



Providing Inspection Services for  
Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



The Education and Training Inspectorate

# Report of an Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with a Visual Impairment in Mainstream Schools in Northern Ireland

FEBRUARY 2012

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The overall figures from 2008-2011 for visually impaired (VI) pupils in mainstream schools have remained relatively consistent. See Appendix 1 for detailed statistics for each education and library board (ELB) area. These statistics are based on agreed inter-ELB criteria which identify a continuum of six levels of VI.

1.2 Four of the five ELBs, the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB), the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB), the Western Education and Library Board (WELB) and the South-Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) employ Qualified Teachers of the Visually Impaired (QTVI) as part of the Sensory Support Services within the ELBs. In the North-Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) the services of two full-time equivalent QTVI from the staff of Jordanstown Schools provide support for pupils with a VI in mainstream schools.

1.3 In this report, the term 'visual impairment' is used to refer to blind or partially sighted pupils who require additional support to help them access the curriculum and the overall learning environment. Current provision ranges from advice and monitoring visits once a year to significant ongoing weekly pupil support and individual staff development. Agreed procedures are in place across the ELBs to identify the level of support each pupil requires.

1.4 In June 2011, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) undertook an evaluation of the quality of the provision for pupils with a VI in a random sample of pre-school, nursery, primary and post-primary schools. In addition, ETI issued questionnaires to all schools with a pupil/s with a VI. Further evidence was drawn from interviews and discussions held with officers of the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) and staff and parents from Angel Eyes, a voluntary organisation providing advocacy and support for pupils with VI. This report is based on the findings of inspection visits to approximately 60 schools (See Appendix 2) and the evidence emerging from the questionnaires and discussions.

## **2. OBJECTIVES OF SURVEY**

2.1 The survey's overall aim was to evaluate the quality of provision for pupils with a VI in mainstream schools. This was achieved by focusing on:

- the quality of management of the provision for pupils with a VI in each of the schools visited;
- the level of staff competence to work with pupils with a VI, as observed in lessons and through discussions, and through identifying examples of good practice;
- the learning and social outcomes for the pupils and evidence from statistical returns for examinations; and
- collaboration, consistency and strategic planning across the ELBs.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

3.1 Every primary and post-primary school with a pupil or pupils with a VI was invited to complete an online questionnaire relating to provision for VI. Approximately 67% of these schools submitted the online questionnaire. This information was analysed to inform the survey outworking and to augment the evidence arising from the visits to the sample of schools. (Appendix 3) The questionnaires also informed the discussions held during the school visits.

3.2 The inspectors observed approximately 90 lessons in the schools; these observations took place in mainstream classes and in social and cultural activities. In addition, discussions were held with Principals, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs), teachers, classroom assistants and pupils. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, teachers' planning, school development plans (SDPs), special educational needs (SEN) policies, individual education plans (IEPs) and any other documentation, provided by the schools, and relevant to the survey.

3.3 A meeting was held with key education officers and staff who hold line management responsibility for VI, to outline the inspection procedures and approach and to consider any key matters raised by the officers. Another meeting was held with the officers and staff in the VI support services. In addition, meetings were held with the RNIB officers and a sample of parents and staff from the charity Angel Eyes which provides support for parents and families of children who are blind or partially sighted. ETI also visited the newly opened Regional Vision Resource Base (RVRB) (which is a new support service funded by DE and hosted by the BELB). In the short time that this service has been in operation, there has been considerable interest shown by schools wishing to avail of the expertise and facilities.

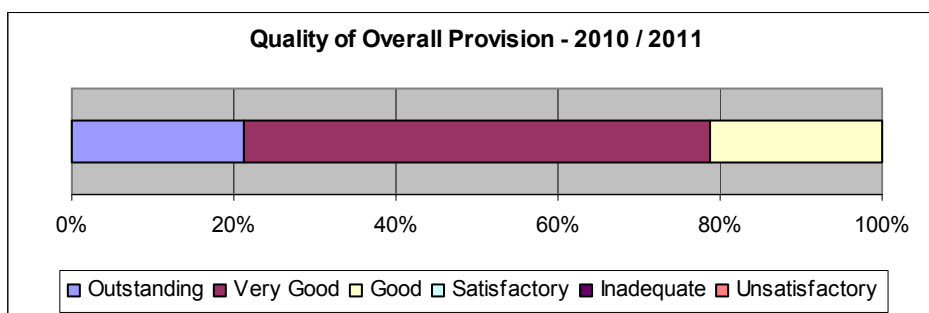
3.4 In assessing the various features of the provision for VI, inspectors relate their judgements to the following six performance levels:

Performance Level
Outstanding
Very good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

3.5 Throughout the report, a number of quantitative terms are used which should be interpreted as indicated below:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
most	-	75%-90%
a majority	-	50%-74%
a significant minority	-	30%-49%
a minority	-	10%-29%
very few/a small number	-	less than 10

