent to which schools should lay down requirements regarding dress codes and especially the display of various religious

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[19] The account here is based on the programme in Victoria for Australia and in British Colombia for those in Canada.

symbols. Strictly secular approaches to this issue seem to run counter to respect for diversity and this has led to tension in some cases (Eurydice, 2004; Luciak, 2006). In France, for example, where public education is secular and non-denominational, a bill was approved following intense debate which bans religious items worn conspicuously on school premises.

Other countries have adopted different approaches, as in Britain. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a specific duty on schools to assess the impact of their policies on minority ethnic pupils, staff and parents. School policies such as uniform/dress codes fall within these general requirements and schools are expected to be sensitive to the needs of different cultures, races and religions. For example, schools are expected to accommodate these needs within a school uniform policy by allowing Muslim girls to wear appropriate dress and Sikh boys to wear traditional headdress. While not within the educational sector, the Text Box 4 provides an example of how this type of legislation can work in practice.

Text box 4: Managing diversity, Bradford City Council

Bradford City Council has a policy on Cultural and Religious Needs that allows the observance of religious dress, but taking into consideration service needs. For example, when Muslim staff members who wish to observe the wearing of a Hijab, they are provided with a corporate headscarf. The Hijab is made from the same material as the corporate uniform and the logo of the company is sewn at an appropriate and visible part of the scarf.

Source: FRA (2008)

In regard to supporting the inclusion of immigrant children within the education system, a review of international experience shows that schools frequently take steps to assist immigrant pupils and parents with enrolment, settling in and accessing information about future educational choices. These measures are considered important as immigrants (particularly new immigrants) can face problems in accessing a broad range of information about their educational options. This is partly due to a tendency to show high levels of attachment within and to their own ethnic group (Gijsberts and Dagevos, 2005). In general, support measures can be grouped into the following five activities (Eurydice, 2004):

- Written information about the school system.

- Provision of interpreters.

- Special resource persons / councils.

- Additional meetings specifically for immigrant families.

- Information about pre-primary education.

A review conducted by Eurydice shows that all surveyed countries across the EU have introduced at least one of the measures above but with Finland and the United Kingdom being particularly proactive (four measures or more). The Text Box 5 provides an example of orientation measures in Finland:

Text box 5: Orientation measures in Finland

In Finland, national authorities maintain websites and brochures with information about educational opportunities. These are available in a range of languages. In some schools, teachers as co-ordinators or guidance counsellors have been appointed and immigrant parents have been invited to attend information systems given in their own language on the Finnish education system. Using pupils as tutors is regarded as another way of promoting education of immigrants. Broader educational and public service information is also provided to immigrants including details on pre-school provision, housing, day-care, health services and leisure and cultural services.

Source: Eurydice (2003/04)

Teacher training

Teaching in multilingual and culturally diverse school environments presents a range of challenges to teachers. Research conducted by Eurydice (2004) has identified training and support for teachers as being of vital importance if intercultural education is to be developed as one means of enhancing education provision within schools.

According to this study, the teaching of the intercultural approach requires complex skills that should be acquired during initial teacher education or in-service training (Eurydice, 2004: 62). Many of the core skills, for instance, include the ability to[20]:

- Deal appropriately with prejudice at school.

- Teach children who lack a strong command of the language of instruction.

- Make good use of the resources that minority children bring to the classroom.

- Communicate effectively and with cultural sensitivity with parents.

A review across the EU has found that much variation exists in the extent to which training for intercultural education is centrally mandated and specified. In general, institutions for initial teacher education in countries across the EU are at least partly free to draw up their own curriculum.

A 2004 review showed that in the majority of EU countries, the inclusion (or otherwise) of an intercultural approach is governed solely by internal policy[21]. This finding supports previous research, which recommended that concerted efforts be made within the European Union to search for commonly accepted standards for teacher training. The objective being to equip teachers with the multicultural competencies required to function effectively in culturally diverse environments[22].

Text box 6: Supporting student teachers in the UK

In the UK, Multiverse is a national professional resource network that supports initial teacher education. It aims to meet the challenges of raising the achievement of pupils from diverse backgrounds. Established in 2003 by the Training and Development Agency for Schools, Multiverse is a consortium of eight Initial Teacher Training institutions who work in partnership with local education authorities and community groups among others.

It offers training and an online resource network for teacher educators, student teachers and trainees. Multiverse was developed in response requests by newly qualified teachers for more support in teaching pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with English as an additional language. Issues relating to social class, religious diversity, refugees and asylum seekers, and Travellers and Roma are also explored. In March 2007 the website had 560 resources, 8002 registered users (55% trainees, 22% tutors, 12% teachers) and on average 900 downloads a day.

Source: http://www.multiverse.ac.uk/

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[20] European Commission, Report of the Peer Learning Activity (PLA), Oslo, May (2007). PLAs are a process of cooperation at European level whereby policy makers and practitioners from one country learn from the experiences of their counterparts elsewhere in Europe in implementing reforms in areas of shared interest and concern. The PLA cited here is part of the EU Education and Training 2010 programme, in the 'teachers and trainers' cluster: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/reportpeer3_en.pdf

[21] Around 10 countries formally require institutions to provide for intercultural education. In the French Community of Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands (in primary education), Finland, the United Kingdom, Norway and Romania intercultural education must be included in teacher education programmes (Eurydice, 2004).

