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Adapting to Diversity: Irish Schools and Newcomer Students

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Before commencing fieldwork for the study, the project team consulted through individual and group meetings as well as email with a range of organisations in the sphere of education and migration. They include:

- Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland;
- CADIC (Coalition against the Deportation of Irish Children);
- Children's Rights Alliance;
- Dublin Inner City Partnership;
- FLAC (Free Legal Advice Service);
- Immigrant Council of Ireland;
- Integrating Ireland;
- Irish National Teachers' Organisation;
- Irish Primary Principals' Network;
- Joint Managerial Body, particularly its National Advisory Committee on Intercultural Education;
- Migrant Rights Centre;
- National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals;
- National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI);
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment;
- The Ombudsman for Children;
- Reception and Integration Agency;
- Teachers' Union of Ireland.

Their insight into the policy issues provided a crucial foundation for our own research. A number of individual school principals also attended some of these meetings and we are grateful for their input.

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As always, our research would not be possible without the help and generosity of school principals, teachers and students. We hope that the study in some measure reflects their input.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The period since the 1990s has seen immigration into Ireland of a scale and speed unprecedented in comparative context. Immigrants in Ireland are a heterogeneous group in terms of nationality, ethnicity, legal status and language skills, although the largest segment comes from the new EU Member States. Overall, immigration has benefitted Ireland economically as well as providing welcome cultural diversity. However, immigration has posed challenges for schools with little prior experience of dealing with cultural and linguistic diversity. On the other hand, however, the relatively high educational profile of immigrant adults in Ireland provides vital resources to support their children's education. This study documents the experiences of schools in catering for immigrant children and young people. In doing so, it draws on the first national survey of primary and second-level principals on diversity, supplementing survey data on 1,200 schools with twelve detailed case-studies of schools with differing numbers of immigrant students and varied provision. Combining large-scale survey data with rich information at the school level allows us to provide a more holistic view of school experiences, thus providing a crucial evidence base for future policy development. In this study, we focus on 'newcomer students', that is, children and young people both of whose parents originally come from outside Ireland.

Distribution of Newcomer Students Across Schools

On the basis of our survey data, it is estimated that newcomer students made up approximately 10 per cent of the primary school-going population and 6 per cent of the second-level population in 2007. However, newcomers are quite differently distributed across schools in the two sectors. The vast majority of second-level schools have at least one newcomer student but newcomers make up a relatively modest proportion of students, typically 2 to 9 per cent, within each school. In contrast, the pattern among primary schools is quite different: there is a significant number of schools – four in ten – with no newcomer children, while newcomers are highly represented – making up more than a fifth of the student body – in a tenth of primary schools. The availability of places in schools, coupled with residential patterns, means that newcomers are more highly represented in urban schools and those already catering for more disadvantaged populations. Where schools are oversubscribed, enrolment criteria, such as 'first come, first served' and priority given to siblings of children already in the school, are likely to favour settled communities and thus newcomers will be under-represented in these schools.

Language Needs Among Newcomer Students

The majority of newcomer children and young people in Ireland are from non-English speaking countries. As a result, over half of both primary and second-level principals reported language difficulties among 'nearly all' or 'more than half' of their newcomer students. School principals and teachers indicate that language difficulties have marked consequences for the academic progress and social integration of newcomer students. Withdrawal from regular class for additional English language support is the dominant approach to addressing students' language needs. However, it should be noted that non-specialist classroom and subject teachers play a highly significant role in supporting language skill acquisition since newcomer students spend the bulk of the school day in their regular class. This pattern has implications for the training needs of classroom and subject teachers. Separate intensive base classes are provided in only a small number of schools with high concentrations of newcomers; the study findings indicate some concerns about the implications of separate provision for the longer term social integration of students.

The change in the allocation of language support to schools in May 2007 was seen as having enhanced provision across a number of schools. A number of schools had built up a dedicated and skilled team of language support teachers. However, many schools reported difficulties in recruiting trained language teachers and commented on the lack of professional development for mainstream teachers. Many language support and mainstream teachers reported difficulties in acquiring books and other materials suitable for older students. Lack of access to translation and interpretation services was also seen as hindering school contact with parents.