#### 4. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS



***The overall quality of provision for pupils with a VI in mainstream primary and post-primary schools is very good.***

4.1 Overall, the survey recognises the hard work, dedication and commitment shown by the schools in planning and implementing provision for pupils with a VI. In particular, the VI support services across the ELBs were found to provide a very good standard of service which is highly appreciated and valued by schools. The evidence also identifies the pivotal role of the teachers of VI in advising and supporting the classroom teachers to develop the strategies which ensure that pupils with a VI access the curriculum and enjoy their learning. The VI teachers' knowledge, expertise, support and advice, often accompanied by detailed and practical reports, were evaluated as outstanding during the visits to the schools in the survey. Moreover, the high quality of most of the teaching observed included clear steps to ensure the pupils with a VI participated and contributed appropriately to the lessons, individually and in group or class settings. In the most effective practice the principal and senior staff contributed significantly to the planning and monitoring of the work. As a consequence, in most instances, the pupils made good progress in terms of the curriculum, accreditation and in developing their capacity to adapt to the difficulties posed by their VI. Good resources and adaptations were readily available and in use.

4.2 The survey also identified a number of areas which need to be addressed if the quality of the provision is to be improved further. These include:

**Training:** the need to:

- improve further whole school knowledge of VI, including the use of e-technology and the impact on learning, particularly for the pupil with a significant VI;
- ensure, particularly at post-primary level, that all staff are fully informed, at the earliest possible stage, of the specific needs of pupils with a VI joining their classes; and
- ensure that individual education plans are more sharply focused on teaching and learning, in a minority of schools.

**Communication:** the need to:

- involve parents, voluntary agencies and pupils more purposefully in discussions and decisions about their learning;

- ensure more efficient access to C2k facilities for utilising assistive technology; and
- plan opportunities for schools to discuss and share good practice, experiences and resources.

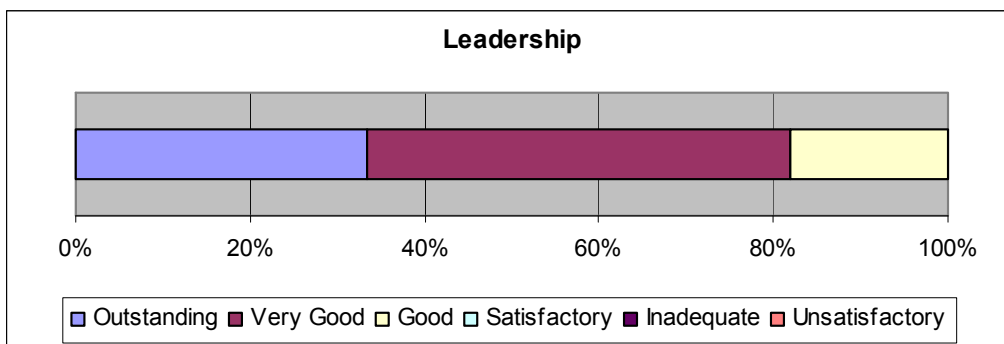
**Resources:** the need to:

- audit provision and consult regularly to ensure that there is sufficient staff and resource in the VI services to meet the level of need across schools and the increasing commitment required to support pupils with significant and complex needs.

## 5 FINDINGS FROM THE ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE AND SCHOOL VISITS

5.1 The findings from the online questionnaires indicate that schools are committed to meeting the needs of pupils with VI and this is supported by the evidence of the school visits and serves overall to conclude that provision for pupils with VI is well developed and effective.

### 5.2 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT



**The overall leadership and management of provision for pupils with VI ranges from good to outstanding.**

5.2.1 In almost all of the schools visited, the leadership and management demonstrate strong commitment and take appropriate action to meet the needs of all pupils with VI. There are effective links between the pastoral care and special educational needs provision which ensure that the pastoral and learning needs of pupils with VI are carefully considered and secure. The Principal and senior management team (SMT) demonstrate good knowledge of VI and the impact of the school environment on the pupil with a VI. In one nursery school, for example, detailed notes and records of outside agency and ELB support services were used well to assess and inform the writing of an individual support plan which formed the basis of continuous monitoring of progress by school management.

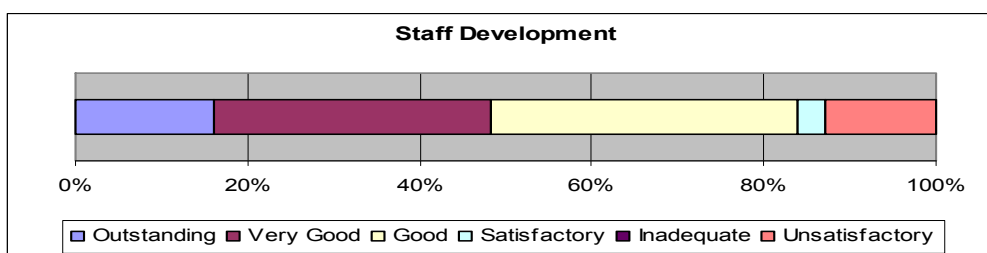
5.2.2 In the majority of schools, the quality of the work of the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) is very good or outstanding and is characterised by meticulous assessment and monitoring of the pupils' achievements and sense of well-being, the sharing of relevant information and staff awareness training and advice. In one post-primary school,

for example, where the quality of provision was of a very high standard, the SENCO identified the barriers to learning for the pupils with VI and put in place additional support in practical subjects by providing adapted textbooks and assistive technology. In this instance, appropriate lighting and independent mobility were given a high priority.