[22] European Commission (1998) Immigration as a Challenge for Settlement Policies and Education: Evaluation Studies for Cross-Cultural Training, http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp1.htm

Following initial training, teachers may be supported in a number of ways, including in-service training and ongoing professional development. The majority of teachers across Europe have provision for in-service training in intercultural education, which in most cases is optional and provided by a diverse range of providers; such as teacher associations, ministries of education or institutions for teacher training.

An additional area where support can be provided is in the provision of teaching materials or other classroom resources. The example given in Text Box 6 illustrates resources to support teacher training in the UK.

Monitoring and evaluation

In regard to examining the outcomes of intercultural education initiatives within the EU, evidence suggests that, to date, systematic monitoring and evaluation has been limited. For example, there is a lack of active and systematic recording of racist incidents and discriminatory practices in the field of education in most EU states (FRA, 2007).

Similarly, the Eurydice study (2004), which is published by the European Commission, also stresses the importance of monitoring and evaluation. The Commission comments that across Member States, there has been little evaluation of how schools implement curricular instructions or recommendations regarding intercultural education[23]. The following text box highlights the experience of the Netherlands in implementing, monitoring and evaluation processes.

Text box 7: Evaluation in the Netherlands

According to the Netherlands' country report to Eurydice, at all levels of the education system, the educational achievements of immigrant children are constantly monitored, and it appears that immigrant children are achieving better results. However, it acknowledges that it is difficult to determine to what extent the various measures adopted have contributed to the improvement.

For example, the Netherlands operates a weighting system which gives extra resources to certain schools but a lack of targets as well as the fact that not all schools that are entitled to extra resources receive them has impaired efforts at evaluation. To address this issue, the Ministry of Education redefined targets for the impact of resources received through the weighting system. An example of a redefined target is a requirement to reduce the language lag of immigrant pupils by 25% within a given timeframe.

Source: Eurydice (2004)

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[23] At the time of publication in 2004, only five countries had conducted evaluations. These were the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Netherlands, the UK (England) and Norway.

Summary

This section has identified a series of different challenges in providing education to immigrant children cross-nationally, and examined the variation in the extent to which responses have been effective. There is much debate in regard to which responses or approaches should be adopted. The key findings from the section are as follows:

- While some research suggests that the needs of immigrant pupils are best addressed through minority/separate education, it is broadly recognised that an integrated approach which supports intercultural education can improve educational outcomes and make a stronger contribution towards social integration and cultural understanding.

- In terms of addressing the challenge in which immigrant pupils are overrepresented in underperforming schools, experience from the Netherlands suggests that de-segregation measures have not been very effective and that providing additional financial support to schools is a more appropriate response. As an alternative, a dual approach (combining financial support and promoting de-segregation) can also be employed.

- While evidence is unclear on whether teaching both the language used at home and the language of instruction, or teaching solely the language of instruction, is best, some practical best practice in language teaching policy can be identified. This includes ensuring that programmes have clear principles, goals and standards, providing specialised support for teacher training, and continued support for language at primary and secondary school level.

- In regard to accommodating diversity in schools, some countries have adopted strictly secular approaches to this issue which has led to tensions in some cases, while other countries have aimed to accommodate the needs of immigrants, where appropriate. Although variation exists across countries of the EU, efforts have also been made to provide supports to immigrants about their educational choices.

- Although there is no commonly accepted standard for teacher training or curriculum requirements for intercultural education for teachers across the EU, the core skills needed have been identified and some form of in-service training is common.

- A review of international experience shows that the systematic monitoring and evaluation of intercultural education initiatives in schools has been limited in countries across the EU. This has made it difficult to measure progress, examine outcomes and identify 'what works'.

The profile of immigrants in Section One has highlighted the rapid nature of social change in Ireland, particularly in relation to increased diversity across nationality, ethnicity and culture. We then explored some key issues in the international literature on providing education for migrant children. In this section we look at the current situation in Irish schools in relation to accommodating the greater diversity in Ireland. In particular, the section introduces some key educational challenges presented by immigration and examines the responses that have been introduced. Reflecting the structure employed for the international literature, this section is organised as follows:

- Segregation or integration?

- Spatial clustering of immigrants.

- Language supports.

- Accommodating diversity.

- Teacher training.

- Monitoring and evaluation.

Before this, however, the section will begin with a brief overview of the compulsory education system in Ireland and provide an outline of the education structure.

Structure of the education system

From the establishment of the national school system in 1831, the fundamental foundation of the system was that the state gave financial support to local initiatives taken to establish national schools. A local patron sought support from the Commissioners of National Education in return for which the patron agreed to abide by the rules and regulations of the Commissioners.

In most cases, however, the ownership of the school and the local management resided with the local patron. The system did not specify a particular religious ethos but in reality most patrons were religious and the system was *de facto* a denominational one. As time went on, public funding accounted for the majority of expenditure on the national school system, yet, the schools never became state schools *per se*. While the ownership and trusteeship of most schools remains vested in private bodies, for most practical purposes, the Irish schooling system is regarded as a public one (Murphy and Coolahan, 2003).

At second level, the formation and running of schools is more complicated than at primary level. More diversity was introduced into the second level system earlier than in the primary level with the introduction of free education in 1967 and the creation of community, comprehensive and vocational schools.

Nearly all schools depend on the State for their capital and current costs, including teacher salaries, and are governed by State rules and regulations. They observe the State curricula and participate in the public examinations administered by the State. Almost all schools are now governed by boards of management which have representatives of trustees, parents, teachers and the community.