Academic Progress Among Newcomer Students

The majority of primary and second-level principals report that academic achievement levels among newcomer students are at least as good as those among Irish students, although lack of language competency is seen as adversely impacting on the achievement of some newcomer students. Newcomer students, especially those in second-level schools, are generally seen as hard-working, motivated about their schoolwork and as having high educational aspirations. Interestingly, newcomer students have more positive academic experiences in schools with a more positive climate, that is, with positive relations between teachers, students and parents.

Generally, school principals consider more could be done to ensure the Irish educational system is fully inclusive. Curriculum and textbooks are not seen as taking adequate account of diversity, although the flexibility of the primary curriculum is viewed more positively in this regard. Furthermore, the vast majority would like to see more professional development on intercultural education for teachers. The study highlights the importance of a whole-school approach to intercultural education, involving both mainstream and specialist teachers.

Social Integration Among Newcomer Students

Enrolling in an Irish school requires adaptation not only to schoolwork but to a new social setting. Many schools have put in place specific social supports for newcomer students (for example, having a designated staff member) while others use existing structures (such as the pastoral care team) to address their needs. Language support teachers operate as an important source of social as well as academic support for newcomers. Language difficulties are seen as impacting on the initial transition period for newcomer students. However, newcomer students find most Irish students and teachers friendly. Both teachers and students comment on some difficulties within the social sphere. Newcomers are often seen as socialising among themselves, with some reporting difficulties in making Irish friends. In addition, some newcomers had experienced bullying on the grounds of nationality or ethnicity, but, as is the case with Irish children, were generally reluctant to report bullying incidents to school staff. As with academic progress, social integration appears to be enhanced by a more positive school climate.

Implications for Policy Development

The recent nature of immigration to Ireland provides an opportunity to foster the long-term development of newcomer children and young people. Effective support at this stage will help to avoid the sorts of social segregation experienced in other countries. Primary and second-level schools have put in place a range of innovative academic and social supports for newcomers, often relying on the voluntary commitment of staff to do so. The study highlights a number of areas which would further enhance provision for newcomer students in Irish schools. First, language support provision would benefit from a greater emphasis on combining withdrawal and within-class support, flexibility (e.g. tapering) in resource allocation, training and support for specialist and mainstream teachers, and access to suitable teaching resources and materials. Second, language support within the school needs to be situated within the wider context, in terms of language support for the adult population and access to translation/interpretation services for schools. Third, social integration is likely to benefit from the promotion of intercultural awareness within and outside schools, consistent practice regarding bullying, and the use of student mentors to counter bullying.

The period since this study was conducted has seen a rapidly changing economic and policy climate. A number of recent measures, including changes in the criteria for allocating language support teachers, may negatively impact on the educational experiences of newcomers. Recessionary conditions may prompt net emigration but, such was the scale of inward migration, it is clear that Irish society will remain culturally diverse for the foreseeable future. In the context of scarce resources, it is important that there is no perceived trade-off between the needs of newcomer and Irish students. Our findings clearly indicate that supporting more differentiated teaching methods and promoting a positive school climate would benefit newcomer and Irish students alike.

1. Introduction and Context for the Study

1.1 Introduction

The past fifteen years have seen the transformation of Ireland from a country of net emigration to one of net immigration. As a result, Irish society has become more diverse in terms of nationality, language, ethnicity and religious affiliation, and these changes are now clearly reflected in the composition of the vast majority of schools at both primary and post-primary levels. Previous Irish research has highlighted the experiences of students during the initial phase of immigration (see, for example, Devine, 2005) as well as the experiences of specific groups, such as unaccompanied minors (see Ward, 2004). However, because of a lack of national data, very little is known at the national level about school provision for newcomer (immigrant) children or about the educational experiences of newcomer children in schools in Ireland. Furthermore, little is known about the experiences of schools in dealing with a more diverse student intake.

This study represents the first large-scale national research conducted on school experiences regarding provision for newcomer students and, therefore, provides a strong evidence base for future policy development in intercultural education. It draws on a national survey of primary and second-level school principals, complementing this information with detailed case-studies of schools with varying proportions of newcomers. The main objectives of the study are:

1. To analyse the distribution of newcomers across schools and the characteristics of schools with different proportions of newcomers;
2. To document the current mode of provision for language support, the perceived language needs of newcomer students, and the issues involved in addressing their needs;
3. To examine the perceived suitability of the existing curriculum and teaching materials for educating a diverse student population;
4. To document the social supports put in place by schools for newcomers and the perceived adequacy of such supports in fostering social integration;
5. To examine the implications of the study findings for future policy development.