5.2.3 In a further example, the Principal of a primary school requested appropriate VI signage as an integral aspect of the new school building. This response indicates the need for awareness of the impact of VI and the need to adapt new school buildings accordingly.

5.2.4 In the best practice the work of classroom assistants is clearly defined and well managed and there is effective teamwork in the classroom. In one primary school, for example, the classroom assistant worked closely with the teacher to ensure that advance planning enabled the pupil with a VI to be included in all aspects of school life, including school trips, sports days and plays. She was also very skilled in the technicalities of preparing large print and classroom materials and adapting ICT based learning materials to the correct fonts and colours. In another school the classroom assistant had developed a very useful handbook for any substitute or visiting teachers to quickly familiarise themselves with her pupil's needs.

5.2.5 In a minority of schools, the classroom assistants are not given appropriate information and training prior to the pupil entering school often because they were on temporary contracts and schools were unable to employ them in advance of the pupil arriving.



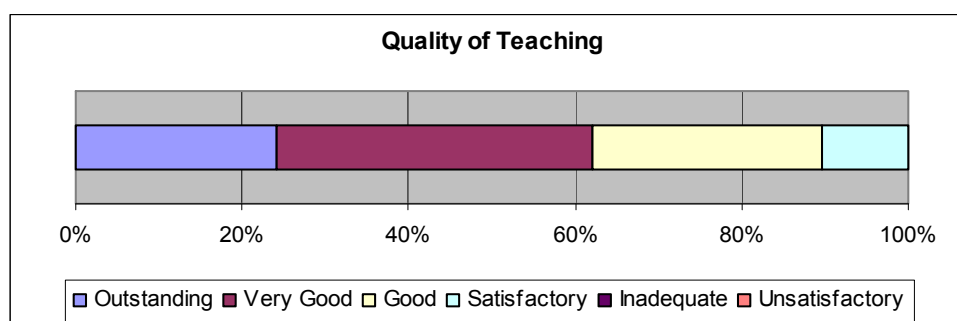
5.2.6 In a majority of schools, staff training is appropriate and tailored to need. There are however a number of deficiencies; the need to raise the profile of staff training further is evident and particularly to develop the staff's skills to work with the pupils who are blind or have limited residual vision. Schools should be facilitated to network and share experiences; C2K is well placed to provide an e-forum for such activities. In one primary school, for example, all staff were given training in VI awareness and the nursery staff where the pupil was to be placed were given in depth support twice a week on a range of issues, including, for example, how to train the pupil with a VI to use a Braille machine. This involved in-class support, withdrawal sessions and individual work with the classroom assistant and teacher. It is significant that in the primary sector this intensive support must be duplicated as the pupil changes teacher each year.

5.2.7 In almost all schools there are high quality links with the VI Support Services which schools value greatly; the survey identified numerous examples across the five ELBs of teachers, classroom assistants and principals whose understanding and knowledge of the problems faced by pupils with a VI, particularly those who are blind and have medical needs, have been enhanced by contact with teachers from the VI services. It is notable that this depth of work requires significant time investment from the VI teachers and school staff.

5.2.8 In a majority of schools there is good quality communication, partnership and involvement with parents and there are good arrangements in place to share information at key transition points in advance of pupil coming to school. In one instance which typified most schools, the staff made extensive efforts to ensure parents were shown every classroom in the school so that the Senior Management Team could plan suitable physical adjustments. In a minority of schools however, it was the case that alterations, for example installation of anti-glare blinds, were not completed until after the pupil started school. It is clear from these examples that physical adaptations need to be better co-ordinated in order to ensure immediate and appropriate environmental changes are in place when new pupils are enrolled.

5.2.9 In conclusion, the evidence indicates the need for schools to ensure better and earlier strategic planning, environmental adaptations and staff training particularly for young pupils who are blind or with little residual vision as they move through the school system.