Overall, there are 3,284 primary (national) schools that are, in effect, state-aided schools. Of these, approximately 3,116 are under diocesan patronage, 124 are special schools for children with disabilities, 44 are Educate Together National Schools and 135 are Irish medium primary schools (outside of the Gaeltacht) (figures supplied by the Department of Education)[24].

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[24] In 2005, the non-Catholic religious management at

At second level, there are 742 schools, of which 247 are vocational schools, 76 are community schools and 16 are comprehensive schools (all figures supplied by the Department of Education and Science).

This means that at both primary and secondary level, the majority of schools are owned and managed by religious communities. In a national poll quoted in the *Irish Examiner* of 1,000 adults 44% thought that all schools should be non-denominational[25] and 40% disagreed, yet four out of five adults said that Catholic schools should not be for Catholics only (20 March 2008). This suggests that while there is a substantial minority who support denominational schools, the preference is that these are open to children of all religions and no religion.

Segregation or integration?

The overview of the education system shows that the Irish system is one of integration, that is, in general, separate schools are not provided for immigrant children. However, while immigrants are generally expected to enrol alongside non-immigrant pupils, most education in Ireland is segregated along religious lines creating challenges for students, parents and providers alike. Indeed, this challenge is particularly acute within primary schools as the overwhelming majority of schools at this level are under religious patronage.

The implications of religious patronage

Research shows that if schools seek to adopt policies and practices that are viewed as welcoming and inclusive, they are more likely to attract the children of migrants (Lynam, 2006).

This approach, as outlined by Begg, needs to be uniformly applied across the education system as it is not considered desirable for some schools to adopt intercultural practices and inclusive admissions policies while others do not actively accommodate diversity,:

> 'The responsibility for meeting the requirements of international students should not be disproportionately focussed on one section of education. The new agreement [partnership agreement, *Towards 2016*], requires all schools to publish their admissions policy which is crucial, as we have strong reason to believe that some schools are turning away foreign students, thereby placing a disproportionate burden on the remainder' (Begg, 2007: 186).

The Education Act 1998 requires schools to publish their admissions policy. Under equality legislation, however, schools are entitled under legislation to protect their ethos through their admissions policies and in the way the school is run[26].

> 'A school that has this objective [promoting or protecting a religious ethos] can admit a student of a particular religious denomination in preference to other students. Such a school can also refuse to admit a student who is not of that religion, provided that it can prove that this refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.' (The Equality Authority, undated, p.13-14).

Although many migrant children come from religious faiths that are found in traditional schools in Ireland, many more do not. This can create difficulties for non-Christian children, particularly non-Catholics, in accessing schools as the majority of places are governed under religious patronage. At the same time, challenges for schools are also presented in

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primary level included 190 Church of Ireland (Anglican), 18 Presbyterian, one Methodist, one Jewish, and two Muslim schools (O Cuanacháin, 2005).
[25] Denominational schools teach religion according to a particular faith. Multi-denominational schools (Educate Together) teach about faith and religion and include an ethics programme. Non-denominational schools generally do not teach religion (though there is provision for some VEC schools to offer religion).

[26] Students who are not admitted can appeal the decision.

terms of how non-Christian children are accommodated within the school.

Indeed, as many non-Catholic children attend Catholic schools, issues arise in relation to the conflicting rights of schools to uphold their specific religious ethos and those of parents and students to participate in education in a way that respects their different beliefs (Lodge & Lynch, 2004).

The Constitution protects the rights of children from receiving inappropriate religious education (Lodge & Lynch, 2004) and parents can request that children are taken out of religion class. The literature highlights two particular issues in relation to this. This first is that this withdrawal can make children feel uncomfortable. The European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)[27] has recommended that Irish authorities '…ensure that the current opt out system in denominational schools is implemented in a manner which does not make pupils feel singled out' (ECRI, 2007). The second issue is that children are not always withdrawn according to their parents' wishes due to lack of staff to supervise them. The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism[28] (NCCRI) has highlighted that 'at the moment, some schools with a Catholic or Protestant ethos put Muslim children at the back of the class during religious education because they do not have the resources to mind the children. This is completely inappropriate and must be dealt with urgently' (Watt, 2008).

A further challenge that arises in relation to denominational schools is that, while in theory or in practice, pupils of minority beliefs can be withdrawn from classes of majority belief religious instruction, they cannot be withdrawn

from other practices, customs and messages that permeate the life of the school such as prayers at the start of class. As Devine puts it 'the majority of schools are Catholic schools, and one of the essences of the Catholic faith is that this ethos will be reflected throughout the integrated curriculum' (Devine, 2005a, p. 34).

In Catholic primary schools in particular, the preparation for religious ceremonies such as First Confession, First Communion and Confirmation becomes an integral part of the school day for the relevant class groups. One small scale study found that parents of non-Catholic children in this situation were concerned about this and indeed, some parents reported that their children were isolated and treated poorly as a result of not participating in the religious preparations (Lodge, 1999 cited in Lodge & Lynch, 2004).

