

CCBA



PRIME MINISTER

EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN NORTHERN IRELAND

1. In Northern Ireland we have been considering how to achieve improvements in educational standards like those addressed in Kenneth Baker's Education Reform Bill. We have also noted the position in Scotland.

2. Subject to your approval, and the agreement of colleagues, I intend soon to issue a consultative paper in Northern Ireland. I have four main proposals:

- to introduce a common curriculum for Northern Ireland;
- to increase scope for parental choice in the selection of schools, subject to their physical capacity;
- to delegate responsibility for financial management to schools and to further education colleges; and
- to give to school governors and parents the opportunity to opt for grant-maintained status, in a form tailored to Northern Ireland circumstances and, in particular, offering real prospects for the spread of co-education of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils.

These are described below. A more detailed summary and a copy of the consultative paper are attached.

3. The proposals, and in particular that for the introduction of grant-maintained status, have clear implications for Northern Ireland society as well as addressing purely educational

objectives. They will be highly contentious. Nevertheless, the current proposals in England and Wales provide a unique opportunity, which I believe we must grasp, to move forward in an area where the need for change is so clear. Because of the position of the Catholic Church in Northern Ireland society it will be important to give an advance explanation of the proposals at official level to the Irish.

COMMON CURRICULUM

4. My proposals for a common curriculum in Northern Ireland are largely those advanced for England and Wales, but I intend to signal my acknowledgement of the special position of religious education by including it amongst the proposed foundation subjects, though for RE there would not be a centrally-prescribed programme of study.

5. The consultative paper makes clear that the selective system of secondary education in Northern Ireland is not in question. But the proposal to introduce attainment testing at age 11 offers a valuable opportunity for us to look again at the transfer procedure itself, with the option of discontinuing the present regime of tests and quotas in favour of selection at school level based on a combination of pupil attainment and teacher assessment.

PARENTAL CHOICE AND FINANCIAL DELEGATION

6. My proposals broadly reflect those in the Education Bill.

GRANT-MAINTAINED STATUS

7. As in England and Wales, I propose to introduce legislation incorporating parent-led procedures whereby schools may acquire a new form of corporate identity, attracting 100% funding directly from central Government. The existing character, including

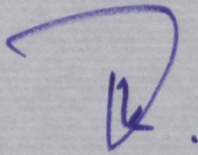
religious ethos, of these schools would be unchanged at the time of becoming grant-maintained. In Northern Ireland this proposal in itself will help to soften the sharp distinction perceived between "Catholic" and "Protestant" schools.

8. An extension of this approach - grant-maintained integrated status - offers parents the prospect of real progress on integrated education. Despite the 1978 provision to promote integrated education by allowing existing schools to become controlled integrated schools, no such schools exist. That provision's fundamental weaknesses are that it provides a veto against change for Church appointees on Boards of Governors, and puts the new integrated school under the management of the Education and Library Board (and therefore associates it in many minds with the Protestant tradition).

9. My proposed legislation will avoid these obstacles. Not only will new grant-maintained integrated schools look directly for grant to central Government, but the initiation of the statutory procedures will be determined by parents. Moreover, our commitment to the development of integrated education will be sustained by making available special purpose grants and allowing enrolments to grow as far as possible in line with parental demand, with high priority within Departmental capital programmes for the provision of additional places.

10. It is clear that full implementation is likely to be costly, though the phased introduction (as in other regions) of the curricular changes may ease the resource burden in the early stages. It will add to the pressures in the Northern Ireland block, but I believe that the policy (with the adaptations I have indicated) is as relevant for Northern Ireland as for the rest of the country; and in any event I would have little option but to mirror in Northern Ireland such a significant development in national policy.

11. I am copying this minute to Geoffrey Howe, Peter Walker, Kenneth Baker, Malcolm Rifkind, John Major, and Sir Robin Butler. To enable me to release the consultative paper in the second half of March, I should be grateful to have your concurrence, and any comments from copy recipients, by 11 March.



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1 March 1988

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PROPOSED EDUCATION REFORM IN NORTHERN IRELAND:
SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

1. It is intended to issue a consultative paper in the near future on the implications for Northern Ireland of the Government's proposals for education reform in England and Wales. The proposals will have a major impact throughout the education system and indeed upon society as a whole, and have, as their main thrust, a range of measures designed to increase scope for parental influence on their children's education. The four main proposals are:
 - that a common curriculum should be introduced in all schools;
 - that the current transfer procedure might give way to attainment testing at age 11 as a basis for transfer to secondary school, thus increasing opportunity for parental choice of school by the elimination of the use of "quotas";
 - that responsibility for the financial management of schools and colleges of further education be delegated to their Boards of Governors; and
 - that all schools be given the opportunity to acquire their own corporate identity as grant-maintained schools, or grant-maintained integrated schools, receiving all recurrent and capital funding direct from Central Government.

A New Common Curriculum

2. The Government proposes to introduce legislation which would require a common curriculum to be provided in all



grant-aided schools so as to ensure that all pupils study a common agreed group of essential (foundation) subjects which would provide a sufficiently broad and balanced education. The foundation subjects which all pupils should study are:

English

Mathematics

Science

History/Geography/Environmental Studies (either singly or in combination)

Technology (incorporating Craft, Design and Technology)

Music/Art/Drama (either singly or in combination)

Physical Education

Religious Education

A Modern Foreign Language (secondary schools only)

3. Within these foundation subjects, it is proposed that particular attention would continue to be given to English, mathematics and science, which together should comprise 30%-40% of curriculum time. In respect of each foundation subject programmes of study would be devised, usually with associated assessment criteria upon which attainment testing and formal teacher assessment would be based. For music, art, drama, RE and PE, as well as for some of the non-foundation subjects, guidelines would be set, incorporating the underlying objectives of the programmes of study, rather than specific assessment criteria (for RE, these guidelines would not be determined centrally). Working Groups would be established to make recommendations about programmes of study and assessment criteria for each subject. The programmes of study would not be narrowly prescriptive and teachers would be free to determine the detail of what was taught and the teaching approaches used, so long as these would allow pupils to fulfil the assessment criteria. In the Northern Ireland context, regard would be had to the approaches advocated in Primary Guidelines, and



the curricular structures which have been developed under the 11-16 Curriculum Review and Vocational Education Programmes.