### 5.3 QUALITY OF PROVISION



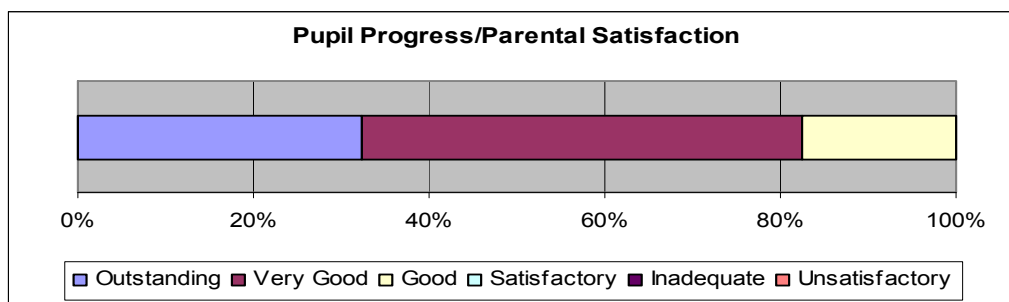
**The overall quality of provision ranges from satisfactory to outstanding.**

5.3.1 In a majority of schools the teachers' preparation and planning is detailed, practical, linked well to curriculum planning, informed considerably by the QTVI recommendations and translated into effective and practical working IEPs. Ongoing assessment and mentoring is a feature of this type of practice. In a minority of schools, the IEPs are poorly developed and limited attention is afforded to the VI area or its impact on learning.

5.3.2 A minority of schools have classroom assistants with experience, skills and training in VI. The majority have developed their understanding of VI through training from the VI support teachers and from contact with parents and teachers. In the majority of classrooms they have often developed good skills in the use of assistive technologies. The majority combine sensitivity to the emotional and social needs of the pupils with a clear understanding of the challenges they face in learning. In the best practice classroom assistants are skilful in listening and negotiating with the pupils. There are many examples of creative tailored resources produced by classroom assistants to meet individual need, for example, sensory resources for use in story telling. The new service, the RVRB, in Fortwilliam, Belfast, could provide a useful forum for classroom assistants to share ideas and resources to avoid unnecessary duplication.



## 5.4 ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS



**Overall quality of achievements and standards ranges from good to outstanding.**

5.4.1 Overall, as the table above shows, the majority of pupils are achieving well. The evidence from observation and parental opinions shows that pupils with a VI are adapting to their conditions and becoming independent learners. At post-primary level, it is very challenging for schools to provide consistent high quality support across a wide range of subjects. Where the pupil and the parents are actively involved in a partnership with the school, and the pupil's voice is heard and listened to, the progress made by the pupil is enhanced.

5.4.2 The survey found examples where pupils both in class and especially during examinations were very tired because of the level of concentration they had to maintain. This is an important area for consideration when examination schedules are drafted.

## 6. CONCLUSION

6.1 In summary, the findings from the questionnaires and the school visits indicate that provision for VI has developed in a cohesive manner and is of a very good standard overall. Education and Library Boards services work collaboratively and provision is in general, consistently delivered and standardised. While there is much to commend in the provision for VI, aspects of provision identified in this report for improvement should be discussed and action taken to ensure that the level of provision is maintained, particularly for the more vulnerable pupils with complex VI and for staff who need ongoing training to meet their needs.

**BELB Vision Support Caseload**

Year	Primary schools	Primary pupils	Post-Primary schools	Post-Primary pupils	Blind pupils (Non-Text)	Classroom assistants (VI primary disability)
08-09	29	45	21	30	1 (special school)	14
09-10	36	64	20	33	1 (special school)	12
10-11	39	74	24	42	1 (special school)	17

Levels of intervention for **mainstream primary & post primary only** are detailed below:  
(As per Interboard working documentation- Guidelines for Support)

Year	*Band 1 On Request	Band 2 Annual	Band 3 Termly	Band 4 Half termly/ monthly	Band 5 Fortnightly/ weekly
08-09	9	8	42	13	3
09-10	7	24	47	17	2
10-11	6	36	53	19	1

**SELB Vision Support Caseload**

Year	Primary schools	Primary pupils	Post-Primary schools	Post-Primary pupils	Blind pupils (Non-Text)	Classroom assistants (VI primary disability)
08-09	28	42	31	36	1	38
09-10	34	39	25	36	1	44
10-11	34	45	28	37	1	41

Please note these figures do not include nursery or pre-school. 1 blind child (also requiring pre-braille teaching) was at nursery during 10/11.

\* Band descriptors refer to agreed ELB criteria.

Levels of intervention for **mainstream primary & post primary only** are detailed below:  
(As per Interboard working documentation- Guidelines for Support)

Year	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5
08-09	76	23	7	23	25
09-10	76	18	12	21	23
10-11	78	20	10	20	24

#### WELB Vision Support Caseload

Year	Primary schools	Primary pupils	Post Primary schools	Post primary pupils	Blind pupils (Non-Text)	Classroom assistants (VI primary disability)
08-09	57	109	35	94		29
09-10	65	109	35	99		31
10-11	65	112	34	97		30

Levels of intervention for **mainstream primary & post primary only** are detailed below:  
(As per Interboard working documentation- Guidelines for Support)

Year	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5
08-09	84	86	28	5	
09-10	86	88	29	5	
10-11	104	76	23	6	