In the remainder of this chapter, we place our study in the context of recent trends in immigration and the profile of newcomers to Ireland. The second chapter locates our research within the context of existing international studies on the school experiences of newcomer children and young people. The methodology used in the study is described in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 presents for the first time national figures on the proportion of newcomer students across different school types, and considers the characteristics of schools that have more newcomer students relative to those who have fewer newcomer students, paying particular attention to school level characteristics and the nature of student composition. Chapter 5 examines the settling-in process for newcomer students, outlining the challenges associated with arriving to a school in Ireland, and considers social integration between newcomer and Irish students. Chapter 6 presents information on the nature of language support provision and staff perceptions of different forms of language support within primary and post-primary schools. Chapter 7 begins by considering the academic orientation of newcomer students relative to Irish students and then highlights the implications of a more diverse student population for curriculum and teaching. Finally, Chapter 8 summarises the main findings of the study and highlights the implications of our findings for policy development.

1.2 Recent Migration Experience – An Overview

With the exceptional economic growth of the last decade, Ireland has been transformed from a country of emigration to one of immigration, and non-Irish immigrants have come to outnumber returning Irish emigrants. In this chapter we begin by considering recent trends in migration, where the immigrants came from and how this has affected the national composition of the population of Ireland. We consider the conditions under which various immigrants can enter, live and work in Ireland. We discuss the social and economic impact of immigration. We consider the age profile of non-Irish nationals, their English language ability, their ethnicity, their educational qualifications, their position in the Irish labour market and their spatial distribution. We review evidence on the attitudes of the Irish population to immigrants and immigration, and the experience of migrants themselves, and then discuss Irish policy responses to migration and integration. Finally, we discuss education policy and how it relates to migrants.

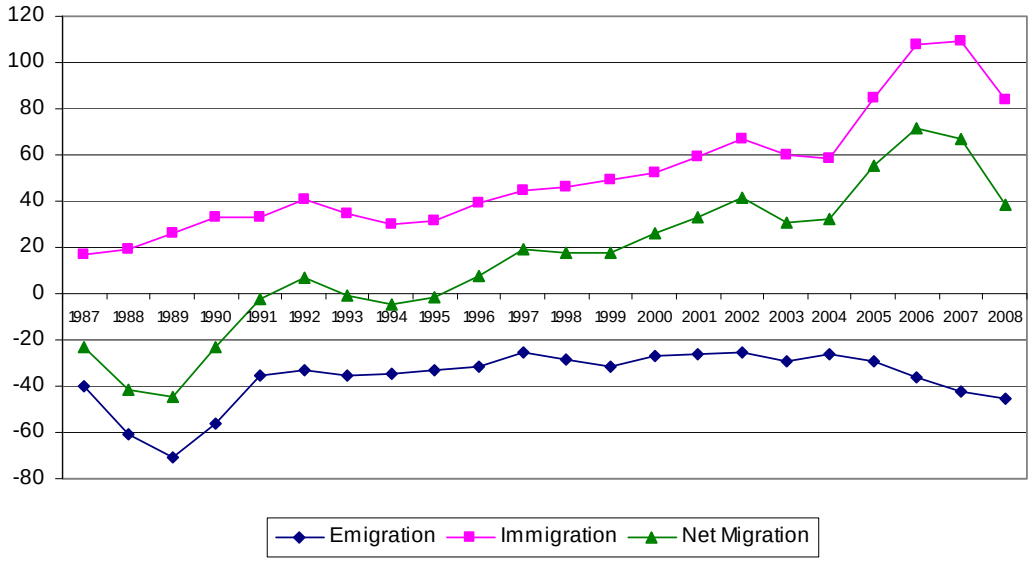
Throughout the chapter there is an important distinction between migration flows and the number of immigrants (i.e. those born outside Ireland) and non-Irish nationals, those who do not have Irish nationality. These are not synonymous: many immigrants, as we will see, were returning Irish, not non-Irish nationals. In general, the information we have is more robust concerning migration flows and the number of immigrants, but for many questions the population of interest is actually non-Irish nationals currently living in Ireland. A second important distinction is between non-Irish nationals and ethnic minorities. Most non-Irish nationals are White, though a significant minority are non-White. Non-Whites may face particular challenges as they are visibly different from the

host population.[1] In general, this chapter uses the most recent data available for describing trends – either 2007, the year of the surveys, or 2008. In some cases, where more detailed information and a larger sample is preferable, the most up-to-date source is the *2006 Census of Population.*