4. The assessment criteria would be certain key aspects identified at various stages within the programmes of study. They would be developed initially in English, mathematics and science, and at a later stage for the other foundation subjects. The aim would be to establish what children should normally be expected to know, understand and be able to do at regular intervals throughout compulsory education. It is proposed that Northern Ireland should follow broadly the same pattern as England and Wales, with targets set for ages 7 or 8, 11, 14 and 16. At age 16, attainment for the majority of pupils would be measured via GCSE.

5. So as to provide a substantive profile of each pupil's progress and attainment, records of achievement would be introduced for all pupils which would be available to them at the end of the primary stage, and when they left secondary school. These records would include less formal aspects of achievement as well as the pupil's performance in the attainment tests and examinations. In addition, it is proposed that all parents should be kept regularly informed as to how the school's schemes of work relate to the common curriculum, and how their children have performed in attainment tests against the assessment criteria and that teachers should know how their classes were doing in comparison with others. It is also important that Government, employers and the general public should be able to monitor Northern Ireland standards of attainment and improvement over time, and to be able to make broad comparisons with standards elsewhere in the United Kingdom; appropriate information on school performances would therefore be published on a regular basis.

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6. A new body, to be known as the Northern Ireland Curriculum Council, would be established by legislation to advise the Department of Education on the curriculum. Their remit would include oversight of the working groups which would be preparing the proposed programmes of study. NICC would be responsible for updating these as well as for liaising with the Northern Ireland Schools Examination Council in establishing the assessment criteria. NISEC would have a new statutory role in conducting, monitoring and moderating the attainment tests at all levels, retaining its present responsibility to ensure that standards of examinations in Northern Ireland are recognised as equivalent to those elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

Parental Choice

7. The introduction of attainment testing at the end of primary education at age 11 might well have implications for the present transfer procedure. This currently takes the form of verbal reasoning-type tests, and includes a formula whereby predetermined percentages (or "quotas") of pupils are awarded the various grades. The Consultative Paper therefore specifically asks for views on what are seen as the two main options. Under the first, children could take both types of test around the age of 11. It might be argued that together the tests would provide a valuable range of complementary information on the development of pupils. The second option, based on the view that the simultaneous operation of two separate tests could be a severe imposition on pupils and schools, would require pupils to take only one set of tests at age 11, and this would be the proposed attainment test. If this second option were chosen, the existing transfer procedure would be discontinued and schools would need to look, for the purposes of selecting pupils for the different types of secondary education, to the results of the proposed attainment test at age 11

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together with its associated teacher assessment. Taken together with the policy decision already promulgated to abandon the imposition of admissions limits upon secondary (including grammar) schools from the 1988/89 school year, this would significantly enhance opportunities for parents to choose the secondary school they wish their children to attend.

Financial Delegation to Schools and Colleges

8. There are clear benefits for schools and further education colleges in being able to manage their own finances. It is proposed to introduce similar arrangements to those advanced for England and Wales which will enable schools and colleges to match expenditure decisions to educational objectives and to reflect their particular needs and aspirations.
9. The key features of the proposals for financial delegation for Northern Ireland schools are that Education and Library Boards would be required, after appropriate consultation, to draw up schemes whereby the budgets of controlled and maintained schools (which are fully maintained by Education and Library Boards) would be delegated to the Boards of Governors, to be managed at their discretion for the purposes of securing the delivery of the full curriculum in the school. To determine a budget for each school, an Education & Library Board would first establish its total financial resources available for schools and deduct the costs of centrally administered expenditure. A formula would be established for the distribution among schools of the remaining resources. Similar proposals are being canvassed in the Consultative Paper for financial delegation to the Governing Bodies of Further Education colleges. The Paper lists the main cost elements which might be delegated and sets out how the schemes might operate in broad terms; it also proposes the publication of information on how school and college budgets are determined.

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Grant-Maintained Schools

10. The proposals for legislation in England and Wales include provision enabling schools to seek a new kind of funding and management arrangement supported wholly through grants from Central Government. It is proposed that all existing primary and secondary schools in Northern Ireland, whether controlled or voluntary, should be enabled to acquire a corporate identity, and a high degree of autonomy, with 100% of recurrent and capital funding paid directly by Central Government. In the Northern Ireland context this would provide a "middle ground" which might attract schools wishing to move away from existing "denominational" labels.
11. In addition, the Consultative Paper reiterates the Government's commitment to encourage educational integration between Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils in schools in Northern Ireland. It is therefore proposed to establish a further category of grant-maintained schools, to be known as grant-maintained integrated schools, distinguished mainly by the constitution of their managing bodies and also largely exempted from the general (physical capacity-based) control upon growth of enrolments, and attracting a very high priority for capital projects designed to provide necessary additional pupil places. In addition, at least 20% of the enrolment of these schools should be Roman Catholic where the majority is Protestant, or vice-versa.
12. In general, as with grant-maintained schools in England and Wales, it is proposed that basic recurrent funding would broadly reflect the same level of resources as the school was already receiving from its maintaining authority, to which would be added an element for teachers' salaries already funded by the Department of Education. Additionally, it is proposed to make provision in the legislation for the payment of special purpose grants to

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take account of special needs, related for example to the make-up of the population of the area served by the school.

13. As is proposed for England and Wales, proposals to obtain grant-maintained status would be made by the Board of Governors, supported by a majority of parents voting in a secret ballot, and parents would have the power to require the Board of Governors to initiate the necessary procedures in any case where the Board of Governors itself had decided not to do so.
14. The views of those consulted are particularly sought on the management structures for grant-maintained schools, but in principle they would be made up of members representative of parents and teachers, members appointed by the Department of Education, and a body of foundation governors. The trustees of the former voluntary schools would retain at least half of the membership of the new Board of Governors of those grant-maintained schools which were not seeking special integrated status. For grant-maintained integrated schools, it is proposed that the foundation governors would be the largest single grouping, but short of an overall majority.

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EDUCATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

PROPOSALS FOR REFORM - A CONSULTATION PAPER

INTRODUCTION

1. Government is committed to raising standards in all sectors of education throughout the United Kingdom. To this end, it has proposed major reforms. For England and Wales, these are incorporated in the Education Reform Bill currently before Parliament. Proposals for change have also been the subject of consultation in Scotland.
2. The purpose of this paper is to examine the Northern Ireland position and to give an indication of Government's preliminary views on how comparable reforms should be introduced here. It provides a basis for comment and consultation. All those with an interest in education in Northern Ireland are invited to make their views known as soon as possible, and no later than ^{31 MAY} ~~29 April~~ 1988. In reaching final decisions, Government will take into account the views expressed together with any amendments made to the corresponding England and Wales legislation during its passage through Parliament.
3. Implementation of the proposed changes will require separate Northern Ireland legislation. Government will publish later this year a Proposal for a draft Order in Council to amend the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. This will provide a further opportunity for comment, during the formal consultation period for such legislation.