#### Outreach Service for the Visually Impaired Caseload (NEELB)

Year	Primary schools	Primary pupils	Post-Primary schools	Post-Primary pupils	Blind pupils (Non-Text)	Classroom assistants (VI primary disability)
08-09	43	49	25	21		31
09-10	51	62	27	37	1	41
10-11	44	48	25	29	1	34

Levels of intervention for **mainstream primary & post primary only** are detailed below:  
(As per Interboard working documentation- Guidelines for Support)

Year	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5
08-09	2	49	26	5	
09-10	2	62	32	3	1
10-11	3	53	18	2	1

#### SEELB Vision Support Caseload

Year	Primary schools	Primary pupils	Post-Primary schools	Post-Primary pupils	Blind pupils (Non-Text)	Classroom assistants (VI primary disability)
08-09	47	61	24	43	0	33
09-10	53	62	22	32	0	40
10-11	46	67	22	38	0	43

Levels of intervention for **mainstream primary & post primary only** are detailed below:  
(As per Interboard working documentation- Guidelines for Support)

Year	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5
08-09	9	53	26	9	7
09-10	10	50	26	12	6
10-11	11	52	31	15	6

**LIST OF SCHOOLS VISITED**

Banbridge Playgroup	Templepatrick Primary School
Limavady Nursery School	Ballyclare High School
Magherafelt Nursery School	Banbridge Academy
Strathfoyle Nursery School	Clounagh Junior High School
Acorn Integrated Primary School	Colaiste Feirste
Ampertaine Primary School	Cross and Passion College
Ballyholme Primary School	De La Salle College
Bush Primary School	Hazelwood College
Cranmore Integrated Primary School	Kilkeel High School
Drumahoe Primary School	Limavady Grammar School
Finaghy Primary School	Loreto College
Greenwood Primary School	Lumen Christi College
Irish Society's Primary School	Methodist College
Killowen Primary School	New-Bridge Integrated College
Millisle Primary School	North Coast Integrated College
Newtownards Model Primary School	Oakgrove Integrated College
Omagh County Primary School	Our Lady and St Patrick's College
Rasharkin Primary School	Our Lady of Lourdes High School
Seagoe Primary School	Portora Royal School
Sion Mills Primary School	Sacred Heart College
St Brigid's Primary School	Saintfield High School
St Colman's Primary School	St Ciaran's High School
St Conor's Primary School	St Columb's College
St Eugene's Primary School	St Dominic's High School
St Mary's Primary School	St Malachy's College
St Michael's Primary School	St Mark's High School
St Patrick's Primary School Dungannon	St Patrick's Grammar School
St Paul's Primary School	St Paul's High School
St Teresa's Primary School	Strangford Integrated College
Stranmillis Primary School	The High School Ballynahinch
Strathfoyle Nursery School	

## ANALYSIS OF ONLINE EVALUATION

It is worth taking note that not every respondent answered every question. The amount of missing values is recorded below each table; however the percentages in the tables and figures reflect the number that did respond to that particular question.

### **GENERAL DETAILS**

A total of 163 questionnaires were returned by schools; 2 Pre-Schools, 5 Nurseries, 78 Primary's (including preparatory departments) and 78 Post-Primary schools. In total 68% of schools that were given the opportunity to complete this survey did so. **Table 1** shows the number and type of schools that submitted a return.

**Table 1: The number of Educational Establishments that submitted a return**

School type	Frequency
Pre-School/ Nursery	7
Primary <sup>1</sup>	78
Secondary	49
Grammar	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>163</b>

<sup>1</sup> Primary includes Preparatory departments of Grammar schools

From the schools that submitted a return, a total of 304 pupils out of 81631 had a visual impairment, this included 14 in Pre-School/Nursery, 137 in Primary and 153 in Post-Primary schools. This breakdown is shown in **Table 2** below.

When a breakdown by gender was carried out on the pupils who had a visual impairment, 53% of boys had visual impairments compared to 47% of girls. A breakdown of these figures by school type is given in **Table 3** below.

Fifty-nine percent (179 out of 304) of the pupils who had a visual impairment also had a statement of Special Educational Need. This breakdown is shown in **Table 4** below.

**Table 2: Total Enrolment and Number of Pupils with Visual Impairment (VI) by School Type**

School type	Total pupil enrolment	Total number of pupils with visual impairment (VI):	% of pupils with visual impairment (VI):
Pre-School/ Nursery	480	14	2.9%
Primary <sup>1</sup>	20930	137	0.7%
Secondary	32335	88	0.3%
Grammar	27886	65	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>81631</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>0.4%</b>

<sup>1</sup> Primary includes Preparatory departments of Grammar schools

**Table 3: Number of Pupils with Visual Impairment (VI) by Gender and School Type**

School type	Total number of boys with visual impairment (VI):	% of boys with visual impairment (VI):	Total number of girls with visual impairment (VI):	% of girls with visual impairment (VI):
Pre-School/ Nursery	8	57.1%	6	42.9%
Primary <sup>1</sup>	68	49.6%	69	50.4%
Secondary	47	53.4%	41	46.6%
Grammar	39	60.0%	26	40.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>53.3%</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>46.7%</b>