Research also shows that some parents had no choice in the school to which they sent their children. According to Lodge and Lynch (2004), this presents a real difficulty in some areas as it is far from clear how the beliefs of those from minority backgrounds are to be respected. In a *Law Society Gazette* article Hayes (2007) also raises this as an area of concern:

> 'it will be of increasing relevance that the majority of Ireland's newer immigrant populations (along with a substantial proportion of Irish citizens) do not identify as Catholic and yet have no available local alternative source for the provision of primary education. For as long as such an overwhelming majority of primary and secondary school places in this country are left to be provided by denominational schools, it is questionable whether any viable element of parental choice in education is being adequately respected by the state, as required by the Constitution' (p. 21).

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[27] The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) is the Council of Europe's monitoring body, combating racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance in greater Europe, from the perspective of the protection of human rights.
[28] The NCCRI is an independent, government-funded expert and advisory body on racism and interculturalism.

Developments in school patronage and management

While choice within the education system in Ireland may be limited, Catholic education is not the only provision in all areas, with some minority religions managing their own schools.

Additionally, the Educate Together schools provide a model of multi-denominational education at primary level. The Educate Together organisation has laid out a long-term goal of providing sufficient schools along this model so that everyone in the country would have access to such a school within a 30-minute commute. They estimate that this would entail the provision of 400 schools and plan to configure schools in clusters so that support services could be integrated and enhanced with complementary pre-school and second level provision (Educate Together, 2007 p.20).

A number of recent developments show that there has also been an official response to the challenge of accommodating increased diversity within the educational system. In early 2007, the Minister for Education and Science announced her intention that a new model of primary school would be developed to cater for the needs of children for denominational, multi-denominational and non-denominational education within the framework of a single patron model and single board of management structure. This model is intended to supplement rather than supplant existing provision, in order to provide parents with enhanced choices[29].

In September 2008, the first two schools will open under this new model. Both will be in Dublin, one in the Phoenix Park and the other in Phibblestown, Dublin 15 (a third school in Diswellstown, Dublin 15 is to transfer to this model after a two year period). These schools will operate under the patronage of the County Dublin Vocational Education Committee (VEC)[30]. An insight into parents's views is provided by recent survey of parents whose children are in Catholic schools conducted on behalf of the Catholic Church. It found that the majority are happy with their choice of school. However, about a third would like to see a more direct role for the State in the provison of primary education (*Irish Independent*, 9 April 2008).

Existing religious school patrons are also actively considering the issues of integration and segregation of schools. The complexity of the issues is highlighted by the contrast between the Department of Education receiving five applications in 2007 for recognition of new Muslim schools (*Irish Examiner*, 17 November 2007). At the same time the NCCRI has stated that there is some questioning among the Muslim community whether or not the Muslim school in Clonskeagh should exist, with a feeling prevailing that the future lies in integration rather than segregation[31].

In addition, the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin has expressed the view that Catholic schools are over-represented in the national school system and that he would welcome the creation of more inter-denominational schools (*Irish Independent*, 14 December 2007). This view comes alongside a proposal by the Dublin Catholic Archdiocese, in January 2008, to introduce a quota system that will see places reserved for non-Catholic pupils in some schools.

This new arrangement is being piloted in two primary schools in west Dublin (at St. Patrick's and St. Mochta's) and is designed to reflect the multicultural nature of the area (*Irish Times*, 24 January 2008). Under the pilot project, a third of all junior infant places will be reserved for non-

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[29] In addition the Department of Education and Science has recently established a new section, the Developing Areas Unit, dedicated to planning and providing for schools in areas with rapidly expanding populations.

[30] Presentation by officials of the Department of Education and Science to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Science, 14 February 2008.
[31] Dr. Philip Watt, NCCRI, at the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Science, 13 March 2008.

Catholics. This is a departure from standard policy whereby all schools under the management of the Archdiocese had to give priority to Catholic pupils (ibid.).

The Minister for Education and Science, Mary Hanafin, TD, has announced that a forum is to be held in June 2008 to discuss issues of school patronage and how this can contribute to an inclusive society. Participants will include the main patron bodies and other representatives such as teachers, parents and management bodies (DES, 2008b).

Spatial clustering of immigrants

The analysis of the spatial distribution in Section One has shown that immigrants are disproportionately concentrated in certain cities and towns in Ireland. For some primary and secondary schools in certain areas, this spatial clustering exacerbates the challenges involved in providing education and accommodating diversity within the existing school system. To highlight one example, Dublin 15 is an area in which recent demographic changes have implications for the provision of education services.

In this area, the continuation of population growth in general, as well as a relatively high composition of those from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds (who are also concentrated in certain localities within the area), has become a major challenge and cause for concern from a schooling perspective (McGorman and Sugrue, 2007)[32]. While experiencing a 23.4% increase in primary school pupil numbers between 2003/04 and 2006/07,

21% of the total primary school population in Dublin 15 are eligible to qualify for English Language Support Assistance (see pg. 21 below for further discussion of this). This provides a clear indication of the challenges involved in providing education to a school population which is from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Indeed, McGorman and Sugrue (2007) suggest that over 15% of all pupils in Ireland who require English Language Support Assistance are based in the 24 primary schools in Dublin 15. This challenge is also disproportionately experienced in some schools. There are eight primary schools in Dublin 15 where between 30% and 50% of pupils require English Language Support (McGorman and Sugrue, 2007).