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Education in Northern Ireland

4. There are many commendable features of education in Northern Ireland. In the main, teachers in our schools and colleges display a high degree of professionalism and commitment in the education offered to our young people. A higher proportion of pupils in Northern Ireland than in England and Wales achieve success in 'A' level examinations and are more likely to proceed to university or other forms of higher education. Within schools, much has already been done, through developments such as Primary Guidelines and the 11-16 Curriculum Development Programme, to ensure that the range of educational experiences available to pupils is broadened and made more balanced, and more suited to their aptitudes and levels of ability.
5. There remain, however, some significant weaknesses:
 - In the primary sector, although progress has been made in some schools towards the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum for all children, in many, for a variety of reasons, there is undue attention paid to the development of a small range of skills, knowledge and competences, including verbal reasoning, at the expense of broad provision. As a result, the educational experience of many children lacks proper development, particularly in activities involving science, creative work and physical education. In addition, the expectations of a number of teachers and parents are too low, and children are not sufficiently stretched intellectually to reach their maximum potential.
 - In the secondary sector, although there has been some encouraging movement to create breadth and balance in the curriculum for pupils in the first three years, for many pupils this breadth and balance breaks down with the option system in years 4 and 5. In these years many pupils discontinue study of science, modern languages and technology. For many more, the curricular provision in art, music and physical

education is less than it ought to be. In addition, it remains a disturbing fact that, compared to the average for England and Wales, a much higher proportion of pupils leave compulsory education in Northern Ireland without recognised examination qualifications of any kind. Further, critical comments are increasingly being made by employers about the standards of basic literacy and numeracy and the readiness for employment of a proportion of young people leaving the school system.

- In the further education sector, there is scope for greater efficiency in the deployment of resources, particularly at college level, and a need for greater flexibility on the part of colleges in responding to demands from local industry and commerce, as well as to changes emerging at national level in relation to, for example, Open Learning and the work of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications. Colleges also need to improve their ability to "market" particular services and courses.

These weaknesses need to be tackled urgently to ensure that all our pupils have the maximum opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding so that they can develop their talents and aptitudes and be better equipped for adult life and employment. In so doing, our aim must be to ensure that the educational opportunities on offer in our schools and colleges are at least the equal of those anywhere else in the United Kingdom, and that Northern Ireland should maintain and enhance its reputation of having a highly skilled workforce, and thus its attractiveness to industrial and commercial investors.

6. It is also crucial to acknowledge that the task of raising standards in education in Northern Ireland is being tackled in a community with deep divisions which are reflected in the education system. Children from the two traditions in Northern Ireland are - for the most part - educated separately. There is, of course, room for debate over how far this separation contributes to the divisions in the Northern Ireland community.

But even those who would question the significance of that contribution would probably acknowledge that segregation in education, as in housing, does little or nothing to reduce community divisions. Against this background the Government's approach will be:

- to continue to apply the principle that, as far as possible, children should be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents;
- to continue to support programmes and activities which bring together children from the two traditions in the interests of fostering greater tolerance and mutual understanding; and
- to act positively to facilitate the development of integrated education where there is sufficient parental demand to support a viable school.

Proposals for Reform

7. The Government believes that, as in England and Wales, we must now consider a range of reform measures designed to bring about the required changes, to increase parental influence and to raise standards. These include:
 - a common curriculum, based in legislation, for all grant-aided schools to ensure study by all pupils of an agreed group of essential subjects, providing a broad and balanced education;
 - common means of assessing the progress and attainment of pupils;
 - improved information to parents about the performance of their children, and to the community about the performance of schools generally;

- greater freedom of choice for parents in selecting the school which their children should attend;
- means of securing the maximum participation by parents in the management of schools;
- greater flexibility for schools to determine priorities in the use of resources in line with the provision of the common curriculum and their educational objectives;
- the opportunity for schools to choose to operate with greater autonomy in the management of their affairs and to promote integrated education, with their funding provided directly through grants by the Department of Education; and
- greater delegation to institutions of further education in the financial management of each college and a greater role in management for local industrialists and others with special expertise.

Comments

8. Comments on the proposals in this paper should be addressed to the Policy Planning Branch of the Department of Education, Rathgael House, Balloo Road, Bangor, Co Down BT19 2PR, to be received by the date indicated in paragraph 2. Further copies of the paper are available from the same address.

THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

9. The quality of education a child receives is influenced by a variety of factors, and one of the most important of these is the adequacy of the curriculum on offer in the school attended. The Government believes that all children should follow a curriculum which contains all the essential elements to enable them to develop to their full potential and make their contribution to society - whether in their chosen career, personal and family life, or social activities. To this end, Government proposes to introduce a common curricular framework for all grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland comprising a set of foundation subjects, each with a prescribed programme of study and associated assessment arrangements, based on the recommendations of working groups.
10. The focus of the common curriculum will be on children of compulsory school age, and it is not intended that it should apply to nursery schools or to nursery classes in primary schools. Although there would be no general provision for the exemption of individual pupils attending grant-aided schools from the requirements of the curriculum, it is proposed that, for a pupil for whom a statement of special educational needs is maintained, the statement should identify any of the requirements of the common curriculum which should not apply. In addition, the legislation would include provision for modification of the content of any foundation subject in circumstances of special educational need.
11. Throughout the compulsory ages of education, all pupils should engage in the following areas of study (to be referred to as "foundation subjects"):

English
Mathematics
Science

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History/Geography/Environmental Studies (singly or in combination)
Technology (incorporating Craft, Design and Technology)
Music/Art/Drama (singly or in combination)
Physical Education
Religious Education
A modern foreign language (secondary schools only)

