



NEWB

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL WELFARE BOARD
AN BORD NAISIÚNTA LEASA OIDEACHAIS

Annual Report 2008
**National
Educational
Welfare Board**

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Overview of the National Educational Welfare Board

Function

The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) was established in 2002 and has a statutory function to ensure that every child either attends a school or otherwise receives an education or participates in training. One of the Board's key roles is to act as an advocate or support for a child, parent or guardian if there is a difficulty with school attendance or their educational welfare.

The Board also has responsibility for children who are being educated outside of recognised schools, for example, at home, as well as 16-17 year olds who leave school to take up employment.

Ethos

The NEWB was set up under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000. This Act is a progressive piece of legislation that takes an enlightened approach to the promotion of school attendance and the ethos of the Board follows the Act. Instead of admonishing children and parents for non-attendance, the NEWB focuses on getting to the causes of the problems behind a child's or young person's non-attendance.

The NEWB strives at all times to maintain a relational and respectful ethos in order to increase the life chances of every child and young person in this State, to reduce school absenteeism and early school leaving, and to deliver on Government policy in education to children and young people.

Mission

The mission of the NEWB is to maximise the level of educational participation of children and young people by ensuring that each child is attending school, or otherwise participating in an appropriate education.

Values

The following values inform the work of the NEWB. They imbue the way the NEWB goes about its work as an organisation, with all of its partners in education and in carrying out its remit:

- Putting the best interests of children and young people first.
- Advancing educational equality for all children.
- Supporting and enabling our staff.
- Operating to high standards of corporate governance.
- Working inclusively and collaboratively.

The NEWB recognises that every day counts in a child's or young person's education, and we regard it as our responsibility to encourage and support those at risk of not achieving regular attendance.

Chairperson's Statement



If all those working in the field of educational welfare were to have one over-arching goal, it would be to ensure that education is a positive life experience for every child and young person.

It's a simple statement, but an immense challenge.

Each year the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) works with between 8,000 and 10,000 young people and their families, many of whom have had far from positive life experiences, who are overburdened by their circumstances and to whom the idea of a good education is a distant concept.

The excellent work of our Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs) centres on working with a range of other support services to find solutions to these often complex barriers to education. This important task is driven by the knowledge that engaging with education is one of the best ways for children and young people to overcome disadvantage and achieve their aspirations.

The challenges that our EWOs meet, as they go about the task of ensuring that children participate fully in a quality education system, are a rich source of learning and guidance to the entire NEWB organisation. Our policies and practices develop with the benefit of their experiences and we are continually learning about how to get better outcomes for children.

Combating the issues underlying poor attendance requires concerted action and collaboration between school support services and other children services, young people and their families.

Furthermore, a clear understanding of how we can work effectively is fundamental to delivering real improvement in the lives of children and young people. In response to this, in 2008 a new model of working with children, families and schools was rolled out in six locations across the country in consultation with staff. A key challenge was clarifying the role of EWOs and the objectives of their work in these various settings. It is anticipated that the learning achieved from this process will form the bedrock of a strengthened model of intervention which will improve the way we work with schools, families and young people.

We know that early intervention and positive relationships amongst all those involved in a child's education are key to ensuring a quality education, high levels of attendance, participation and achievement in schools and lower levels of early school leaving.

But to measure effectiveness, a necessary first step is to establish baseline data on non-attendance. In 2008, the NEWB published a report on attendance statistics for a three-year period (2003/4-2005/6). It is now possible to measure change both at system-wide and at individual school level with the use of such statistics.

The report tells us that absences of 20 days or more are a central feature of social exclusion, which if measured over time will give us a true indication of the progress being made in addressing disadvantage in education. Therefore, the collection and refinement of this data is an important contribution to our understanding of school absenteeism and how we are dealing with it.

The data comes to us at a time when we are assessing our Strategic Plan and planning for the future. In the coming years I look forward to continuing to work closely with the Board and staff as well as our stakeholders including children and families, the education partners, the Minister and officials. We are united by a common goal to ensure that all children experience an education that will enrich and improve their chosen life path.

Finally, in 2008 a number of new appointments were made to the Board of the NEWB by former Minister for Education and Science. I would like to warmly welcome our new Board members and thank past members for their support and commitment to the vision embodied within the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Cathal Flynn'.

Cathal Flynn
Chairperson

Chief Executive Officer's Review



The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) was established under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 to ensure that every child attends school regularly or otherwise receives an education.

The Act acknowledges that non-attendance is a complex matter often having its origins in socio-economic circumstances requiring the active collaboration of the family, the school, the NEWB and other support services to address them. The Act outlines a framework to support regular attendance at school and participation in education.

Since the Board's inception in 2002, the emphasis has been on building an educational welfare service and developing an organisational infrastructure to support service delivery. The organisation now has a total of 104 posts, 90 of which are involved in the delivery of services to children, families and schools at 31 regional offices nationwide.

Much has been achieved in a short space of time: each year, Educational Welfare Officers work with between 8,000 and 10,000 children who have been reported as having attendance or school placement difficulties or who have been expelled from school; prosecutions are taken against parents who fail in their duty to send their child to school regularly; public awareness campaigns have raised the profile of school attendance and its importance in relation to education and development outcomes for children; the Board has carried out research to support schools in their development of strategies on attendance, participation and behaviour and significantly Guidelines for Developing School Codes of Behaviour have been sent to all schools in the country; a Register has been established for children who are being educated outside of recognised schools and who are receiving a certain minimum education; and an Education Helpline is operated to provide information to parents on school attendance and related matters.

Collaborative working is a key goal for the organisation and great emphasis has been given to developing protocols with other professionals and agencies to ensure an integrated approach to children's educational welfare. Across the country, the local Educational Welfare Officer develops excellent

professional working arrangements with a wide range of statutory and voluntary service providers who work with vulnerable children and their families. The purpose of these initiatives is to provide a quality service delivery to children and their families, which is streamlined, appropriate and in the best interests of the children concerned.

In the second half of 2008, we all became familiar with the Government policy of reducing public expenditure in response to the country's changed economic circumstances. During this time the objective of the Board has been to safeguard progress achieved over recent years and to maintain frontline services. In real terms, however, it has meant that we have only been in a position to recruit 13 of the 15 post sanctioned to us under the Towards 2016 agreement.

As we enter 2009, budgetary restrictions are intensifying further. This environment places additional pressures on us all as we strive to meet our obligations in a climate of diminishing resources. Managing these circumstances demands creativity, flexibility and a focus on the organisation. In this regard, I wish to acknowledge the support and advice received from the staff and the Board of the NEWB.

We are in the closing stages of developing the organisation's strategy which will map out the NEWB's direction for the next number of years. I hope that the strategy will set a direction for all who work on attendance so that we can achieve better educational outcomes for children.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eddie Ward".

Eddie Ward
Chief Executive Officer

The Board

The duties of the Board include setting and upholding the values and standards necessary to ensure that the National Educational Welfare Board's obligations are met.





Mr Cathal Flynn
Chairman, NEWB



Mr Eddie Ward
Chief Executive Officer, NEWB



Ms Fionnuala Anderson
FÁS



Mr Brendan Callaghan
Department of Justice,
Equality & Law Reform



Ms Sonja Croke
EWO, NEWB



Mr Declan Dunne
Ballymun Partnership



Ms Catherine Hazlett
Department of Social &
Family Affairs



Ms Aine Lynch
National Parents Council
(Primary)



Ms Marie-Claire McAleer
Community and Voluntary
Pillar



Mr Pat McSitríc
Department of Education
and Science



Mr Seamus Moore
Health Service Executive



Sr Eileen Randles
School Management
Organisations



Mr Billy Sheehan
Irish National Teachers'
Organisation (INTO)

In 2008, the following new appointments were made to the Board of the NEWB by the Minister for Education and Science:

Ms Catherine Hazlett, Department of Social and Family Affairs (replaced Mr Gerry Mangan, Department of Social & Family Affairs)

Ms Aine Lynch, National Parents Council (Primary) (replaced Ms Fionnuala Kilfeather, National Parents Council)

Ms Marie-Claire McAleer, Community and Voluntary Pillar

Mr Billy Sheehan, Irish National Teacher's Organisation (INTO) (replaced Mr Fergal McCarthy, TUI)

Ms Fionnuala Anderson, FÁS (replaced Guss O'Connell, FÁS)

Ms Sonja Croke, EWO (replaced Donal O'Connor, EWO)

Review of 2008

The National Educational Welfare Board
exists to uphold each child's right to receive
an education.



Throughout the year, while rolling out and assessing a number of new working partnerships, we have been reflecting on, consulting and formulating the strategic direction of the organisation for the next number of years, as our first strategic plan reaches its conclusion. The voices of direct experience, particularly our EWOs on-the-ground, have been listened to closely as they are the individuals who implement and interpret policy in real life settings.

Strategic Development

In 2008 much consultation work was undertaken with regard to the formulation of a new strategic plan for the organisation – one that will navigate the organisation through the various challenges ahead.

Many strands - internal and external to the NEWB - comprised this important work. In particular, assessing our experience of the previous Strategic Plan “Every Day Counts”; analysing the Irish policy environment; examining international approaches and trying, as far as possible, to anticipate change. Inputs to the process took a variety of formats including written submissions, questionnaires, research and discussions.