<sup>1</sup> Primary includes Preparatory departments of Grammar schools

**Table 4: Number of Pupils with Visual Impairment and Number of Pupils with Visual Impairment and Statement of Special Educational Need by School Type**

School type	Total number of pupils with visual impairment (VI):	Total number of VI pupils with statement of SEN:	% of VI pupils with statement of SEN:
Pre-School/ Nursery	14	*	*
Primary <sup>1</sup>	137	64	46.7%
Secondary	88	65	73.9%
Grammar	65	#	#
<b>Total</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>58.9%</b>

<sup>1</sup> Primary includes Preparatory departments of Grammar schools

\* Relates to fewer than 5 cases.

# Number suppressed to prevent disclosure of small number elsewhere

A total of 5794 staff work in the educational establishments that submitted a return. A breakdown of these figures by school type is given in **Table 5** below.

**Table 5: Total Number of Staff working in the Educational Establishments that submitted a return by School Type**

School type	Number of Educational Establishments that submitted a return	Total number of staff
Pre-School/ Nursery	7	35.4
Primary <sup>1,2</sup>	78	1281.1
Secondary	49	2372.5
Grammar	29	2105.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>5794.0</b>

<sup>1</sup> Primary includes Preparatory departments of Grammar schools

<sup>2</sup> Two schools did not include the number of staff on their return

**Tables 6- 8** show the breakdown by year group of the pupils with visual impairment and the types of needs that they have. Care should be taken when making reference to the figures in these three tables as some pupils have not been accounted for (see note 1 below each table).

**Table 6: Year of Pupils with Visual Impairment in Primary Schools**

School type	Pupils in P1 with Visual Impairment.	Pupils in P2 with Visual Impairment.	Pupils in P3 with Visual Impairment.	Pupils in P4 with Visual Impairment.	Pupils in P5 with Visual Impairment.	Pupils in P6 with Visual Impairment.	Pupils in P7 with Visual Impairment.	Unknown <sup>1</sup>	Total number of pupils with VI
<b>Primary</b> <sup>2</sup>	9	16	11	14	20	12	18	37	137

<sup>1</sup> Excludes 37 pupils due to design layout of the questionnaire, i.e. where a school has multiple pupils with VI in a certain year, it is only counted once as response was a Yes/No answer only

<sup>2</sup> Primary includes Preparatory departments of Grammar schools

**Table 7: Year of Pupils with Visual Impairment in Post-Primary Schools**

School type	Pupils in Y8 with Visual Impairment.	Pupils in Y9 with Visual Impairment.	Pupils in Y10 with Visual Impairment.	Pupils in Y11 with Visual Impairment.	Pupils in Y12 with Visual Impairment.	Pupils in Y13 with Visual Impairment.	Pupils in Y14 with Visual Impairment.	Unknown <sup>1</sup>	Total number of pupils with VI
<b>Secondary</b>	17	14	11	15	14	3	6	8	88
<b>Grammar</b>	11	12	5	4	8	5	10	10	65
<b>Total post-primary</b>	28	26	16	19	22	8	16	18	153

<sup>1</sup> Excludes 18 pupils due to design layout of the questionnaire, i.e. where a school has multiple pupils with VI in a certain year, it is only counted once as response was a Yes/No answer only



**Table 8: Types of Needs Visually Impaired Pupils have by School Type**

School type	Visual impairment only	VI and mild learning difficulty	VI and specific learning difficulty (dyslexia)	VI and physical disability	VI and medical condition	Unknown <sup>1</sup>	Total number of pupils with visual impairment (VI):
Pre-School/ Nursery	*	*	0	*	*	5	14
Primary <sup>2</sup>	47	20	5	7	14	44	137
Secondary	26	14	#	*	27	9	88
Grammar	#	*	*	*	#	25	65
<b>Total</b>	99	37	18	15	52	83	304

<sup>1</sup> Excludes 83 pupils due to design layout of the questionnaire, i.e. where a school has multiple pupils with VI in a certain year, it is only counted once as response was a Yes/No answer only

<sup>2</sup> Primary includes Preparatory departments of Grammar schools

\* Relates to fewer than 5 cases.

# Number suppressed to prevent disclosure of small number elsewhere

In the past five years, the most popular type of CPD/training relating to visual impairment has been having access to advice and support. Eighty-five percent of schools indicated on their return that they have accessed advice and support. This was the most popular type of training by all school types. The second most popular type of training was school based training followed by individual research by members of staff and then external training. The least popular type of CPD/training was attending courses/conferences. A breakdown of these figures by school type is given in **Table 9** below.