12. At primary level, although it is intended that particular attention should be given to English, mathematics and science, it will be important that all the other foundation subjects should receive adequate time and depth of coverage. In many good primary schools, alongside the work to develop skill, understanding and mastery of English and mathematics, programmes of study are not broken down into separate subjects, but are developed in a coherent and integrated way. Provided that the curriculum were seen to cover the essential knowledge, skills and competences, as defined by the working groups, schools would not be required to organise the curriculum in a rigid subject framework.
13. Throughout compulsory secondary schooling, although all pupils would continue with study of all the foundation subjects already outlined, particular attention would continue to be given to English, mathematics and science, which together should comprise 30%-40% of curriculum time. The method of organisation of the curriculum - whether as separate subjects or in related groups of subjects - would continue to be a matter for individual schools to decide, provided that schools were able to demonstrate adequate coverage of the key skills, knowledge and concepts defined for each programme of study. However, it is the Government's intention that the testing of pupils' acquisition of these key skills, knowledge and concepts, at both primary and secondary levels, would be on a subject basis.
14. It is not intended that the legislation should specify the allocation of time to each foundation subject. Collectively, however, the foundation

subjects would require around 70%-75% of curriculum time. The remaining 25%-30% would provide opportunity for study of, for example, classics, home economics or a second foreign language, or, in so far as they require separate treatment, for provision for such cross-curricular themes as Education for Mutual Understanding, careers guidance, health education, information technology and economic awareness (although these could also form part of the programmes of study in the foundation subjects). In secondary schools where Irish forms part of the curriculum, it follows from paragraph 11 above that pupils would have to learn two modern languages other than English; similar considerations would apply to schools where the teaching is through the medium of Irish.

Programmes of Study

15. It would be necessary to establish working groups to make recommendations about the intended outcomes of the teaching and learning for each subject (ie the "underlying objectives") together with the associated programmes of study by which those objectives might be achieved. The working groups, which would be free to consult as they considered necessary, would take account of curricular developments which have already taken place in Northern Ireland schools, as well as of the corresponding programmes of study being developed in England and Wales. The objectives and study programmes thus produced would be crucial to ensuring clear definition of:
 - the essential knowledge, skills and concepts to be taught and learned; and
 - the assessment criteria against which pupils' levels of attainment in understanding, skill and competence would be tested.
16. The position of religious education in schools is already safeguarded by statute. Its position among the foundation subjects further recognises its

essential and central contribution to the spiritual and moral education of all pupils. For the programmes of study in RE, it may be appropriate to issue guidelines; these would not however be centrally determined but would be a matter for school authorities. There would likewise be no prescribed assessment criteria. It would nevertheless still be possible for RE to be taken as an examination subject by those pupils who wished to do so .

17. The programmes of study would specify the content which would be common to all pupils and the expected levels of attainment at various stages. In addition, they should set out guidance about other levels which children of differing abilities might be expected to reach, thus ensuring that all pupils were adequately stretched and challenged. The study programmes would also give indications of the links and overlaps with other programmes or themes.
18. The programmes of study would not be narrowly prescriptive, and teachers would be free to determine the detail of what was taught provided that this would allow the underlying objectives to be met. The organisation of the teaching and learning, and the approaches used, would also be for schools to determine, taking account of the ages, abilities and needs of the children in the classroom. In particular, the approaches advocated in Primary Guidelines, and the curricular structures developed under the 11-16 Curriculum Development and Vocational Education Programmes, would be important to primary and secondary schools respectively in taking forward the objectives of the curriculum in a unified and coherent manner. It is proposed that schools would set out schemes of work to be covered in each foundation subject at various stages, and that these schemes of work would be made available to parents.
19. This flexibility in approach would mean that the proposed framework for the curriculum would be compatible with the continuation of a selective system of secondary education. While the foundation subjects of the curriculum would be common to all types of school, there would be scope for differentiation in the depth of treatment, depending on pupils' abilities.

There would also be the possibility of differences in emphasis in what was offered by schools in the remaining (approximately) 25%-30% of curriculum time.

Assessment Criteria

20. Certain key aspects within the programmes of study would be identified as assessment criteria for pupils at various stages. These assessment criteria would be set initially in English, mathematics and science. At a later stage criteria would be developed for the other foundation subjects, although they could be broadly rather than specifically framed for art, drama, music and physical education, as well as for the other non-foundation subjects such as home economics, and for the cross-curricular topics and themes such as health education and economic awareness. These criteria would specify what children should normally be expected to know, understand and be able to do at particular stages during compulsory education. It is proposed that Northern Ireland should follow broadly the same pattern as England and Wales, and that testing would take place at ages 7 (or 8), 11, 14 and 16. At age 16, attainment for the majority of pupils would be measured via GCSE or other approved qualifications: the necessary adjustments to syllabuses would be made for this purpose while preserving full equivalence of standards with examinations in England and Wales. Not all pupils would study all foundation subjects for public examination, however, so there would need to be other assessment criteria to build on what they have learnt up to age 14.

21. The assessment criteria would be set by the Government on the basis of advice from the curriculum working groups and the Northern Ireland Schools Examinations Council (NISEC) and taking account of developments elsewhere in the United Kingdom. In particular, the recommendations of the Task Group on Assessment and Testing and of the subject working groups in England and Wales would have to be carefully considered, since it would be

important that schools, parents and employers in Northern Ireland should be assured that standards of performance continue to be as high as possible and that they compare favourably with those in England and Wales.

22. Attainment tests would be set as the means of finding out whether pupils' performance matched the assessment criteria. All pupils would take part in the tests, and their performance would be used to monitor standards. It is not intended, however, that teaching and learning should be narrowly focussed on the assessment criteria. Schools, no less than the Government, will be anxious to ensure that the curriculum is as rich and varied as possible and that there will be appropriate paid to the development of values and attitudes in each area of study. Only in this way can further development and improvement be achieved.
23. The assessment criteria would provide information and guidance to teachers, parents and children about the standard being aimed at within the different elements of the curriculum at each stage. A comparison of children's performance measured against the assessment criteria would give a preliminary indication of any problems of under-achievement, but this would need to be supplemented by regular testing of a kind that would enable teachers to plan and implement teaching strategies designed to improve performance, especially in the key areas of literacy and numeracy. Tests at 11 and 16, the ages which mark the end of primary and compulsory secondary schooling, would be of particular value to parents and schools in helping them assess the outcomes of learning at these important stages of education.
24. Under-achievement may, however, arise from causes within a school rather than from the child and his or her home environment. A comparison between classes within a school or between schools of the progress of pupils, as measured against the assessment criteria, could help to identify areas in which a class or a school might be failing to deliver an adequate service, so that appropriate remedial action could be taken.