The consultation phase of the work was critical to bringing it to its present point. All staff were given an opportunity to contribute to the process in order to capture as many perspectives as possible. In addition, there was extensive engagement with schools, children services and the staff union, with whom we work in partnership.

The plan will be completed in 2009.

Duties of the Board

In order to discharge its duties (as outlined in Section 10 of the Educational (Welfare) Act, 2000), the National Educational Welfare Board is mandated to fulfill a series of functions. These responsibilities require the Board to operate at several levels to ensure that every child receives a minimum education. The Board is required to intervene at societal level, at the level of the wider educational system, the school system and with individual families and children. The actions to be taken include:

Families and children

Provision of advice and support to children and parents experiencing difficulties in relation to school attendance and behaviour.

The school system

Actions aimed at fostering a climate within schools that is conducive to maximising children's attendance and participation in school life. Specific school-based work to promote increased attendance, including the support, monitoring and assessment of school attendance strategies.

Co-ordination

The development of linkages and systems of co-ordination with key agencies whose work has dimensions relevant to school attendance.

The educational system

Review of teacher education and guidance in relation to school attendance and provision of advice to the Minister.

The knowledge base

Development of a strong knowledge base in relation to the factors influencing school attendance through commissioning, compiling and disseminating research which is to be used as the foundation for evidence-based attendance policies and strategies.

The wider society

Actions aimed at fostering positive public attitudes to education and increased awareness of the importance of school attendance.

In carrying out its statutory duties the Board finds that, by focusing on school attendance and participation, it is possible to address one of the most powerful and influential variables impacting on social inclusion - educational achievement. There is clear and compelling evidence of the strong links between poor school attendance, poor achievement and early school leaving. Poor attendance plays a significant role in prompting a cycle of social and economic disadvantage in the lives of individual young people, a cycle that is deep and pervasive in many disadvantaged communities.

Our EWOs are the key means for the Board to carry through its statutory remit to reduce absenteeism. Their work in partnership with other service providers has enriched the organisation with valuable qualitative learning and on-the-ground experience that will be reflected in our strategic direction. That most schools in the country now report absenteeism through the Student Absence Report system provides evidence-based quantitative data on which to develop our policies and strategies.

The following sections detail the Board's progress and achievement in relation to its duties in 2008.

Our Service

Our work is driven by the knowledge that engaging with education is one of the best ways for children and young people to overcome disadvantage and so move forward with confidence into the future.



Families and Children

1 The NEWB Educational Welfare Service

The NEWB operates through five regional teams. Each is headed by a Regional Manager (RM) and supported by Senior Educational Welfare Officers (SEWOs) and a cohort of Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs).

In 2008, ten new EWOs joined our services under posts sanctioned as part of the national social partnership agreement Towards 2016. This brings the number of staff involved in service delivery to 90. New offices were set up in Mullingar, Bantry and Donegal Town and additional officers joined existing locations.

New roles within the organisation were also identified and created, including a SEWO with a range of responsibilities including management of the assessment and registration of children educated in places other than recognised schools. In addition, an EWO was appointed as a full-time home education assessor by the Board.

A service is now provided from 31 offices nationwide.

The NEWB's network of Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs) is the key means by which the Board delivers on its statutory remit to ensure that each child benefits from an education.

In the initial stages of the NEWB's service development, priority was given to the most disadvantaged areas (RAPID 1) with significant school-going populations and EWOs provided an intensive service in these areas. Outside of these areas, a less intensive service was provided where priority was given to children who had significant non-attendance or who were out of school entirely.

The Department of Education's DEIS programme (*Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools*) is a key policy context for the work of NEWB. The DEIS initiative is designed to ensure that the most disadvantaged schools benefit from a comprehensive package of supports, while ensuring that others continue to get support in line with the level of disadvantage among their pupils. In line with DES policy, the Educational Welfare Service gives priority to children attending DEIS schools.

Tables 1 and 2 lay out the quantifiable elements of our work.

2 Improving Work Practices

In early 2008, a review of the NEWB's Professional Supervision practices brought new insight into the many dimensions of the work that EWOs engage in. The review identified that the theoretical

framework for interventions (actions to improve situations) needed further development. A key concern that emerged was the need to achieve more clarification around the roles that EWOs should fulfil, as well as the objectives of their work.

As a result, a model of intervention and a framework for best practice were developed in consultation with NEWB staff. Pilot projects were set up in six locations throughout the country, each for a 6-month period (from mid-October 2008) to test various ways of working. The organisation's new draft Supervision Policy was included in each of these sites as an integral element of the testing and evaluation mechanism.

Although some of the methods of intervention included in the pilot are already embedded in the work of the NEWB, it is their interaction with other entirely new elements that needs to be carefully evaluated. It is paramount to ensure that the methods of intervention enable EWOs and the organisation to work more effectively, but more particularly that new ways of working benefit the children and families they are intended to serve.

Monthly evaluations are an essential part of the process - to establish how work is progressing and to allow fine-tuning of the pilot. The learning achieved through this pilot will form the bedrock of a strengthened model of intervention that will improve the way we work with schools, families and young people. It will also deepen the NEWB's organisational understanding of what we are engaged in and what is implied (in terms of service delivery and EWO capacity) when we talk of 'educational welfare'.

3 Working With Families

EWOs operate nationally through five regional teams based in Dublin City, Leinster North, Leinster South, West / North-West and Munster.

Working with a child's family is central to the work of realising positive outcomes for that child's educational welfare. Jean Rafter, Regional Manager for Leinster South, lends her voice to this Annual Report on this subject:

"Our EWOs work in communities throughout the country acting as advocates or supports to parents, guardians and children experiencing difficulty with school attendance or educational welfare.

"With our present staffing levels we have to give priority to the most disadvantaged areas with significant school-going populations and EWOs provide an intensive service in these areas. Outside these areas, a lesser service is provided and

Review of 2008 - Our Service

Dublin City

1. Dublin

Leinster North/Ulster

2. Dublin
3. Navan
4. Dundalk
5. Athlone
6. Cavan
7. Drogheda
8. Clondalkin
9. Mullingar
10. Longford

Leinster South

11. Tallaght
12. Kilkenny
13. Wexford
14. Naas
15. Bray
16. Laois
17. Carlow
18. Tullamore
19. Waterford

Munster

20. Cork
21. Limerick
22. Tralee
23. Thurles
24. Ennis
25. Bantry

West/North West

26. Galway
27. Letterkenny
28. Sligo
29. Castlebar
30. Donegal
31. Tuam

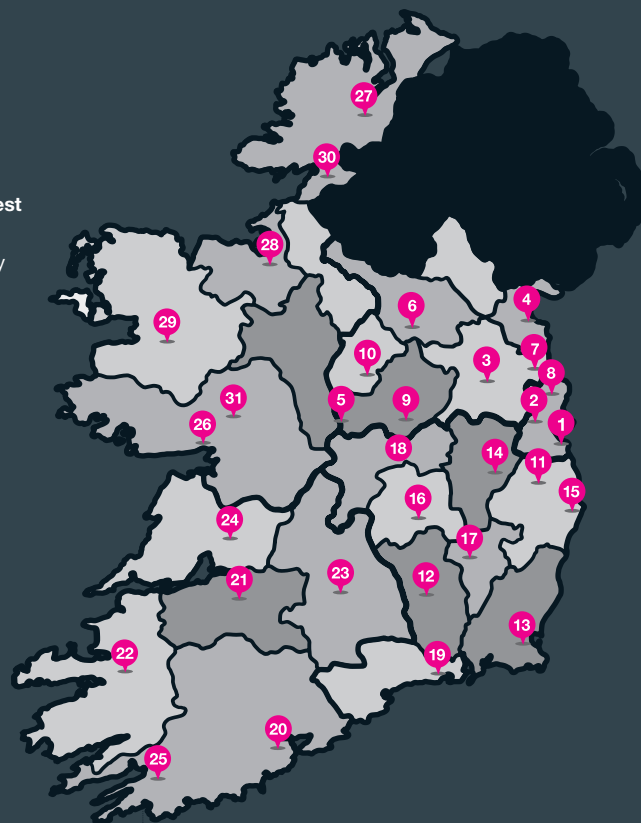


Table 1: Overview of Educational Welfare Service work activity, at 31 December 2008

NEWB Region	No. of school visits	No. of home visits	No. of letters to parents	No. of meetings with other agencies
Dublin City	1,651	2,937	2,551	727
Leinster North/Ulster	1,937	3,266	2,826	999
Leinster South	1,198	2,214	2,908	570
Munster	2,245	2,525	3,015	884
West / North West	780	2,086	1,688	514
Totals	7,811	13,028	12,988	3,694

Table 2: Overview of caseloads, at 31 December 2008

NEWB Region	Cases, start of January 2008	New cases	Closed cases	Cases, end of December 2008
Dublin City	1,212	688	1,059	841
Leinster North/Ulster	750	815	911	654
Leinster South	809	908	1,025	692
Munster	751	1,323	1,466	608
West / North West	467	396	507	356
Totals	3,989	4,130	4,968	3,151

Table 3: Education outside of recognised schools, at 31 December 2008

Home Education	Total No. of Families	Total No. of Children
Total No. Registered	295	439
Private Schools	Total No. of Schools	Total No. of Children
Total No. Registered	31	5,121

priority is given to children who are out of school, have no school place, have been expelled from school or who have significant non-attendance.