Schools were also asked to indicate what they thought were the specific challenges in supporting pupils with visual impairment. The most frequent answers chosen were: awareness of the support that is available to them outside of school and finding the resources to release staff from the classroom. The rest of the answers came in the following order: finding the time to undertake training on VI, accessing information on specific types of support and identifying the specific training that the school needs. A breakdown of these figures by school type is given in **Table 10** below.

**Table 9: Types of CPD/training relating to Visual Impairment that has been accessed in the past five years by School Type**

School type	School based training	Individual research by members of staff	External training	Access to advice and support	Course/ conference attendance
Pre-School/ Nursery	5	2	0	6	1
Primary <sup>1</sup>	29	27	6	66	7
Secondary	19	15	11	42	8
Grammar	15	10	6	25	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>21</b>

<sup>1</sup> Primary includes Preparatory departments of Grammar schools

**Table 10: Specific Challenges in Supporting Pupils with Visual Impairment by School Type**

School type	Awareness of the support that is available to me outside school	Accessing information on specific types of support	Finding the time to undertake training on VI	Finding the resources to release staff from the classroom	Identifying the specific training that the school needs
Pre-School/ Nursery	3	3	3	4	0
Primary <sup>1</sup>	41	31	34	43	30
Secondary	25	21	24	24	13
Grammar	12	13	14	10	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>50</b>

<sup>1</sup> Primary includes Preparatory departments of Grammar schools

Schools were asked to indicate how effective they thought eight different types of support were in helping them develop their school's knowledge and skills in relation to the needs of the pupils who have VI.

A large proportion of schools (94%) found in-school support to be either effective or very effective. Over three-quarters (78%) of schools indicated that seminars and conferences were not applicable to them while only 17 schools indicated that they were either effective or very effective. Seventy-one percent of schools said that externally designed and delivered courses were not applicable to them while only 26 schools said they were either effective or very effective. Only 1 school said that a Post-graduate Certificate/Diploma/Master in VI was very effective while 96% of the schools said it was not applicable to them. Six schools found online continuing professional development neither effective nor ineffective, 3 found it effective, 1 very effective and 87 said it was not applicable to them. Forty-two schools said that they found telephone and email support effective while 55 schools said it was very effective. Twenty-five though said it was not applicable. Sixty-one percent of schools found learning and teaching resources to be effective or very effective. Thirty-six schools said that this type of support was not applicable to them and 9 schools found it neither effective nor ineffective. Fifty-one schools said that the Learning NI website was not applicable to them, 22 said it was neither effective nor ineffective, 21 said it was effective while 3 said it was very effective. A breakdown of the different types of support by school type is given in **Tables 11-18** below.

**Table 11: Effectiveness of In-school support in developing a school's knowledge and skills in relation to the needs of pupils who have Visual Impairment by School Type<sup>1</sup>**

School type	In-school support											
	Very Effective		Effective		Neither		Ineffective		Very Ineffective		Not Applicable	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
<b>Pre-School/ Nursery</b>	3	50.0%	3	50.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Primary<sup>2</sup></b>	40	60.6%	24	36.4%	1	1.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.5%
<b>Secondary</b>	24	54.5%	16	36.4%	1	2.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	6.8%
<b>Grammar</b>	18	69.2%	6	23.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	7.7%
<b>Total</b>	85	59.9%	49	34.5%	2	1.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	4.2%

<sup>1</sup> Twenty-one schools did not answer this question

<sup>2</sup> Primary includes Preparatory departments of Grammar schools

**Table 12: Effectiveness of seminars and conferences in developing a school's knowledge and skills in relation to the needs of pupils who have Visual Impairment by School Type<sup>1</sup>**

School type	In-school support											
	Very Effective		Effective		Neither		Ineffective		Very Ineffective		Not Applicable	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
<b>Pre-School/ Nursery</b>	1	20.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	80.0%
<b>Primary<sup>2</sup></b>	2	4.3%	2	4.3%	2	4.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	41	87.2%
<b>Secondary</b>	1	3.3%	6	20.0%	2	6.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	21	70.0%
<b>Grammar</b>	2	10.5%	3	15.8%	1	5.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	13	68.4%
<b>Total</b>	6	5.9%	11	10.9%	5	5.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	79	78.2%

<sup>1</sup> Sixty-two schools did not answer this question

<sup>2</sup> Primary includes Preparatory departments of Grammar schools

**Table 13: Effectiveness of externally designed and delivered courses in developing a school's knowledge and skills in relation to the needs of pupils who have Visual Impairment by School Type<sup>1</sup>**

School type	In-school support											
	Very Effective		Effective		Neither		Ineffective		Very Ineffective		Not Applicable	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
<b>Pre-School/ Nursery</b>	1	20.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	80.0%
<b>Primary<sup>2</sup></b>	2	4.0%	7	14.0%	2	4.0%	1	2.0%	0	0.0%	38	76.0%
<b>Secondary</b>	5	14.7%	7	20.6%	1	2.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	21	61.8%
<b>Grammar</b>	3	15.8%	1	5.3%	1	5.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	14	73.7%
<b>Total</b>	11	10.2%	15	13.9%	4	3.7%	1	0.9%	0	0.0%	77	71.3%