25. In order to provide a substantive profile of each pupil's progress and attainment, records of achievement would be introduced for all pupils which would be available to them at the end of the primary stage and when they leave secondary school. These would record not only details of pupils' performance in attainment tests and examinations, but would include other aspects of achievement throughout their schooling and beyond the formal curriculum. There is currently a pilot project on the development of records of achievement in a number of secondary schools in Northern Ireland and the project report should be available at the end of this school year.
26. The regular assessment by teachers of their pupils' work is an integral and essential part of education. This is as it should be, and should continue. This ongoing informal assessment will remain the responsibility of the individual teacher. In addition, teachers would be required to carry out and mark the more formal testing at ages 7(or 8),11 and 14 based on the programmes of study, and at age 16 for non-examined subjects. This testing would comprise both the performance in any written tests and the formal assessment of pupils' work in designated tasks in the classroom. Together, these would provide an indication of each pupil's progress at these ages. This testing and associated formal assessment would be conducted, moderated and monitored by NISEC.
27. At age 16, GCSE and other qualifications of equivalent level would provide the main means of assessment through examinations. It is intended that the Government would determine the qualifications to be offered to pupils during the years of compulsory schooling. This would ensure that these qualifications contributed to and reinforced the underlying objectives and programmes of study.

Availability of Information

28. In order to raise standards, sufficient information should be available about what is being taught, what outcomes are expected and what is actually being achieved. In particular it is proposed that:

- parents should be informed by the school about how the school's schemes of work related to the underlying objectives of the curriculum for Northern Ireland. They would also need to know how their children's performance in attainment tests matched the assessment criteria;
 - teachers should know how their classes were doing in comparison with other classes and other schools, as well as how individual pupils were progressing, so that they could evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching and teaching strategies, and if necessary modify them so as to ensure that the more able pupils would be challenged and that the less able would be given the necessary remedial help;
 - parents, and governors, should know how the school compared with other schools in Northern Ireland;
 - the Government, employers and the public should be able to monitor Northern Ireland standards of attainment and improvement over time, and to make broad comparisons with standards elsewhere in the United Kingdom.
29. Information about the performance of an individual pupil would invariably be confidential to that pupil, to his or her parents and to teachers. Information about class performance would also be made available to parents. In addition, the Government would publish regularly information on each school's performance on a range of key indicators, including attainment test results, together with comparative aggregated data on the performance of similar schools. Information would also be published regularly on the performance of schools in each sector and Education and Library Board area together with (where available and appropriate) comparative data on other regions of the United Kingdom.
30. In addition, the opportunity would be taken in the amending legislation to

clarify the respective responsibilities of Education and Library Boards, Boards of Governors and school Principals in relation to the curriculum.

Testing at Age 11 and Transfer to Secondary Education

31. Formal teacher assessment and testing would relate to specified aspects of the programmes of study. This would ensure consistency of standards amongst pupils, teachers and schools, as well as permitting some measurable comparability with standards elsewhere in the United Kingdom. The introduction of this type of assessment at the end of primary education at age 11 could, however, have implications for the present transfer procedure arrangements from primary to secondary education.
32. The proposed tests would be different in nature and purpose from the verbal reasoning-type tests currently used in the transfer arrangements, in that they would seek to measure achievement in the respective programmes of study (at primary level, initially in English, mathematics and science), whereas the present form of transfer test is not designed to reflect the breadth of the curriculum available to the pupil. The Government is aware that public concern has already been expressed about the operation of the existing transfer procedure and it considers that the introduction of the common curriculum and its associated testing offers a valuable opportunity to look again at how selection might be undertaken.
33. The Government considers that the choice lies between two options. Under the **first** option, children could take both types of test around the age of 11. Because of their different design and purpose, and the different attributes which they seek to test, it might be considered that together they would provide a valuable range of complementary information on pupils' development.
34. Against this, however, the simultaneous operation of two separate tests could well be seen as a severe imposition on pupils and schools, and might

be confusing to parents and the public. If this view were to prevail, a second option might then be to require pupils to take only one set of tests at age 11. This would be the proposed attainment test which, with its associated teacher assessment, would form part of a summative record of pupil achievement and aptitudes during the primary stage. It would also provide a reliable basis for the overall assessment of the suitability of individual pupils for different types of secondary school, since the new common curriculum would guarantee a continuity of curriculum content throughout primary and secondary education.

35. Under this second option, there would be no verbal reasoning tests which, in the past, have been criticised for their tendency to constrain and distort the primary curriculum. Instead, pupils would be judged on their performance in objective and standardised attainment tests, in subjects which would be common to all schools. By the nature of these tests, which would be intended to show what the majority of pupils know, understand and can do, the percentage of pupils reaching a particular level could not be predetermined. Thus, on its own, attainment testing would not be compatible with identifying a particular percentage of pupils who would be considered suitable for a particular type of secondary school. Taken together with the decision already announced by the Government to remove, from the 1988/89 school year, intake quotas at individual school level, this would open new opportunities for the exercise of parental choice in the transition from primary to secondary education. This is discussed further in the following section of the paper.

Parental Choice

36. The Government wishes to ensure that parents can have as much freedom of choice as possible when selecting the school which their children should attend, and has already indicated its intention to bring forward amending legislation to secure this. The legislation would apply to both primary and secondary schools (except nursery and special schools) and would mean

in practice that no limit would be placed on the enrolment at any primary or secondary school other than that determined by the physical capacity of its premises.

37. If the first option (paragraph 33 above) were taken, the quota system linked to verbal reasoning would remain and transfer arrangements could proceed as at present, although the predetermined percentage of pupils awarded each grade could be subject to change.
38. If the second option (paragraph 34 above) were chosen and the attainment test at age 11 were being used in place of the existing transfer procedure, there would be no artificial restriction placed on the percentage of pupils considered suitable for a particular type of secondary education. Admission to any individual secondary school would therefore be determined by the combination of:
 - the results of the attainment tests and teacher assessment, which would form part of the pupil's record of achievement at primary school;
 - the operation of parental preference; and
 - selection by the receiving secondary school, constrained only by the physical capacity of its premises as approved in each case by the Department of Education.
39. Taken together, these measures would greatly increase parental choice and the ability of those schools with a deserved educational record to attract pupils. In a situation of continuing decline in secondary-age enrolments and existing over-capacity, this could open opportunities for school authorities to effect significant rationalisation of provision and release substantial resources for the benefit of education as a whole. The Government accepts nevertheless that it may be necessary to sustain the viability of a small number of schools serving isolated communities and reaffirms its commitment to do so, and to provide the resources necessary

for a full curriculum so that pupils in such areas would receive a broad and balanced education.