"Each quarter, schools have to report any children that are missing 20 days or more. Principals can also get in touch with us if they are concerned about a particular child's attendance. We will examine the school returns and see what category the children have been placed in and will then contact the school only if the child is absent for twenty, or more, unexplained days. If necessary we will arrange to meet with the family of the child.

"In following up on individual children, a check is made on the work already done by schools and their staff. EWOs will usually contact the principal (or other designated person) about a child before making contact with the home. Home visits are an essential part of an EWO's work. Once any underlying problems are identified, the EWO can then seek to address the family's unique set of circumstances, if necessary in conjunction with school staff and other local support services.

"Some families welcome our help. For example, if a parent who sent a child out in the morning to go to school and the child fails to attend, the parent may not be aware of the problem and will rectify the situation immediately. However, the parents we tend to work intensively with often have a number of agencies working with them already and school attendance is not an isolated problem within the family. It is not unusual to have probation officers, social workers, addiction counsellors, local authority personnel, as well as in-school support services also working with the family. In these circumstances parents can become frustrated with us, but I think it is important that we emphasise we're here for the best interest of their child."

The case studies in this report illustrate the steadfast commitment to the betterment of the children and young people's educational opportunities that NEWB EWOs encounter.

4 The National Education Helpline

The NEWB continued to successfully operate the country's only national Education Helpline (1890 36 36 66) throughout 2008. Operated by trained EWOs, the Helpline provides practical help and guidance to parents and schools on educational issues.

5 Education In Places Other Than Recognised Schools

Section 14 (1) of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 states that the NEWB shall establish and maintain a register of all children in receipt of an education in a place other than a recognised school. The Act outlines the process of application, assessment, registration and appeal that should be adhered to by the Board. To date, the Board has registered 439 children who are educated at home and 5,121 children educated in 31 non-recognised schools (independent schools of various types) throughout the country.

During the last year there have been a number of significant changes in terms of service delivery in this area. In early 2008 a Senior Educational Welfare Officer (SEWO) was appointed to the Board with a range of responsibilities including management of the assessment and registration of children educated in places other

than recognised schools. In May 2008, an EWO was appointed as a full-time assessor.

It was also decided that a panel of assessors with a broad range of specific expertise, including the area of special needs, be established throughout the country to carry out particular assessments. After careful research and consideration, eleven experienced professionals were identified and trained as assessors. This team of assessors comprises various professional backgrounds, including EWOs, teachers, principals, inspectors, and experts in child psychology, early learning, special needs and education.

6 Legal Sanctions

Under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, every child aged between 6 and 16 must receive an education and a school must notify the National Educational Welfare Board if it is concerned about a child's attendance.

This obligation exists to protect children's educational welfare. Poor school attendance needs to be responded to early; otherwise, as research has shown, it can lead to poorer examination results, early school leaving and poorer life chances for children. There are numerous reasons why children miss school and EWOs need to address these first, before initiating legal processes. According to Michael Doyle, NEWB Regional Manager for Leinster North:

"It's the value parents place on regular school attendance: it's the relationship the child has with a particular teacher or school. There could be family circumstances, an illness, including a psychological or psychiatric illness, or financial reasons. It could be that the parent had a negative experience when they went to school and they don't place a high value on education as a result. Every case is unique.

"It's unusual that parents are surprised to see us. We do get a mixed response – sometimes we get full co-operation from parents and other times parents are already overwhelmed at home and are unable to engage with us, others simply refuse.

"Legal proceedings are issued against parents who have failed to co-operate with the NEWB and it's a very last resort. We make all reasonable efforts to identify what the problems behind absenteeism are, but if at the end of this process after investing time, effort and support, parents are still failing to send their children to school we will issue a School Attendance Notice (SAN) – which is the first step in legal proceedings, which compels them to send their child to school. If there is no improvement a summons is issued and the matter is handed over to the courts."

A total of 140 court summons involving 88 children have been issued against parents since 2006, and to date 27 of these have resulted in convictions, 40 were struck out for a range of reasons, including improvement of attendance and the remainder are on-going. Imposing a sanction on parents for their child's non-attendance is the responsibility of the court. A convicted parent can receive a maximum penalty of €635 and one month's imprisonment.

The NEWB needs to be able to demonstrate to parents that children have a fundamental right to an education, and in some instances the matter needs to be brought before the court to do that, and result in a positive outcome for the child.

Case Studies

When a young person is referred to an Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) by a school, a parent or another agency, the initial work of the EWO is to assess the nature, scope and depth of the problem.

Information is gathered from the school, home and the young person, to gain an understanding of the nature of the difficulties. If the problem is one of poor school attendance, for example, the assessment will examine the barriers to attendance facing the young person at this point in time.

The reasons for non attendance are frequently multi-dimensional – some issues may be located in the family and their particular circumstances, others in the school experience or within the young person them self. An assessment will seek to identify the strengths and resilience in the young person's and family's situation to enable problems to be resolved. A plan will then be drawn up with the young person, family and school to address the various barriers identified. If a medical or psychological assessment of the young person or parent(s) is needed, the EWO will make these referrals. Family support may be needed by the family and / or the help of other statutory and NGO support agencies to help address identified issues.

Problems of poor school attendance are frequently one manifestation of more complex and deep rooted problems for families and take significant time, expert help and ongoing support from the EWO to make progress.

Here are examples of three such cases. (Names and other identifying features have been changed to protect the child and family privacy).

Katie, aged 10

Katie's Principal referred her to the NEWB as she was refusing to attend school. The local EWO met with the school Principal to gain more understanding of her case and it was agreed that the EWO would make contact with Katie's family.

Katie's parents were in despair and did not know what they should do as she was simply refusing to attend school. Katie was an anxious child and in an effort to try and reach her, the EWO arranged for Katie to see a play therapist. Katie attended a number of sessions, but she continued to refuse to go to school and got very upset at the mention of it.

Then Katie told her parents and the EWO that she wanted to change school and, subsequently, her parents enrolled her in a new school. However, the problem did not go away and Katie refused to attend the new school. Katie would get up every morning, put her uniform on, get her lunch ready, but when it came to the time to go to school she would not leave the house. She would become very upset and angry when pressured.

At this point the EWO decided that a new strategy was needed. The EWO set up a meeting with the new school's Home School Community Liaison officer, and Katie and her parents agreed to try a more gradual approach.

The EWO learned that Katie had a friend in the class and she arranged for Katie to go out into the yard at break-time with her pal where she stayed and played for ten minutes. The routine was kept up for a number of days and Katie got her homework from the class teacher, which she completed every night. By now, Katie had met with the Principal on several occasions, and they were starting to build up a good relationship.

Katie came to know that if anything was bothering her in school she could speak to the Principal or the Home School Community Liaison officer. Katie started to do some school work in the Principal's office and the EWO continued to call to the house to ensure everything was going well for Katie during the limited time she was in the school. As time passed and with everyone working together, Katie started to go into class for 30 minutes at a time. Eventually her time in class built up and she is now attending full days and has very good attendance.

Michael, aged 13

Michael had not transferred from primary school to secondary school and was referred to the NEWB by his Juvenile Liaison Officer. He was also due before the court as a result of serious delinquent behaviour.

The EWO met with Michael and his mother to advise her on applying to schools. His mother was extremely concerned as Michael had very low literacy levels, and she was worried about how he would cope in secondary school.

With the support of the EWO, Michael's mother applied to a local school. However, the school could not offer Michael a place as they were full. While the parents and the EWO looked for another school place, the EWO applied for home tuition for Michael as an interim measure. This was sanctioned by the Department of Education & Science, and a tutor came into the home and worked with Michael on a one-to-one basis. The intensive tuition sessions gave Michael confidence in his abilities and he began to talk more and more positively about returning to school. During this period, Michael was facing charges in court and as part of this process was sent to be psychologically assessed. The assessment showed that Michael had ADHD and that he was also dyslexic.

Shortly after this, Michael was offered a place in another local school. The EWO and parents met with the Principal to go through the results of this psychological assessment. The EWO then met with the school's Special Education Needs Assistant, who in turn met with the Principal and resources were allocated to support Michael's learning in school.

Michael began the school that September. He started off well but his behavioural problems returned and he was expelled. The EWO continues to work with the family in finding an alternative school place and has arranged home tuition as an interim measure. Michael is very keen to return to school and has a good relationship with the EWO.

George, aged 15

George, aged 15 was referred to the NEWB by his school as he had been suspended on numerous occasions. He had previously been diagnosed as having ADHD and was coming into school late and was frequently abusive to teachers and fellow pupils.

The EWO met with George and his Mum, however George refused to talk to the EWO about his difficulties. His Mum told the EWO that she was at her 'wits end' and was worn out from getting phone calls from the school, but understood how difficult it was for the school to cope with his behaviour. She felt that George was simply not happy at school and so he was deliberately resorting to bad behaviour to get sent home.

On the EWO's third visit to the house George chose to speak with her and he asked about alternatives to school as he felt he was not going to achieve anything in school. However, the EWO decided to keep trying with the school return idea, and suggested that they both meet with his year head and develop a phased return to school. However, George refused and was adamant that he did want to return to school.

The EWO was able to discuss and inform George and his parents about alternatives to mainstream education. It was agreed that the EWO would refer him to a local Youthreach centre. The EWO met with the co-ordinator of Youthreach and arranged a time for George and his parents to visit the centre, which they did and fortunately George was offered a place, which he accepted.