1.2.1 FROM EMIGRATION TO IMMIGRATION

The economic boom resulted in an increase in employment of 912,000, or 77 per cent, between 1993 and 2007, and the emergence of widespread labour shortages. This has attracted large numbers of immigrants to Ireland, on a scale previously unknown in the country's history.

Figure 1.1: Emigration, Immigration and Net Migration (Thousands) 1987-2008*



Source: CSO *Population and Migration Estimates*, April 2008 and earlier releases.
Note: *Year runs from April to April in the population and migration estimates. So, for example, the 1987 figure shown refers to the period April 1986 to April 1987, following CSO convention. Figures for 2008 are preliminary.

Figure 1.1 shows the change from net emigration in the late 1980s to net immigration from the mid-1990s onwards. In 1987, 23,000 more people left than entered the country (40,000 left while 17,000 came in). In the early 1990s, the outflows and inflows were almost in balance. However, from 1996 onwards net migration has made a positive contribution to Ireland's population growth. Net migration increased from 8,000 per annum in 1996 to a peak of almost 72,000 per annum in 2006. Since then, net migration has fallen, particularly between 2007 and 2008, to just under 40,000 per annum in 2008. While migration is notoriously difficult to predict, most commentators expect net migration to fall markedly in the 2009-2010 period (e.g. Barrett *et al.*, 2008).

Table 1.1 presents information on the national composition of the Irish population in 2006. In 2006 just over 10 per cent of the population, or

[1]In many countries there are significant ethnic minority groups who were born in their host country (second generation). This is not the case in Ireland, where the non-White Irish population is negligible.

almost 420,000 people, were foreign nationals (see Table 1.1). Non-Irish are typically divided into four groups. The largest non-Irish group, UK nationals, have been resident here for longer than the other groups, with significant numbers having been in Ireland since the 1970s and 1980s, though the majority migrated in the 1990s. EU15 nationals (excluding UK and Ireland) are people from the 15 states comprising the EU before May 2004, namely: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Portugal. A majority arrived in the period 2001-2006, though many also migrated in the 1990s. The third group is EU16 to EU25 Accession State nationals, that is, nationals of: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. This group saw the largest growth between 2002 and 2006, reflecting the accession of these states to the EU in 2004 (see Table 1.1). The 'Rest of the World' category is a diverse group of non-EU nationals; in Table 1.1 they are further broken down into 'Other European', 'USA', 'African', 'Asian' and 'Other' nationalities.

Table 1.1 shows that of all non-Irish nationals, 276,000 or two-thirds were nationals of other EU countries (including the UK), and 144,000 or one-third came from outside the EU25. This compares to 224,000 non-Irish nationals in 2002, of which 133,000 or 60 per cent came from other EU countries and 91,000 or 40 per cent from outside the EU15.

Table 1.1: Total Population in 2002 and 2006 Classified by Nationality

Nationality	2002	%	2006	%
Irish	**3,584,975**	**92.9**	**3,706,683**	**88.8**
Non-Irish EU Nationals				
UK	103,476	2.7	112,548	2.7
Other EU15	29,960	0.8	42,693	1.0
EU16 to EU25 Accession States	-	-	120,534	2.9
Total EU	**133,436**	**3.5**	**275,775**	**6.6**
Rest of the World (non-EU)				
Other European	23,105	0.6	24,425	0.6
USA	11,384	0.3	12,475	0.3
Africa	20,981	0.5	35,326	0.8
Asia	21,779	0.6	46,952	1.1
Other nationalities	11,236	0.3	22,422	0.5
Multi/No nationality	3,187	0.1	3,676	0.1
Not stated	48,412	1.3	44,279	1.1
Total Non Irish*	**224,261**	**5.8**	**419,733**	**10.1**
Total Population	**3,858,495**	**100.0**	**4,172,013**	**100.0**

*Excludes "no nationality" and "not stated".
Note: The Census counts 'persons usually resident and present in the State on census night'. Some commentators believe the non-Irish population may be underestimated, even by the Census.