40. Since admission to secondary schools under the second option would be on the basis of pupil attainment, teacher assessment and parental choice, there would be no logical case for the retention of **fee-paying** in the secondary department of a grammar school, though voluntary grammar schools would still be empowered to charge **capital fees**. If the first option were chosen, the current position in relation to fees in the secondary departments of grammar schools would be unchanged.

Common Curriculum and Assessment - Supporting Structures

41. It is intended that the working groups drawing up programmes of study and assessment criteria would operate ultimately under the aegis of a new statutory body which could subsume some or all of the functions of the present Northern Ireland Council for Educational Development (NICED).
42. The primary role of the new body - which would be known as the Northern Ireland Curriculum Council (NICC) - would be to advise the Department of Education on the curriculum, including the preparation and updating of the proposed programmes of study, keeping abreast of curriculum developments elsewhere in the United Kingdom and undertaking pioneering work in new teaching materials. It would work in close liaison with NISEC in establishing the assessment criteria for ages 7 (or 8), 11, 14 and 16, which would be the basis of the prescribed tests at these ages. Pending the establishment of the new body it might be necessary to make interim arrangements for co-ordinating the working groups which would be preparing the statement of objectives and programmes of study.
43. It is envisaged that NICC would have certain executive as well as advisory functions and be under the direction of a small managing council. The members of the managing council would be appointed in a personal rather

than a representative capacity and on the basis of their expertise in curriculum and related matters, although NICC would have the power to set up such committees as it considered necessary to assist it in undertaking the various tasks to be assigned.

44. The present statutory remit of NISEC relates largely to the conduct of examinations at secondary level. The proposed amending legislation would, in addition, provide a new role for NISEC in conducting the attainment tests at both primary and secondary levels for all schools in Northern Ireland, and for establishing procedures for moderating standards of school assessment under the common curriculum at ages 7 or 8, 11, 14 and 16. (No fees would be charged to school authorities for these tests.) The opportunity would also be taken to restructure NISEC itself, on the same basis as that proposed for NICC. There would be a small executive council appointed by the Department of Education for their particular expertise, supported by such committees as NISEC considered necessary. Its present statutory responsibility, to ensure that standards of examinations in Northern Ireland are recognised as equivalent to those elsewhere in the United Kingdom, would be retained.

Boards of Governors of Controlled and Voluntary Schools

45. The Government is not proposing any major reform of the management structures of existing grant-aided schools. However, consistent with the principle of greater parental and community involvement in education, it is proposed as a parity measure with England and Wales:
- to amend the law so as to require vacancies on Boards of Governors for parent representatives which may remain unfilled after proper elections have been held to be filled by direct appointment by the Board of Governors; and
 - to introduce provision which would allow secondary schools to broaden

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their base of governance by co-opting a limited number of (non-voting) additional members from their local community.

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FINANCIAL DELEGATION

46. The Government sees clear benefits for schools in being able to manage their own finances. Boards of Governors could match expenditure decisions to educational objectives, and so reflect the particular needs and aspirations of their school and its pupils. The proposals for England and Wales include delegating the management of their recurrent budget to schools and providing more information to the community on how school budgets are determined. The Government believes that these measures are equally desirable for Northern Ireland schools and proposes that similar opportunities for good management should be available to schools here.

Existing Position

47. Many schools in Northern Ireland already have experience of budget management. Voluntary grammar schools are directly funded by the Department through a block grant arrangement which covers all aspects of recurrent expenditure. The grant contains two elements, covering teaching costs and other running costs respectively; at present schools are not permitted to switch resources between the two elements, but this is under review.
48. In addition, three of the five Education and Library Boards operate a consolidated allowances scheme under which schools can spend at their own discretion on a limited number of recurrent items. Teaching costs are not included. The coverage of these schemes includes, variously, heating and lighting, teaching requisites (including small equipment), cleaning materials, protective clothing, books and practice materials, travel and subsistence to teachers and governors, postage and telephones, educational visits and sports, some maintenance costs, printing, stationery and office

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requisites, hire of audio-visual and reprographic equipment, and costs of community functions.

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Key Features

49. The key features of the Government's financial delegation proposals for Northern Ireland schools are:-
- Boards would be required, after appropriate consultation, to frame for the Department's approval a scheme under which the management of resources for controlled and maintained schools in their area would be delegated to the Boards of Governors, to be spent at their discretion for the purposes of securing the delivery of the full curriculum in the school. Exemptions could be prescribed from time to time to allow the earmarking of specific resources for priority curriculum needs.
 - To arrive at a budget for each school, a Board would establish its total funding for schools, and from this deduct the costs of identified items of centrally-administered expenditure. The remaining resources would be distributed among schools by the application of a formula which should take account of the various factors influencing levels of spending at these schools. (Since the bulk of teachers' salaries are paid directly by the Department of Education, while other running costs are met by Education and Library Boards, arrangements would have to be devised to facilitate the bringing together of these elements in a composite budget for each school.)
50. The Government considers that budget management should in the first instance be delegated to secondary (including grammar) schools, but proposes to take an enabling power in the amending legislation to provide for the extension of full financial delegation to certain or all primary schools in the future. Pending full financial delegation, the Government proposes that all primary schools should have an entitlement to manage a proportion of their running costs, covering (at least) books, stationery, practice materials and small teaching equipment. The sum which would be under their control should still enable the Principal and the Board of

Governors to make a significant contribution to the financial management of the school.

The Delegated Budgets

51. There are many points which would require to be resolved in relation to the operation of delegated budgets, including the question of which elements of schools' expenditure should be delegated, and which reserved for central administration. Such centrally-administered elements, it is proposed, might include:-

- the Boards' Advisory, Schools Psychological and Education Welfare Services;
- expenditure in relation to children for whom statements of special educational needs are maintained;
- capital expenditure related to premises and grounds;
- home-to-school transport;

and certain other elements where the distribution of costs to individual schools would be impractical because of widely differing uptake from year to year or because uptake is outside the control of the school.