George started in Youthreach in March. The EWO would occasionally meet with George to see how he was getting on. In May, the EWO received a thank you card from George and in it he asked the EWO if she could arrange for him to sit his Junior Certificate in his old school. George's old school principal agreed and George completed the Junior Certificate there. George then asked his old Principal if he could return to school the following September, as he now felt that he would be able to cope better with school. George started 5th year in September and is doing well in school.

The School System

7 Child Protection Guidelines

In 2008, the NEWB produced Child Protection Guidelines for staff. These guidelines provide a standard referral process for staff, and will support consistent practice throughout the organisation in matters concerning child protection and child welfare. Each child protection concern identified will, following consultation with line management, be referred through a Designated Person to the HSE, in line with Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, with responsibility for the area where the child resides.

Implementation of the NEWB Child Protection Guidelines is a continuous process and senior management are assisting in undertaking a quality assurance review of their usage. The assessment process will serve to inform practice throughout the organisation in relation to child protection matters.

8 Code of Behaviour Guidelines

In May 2008, the National Educational Welfare Board issued guidelines to all schools entitled "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools". The Guidelines are part of the Board's overall strategy to support school attendance and participation and are issued under section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. A copy of the Guidelines was issued for all teachers in the State. Under the law, each school must have a Code that is available to students and parents.

The Guidelines were developed over a two-year period and involved extensive consultation and research processes.

The school code of behaviour is the set of programmes, practices and procedures that together form the school's plan for helping students in the school to behave well and learn well. The code of behaviour helps the school community to promote the school ethos, relationships, policies, procedures and practices that encourage good behaviour and prevent unacceptable behaviour. The code of behaviour helps teachers, other members of staff, students and parents to work together for a happy, effective and safe school.

The NEWB Guidelines recognise the importance of the leadership of Boards of Management and Principals and they place a welcome emphasis on the value of engaging everyone in the school community, including teachers, parents and pupils in the task of shaping the school environment and making it a positive place for teaching and learning. The development and review of a code of behaviour provides a real opportunity for school and parents to work together in a joint enterprise, the outcome of which will impact in a very real way on the lives of the young people. A good code will address the following matters:

- The standards of behaviour expected in the school.
- The plan for promoting good behaviour.
- The ways in which the school responds to unacceptable behaviour.
- The plan for implementing the code of behaviour.
- School procedures for the use of suspension and expulsion.

The NEWB Guidelines are an important support for schools as they work with students and their families to ensure that the code of behaviour can maintain the best possible educational environment in the school.

The first step in applying the Guidelines is for schools to familiarise themselves with their content. Each school will then develop an action plan for the review or preparation of their code of behaviour together with appropriate timeframes for doing the work set out in the plan. The Board recommends that this work be completed within a two-year period, i.e. before September 2010 for existing schools. In other cases, a Board of Management should ensure that a code of behaviour based on the Guidelines is in place as soon as possible following the establishment of the school.

9 Reporting Absenteeism

Schools were required to submit four Student Absence Reports and one Annual Attendance Report in the academic year 2007/2008.

Schools submitted returns on those students with serious attendance issues who had been identified during the current academic year, i.e. students falling within the following criteria:

- A student who had reached 20 days of absence cumulatively.
- A principal was concerned about a student's attendance.
- A decision to expel a student.
- A student had been suspended for six days or more cumulatively.
- A student's name was removed from the school register for whatever reason.

The www.schoolreturn.ie website, which was designed in consultation with school managers, principals, teachers and parents, enables schools to submit Student Absence Reports (4 per year) and Annual Attendance Reports online.

The website is confidential and can only be accessed using a school identity code which is held by designated personnel. The data contained on the website is protected under the Data Protection Acts (1988 and 2003) and the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000. The operation of the website is kept under review by the NEWB. The website is supported by a dedicated 'Lo-Call' helpline on 1890 36 36 66.

10 Promoting Good Attendance

EWOs work with schools throughout the country in promoting good attendance. Schools are legally obliged to develop their own statement of strategy around promoting school attendance (under Section 22 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000). In February 2008, the NEWB organised a research conference as a first step towards the development of school attendance strategies, which drew together over 140 delegates from various elements of the education community. Many schools already have comprehensive school attendance strategies in place, which are supported by the NEWB.

Around the country, certificates are regularly presented to children who show an improvement in their attendance or achieve unbroken attendance. In Autumn 2008, five Cork city students received awards for 14 years' continuous unbroken school attendance - which means that they never missed a day while in primary or post-primary. It was also a special occasion for seven sets of siblings who also received awards for unbroken attendance ranging from 8 to 14 years.

The students attended a special event in Cork City Hall in recognition of pupils with eight years' or more unbroken attendance at school. This annual event, which dates back to the start of the last century, is now organised by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) and sponsored by Cork City Council.

Acknowledging the students' excellence, Lord Mayor, Cllr Bermingham said the students' remarkable achievement was due to a combination of good health, going to a school at which they were happy and fulfilled, as well as due to the encouragement and support of their families: "Cork city is proud of you all and I congratulate the principals of the winning students, as well as the teachers and parents who have made school attendance a high priority".

Dan O'Shea, the NEWB's Munster Regional Manager, acknowledged the remarkable achievement of the pupils: "Unbroken attendance is rare and deserving of recognition. A positive attitude to school is the best way to guarantee success at school and your efforts have shown great commitment and dedication. These characteristics will serve you well in your future careers and will be recognised by your employers".

11 School Implementation Group

The School Implementation Group, which includes parents, school managers and teachers, provides advice to the NEWB on both general priorities and on any materials and guidelines to be specifically distributed to schools. The Group's role is to help ensure that those materials are usable, practical and appropriate to already busy school schedules (Appendix 1 lists the members of the group in 2008).

12 Section 29 Appeals

If a parent is unhappy with a school's decision on an expulsion, suspension or enrolment, he/she can appeal the decision to the Secretary General of Department of Education and Science.

The procedures for hearing and determining appeals operate within the wider context of the Constitution of Ireland, the provisions of the Education Act 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.

Section 29 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, places responsibility on EWOs to take appeals in certain circumstances and to make submissions in other cases. EWOs must carry out these functions with independence and sensitivity, having regard to their statutory responsibility towards the child and the position of the individual school.

The Board has statutory responsibilities under the Act to promote the full participation of all children in education in the school setting. In relation to Section 29 Appeals the Board's approach reflects the welfare principle in that legislation - namely that the child's interests and welfare will take precedence over all other matters.

Co-ordination

13 Working with Partners

The NEWB is keenly committed to developing protocols that will promote innovative and collaborative ways of working to improve attendance and tackle attendance issues. Central to this is the development of close working relationships with other professionals and agencies, to ensure an integrated approach to children's educational welfare.

The Board has specifically developed national protocols with the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS), and during 2008, continued the process of elaborating similar protocols with the Home School Community Liaison Teachers along with School Completion Co-ordinators and National Council for Special Education.

In addition, the Board has developed excellent professional working arrangements with a wide range of statutory and voluntary service providers, who work with vulnerable children and their families. The purpose of these initiatives is to provide a streamlined planned service for children and families that eliminates any duplication or overlap.

Outlined below are a number of examples of our work in this area, firstly with the Children's Services Committees (working in four sites), then followed by five other examples of partnership in Limerick, Dublin, Dundalk and Donegal:

Children Services Committees

Under Towards 2016, a key initiative is underway designed to bring about change in children's services. A National Implementation Group (NIG) and county level Children's Services Committees have been set up across the state. Four sites have been chosen for the initial roll-out of the Children's Services Committees (CSC). These are Dublin City Council, South Dublin County Council, Donegal County Council and Limerick City Council.

A key challenge for the initiative is to achieve effective service delivery, cross-sectoral working and joint implementation of policies and initiatives already being drawn up and published in relation to children's services in Ireland. The NEWB's Director of Educational Welfare Services, Nuala Doherty, represents the NEWB on the National Implementation Group, and senior NEWB service delivery staff represent the Board at the four national sites.

At local level the four CSCs have agreed a work programme of achievable targets for their areas, each tailored to the

requirements of the their counties and local priorities in terms of need, local infrastructure of existing services, as well as maintenance of the innovative cross-sectoral working already underway in the area.

In each of the four areas, local providers and practitioners have been asked at individual and collective level to support collaborative working in their area. The NEWB is fully engaged in the programme with a view to advancing better collaboration and integration with their counterparts across organisations, as well as reducing duplication and overlap of services.

Limerick Drop-in clinics

In 2008, the National Educational Welfare Board and Limerick Regeneration Agency, the agency set up to address social exclusion issues in Limerick City, joined forces and set up the first education-focussed 'Drop-in' clinics for residents in the Moyross and Southill areas of Limerick.

The 'Drop-in' clinics provide a free confidential information service to parents and guardians of children aged between 6-16 years of age who may be experiencing difficulties with school attendance (such as refusal to attend school, enrolment issues, no school place, and expulsion and suspension issues).

A steady flow of parents with concerns about their children's education have visited the clinics, and the effectiveness of the service will be evaluated in 2009.

ISPCC Leabhbh Service Tallaght

In 2008, the National Educational Welfare Board engaged in very effective inter-agency working practices with the ISPCC (Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) Leabhbh Service. The main focus of this work has been on supporting the educational needs of the children of Roma families living in the Tallaght area of South Dublin.

Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs) liaised closely with the Leabhbh team to support the enrolment and on-going participation of Roma children in school. A key part of the work involved visiting families with the Leabhbh team, whose unique knowledge and expertise has proved an invaluable asset. Their insight into the Roma culture and their proficiency in the native language have combined to breakdown barriers and paved the way for EWOs to engage with families and forge good relationships, which would otherwise have undoubtedly proved extremely difficult.

Dundalk Initiative

Many collaborative initiatives take place at school level. In Dundalk, the local EWO, Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinators and the School Completion Programme united in a local school-based initiative to target a number of children who have had poor school attendance records.

Each service agreed to work intensively with a number of families to focus on improving the school attendance of the children concerned. The focus was to:

- Identify children with a school attendance record that was a matter of concern to the school authorities.
- Work intensively with a set number of families to identify the barriers preventing these children attending school regularly.
- Support, assist and advise the parents in addressing the matters identified.
- Regular reviews among the professionals concerned to share learning.

The 10-week initiative proved successful and resulted in a considerable improvement in the overall rates of attendance.

ION (Identification of Need), Co. Donegal

The ION initiative is currently being piloted in Letterkenny and is due to be rolled out county-wide in 2009. The initiative commenced in mid-2008 in an effort to link all agencies whose work touches on children and families, in a cooperative network, based on common assessment and co-ordination processes.

The underlying objective of ION is to facilitate the early identification of need and the timely provision of appropriate supportive services. The initiative is the culmination of over two years of planning work between representatives of voluntary and statutory service providers in the Letterkenny area. It is managed by a Project Board and Team, representing the six service sectors: Schools and education, Justice (Gardaí and probation service), Public Health Nursing, Social Provision (e.g. housing, Community Welfare Officers, MABS, etc), Health Services (e.g. psychological services, disability services, etc), and the Community and Voluntary sector. Over 40 members of staff have taken part in ION training.

The process is entirely driven by parents or carers. Young people, as befits their age, comprehension and circumstances have also contributed to the process. Agreed inter-service processes have been developed for the identification of need and organisational practices have been developed for inter-service cooperation in more complex cases.

The feedback from participants to date has been very encouraging, both in terms of welcoming the ION as a means of assisting families, and in terms of re-shaping procedures and improving service. A thorough evaluation, which will hear and evaluate the views of all those involved, will be completed when the pilot concludes. The plan is then to roll ION out throughout the county. There are also plans to have similar projects in Sligo and Leitrim.

Dublin Inner City Project

The Dublin Inner City Project is an inter-agency pilot project which was initiated by the Secondary Schools Network and the National Educational Welfare Board. This was set up in response to historical attendance issues in both north and south inner city schools.

Prior to the project's inception, work in the area of school attendance was characterised by a high degree of informal networking. This project brings cohesion to interactions between the National Educational Welfare Board, Home School Community Liaison, School Completion, Secondary Schools Network and six Primary and four Secondary schools in Dublin 7 and Dublin 8. It has evolved because there was a common recognition that such cohesion is needed.

A three year pilot commenced in September 2008 and will track chronic non-attenders in 4th, 5th and 6th classes over the period.

The Education System

14 Advisory Role

The NEWB has a statutory function to advise the Department of Education & Science on issues relating to attendance and participation in education. Through its research programme and the work of its Educational Welfare Officers, the Board is in a position to offer insights into aspects of the school experience that have relevance in a policy-making context.

In this regard, the Board has also made submissions on the Department of Education & Science's organisational strategy and the Data Strategy and how a strategic approach could be used to support the work of service delivery bodies like the NEWB and to influence positive outcomes in education.

The Board has also made submissions to the Department of Education and Science on curriculum, alternative education provision, supports for schools, implementation of some aspects of the Education Act and the operation of the Section 29 appeals processes.

The Knowledge Base

15 Research overview

The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, confers a broad remit on the NEWB in relation to the promotion of school attendance. This remit spans duties to society, families, training agencies, curriculum development, schools and children. It places a duty on the NEWB to support schools in the preparation of school attendance strategies and codes of behaviour, and to monitor their effectiveness in preventing absenteeism.

The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, envisages that the NEWB's research and development activities will have several dimensions:

- Conducting and commissioning research relating to school attendance.
- Disseminating that research.
- Monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of strategies and programmes aimed at preventing non-attendance.

The main focus and purpose of the Board's research strategy is:

- To support the Board's overall strategic objectives.
- To facilitate evidence-based decision-making.
- To provide access to models of best practice in relation to key areas of the NEWB's work.
- To support policy development.

To date, a variety of research projects have been undertaken by the NEWB and full details of our published research reports are available on www.newb.ie in the Publications section.

16 NEWB Conference 2008 and the Development of School Attendance Strategies

Each school board of management must prepare a statement of strategy that outlines how the school can promote and encourage attendance and participation. Under the Education Welfare Act, 2000 the NEWB must develop and issue guidelines to support schools in this work.

In order to prepare guidelines that have the best chance of being helpful to schools and to students and families, we need to know more about why some children miss school, and why others, often from similar kinds of background and experience, do not. We need to understand why current education systems and structures appear to work for some but not for others. We need to know what strategies, plans and programmes really work.

Good quality research and data are vital so that discussions about school attendance strategies are based on evidence and experience, both international and national. It was with this requirement for greater insight into evidence-based practice in mind that in 2008 the NEWB held a national conference on school attendance and participation. The conference was the first step in the development of guidelines on school attendance strategies and it provided an opportunity to take stock of international and Irish learning and practice. Its main aim was to provide in-depth understanding of the problem of absenteeism and then to start exploring what schools can do to address it.

The conference was attended by over 140 delegates, comprising educators, researchers, child welfare workers and policy-makers, among others. Going forward, the plan is to build upon this first event and open the dialogue with educators, researchers, parents, children and young people, community workers, psychologists and other agencies involved in the welfare of children and families further. The Board will also continue to support, and learn from, the wealth of good practice already taking place throughout the country, as evidenced by the selection of case study presentations at the conference. A report on the conference is available on www.newb.ie.

17 Analysis of School Attendance Data in Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2003/04 to 2005/06

Since the commencement of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, schools are obliged by law to submit a report to the NEWB on levels of school attendance, both periodically and annually. This report is also available to parents. The Annual Attendance Report is submitted by each school when they close for the summer.

The National Educational Welfare Board's report *The Analysis of School Attendance Data in Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2003/4 to 2005/06* (published in 2008) shows a large increase in the number of schools feeding into the NEWB's Annual School Attendance Report.

Over 100,000 children miss more than 20 days each year and non-attendance is greater among older children and children who live in more disadvantaged areas and in urban areas. The report gives an overview of the incidence of suspension and expulsion in schools. The data confirms that we have significant school absenteeism levels in Ireland and it is the beginning of the putting in place of a national baseline data which will help future planning and policy development.

In primary schools, the response rose from 81% to 95% and in post-primary schools from 76% to 88% - meaning that data provided by the Annual Attendance Report now constitutes a national database of non-attendance, expulsion, and suspension in all the country's primary and post-primary schools.

The report highlights that tackling absenteeism is a national issue. The percentage of student/days lost through absence is running at over 6% in primary schools and around 8% in post-primary schools. Over 55,000 students miss school each day, consisting of 27,000 primary and 28,000 post-primary students. This is a loss of 12 school days per student per year in primary school, and 13 school days in post-primary school.

About 11% of primary-school students and 17% of post-primary students are absent for 20 days or more during the school year.

This translates to over 50,000 primary school students, and over 55,000 post-primary students.

The data also shows that reported expulsions are uncommon. Only 134 expulsions from school were recorded in 2005/6, 16 in primary school and the remaining 118 in post-primary schools. Around 5% of post-primary students (over 16,000) were suspended in 2005/6, and a quarter of one percent of primary students (over 1,000). The rate of suspensions is 20 times higher in post-primary schools.

The reports shows there are strong links between poor attendance and other indicators of educational disadvantage. Primary schools with high non-attendance are likely to have a high proportion of students living in local authority accommodation, in lone-parent families or in families where the main earner is unemployed. At post-primary level, non-attendance is strongly linked to high ratings for socio-economic disadvantage, with high rates of dropout in Junior and Senior Cycle, and poorer performance on the Junior Certificate Examination.

The high response rates by schools show how seriously they take the issue of absenteeism. Monitoring attendance will help them to focus their own attendance strategies on prevention and early intervention.

The report tells us that absences of 20 days or more are a central feature of social exclusion, which if measured over time, will give us a true indication of the progress being made in addressing disadvantage in education. Therefore, the collection and refinement of this data is an important contribution to our understanding of school absenteeism and how we are dealing with it.

The broad data highlights again that the causes of poor attendance and educational disadvantage are complex and points us to areas where we need to focus more detailed research. A key component of this strategy is the evaluation of interventions for the purpose of showing what works and the dissemination of the findings and best practice.

The Wider Society

18 Communication

The NEWB has written to every family with children of school-going age advising them of their rights and responsibilities in relation to education and school attendance and where they can get help. A parents' leaflet is now available in 18 different languages on our website www.newb.ie. Special promotional campaigns, for example, the sponsorship of the Cumann na mBunscol competition, provide new avenues into the lives of children, families and their communities.

The NEWB has created and availed of numerous media opportunities throughout the year to impart, as widely as possible, its message of the importance of school attendance to promote educational welfare for children and young people.