Within primary schools in Dublin 15, research also shows that there is strong evidence of a significant movement of pupils into and out of schools, year on year. This movement has an affect on teaching and lesson planning within the classroom but further concerns have also been raised that it is leading to *de facto* segregation. Analysis of the ethnicity of those leaving and joining classes within the area indicates a trend of Irish pupils leaving some schools and immigrant pupils joining over the same period[33]. McGorman and Sugrue (2007) argue that if this trend in the concentration of immigrants in Dublin 15 continues, it will almost inevitably lead to ghettoisation with negative consequences for community integration, inclusion and diversity.

It is also within this context that the Department, as previously noted, is developing a new model of primary school and the Archbishop of Dublin has proposed to reserve a number of school places for non-Catholic pupils.

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[32] McGorman and Sugrue (2007) show that between 2002 and 2006, the population of Dublin 15 increased by 26.9% compared to a national increase of 8.2%. They also highlight that the percentage of the population aged 18 years or younger is 29% in Dublin 15, compared to the national average of 21%, and that the proportion of the population of Dublin 15 who are not reported as 'white Irish' is 27%.

[33] Between 2003-2007, 82 'Irish' pupils left classes in the Dublin 15 area while only 40 joined. This represents a movement of 2:1 out of Dublin 15 by 'Irish pupils'. By contrast, the number of newcomer children joining these classes was 152, which represented 79% of the total cohort of new children joining. This represents a movement of 5:3 into Dublin 15 By immigrant pupils. (McGorman and Surgue, 2007)

Language supports

Students' English language needs

In Ireland, there is great diversity within the minority ethnic children in schools and not all children need English language supports[34]. We saw earlier that the Department of Education and Science (DES) has estimated that approximately 60% (that is about 28,800) of migrant children in primary and post-primary schools do not have English as a first language[35]. For these children and young people, language is important for wider social integration and for understanding and progressing across the curriculum and being placed in a class with one's peers[36].

In relation to the international models of language supports, Ireland's model is one of immersion coupled with systematic language support. Schools are eligible for additional teachers or additional funding based on a formula taking into account the number of students with English language needs.

The number of language support teachers had been limited to a maximum of two per school. The current partnership agreement, *Towards 2016*, commits to eliminating this ceiling and increasing the number of language support teachers by 550. There are now 1900 language resource teachers employed (DES, 2008b).

Concerns have been expressed that these posts are temporary in nature and ought to be established as permanent positions to attract

experienced candidates (INTO Conference, 2005 p.69). Devine (2005a) has argued that the temporary nature of employment of language support teachers makes it 'very difficult for schools to plan properly for their migrant populations and it has often meant untrained teachers in these positions'.

Parents and language acquisition

Reflecting the international experience, the literature on language issues in the Irish education system also identifies the need to assist parents as well as children to acquire English language skills, with a number of studies highlighting the needs of women who are full-time at home in particular (Binchy, 2004; Fitzgerald, 2007, p.43). At local level, some schools have made efforts to meet these needs. For instance, the St. Vincent de Paul charity has funded English language classes for adults run by teachers at St. Mark's Junior National School in Tallaght (Ann Ryan, Principal, in INTO, 2005 p.45).

More broadly, the Minister for Integration, in conjunction with the Department of Education and Science, has commissioned an independent review to assist in the development of a national English language training policy and framework for legally resident adult immigrants (Migrant Rights Centre Ireland, 2007).

Measures to support the language and culture of origin

The Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education has drawn attention to the importance of children being assisted in learning their first language. While acknowledging that it may be problematic to organise classes in some schools, they suggest that it should be possible where there is a sufficient concentration of pupils with the same first language (Irish Association of Teachers of Special Education, 2001 p.8).

Ireland's *Language Education Policy Profile*,

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[34] Reflecting the literature, this section concentrates on English rather than Irish as the language of instruction.
[35] Students who do speak English can nonetheless experience difficulties in relation to dialect and usage (Keogh & White, 2003)
[36] Children are placed in classes with their age group unless their language skills are assessed as being too weak to allow them to keep up, in which case they are placed in a class a year below (Eurydice, 2004, p.5). See also (Keogh & Whyte, 2003) who found that not being able to speak English was a barrier to second level students making friends

jointly published by the Council of Europe's Language Policy Division and the Irish Department of Education and Science, notes the benefits and challenges arising from the maintenance of mother-tongue language. It highlights the diversity of foreign modern languages that have been 'imported' as a resource and an asset for the country. It also draws attention to concerns that maintenance of language of origin can be seen as 'by both the immigrants and a part of the Irish population as an obstacle to integration or as a sign of non integration' (2007 p.26).

The report recognises the measures that have been taken to assist mother tongue language skills and picks up on some ways of supporting this learning that involve schools and other stakeholders, as follows:

> 'Encouraging the maintenance of the languages and cultures of immigrants may be accomplished through various means which do not necessarily imply a heavy load for schools as such. Accepting these foreign languages as subjects for examinations (even though they are not a part of the curriculum), helping bottom-up initiatives of associations, community organisations and local authorities are some of the many ways for a multicultural society to accept itself as such and function harmoniously. In this respect, it is worth noting that the Department of Education and Science currently funds mother-tongue classes organised by immigrant communities for the children of those communities. This support is provided through IILT[37], which also monitors the delivery of these classes. To date, this support has been availed of only by the

Chinese and Vietnamese communities. The classes are held outside of school time, but sometimes on school premises' (2007 pp.26-27).

To meet the mother tongue language needs of their communities two embassies (Latvia and Poland's) have arranged language classes on the weekends, known as Sunday schools (ECRI, 2007).