<sup>1</sup> Fifty-five schools did not answer this question

<sup>2</sup> Primary includes Preparatory departments of Grammar schools

**Table 14: Effectiveness of Post-graduate Certificate/Diploma/Masters in VI in developing a school's knowledge and skills in relation to the needs of pupils who have Visual Impairment by School Type<sup>1</sup>**

School type	In-school support											
	Very Effective		Effective		Neither		Ineffective		Very Ineffective		Not Applicable	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
<b>Pre-School/ Nursery</b>	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	20.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	80.0%
<b>Primary<sup>2</sup></b>	1	2.3%	0	0.0%	1	2.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	42	95.5%
<b>Secondary</b>	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	29	100.0%
<b>Grammar</b>	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	5.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	17	94.4%
<b>Total</b>	1	1.0%	0	0.0%	3	3.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	92	95.8%

<sup>1</sup> Sixty-seven schools did not answer this question

<sup>2</sup> Primary includes Preparatory departments of Grammar schools

**Table 15: Effectiveness of Online Continuing Professional Development in developing a school's knowledge and skills in relation to the needs of pupils who have Visual Impairment by School Type<sup>1</sup>**

School type	In-school support											
	Very Effective		Effective		Neither		Ineffective		Very Ineffective		Not Applicable	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
<b>Pre-School/ Nursery</b>	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	25.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	75.0%
<b>Primary<sup>2</sup></b>	1	2.2%	2	4.4%	4	8.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	38	84.4%
<b>Secondary</b>	0	0.0%	1	3.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	29	96.7%
<b>Grammar</b>	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	5.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	17	94.4%
<b>Total</b>	1	1.0%	3	3.1%	6	6.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	87	89.7%

<sup>1</sup> Sixty-six schools did not answer this question

<sup>2</sup> Primary includes Preparatory departments of Grammar schools

**Table 16: Effectiveness of Telephone and email support in developing a school's knowledge and skills in relation to the needs of pupils who have Visual Impairment by School Type<sup>1</sup>**

School type	In-school support											
	Very Effective		Effective		Neither		Ineffective		Very Ineffective		Not Applicable	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
<b>Pre-School/ Nursery</b>	3	42.9%	3	42.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	14.3%
<b>Primary<sup>2</sup></b>	18	31.0%	18	31.0%	5	8.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	17	29.3%
<b>Secondary</b>	17	43.6%	14	35.9%	1	2.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	7	17.9%
<b>Grammar</b>	17	70.8%	7	29.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	55	43.0%	42	32.8%	6	4.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	25	19.5%

<sup>1</sup> Thirty-five schools did not answer this question

<sup>2</sup> Primary includes Preparatory departments of Grammar schools

**Table 17: Effectiveness of Learning and teaching resources in developing a school's knowledge and skills in relation to the needs of pupils who have Visual Impairment by School Type<sup>1</sup>**

School type	In-school support											
	Very Effective		Effective		Neither		Ineffective		Very Ineffective		Not Applicable	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
<b>Pre-School/ Nursery</b>	3	50.0%	2	33.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	16.7%
<b>Primary<sup>2</sup></b>	9	15.8%	25	43.9%	3	5.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	20	35.1%
<b>Secondary</b>	4	11.8%	15	44.1%	4	11.8%	1	2.9%	0	0.0%	10	29.4%
<b>Grammar</b>	5	22.7%	10	45.5%	2	9.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	22.7%
<b>Total</b>	21	17.6%	52	43.7%	9	7.6%	1	0.8%	0	0.0%	36	30.3%

<sup>1</sup> Forty-four schools did not answer this question

<sup>2</sup> Primary includes Preparatory departments of Grammar schools

**Table 18: Effectiveness of Learning NI website in developing a school's knowledge and skills in relation to the needs of pupils who have Visual Impairment by School Type<sup>1</sup>**

School type	In-school support											
	Very Effective		Effective		Neither		Ineffective		Very Ineffective		Not Applicable	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
<b>Pre-School/ Nursery</b>	1	20.0%	2	40.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	40.0%
<b>Primary<sup>2</sup></b>	2	4.3%	10	21.3%	12	25.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	23	48.9%
<b>Secondary</b>	0	0.0%	3	10.3%	8	27.6%	1	3.4%	1	3.4%	16	55.2%
<b>Grammar</b>	0	0.0%	6	31.6%	2	10.5%	1	5.3%	0	0.0%	10	52.6%
<b>Total</b>	3	3.0%	21	21.0%	22	22.0%	2	2.0%	1	1.0%	51	51.0%

<sup>1</sup> Sixty-three schools did not answer this question

<sup>2</sup> Primary includes Preparatory departments of Grammar schools

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