19 Every School Day Counts

In April 2008, the National Educational Welfare Board launched its equipment sponsorship of Cumann na mBunscol, Every School Day Counts, in Croke Park, which aims to promote the importance of sport in school life. Cumann na mBunscol is the largest sports organisation for primary school children in the country.

International research shows that sport gives children a sense of belonging in school. It also shows that participation in school sports and physical activity can protect children from anxiety, depression and low self-esteem. This has been backed up by OECD research presented at a 2008 NEWB conference on school attendance.

Children throughout the country were presented with sliothars telling them that "Every School Day Counts" as part of the NEWB sponsorship. An "Every School Day Counts" information section was placed on the NEWB and the Cumann na mBunscol websites, and this core message was promoted at regional and national finals.

Organisational Information

Working closely with Educational Welfare Services, the NEWB's Corporate Services function focuses on developing systems, processes and standards that support and enable staff, whilst delivering value for money and ensuring accountability and effective governance.



Key to the effectiveness of the NEWB is a well governed organisation that supports staff through a clearly defined infrastructure of systems, processes and standards.

1 The Board

The duties of the Board include approval of the NEWB's strategic objectives and annual business plans; monitoring the performance of the organisation, and setting and upholding the values and standards necessary to ensure that the NEWB's obligations are met. The Board of the NEWB held eight formal meetings in 2008.

In 2008, new appointments were made to the Board of the NEWB by the Minister for Education and Science and a number of existing Board members were reappointed to the Board of the NEWB. Details of the Board of the NEWB are available on page 5.

The Board also has a number of committees that meet individually. The Committees on Research, Communications and Education were reviewed as part of development process surrounding a new Strategic Plan.

The audit committee was established to provide advice to the Board in relation to corporate governance, financial management, risk management and internal audit.

The Audit Committee is a key governance committee of the organisation and, through its work, aims to ensure that the Board is compliant with its governance obligations as a State and publicly-funded body. This includes ongoing oversight and assessment of the NEWB's corporate governance systems. The audit committee reports to the Board and regularly commissions audits and reviews.

As part of the organisation's three year audit plan, prioritised by the organisation's risk profile, the committee commissioned a

number of key audits which were undertaken by Deloitte, the Board's internal audit service provider.

The audits found that the controls in place provided a level of assurance to ensure the efficient and effective achievement of objectives.

2 Public Sector Transformation

In 2008 the Report of the Taskforce on Public Service published a framework for public sector transformation in response to the OECD's review of the sector and to major developments in relation to public finance. The report sets out a three year framework which the Government has adopted to radically transform the public service.

Value for money must be a priority going forward in the current economic climate. How Public Service organisations are managed, designed and delivered and how necessary support functions are performed must meet the highest standards of productivity and efficiency.

The development of shared services is a key part of this action plan. Experience in both the public and private sectors demonstrates that benefits can be realised by the adoption of shared service models under certain conditions.

The taskforce recommends the establishment of shared services in relation to functions such as payroll, human resources, financial management, procurement and ICT systems management. Work has commenced on a pilot basis and the NEWB is working in partnership with agencies under the aegis of the Department of Education and Science to define the potential for shared services amongst bodies of common purpose.

Review of 2008 - Organisational Information

3 Organisational Structure

Since its inception the Board has incrementally grown its capacity to deliver real improvement in the lives of children and young people.

Under the Towards 2016 agreement, the Board received approval from the Department of Education and Science for the addition of 15 new posts. Through a consultative process with our staff, parent Department and the trade union, the Board considered the organisation's needs and priorities on how the posts would be best used to support the organisation and provide effective service provision.

Twelve of the posts were allocated to service delivery and 3 were allocated to support services. A recruitment campaign commenced in 2008 and thirteen of these new posts have now been filled.

Given the Government's requirement that public bodies reduce pay costs, the Board is not in a position to replace staff or fill remaining vacancies. The Board had 104 staff, at the end of 2008.

4 New Offices

In 2008 new offices were sent up in Mullingar, Bantry and Donegal Town. We relocated premises in Navan, Kilkenny and Dundalk, and additional officers joined existing offices in Longford, Carlow and Waterford. The Tipperary office was relocated from Clonmel to Thurles.

5 Decentralisation

In July 2008, the Government announced the suspension of the decentralisation programme in response to the worsening economic climate. Plans to relocate agencies, including the NEWB, will be reviewed in 2011.

6 Freedom of Information (FOI)

The Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003 apply to the National Educational Welfare Board. The Act asserts the right of members of the public to obtain access to official information to the greatest extent possible consistent with public interest and the right privacy of individuals. A key benefit of FOI legislation is that it encourages openness and transparency and improves data management within organisations.

The Board received and responded to seven Freedom of Information requests in 2008. Two were granted, three were part-granted, one refused and one withdrawn and handled outside of FOI.

7 Towards 2016

The NEWB continued with the development of the service and the implementation of its commitments, as set out in the Towards 2016 Social Partnership agreement, in accordance with the agenda for modernisation and change. A Progress Report for the period January - June 2008, was submitted and approved by the Industrial Relations Standing Committee of the Department of Education. Accordingly, the pay award of 3.5% on 1 September 2008 was sanctioned.

8 Health & Safety

In 2008 the Board further developed its Health & Safety Management System ensuring health and safety is an integral part of the organisation. The process promotes early identification of Health & Safety issues and facilitates a timely response and remedial action at local and national level.

The NEWB's Health & Safety Statement is a living document and work continues on ensuring that it reflects the legislative context and the developing needs of the organisation.

9 Customer Service

The NEWB continued to implement its Customer Service Action Plan, which covers the period 2008 – 2010. Work also continued on the development of our complaints procedure to ensure that it reflects the nature of the service provided by the Board.

10 Partnership

In 2008, the Partnership Committee, through its sub-committees, worked on a Code of Conduct, Health & Safety, Flexible Working, as well as Training and Development.

11 Performance Management Development System (PMDS)

In accordance with the Government's Civil and Public Service Modernisation Programme, the NEWB is in the process of embedding its Performance Management Development System (PMDS) within the organisation. The NEWB PMDS was developed through the Partnership process and staff throughout the organisation were instrumental in its design and execution.

In 2008, the design and development of the PMDS system was completed. In this regard, a competency framework for all job families and the PMDS documentation were designed and agreed in consultation with staff. Also, the Board's model of Professional Supervision has been integrated with PMDS. The Steering Committee agreed an implementation and training plan for PMDS. A PMDS intranet site was developed for staff.

NEWB Report and Financial Statements



Information

Board Address:

16-22 Green Street, Dublin 7

Members of the Board:

Mr. Cathal Flynn (Chairperson)

Mr. Eddie Ward (CEO)

Sr. Eileen Randles

Ms. Aine Lynch

Mr. Billy Sheehan

Mr. Declan Dunne

Ms. Catherine Hazlett

Ms. Fionnuala Anderson

Ms. Marie-Claire McAleer

Mr. Pat McSitric

Mr. Ruairi Gogan

Ms. Michele Clear

Ms. Sonja Croke

Chief Executive:

Mr. Eddie Ward

Bank:

Bank of Ireland, College Green, Dublin 2

Solicitors:

Arthur Cox, Earlsfort Centre, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2

Auditors:

The Comptroller and Auditor General, Dublin Castle, Dublin 2

Website:

www.newb.ie

Statement of Responsibilities of the Board

Section 33 Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, requires the Members of the Board to prepare financial statements in such form as may be approved by the Minister for Education and Science after consultation with the Minister for Finance. In preparing those financial statements, the Board is required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Board will continue in operation.

The Board is responsible for keeping proper books of account, which disclose in a true and fair manner at any time the financial position of the Board and which enable it to ensure that the financial statements comply with Section 33 of the Act. The Board is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Board and for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

On behalf of the Board:



Chairperson



Member



Date

Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General

I have audited the financial statements of the National Educational Welfare Board for the year ended 31 December 2008 under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

The financial statements, which have been prepared under the accounting policies set out therein, comprise the Statement of Accounting Policies, the Income and Expenditure Account, the Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes.

Respective Responsibilities of the Board and the Comptroller and Auditor General

The Board is responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and for ensuring the regularity of transactions. The Board prepares the financial statements in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland. The accounting responsibilities of the Members of the Board are set out in the Statement of Responsibilities of the Board.

My responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

I report my opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland. I also report whether in my opinion proper books of account have been kept. In addition, I state whether the financial statements are in agreement with the books of account.

I report any material instance where moneys have not been applied for the purposes intended or where the transactions do not conform to the authorities governing them.

I also report if I have not obtained all the information and explanations necessary for the purposes of my audit.

I review whether the Statement on Internal Financial Control reflects the Board's compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies and report any material instance where it does not do so, or if the statement is misleading or inconsistent with other information of which I am aware from my audit of the financial statements. I am not required to consider whether the Statement on Internal Financial Control covers all financial risks and controls, or to form an opinion on the effectiveness of the risk and control procedures.

Basis of Audit Opinion

In the exercise of my function as Comptroller and Auditor General, I conducted my audit of the financial statements in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board and by reference to the special considerations which attach to State bodies in relation to their management and operation. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures and regularity of the financial transactions included in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgments made in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Board's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

I planned and performed my audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations that I considered necessary in order to provide me with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming my opinion I also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

Opinion

In my opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland, of the state of the Board's affairs at 31 December 2007 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended.