The ECRI states that it has encouraged Irish authorities to 'consider ways of developing provision of mother tongue teaching for children from other [non Irish] minority groups' (ECRI, 2007).

While research has found that teachers find meeting the language needs of migrant children to be one of the greatest challenges they face (Devine, 2005a), there are concerns that issues of difference will be defined solely as problems of language skills. English language tuition has been identified as 'virtually the only specific support for minority ethnic students that schools can access' in Ireland (Binchy, 2004 p.20). The INTO has stated that a key challenge is to ensure sufficient language supports for children while ensuring that issues of difference are not treated as 'problems of language acquisition *only* rather than an issue about an accommodation of the pupils' culture' (INTO, 2005 p.7, emphasis added).

Accommodating diversity

This section looks at how ethnic and cultural diversity is accommodated in schools in relation to the adaptation of daily school routines, the provision of translation and interpretation facilities, and intercultural education.

Adaptation of daily school life

As noted above, supporting immigrant pupils in schools extends beyond the provision of language support. Indeed, as the international experience shows, a key method of integrating

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[37] IILT is the Integrating Ireland Language and Training organisation, a non-profit organisation located at TCD and funded by the Department of Education and Science. It provides English language supports and training for adults and materials and training for school teachers teaching English as an additional language.

pupils into school settings is to include references to and recognition of their cultures in the daily life of the school. In Ireland, the adaptation of daily school life is a matter for individual schools and adjustments can involve special concessions regarding religious holidays, educational activities and social events.

In recent years, the Department has introduced a degree of flexibility in relation to the school year so that schools can choose to close for particular days outside of the traditional pattern, these can be used to accommodate religious observance of minority groups. In relation to dress codes, this again is the responsibility of schools, and adjustments to uniforms etc. are negotiated at local level (Eurydice Country Report, 2003/2004).

Some traditional schools are also taking significant measures to accommodate the diversity of their pupils such as through hosting intercultural events and the marking of meaningful dates (see for instance Murphy, 2007). In some cases, such as the Tallaght Intercultural Action Project, local schools have been involved in more extensive projects aimed at supporting and empowering minority ethnic groups, promoting anti-racism and influencing policy (see Fitzgerald, 2007).

Empirical work carried out by Devine *et al* (cited in Devine, 2005a), however, found that teachers tend to concentrate on language over cultural supports and other measures required to accommodate diversity. The authors suggest that it is easier to focus on language as it is specific and understandable rather than cultural needs as these are complex and can be difficult. Attempts to address cultural issues were *ad hoc* and focused on asking individual students to comment on their own experiences in their countries of origin etc. Teachers felt they that did not have:

'The resources, the knowledge or the

expertise to deal with the changing profile of the pupils within their classrooms. They were working very much within a policy vacuum and they wanted to know more' (Devine, 2005a p. 36-37).

The difficulties which teachers face in accommodating diversity within schools can also be seen in terms of how racism is tackled[38]. In addressing racist remarks and incidents, Devine and Kelly (2006) found that teachers took a pragmatic view of cultural support in the classroom with some teachers developing valuable intercultural programmes. However, this was not structured and teachers tended to address racism in terms of bullying rather than through a specific anti-racism framework (Devine *et al* cited in Devine, 2005a).

Translation and interpretation

In regard to assisting immigrant pupils and parents with enrolment, settling in and accessing information about future educational choices, the lack of translation and interpretation services for Irish schools has been identified as a gap in provision, specifically at the local level (Lynam, 2006).

At national level, written information on the Irish education system aimed at parents is now available on the Department's website in Polish, Latvian, Lithuanian, Russian, Spanish and German (DES, 2007a). In addition, school information is provided by the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA)[39] for asylum seekers and refugees who also assist parents and

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[38] Research shows there is a conception of 'us' and 'them' among some students, identifying white, settled, Catholic students as the 'norm' and those from minority groups as 'other'. This perception can come across in the language of students and of teachers (Devine, 2005).
[39] The RIA is responsible *inter alia* for coordinating the provision of services to both asylum seekers and refugees, coordinating the implementation of integration policy for all refugees and persons granted leave to remain in the State and responding to crisis situations which result in large numbers of refugees arriving in Ireland within a short period of time.

schools in enrolling asylum seeking and refugee children.

Some services in the education system have provision, such as the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) and the National Educational Psychology Services (NEPS) which hire interpreters when necessary. The translation of psychological assessments is an issue for NEPS because the assessments may need to be translated in a culturally appropriate fashion (NCCRI, 2007 p.39).

At the local level, however, a National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) advocacy paper points out the challenges that arise:

> 'School principals, teachers and home liaison officers face enormous difficulties where pupils' parents do not speak English. Some school principals have built up contacts with members of the community who can act as volunteer interpreters. Other schools rely on pupils to act as interpreters. Still others cannot communicate at all with parents. Even written communication in English about half days or in-service training can cause great confusion where parents do not speak the language' (2007 p.39).

Empirical research by Devine (2005a) has identified that teachers find it difficult to maintain communication with parents. Language was identified by teachers as preventing sustained contact (Devine, 2005a p.34), while Lynam's work with parents identifies their desire to share experiences with teachers in relation to their children's progress (Lynam, 2006, Annex).