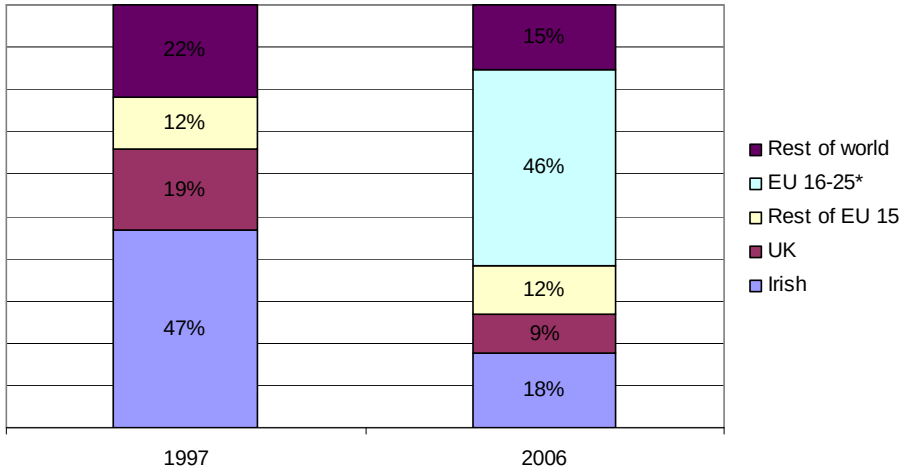
1.2.2 NATIONAL GROUPS MIGRATING TO IRELAND

In recent years, migratory flows to Ireland have become less dominated by return Irish migration and more dominated by migration from the new EU member states. In 1991 about two-thirds of immigrants, 22,600 out of 33,300, were Irish people returning home. By 1997 returning Irish migrants

accounted for just under half of the gross inflow of 44,400, and by 2006 they had fallen to under one-fifth of the gross inflow of 107,800.

Figure 1.2 compares the composition of migration flows to Ireland in 1997 and in 2006 and shows the dominance of migration from the ten new EU Member States in 2007. Nationals from the new EU Member States enjoy almost full EU rights in Ireland, since along with Sweden and the UK this country was one of just three EU15 countries to allow them full access to the labour market.

Figure 1.2: Estimated Immigration Flows Classified by Nationality, 1997 and 2006



Source: CSO (2003, 2007), Population and Migration Estimates.
Notes: 1997 refers to the period April 1996 to April 1997; 2006 to the period April 2005 to April 2006, following CSO convention.
*Prior to 2005 data for EU16-25 were included in the 'Rest of World' category. 2006 is used in preference to 2007 in this figure to be consistent with the nationality classification from the Census (i.e. Table 1.1). 2007 population and migration estimates include Romania and Bulgaria in the Accession State category (i.e. EU16-27).

1.2.3 NON-EU IMMIGRANTS

While EU immigrants can enter and leave Ireland at will, work here without permission, and enjoy many of the same rights as EU citizens, this is not true of immigrants from outside the EU.[2] Compared to movements from within the EU, immigration from outside the EU is modest ('rest of the world' immigration to Ireland in 2006 accounted for only 15 per cent of the gross inflow). Employment-led immigrants are primarily employment permit holders. Non-employment related immigrants include asylum applicants, students, family members and dependents of both Irish and EEA nationals as well as non-Irish and non-EEA nationals.[3] It is