In my opinion, proper books of account have been kept by the Board. The financial statements are in agreement with the books of account.



Gerard Smyth

For and on behalf of the
Comptroller and Auditor General
13 November 2009

Statement on Internal Financial Control

Responsibility for the System of Internal Financial Control

On behalf of the members of the National Educational Welfare Board we acknowledge our responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated.

The system can only provide reasonable, and not absolute, assurance that the assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or other irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely manner.

Key Control Procedures

The Board was established under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 and commenced on 4 March 2002. Since then the Board has taken steps to ensure an appropriate control environment by:

- Clearly defining management responsibilities in a defined organisational structure with clear segregation of duties; and
- Establishing formal procedures for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action.

The system of internal financial control is based on a framework of monthly management information, administrative procedures including segregation of duties, authorisation limits and a documented procedures manual, and a system of delegation and accountability. In particular it includes:

- a comprehensive budgeting system with an annual budget, which is reviewed and agreed by the Board prior to presentation to the Department of Education and Science;
- regular review by the Executive and the Board of periodic and annual financial reports which indicate financial performance against both budget and prior period;
- setting targets to measure financial and other performance;
- clearly defined capital investment control guidelines;
- formal project management disciplines.

The Board has an Audit Committee, which operates in accordance with the Framework Code of Best Practice set out in the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. Through the Audit Committee and with the sanction of the Board of the NEWB, an Internal Audit Services Provider was appointed in 2006. The work of Internal Audit Services Provider is informed by analysis of the risk to which the Board is exposed. The Audit Committee provides the Board of the NEWB with a report of internal audit activity on a regular basis. The report includes the Internal Audit Services Provider's professional and independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of internal financial control.

The following audits were completed in 2008:

- (i) Internal Controls
- (ii) Internal Audit Review of Procurement Processes
- (iii) Travel & Subsistence.

The audits concluded that the controls in place provided a level of assurance to ensure the efficient and effective achievement of objectives.


The Board's monitoring and review of the effectiveness of the system of internal financial control is informed by the work of the audit committee, the Internal Audit Services Provider, the executive management team who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the financial control framework and comments made by the Comptroller and Auditor General in his management letter or other reports.

Statement on Internal Financial Control (continued)

Annual Review of Controls

I can confirm that the Board conducted a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal financial controls in 2008.

Signed on behalf of the Board:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bethul Flynn", is written over a horizontal dotted line.

Chairperson

National Educational Welfare Board

A handwritten date "10/11/09" is written in black ink over a horizontal dotted line.

Date

Statement of Accounting Policies

1. General

The general functions of the Board are to ensure that each child attends a recognised school or otherwise receives a certain minimum education, and to assist in the formulation and implementation of policies and objectives of the Government for the time being concerning the education of children.

2. Basis of Accounting

The financial statements are prepared on the accruals basis of accounting in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and under the historical cost convention and comply with the financial reporting standards of the Accounting Standards Board.

3. Accounting Period

The financial statements cover the year 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2008.

4. State Grants

State Grants shown in the Income and Expenditure Account reflect the amounts received by the Board from the Department of Education and Science in respect of the year.

State Grants include funding for staff seconded from the Department of Education and Science, which is withheld and paid direct by that Department.

5. Tangible Fixed Assets

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation. Depreciation is provided on a straight line basis at rates which are estimated to write down the value of the assets over their expected useful lives as follows:-

Furniture & fittings	4 years
Office equipment	4 years
Computer equipment	3 years
Leased Premises *	10, 20 and 25 years

* Leased Premises include refurbishment which is being written off over the shorter of the period of the related lease or 10 years, and capitalised VAT on leases which is being written off over the 20 and 25 year periods of the related leases respectively.

6. Foreign Currencies

Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated into Euro at the exchange rates ruling at the Balance Sheet date. Transactions in foreign currencies are translated into Euro at the exchange rates ruling at the dates of the underlying transactions. The resulting profits or losses are dealt with in the Income and Expenditure Account.

7. Leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged to the Income and Expenditure account on a straight line basis over the lease period.

8. Capital Account

The Capital Account represents the unamortised value of the income used to finance fixed assets.

9. Pensions

The Board operates a defined benefit pension scheme which is funded annually on a pay- as-you-go basis from monies received from the Department of Education and Science. A defined benefit pension scheme is a pension plan that defines an amount of pension benefit to be provided, usually as a function of one or more factors such as age, years of service and basic pay.

Pension liabilities represent the present value of future pension benefits earned by staff at 31 December 2008. The pension liabilities are calculated annually by independent actuaries using the projected unit actuarial cost method. The pension liabilities are determined

Statement of Accounting Policies (continued)

by discounting the estimated future cash outflows using interest rates of high quality corporate bonds that have terms to maturity approximating the terms of the related pension liabilities.

Deferred pension funding represents the corresponding asset to be recovered in future accounting periods from the Department of Education and Science.

Pension costs reflect pension benefits earned by employees in the accounting period and are shown net of staff pension contributions which are refunded to the Department of Education and Science in accordance with the Board's financing arrangements. The pension costs comprise the current service cost, past service cost and the interest on the pension scheme liabilities. An amount corresponding to the pension costs is recognised as income to the extent that it is recoverable, and offset by grants received in the accounting period to discharge pension payments.

Actuarial gains or losses arising from changes in Actuarial assumptions and from experienced surpluses and deficits are recognised in the Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses and a corresponding adjustment is recognised in the amount recoverable from the Department of Education and Science.

In accordance with the requirements of *FRS 17 – Retirement Benefits*, the Income and Expenditure Account, Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses and the Balance Sheet recognise pension transactions, movements and balances.

Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31 December 2008

	Notes	2008 €	2007 €
Income			
State Grants	1	9,758,403	9,478,471
Net Deferred Funding for Pensions	4	1,120,000	1,264,000
Transfer from/(to) Capital Account	8	85,440	245,849
		10,963,843	10,988,320
Other Income		3,250	-
		10,967,093	10,988,320
Expenditure	2	(11,340,832)	(10,766,533)
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year		(373,739)	221,787
Accumulated Surplus at the 1 January		416,570	194,783
Accumulated Surplus at the 31 December		42,831	416,570

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Notes 1 to 15 form part of these financial statements.

On behalf of the Board:


Chairperson


Chief Executive Officer

10/11/09
Date

Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses for the Year Ended 31 December 2008

	Notes	2008 €	2007 €
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year		(373,739)	221,787
Experience (gains) / losses on pension scheme liabilities	4	2,123,000	(97,000)
Change in assumptions underlying the present value of pension scheme liabilities	4	(2,038,000)	(1,463,000)
Actuarial (Gains) / Losses on Pension Liabilities		(85,000)	(1,560,000)
Adjustment to Deferred Pension Funding	4	85,000	1,560,000
Total Recognised Gains / (Losses) for the year		(373,739)	221,787

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Notes 1 to 15 form part of these financial statements.

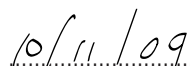
On behalf of the Board:



Chairperson



Chief Executive Officer




Date

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2008

	Notes	2008 €	2007 €
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible assets	5	493,163	578,603
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors & Prepayments	6	85,796	139,087
Cash at Bank and in Hand		1,122,122	1,124,970
Total Current Assets		1,207,918	1,264,057
CREDITORS (amounts falling due within one year)	7	(1,165,087)	(847,487)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		42,831	416,570
Total Assets less Current Liabilities Before Pensions		535,994	995,173
Deferred Funding Asset for Pensions	4	9,491,877	8,287,000
Pension Liabilities	4	(9,491,877)	(8,287,000)
		535,994	995,173
FINANCED BY			
Capital Account	8	493,163	578,603
Accumulated Excess Income over Expenditure		42,831	416,570
		535,994	995,173

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Notes 1 to 15 form part of these financial statements.

On behalf of the Board:


Chairperson


Chief Executive Officer

10/11/09
Date

Cash Flow Statement for the Year Ended 31 December 2008

Reconciliation of operating surplus / (deficit) to net cash inflow / (outflow) from operating activities


	Notes	2008 €	2007 €
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year		(373,739)	221,787
Movement on Capital Account	8	(85,440)	(245,849)
Depreciation	5	111,633	276,149
(Increase) / Decrease in Debtors		53,291	4,120
Increase / (Decrease) in Creditors		317,600	(287,184)
Net Cash Inflow / (Outflow) from Operating Activities		23,345	(30,977)

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

Net Cash Inflow / (Outflow) from Operating Activities		23,345	(30,977)
Capital Expenditure			
Payments to acquire fixed assets	5	(26,193)	(30,300)
(Decrease)/Increase in Cash	9	(2,848)	(61,277)

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Notes 1 to 15 form part of these financial statements.

On behalf of the Board:


Chairperson


Chief Executive Officer

10/11/09
Date

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2008

1. INCOME	2008	2007
	€	€
State Grants paid by the Department of Education & Science	10,085,000	9,738,000
Refund of Employees' Pension Contributions	(326,597)	(259,529)
	9,758,403	9,478,471

The State grants above include funding in respect of the salary of the Chief Executive, who is seconded from the Department of Education and Science, which is withheld and paid directly by that Department.