52. The cost elements which it is proposed to delegate might include:-

- salaries of teachers and other staff, including substitute and supply teaching cover;
- books, practice materials and teaching requisites;
- furniture and equipment;

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- rates, water charges, rents and fuel;
- school meals;
- educational visits and school journeys;
- examination fees;
- printing, stationery, postage and telephones.

Current terms and conditions of staff employed in schools would be unchanged for the purposes of financial delegation.

53. It is proposed that, while control of the budget should be delegated to Boards of Governors, it might delegate any or all of its responsibilities in this respect to the Principal. Each school would also appoint a small Finance Committee to advise the Board of Governors and the Principal. The Government proposes to set up a small pilot project in the financial year 1988/89, to develop and test a model scheme of local financial management, including an appropriate formula for the allocation of resources among schools, which could be used by Boards in extending financial delegation to all their secondary (and, later, primary) schools. Within the terms of each Board's scheme, Boards of Governors would have the maximum possible freedom in the management of their budget, including the facility to switch resources among its constituent elements.
54. The model scheme arrived at through the pilot scheme should include provision for the publication, each year, by Boards of:-
- the total resources available for schools;
 - the resources to be delegated to each school; and

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- the method used (formula) to arrive at each school's allocation.

In the interests of greater local determination of the deployment of teachers among schools, the Government has instituted for the next school year a block allocation of teaching posts to each Board in relation to the controlled schools in its area.

55. The requirement upon Boards to delegate, as far as possible, budget management to schools could have implications for Boards' management of overall resources and the manner of delivery of certain services. Legislative powers would also need to be taken to provide for certain specific responsibilities in relation to the financial management of schools to reside with Boards of Governors. It is proposed that accounting procedures should also be devised to permit carry-over of surpluses to whatever degree is considered appropriate.

GRANT-MAINTAINED SCHOOLS

Introduction

56. The Education Reform Bill includes proposals which would enable schools in England and Wales to seek grant maintained status, under which they would become corporate bodies, with a high level of autonomy, funded directly from central Government. While the present management and funding arrangements for schools in Northern Ireland are different from those in England and Wales, the Government considers nonetheless that there is equal validity here in the underlying principle that parents should be given the maximum opportunity to influence the future development and ethos of the schools which their children attend. This could be achieved by offering to Northern Ireland parents the same rights as are proposed for parents in England and Wales by way of a provision in the proposed amending legislation permitting school governors and parents to apply to the

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Department of Education for a form of grant-maintained status for their school. In the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland, the Government considers that there would be merit in offering to schools the possibility of two forms of grant-maintained status. Under the first, schools would be known as "grant-maintained schools". Under the second, where they were also able to demonstrate a strong commitment to and progress towards full integration between Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils, they would be known as "grant-maintained integrated schools".

57. As in England and Wales, it would be the intention that grant-maintained school should be established as an autonomous corporate body, with a Board of Governors on which parents would have greater representation than on Boards of Governors of existing controlled or voluntary schools. It would be funded by means of 100% grant direct from the Department of Education. Legislation would ensure that the established character of the school, which includes its religious ethos, would not be changed at the time it became a grant-maintained school. A grant-maintained integrated school would, in addition, have a management structure reflecting its declared commitment to integrated education, and a denominationally-mixed enrolment. The remainder of this section sets out, as a basis for consultation, arrangements which could be introduced to permit schools to choose grant-maintained or grant-maintained integrated status.

Acquisition of Grant-Maintained Status

58. The essential feature of the proposals for grant-maintained status is that, as in England and Wales, they would be permissive and subject to the wishes of parents. While, for the reasons stated in preceding paragraphs, Government would seek to encourage and support proposals for the acquisition of grant-maintained, or grant-maintained integrated, status, the initiative would in all cases rest with the school. A proposal could be initiated either by a simple majority of the Board of Governors or at the request of 20% of the parents. In either case, this would be followed

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by a secret postal ballot of parents, and a simple majority would have to vote in favour of the proposal in order for it to proceed. Thereafter the Board of Governors would be obliged, within a specified timescale, to publish the proposal and submit it to the Department together with such supporting information as the Department might require. The Department would, after an appropriate period for the notification of objections, approve or reject the proposal, or approve it with modification.

59. The possibility of acquiring grant-maintained, or grant-maintained integrated, status would be open to any primary or secondary school, irrespective of size or management type, although in every case the Department would require evidence of sustained viability in enrolments. Schools could opt for either form of grant-maintained status. In addition, schools which had received grant-maintained status would be enabled subsequently to seek grant-maintained integrated status by repeating the application process described in the preceding paragraph. Schools seeking grant-maintained integrated status would in addition be required to indicate their commitment to full integration, and to show that the composition of their current enrolment was already such that, in a school where the majority of pupils was Protestant, at least 20%-25% of the total enrolment was Roman Catholic (or vice-versa).

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Funding and Related Arrangements

60. Upon the approval by the Department of the application for grant-maintained (including grant-maintained integrated) status, the school would be constituted as a body corporate and would be funded by grants paid directly by the Department. Grants on approved expenditure, both recurrent and capital, would be at the rate of 100%. It is envisaged that, so far as existing grant-aided schools are concerned, basic recurrent funding would reflect broadly the same level of resources as the school was already receiving from its maintaining authority, together with the teachers' salary element funded by the Department. While the effect would thus be largely neutral in recurrent expenditure terms, the legislation would, in addition, make provision for special purpose grants to take account of circumstances where, for example, there may be special needs of the population of the area served by the school or other expenses which it would be unreasonable to expect the school to meet from normal maintenance grants. The school would, of course, have discretion to vary expenditure on all elements within its budget, on the same basis as other schools operating under financial delegation arrangements.

61. Proposals for capital expenditure on buildings and equipment in respect of grant-maintained schools would be examined by the Department on their individual merit, in the same way as it does at present for voluntary schools. In grant-maintained integrated schools, given the Government's commitment to support and encourage integrated education, enrolments would not necessarily be constrained by a school's existing physical capacity and normally it would be the intention to give the highest priority within the capital programme to projects involving the provision of necessary additional pupil places.

Management Structures

62. Grant-maintained and grant-maintained integrated schools would have distinctive management structures, reflecting both the enhanced influence of parents and the fact that the Education and Library Boards would not have responsibility for the maintenance of these schools. The precise management structures would be among the subjects for decision following consultation, and the Government would welcome comments on the appropriate composition of the Boards of Governors of these schools.