Attempts have been made in some areas at the local level to address the challenges of communication. An initiative to train bilingual people to interpret in schools was funded by Fingal County Council in 2006. The Dublin Inner City Partnership has obtained funding from Pobal for a three-year project to provide translation, interpreting and cultural mediation to a small number of schools (NCCRI, 2007).

The value of such initiatives is highlighted in an evaluation of the Tallaght Intercultural Action Project that took place in secondary schools in that area between 2005 and 2007. It found that providing non-English speaking parents with translated material on individual schools and their child's education in their own language was very useful and highly valued especially by Home School Liaison Teachers (Fitzgerald, 2007).

The Irish National Teachers' Organisation has recommended that 'schools should have access to funding which would allow them to provide translation and interpretative services where necessary' and Lynam has argued that 'translation and interpretation costs need to be acknowledged as part of the normal operating costs of a service' (Lynam, 2006).

However, the Department of Education & Science has no policy on interpreting and makes no provision for interpreters (NCCRI, 2007). This situation is not unique to the education sector and the NCCRI has called for urgent action to put in place a 'coherent policy and a clear direction on the provision of interpreting in different sectors across the country' (NCCRI, 2007 p.57).

Intercultural education

There have been calls for the provision of intercultural liaison officers to be appointed in schools to assist in accommodating diversity. A report on the changing nature of the school population in two Archbishop Ryan primary and secondary schools in Dublin recommends that the Department should establish 'a special support service along the lines of the existing Home School Community Liaison or Visiting Teachers for Traveller Service, for parents of international children' (Murphy, 2007 p.42). In a similar vein, the NCCRI has argued that:

'There are language teachers and home-school liaison teachers but there is a need for a specific role to be assigned for one or more teachers in the area of interculturalism. This matter does not relate solely to language but encompasses parents who may not speak English and people who are not used to our culture and education system. This is all an important part of the integration process' (Watt, 2008).

In relation to the curriculum, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) has developed guidelines for primary and post-primary schools highlighting what intercultural education is and how it can be reflected in the national curriculum. The NCCA defines intercultural education as education:

'...which respects, celebrates and recognises the normality of diversity in all areas of human life. It sensitises the learner to the idea that humans have naturally developed a range of different ways of life, customs and worldviews, and that this breadth of human life enriches all of us. It is education which promotes equality and human rights, challenges unfair discrimination and promotes the value upon which equality is built' (NCCA, 2005).

The guidelines, which are funded by the Department of Education and Science, were issued to primary and post-primary schools in 2005 and 2006 respectively. The guidelines for each level follow a similar structure, describing the context of intercultural education, how it relates to the school curriculum, school planning and classroom planning (including identifying opportunities for intercultural education in specific subject areas). Each set of guidelines also covers:

- Approaches and methodologies.

- Assessment and cultural diversity.

- Language and interculturalism.

Naturally, the guidelines differ in relation to the needs of primary and second level students and their school curricula.

The Department of Education and Science emphasises that intercultural education 'is not something extra that teachers must do in an already busy school day', rather the guidelines present a different way of doing the same things (DES Press Release, 17 May 2005). Crucially, intercultural education is not only important for minority ethnic pupils or for all pupils in schools with minority ethnic pupils. It is important for all pupils and students in all schools at all levels. Dorrian (2005) argues that the intercultural approach extends beyond the taught curriculum to encompass the ways in which schools are organised and run.

'An intercultural approach to education - where cultural difference is respected and anti-racism is promoted - is now encouraged in schools. Intercultural education may be viewed as an encounter of cultures - knowledge of different cultures is not considered sufficient. However, this approach is not without its challenges. Schools have to look at their structures, policies, teaching methodologies and relationships in order to become fully inclusive' (p.30).

In the previous section on international literature, we saw that there is little evidence from other countries on how schools implement intercultural policies and guidelines. In Ireland, the INTO recognises the 'laudable and worthy sentiments' promoted in the NCCA guidelines, however it argues that:

'Schools have not received any support, beyond the receipt of a 175 page document, in implementing an intercultural approach. Schools are facing very basic questions about how other cultures should be recognised and

affirmed in their schools without practical guidance or time to adopt a planned whole school approach' (Irish National Teachers' Organisation, 2006).

Teacher training

There is evidence to suggest that teaching has changed in the last decades, with teachers becoming responsible for a greater variety of complex tasks. New processes at school level such as whole school evaluation and school planning models are part of this change and intercultural education is a further element. This process of change has been termed the 'intensification' of teaching (Devine 2005a, p.32). Teachers have highlighted the challenges arising from the language needs and diverse religious affiliations of minority ethnic groups. Although the research in this area indicates that teachers generally welcome the cultural diversity in their classrooms and schools, it also suggests that they feel unsupported in many of the challenges they face and are keen to engage with any supports available (Devine 2005b).

The international literature discussed above highlights the importance of teachers being trained to acquire the core skills necessary to work in a multilingual, culturally diverse environment. Training on intercultural education is not compulsory at initial (pre-service) training level in Ireland. According to the Eurydice report on Ireland for the period 2003/2004, it is a compulsory subject in some teacher training colleges, and offered as an optional subject in others. The same report notes that apart from these specific modules an intercultural ethos permeates teaching in some subject areas such as religious education and developmental psychology (which looks at diversity and identity) (Eurydice, 2003/2004).