2. EXPENDITURE	2008	2007
	€	€
Wages, Salaries & Pension Costs (Note 3)	7,412,072	7,002,972
Training, Travel & Subsistence Expenses	597,937	501,255
Meeting Expenses	21,695	24,837
Recruitment & Organisational Support Expenses	82,659	165,188
Rent & Rates	795,119	716,969
Utilities	54,503	43,516
Repairs, Maintenance & Service Charges	208,357	168,975
Refurbishment	5,394	3,014
Insurance	10,303	9,883
General Expenses	4,537	1,146
Telephone & Telecommunications	223,567	220,686
Information Technology	251,042	218,466
Printing, Postage and Stationery	175,547	467,960
Translators and Interpreters	5,435	12,337
Publications and Promotion	265,423	70,814
School Attendance Conference	33,078	0
Research	95,983	83,112
Professional Fees	975,048	767,754
Audit Fee	11,500	11,500
Depreciation	111,633	276,149
Total Expenditure	11,340,832	10,766,533

The 2007 comparatives were reanalysed in 2008 and resulted in a change to figures reported in 2007 but Total Expenditure remained unchanged.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2008 (continued)

3. WAGES AND SALARIES

	2008 €	2007 €
Gross Salaries	5,679,262	5,182,000
Employer PRSI	434,855	401,689
Pension Costs (Note 4)	1,042,200	1,264,000
	7,156,317	6,847,689
Other Temporary Staff Costs	255,755	155,283
	7,412,072	7,002,972

The average number of persons employed by the Board during the year was 102 (2007 - 101), including staff seconded from the Department of Education and Science.

4. PENSION COSTS

a) Analysis of pension costs charged to Expenditure

	2008 €'000	2007 €'000
Current Service cost	895	1,173
Interest on pension scheme liabilities	474	423
Employee contributions	(327)	(260)
	1,042	1,336

b) Movement in Net Pension Liabilities during the year

	2008 €'000	2007 €'000
Pension liabilities at 1 January	8,287	8,583
Current service cost	895	1,173
Interest cost on pension scheme liabilities	474	423
Actuarial (gains) / losses	85	(1,560)
Pensions paid during the year	(249)	(332)
Pension liabilities at 31 December	9,492	8,287

c) Deferred funding asset for pensions

The Board recognises amounts owing from the State for the unfunded deferred liability for pensions on the basis of a number of past events. These events include the statutory backing for the superannuation scheme and the policy and practice in relation to funding public service pensions including the Annual Estimates process. The Board has no evidence that this funding policy will not continue to progressively meet this amount in accordance with current practice.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2008 (continued)

4. PENSION COSTS (continued)

c) Deferred funding asset for pensions (continued)

The Net Deferred Funding for Pensions recognised in Income and Expenditure Account was as follows:

	2008 €'000	2007 €'000
Funding recoverable in respect of current year Pension costs	1,369	1,596
State grant applied to pay pensions	(249)	(332)
	<u>1,120</u>	<u>1,264</u>

The deferred funding asset for pensions as at 31 December 2008 amounted to €9,492,000 (2007 - €8,287,000).

d) History of defined benefit obligations	2008 €'000	2007 €'000	2006 €'000	2005 €'000
Defined Benefit Obligation	9,492	8,287	8,583	7,745
Experience (gains) / losses on liabilities:	2,123	(97)	404	62
Amount				
Percentage of scheme's liabilities at year end	22.4%	(1.2%)	4.7%	0.8%

The cumulative actuarial loss recognised in the Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses amounts to €85,000

e) General Description of the Scheme

The pension scheme is a defined benefit final salary pension arrangement with benefits and contributions defined by reference to current "model" public sector scheme regulations. The scheme provides a pension (eightieths per year of service), a gratuity or lump sum (three eightieths per year of service) and spouse's and children's pensions. Normal Retirement Age is a member's 65th birthday, and pre-2004 members have an entitlement to retire without actuarial reduction from age 60. Pensions in payment (and deferment) normally increase in line with general public sector salary inflation.

The valuation used for FRS17 (Revised) disclosures has been based on a full actuarial valuation dated 24 April 2009 by a qualified independent actuary taking account of the requirements of the FRS in order to assess the scheme liabilities at 31 December 2008.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2008 (continued)

4. PENSION COSTS (continued)

e) General Description of the Scheme (continued)

The principal actuarial assumptions were as follows:

	2008	2007
Discount rate for liabilities of the scheme	5.75%	5.5%
Rate of increase in salaries	3.25%	4.0%
Rate of increase in pensions in payment	3.25%	4.0%
Rate of increase in pensions in deferment	3.25%	4.0%
Inflation rate	2.00%	2.25%

The mortality basis adopted allows for improvements in life expectancy over time, so that life expectancy at retirement will depend on the year in which a member attains retirement age (age 65.) The table below shows the life expectancy for members attaining age 65 in 2008, 2028 and 2048.

Year of attaining age 65	2008	2028	2048
Life expectancy – male	86.6	87.7	87.7
Life expectancy – female	89.7	90.8	90.8

f) Revised FRS17 Disclosures

The information on pensions has been presented in line with new disclosure requirements required from 2008 under an amendment to FRS 17.

5. FIXED ASSETS

Cost	Leased Premises €	Office Equipment €	Furniture & Fittings €	Computer Equipment €	Total €
At 1 January	588,139	299,473	469,370	690,103	2,047,085
Additions	–	–	9,406	16,787	26,193
At 31 December	588,139	299,473	478,776	706,890	2,073,278
Accumulated Depreciation					
At 1 January	129,230	261,573	427,158	650,521	1,468,482
Charge for the year	36,591	21,872	24,355	28,815	111,633
At 31 December	165,821	283,445	451,513	679,336	1,580,115
Net Book Value					
At 31 December 2008	422,318	16,028	27,263	27,554	493,163
At 31 December 2007	458,909	37,900	42,212	39,582	578,603

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2008 (continued)

6. DEBTORS & PREPAYMENTS

Amounts falling due within one year	2008 €	2007 €
Prepayments and deposits	<u>85,796</u>	<u>139,087</u>

7. CREDITORS

Amounts falling due within one year	2008 €	2007 €
Trade Creditors	597,609	373,609
PAYE/PRSI	116,440	2
Salaries Deductions	6,220	—
Pension Deductions	1,200	—
Accruals	443,618	473,876
	<u>1,165,087</u>	<u>847,487</u>

8. CAPITAL ACCOUNT

	2008 €	2007 €
Opening Balance	578,603	824,452
Income used to acquire Fixed Assets	26,193	30,300
Amortisation in line with asset depreciation	<u>(111,633)</u>	<u>(276,149)</u>
Transfer to Income and Expenditure Account	(85,440)	(245,849)
Closing Balance	<u>493,163</u>	<u>578,603</u>

9. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN CASH AND BANK

	2008 €	2007 €
Cash at Bank and In Hand at 31 December 2008	1,122,122	1,124,970
Cash at Bank and In Hand at 1 January 2008	<u>(1,124,970)</u>	<u>(1,186,247)</u>
Change in the year	<u>(2,848)</u>	<u>(61,277)</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2008 (continued)

10. LATE PAYMENTS

The Board is aware of its responsibilities under the Late Payments Legislation and has established appropriate procedures and processes to ensure that payments are made in accordance with the legislation. No late payment interest was paid by the National Educational Welfare Board during the year.

11. CONTINGENT LIABILITY

There are 102 legal proceedings (2007 – 53) ensuing from the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000. The amounts of the liabilities, if any, cannot yet be determined. The legal expenses of the Board in relation to these cases are recognised as they arise and no provision has been made for future costs or possible future recoveries in the case of proceedings initiated before the balance sheet date.

12. OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

At 31 December 2008, the National Educational Welfare Board was committed to making payments during 2009 under operating leases which expire –

	2008	2007
	€	€
- within one year	13,426	7,500
- between two and five years	124,139	165,567
- after five years	398,096	383,696
Total committed operating lease payments	535,661	556,763

All operating leases are in relation to land and buildings. The leases on Head Office run for a 25 year period, subject to five year reviews.

The total operating lease rentals charged in the Income and Expenditure Account for 2008 was €736,025 (2007 - €619,069) and includes payments to the OPW and other Government bodies.

13. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

In the normal course of business, the National Educational Welfare Board may enter into contractual arrangements with undertakings in which Board members are employed or otherwise interested. The Board adopts procedures in accordance with the Department of Finance's Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, the Ethics in Public Office Act 1995 and the Standards in Public Office Act 2001, in relation to the disclosure of interests of Board members. These procedures have been adhered to by Board members and the Board during the year. No such transactions occurred during the year.

14. POST BALANCE SHEET EVENTS

No circumstances have arisen or events occurred, between the balance sheet date and the date of approval of these financial statements by the Board, which would require adjustment or disclosure in the financial statements.

15. APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 10 November 2009.

Appendix 1

Members of School Implementation Group

Members of the School Implementation Group, 2007

Eddie Ward (Chairperson)
Chief Executive Officer, NEWB

Chris Kelly
DES

Anne McElduff
INTO

Nuala Doherty
Director of Educational Welfare Services, NEWB

Fergal McCarthy
TUI

Dan O'Connor
CPMSA

Clive Byrne
JMB

Jacinta Stewart
IVEA

Joan McLoughlin
NPC, Parent Primary

Michael Naughton
ACCS

Eleanor Petrie
NPC, Post-Primary

Sean McCarthy
TUI

Noreen Flynn
INTO

Sr. Eileen Randles
School Management

Susie Hall
ASTI