63. The Government's preliminary view is, however, that a grant-maintained school, other than a grant-maintained integrated school, could have a Board of Governors in the range of 15-20 people. The Board of Governors would comprise "foundation" governors, parents, teachers and members appointed by the Department. Within this range, there could be, say, 5 members appointed by the Department, 5 parents and 2 elected to represent teachers. In schools which were formerly controlled schools, all the parent governors would be elected by parents. In the case of former voluntary maintained schools and former voluntary grammar schools, up to 3 of the 5 parents could be appointed by the trustees or former foundation governors as new "foundation" governors. Bearing in mind the legislation in England and Wales, the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland and the views expressed during this consultation process - especially those of parents - it would be Government's intention that in these schools the total number of "foundation" governors (including those who were parents) should be not less than 50% of the membership.

64. A grant-maintained integrated school, depending on its size, could have a somewhat larger Board of Governors of perhaps 20-25 members to allow adequate representation from the whole community served by the school. It is envisaged that the number of members appointed by the Department would remain around 5, but with some increase in the teacher and parent

representation, all of whom would be elected. The remaining members would be the "foundation" governors, and would, where appropriate, include representatives of trustee or transferor interests. "Foundation" governors would be the largest grouping, but would not have an overall majority.

65. The proposed legislation would also need to make provisions regarding the form of schemes of management and related financial and other matters, including:
- the responsibility of the Board of Governors to secure the delivery within the school of the common curriculum for Northern Ireland;
 - the responsibility of the Board of Governors to publish annually the school's admissions policy;
 - the requirement that no tuition or capital fees be charged to any pupil in attendance at the school;
 - the facility, in all grant-maintained secondary schools, for the Board of Governors to co-opt a small number of (non-voting) additional members and requiring that these should include representatives of the local business community;
 - the transfer of staff to the new school in a manner which preserved continuity of employment.

Existing Legislation

66. If, following consultation, it is decided that, in particular, the amending legislation should provide for the creation of grant-maintained integrated schools, it is envisaged that the provisions of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 relating to controlled integrated schools would be repealed.

FURTHER EDUCATION

67. The Government's proposals for educational reform for England and Wales also extend to the further education sector. It is intended that similar measures should now be introduced into further education colleges in Northern Ireland, including:

- the delegation of financial powers and responsibilities to further education colleges, for the same reasons of self-determination and good management as financial delegation to schools, as well as to enable them to respond more imaginatively to local demand; and
- the regulation of the size and composition of their Governing Bodies, to give them a more appropriate balance in relation to their duties and responsibilities.

It is intended that other issues relating to the broader role and structures of further education should be more comprehensively reviewed in due course.

Financial Delegation

68. Like colleges in the rest of the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland FE colleges already have experience of managing delegated budgets, although currently the extent of delegation varies from area to area. The Government proposes that all colleges should have the maximum possible freedom in the management of their budgets, including all staff costs, less certain items of centrally-determined expenditure such as Boards' professional and advisory services and some Board headquarters costs.

69. As for schools, the Government proposes that each Board would be required

to prepare a scheme, for the Department's approval, for the delegation of financial powers and responsibilities to colleges. The scheme should take account of:

- the Board's own policy on post-16 provision in its area;
- the total resources available to it for FE provision; and
- the amount to be held back for centrally-determined expenditure.

The Government does not propose to prescribe in detail how college budgets should be calculated, but considers that each Board's scheme should include a formula for the distribution of the remaining resources among its colleges; the formula should take account of relevant factors such as student intake numbers and course provision. FE colleges would be encouraged to generate as high a proportion of their income as possible by providing courses and services to meet specific local needs, and arrangements would be made for the income so derived to be retained by the colleges.

70. Each Board's scheme should also provide for the publication of FE financial information, including:

- the total resources available for FE provision;
- the amount to be held back for centrally-determined expenditure; and
- the formula whereby the remainder is allocated amongst colleges.

71. It is proposed that the delegated budget should include the salary costs of full-time and part-time teaching staff, as well as those of non-teaching staff. While this element of the delegated budget is derived from two sources (the Department in relation to full-time teaching costs, and the

Education and Library Boards in relation to part-time teaching costs), colleges would be free, subject to the terms of each Board's scheme, to make adjustments within the total allocation. As in the case of Northern Ireland schools, it is not proposed that the terms and conditions of service of any members of staff employed in FE colleges should change for the purposes of financial delegation.

Governing Bodies

72. In the interests of uniformity of approach to college governance, the Government proposes to introduce the same composition of membership and size requirements for colleges in Northern Ireland as are proposed for colleges in England and Wales. This would mean that at least 50% of the membership of the Governing Body of each college would be made up of representatives of business, industrial, professional and other employment interests, Board representation would be not more than one-fifth, and total membership, which would be between 20 and 25, would include representatives of students, of parents, of staff (teaching and non-teaching) and of neighbouring educational institutions. The Principal would also be a member.

73. The Government proposes to provide that the appointment of governors to colleges to represent business, industry, the professions and other employment interests should be the subject of close local consultation. Student representatives would be elected from and by the students; parent representatives should normally be elected from and by parents, but schemes of management of colleges might make provision for parent places unfilled by such means to be filled by appointment by the other governors. Staff representatives would be elected from and by the staff body they were to represent, while representatives of neighbouring educational institutions would be appointed by the other governors. The Chairman of each Governing Body would be appointed by the governors from amongst those representing the business, industrial, professional and employment interests or parents.

CONCLUSION

74. The changes proposed in this paper have widespread implications for the education of children and young people, for the influence of parents on the education of their children, and for the management and autonomy of schools and colleges. They will require very important decisions which are likely to have considerable long-term effects on society in Northern Ireland as a whole. They should be subject to the most careful consideration by all those with an interest in education and its place in shaping our values, standards and attitudes.
75. There are, indeed, values implicit in the proposals: they are being made with the underlying objectives of improving the quality of the educational opportunities offered to young people, of increasing the scope for the exercise of parental influence, and of raising standards generally. Legislation can provide the framework for progress, but these objectives can be achieved only through the wholehearted involvement and continuing commitment of the education service, in particular of teachers in the classroom, and of parents. To reach these goals will require more than mechanisms of support, information and advice: it will require vision, professionalism, and a determination to foster relationships of trust and partnership among all concerned with improving the quality of education.