NGOs, teacher and management organisations have provided for in-service training in this area. An intercultural dimension is incorporated into the in-service training programme offered to all language support teachers (Eurydice, Country Report, 2003/04). In addition, the Department of Education and Science has highlighted that all primary teachers who attend Social, Personal and Health Education in-service training receive an element of training on interculturalism which includes making children aware of other cultures in the classroom and how these cultures can enrich our society (DES Press Release, 21 Feb 2007). In-service training that covers racism and discrimination and related issues is offered to teachers of Civil, Social and Political Education (a compulsory subject at junior cycle of secondary school).

A key recent development has been the launch, in 2007, of Lóchrann, the Centre for Intercultural Education at Colaiste Mhuire, Marino Institute of Education. The aim of the Centre is to enhance the development of best practice in intercultural education in Irish schools through its engagement in teaching, learning and research. The Centre will offer courses relevant to intercultural education and undergraduate and postgraduate levels. There have been calls for enhanced teacher training around cultural issues (Watt, 2008). One recommendation in the literature is that:

> 'The DES should ensure that a module on intercultural education is a core part of all teacher training. Regular in-service training on multiculturalism should be available to all teachers' (Murphy, 2007, p.42).

In relation to teaching English as an additional language, Integrate Ireland Language and Training provides in-service training for teachers. In addition, Lóchrann is running an eight module course in this area. To date, 900 teachers have participated in this one semester course.

Further to this, the issue of employing teachers from minority ethnic groups has been raised. The European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance has recommended that Ireland 'take measures to encourage members of minority

ethnic groups to enter the teaching profession' (2007).

Monitoring and evaluation

In this rapidly developing and relatively new policy environment, research on what is happening and data to monitor progress are vital to support the development of the appropriate policies.

The ECRI has highlighted that ongoing data collection is required in relation to the progress and performance of minority ethnic groups in the Irish education system. It has recommended the establishment of 'a consistent system of data collection to assess minority pupils' performance in education and establish the necessary policies in this area' (ECRI, 2007).

At present there is a lack of individual data on primary school pupils. However, a 2005 survey conducted by the Department collected data on the nationality of primary school children and their families. At post-primary level, a database on students, which includes data on nationality, has been in operation since the early 1990s. The Department points out that:

> 'At second level information is available on nationality of pupils – however this field is defaulted to Irish nationality when no indication is given of nationality and the reliability of information across schools is open to question' (DES, 2007b, p.35).

The Department has developed a Data Strategy for the period 2008-2010. The aim of the strategy is to assist the Department to make better use of existing data and to develop new and essential sources of information. Among the equality issues covered in the strategy is the increased national and cultural diversity among the school population. The strategy acknowledges that:

> 'There is a need to know the level and distribution of newcomers across our schools, to assess trends over time as well as concentrations of pupils who are likely to have different learning needs – especially but not exclusively linguistic' (DES, 2007b p34).

Addressing gaps such as this is a key concern of the data strategy. The first 'High Level Goal' of the strategy is:

> 'To improve the quality of information at all levels of education by developing database systems that can link information on the characteristics and needs of individual learners from pre-primary to higher and further education' (DES, 2007b p.39).

Within this goal, priority has been assigned to the development of an individualised database of pupils at primary level. This will constitute Phase 1 of a 'Learner Database' with the second part, on secondary level students to form Phase 2 of the Learner Database will include the post-primary element (replacing the existing Post Primary Pupil Database). Specific actions are outlined the strategy relating to the collection of data on nationality, Traveller status and language needs.

In addition, the Department has commissioned the ESRI to undertake a large scale study on the affect an increasing diversity of students has on resource requirements and day to day teaching and learning in our primary and post-primary schools. According to the Department, the study will 'ensure the language provision is appropriate to meet the needs of newcomer students' (DES, 28 February 2008). The report from this research is expected in 2008.

Summary

This section has looked at some of the key challenges arising in the education sector as a result of increased immigration into Ireland. The initiatives in place and steps taken to meet these challenges by the Department of Education and Science, by parents, by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), by teachers' unions and by existing school patrons, demonstrate that this is an area which is receiving a great deal of attention and has become a highly dynamic policy area.

The Department of Education and Science is working with a large number of diverse, autonomous establishments at a time of rapid social change. In this context, the Department has begun to put support structures in place through intercultural education guidelines (issued through the NCCA), translated information for migrant parents on educational structures, language supports, enhanced teacher training, and the development of a new model of school patronage.

The literature, however, indicates that attention is warranted in the areas of translation and interpretation especially at local level, in non-language supports to students and in tackling racism through an anti-racism framework.

At local level a number of initiatives are identified where schools are working with both Irish and immigrant students, parents and other bodies to meet the challenges they face. At the same time, local schools and communities have mobilised to capture the situation they experience through individual research projects aiming to document the nature of the challenges faced.

The wide range of supports put in place by numerous authorities and local bodies is evident. The NCCRI has acknowledged the work being done but has characterised developments to date as "somewhat 'add on'/piecemeal in character" (Watt, 2008). The NCCRI and the National Action Plan against Racism (NAPR) have stated that there is now a need to draw together existing policy and initiatives. They emphasise that the National Action Plan Against Racism has identified a need for the Department of Education and Science to develop a national intercultural education strategy. The NAPR envisages that the strategy will provide 'a blueprint for accommodating diversity at all levels of within the Irish education system' (Irish Times, 8 April 2008). The strategy will engage with key stakeholders to develop a whole system approach to intercultural education and put in place the necessary supports (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 2005 p.107).

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