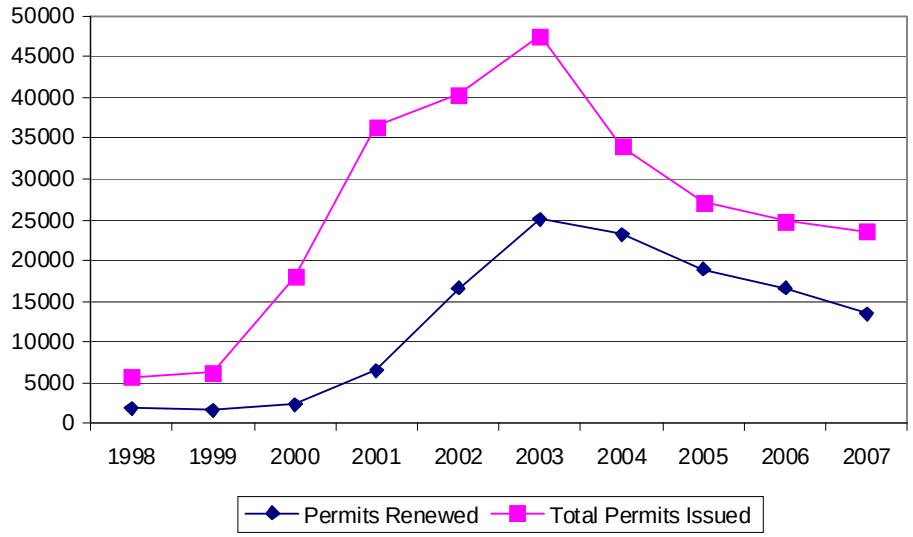
[2] At present the more restrictive work permit regime continues to apply to nationals of the new EU accession states: Romania and Bulgaria.
[3] The European Economic Area (EEA) comprises all EU States plus Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. Note that, although a person may enter on non-economically active grounds, this may change with time. For example, an asylum seeker may be granted refugee status or the spouse of a work permit holder may secure a work permit of his or her own. Students may also be subsequently granted a work permit.

reasonable to assume that most illegal immigrants come to Ireland with an intention to work.

1.2.4 LABOUR MIGRANTS: EMPLOYMENT PERMIT HOLDERS

For the last ten years, the majority of non-EEA nationals coming to Ireland to take up work were work permit holders. The total number of employment permits issued (including new permits and renewals) increased by 800 per cent from around 6,000 in 1999 to 48,000 in 2003. However, as Figure 1.3 shows, there was a substantial fall in the number issued in 2004 as nationals of the New Member States no longer required work permits after 1 May 2004. Government policy now strongly favours employers sourcing their migrant workers from within the enlarged EU. In 2007, 23,600 work permits were issued, including almost 13,500 renewals.

Figure 1.3: Employment Permits Issued and Renewed, 1998-2007



Source: Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.
Note: Includes work permits, spousal work permits, group permits, green cards and intra-company transfers. These figures do not include students with permission to work while engaged in education.

In 2004 it was estimated that there were up to 21,270 registered non-EEA students in Ireland and approximately half of these came from China (Ruhs, 2005). Until April 2005 all non-EEA students could access the Irish labour market. Now only students who are pursuing courses which are of at least one year's duration and which lead to a 'recognised qualification' may enter the Irish labour market (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, December 2004).

No estimates are available of the number of dependents of non-EU nationals who come to Ireland to join family members.

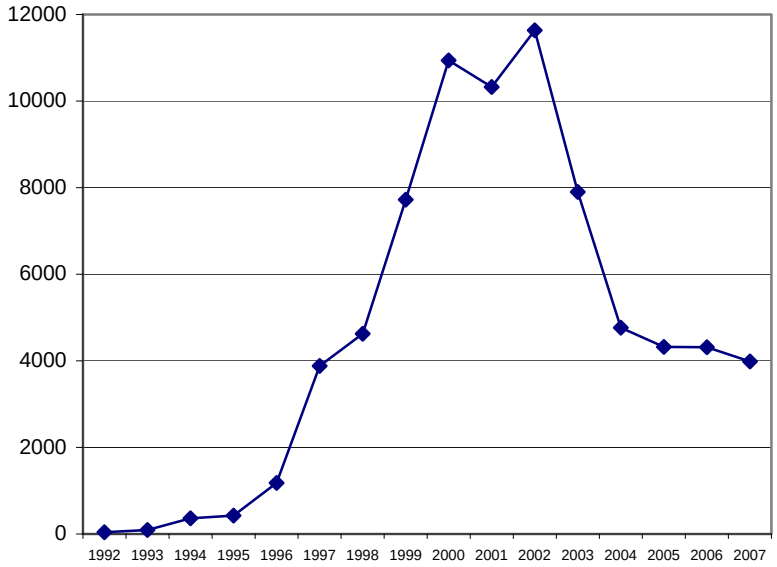
1.2.5 ASYLUM SEEKERS

Applications for asylum began to build up from a very low base of 39 in 1992 to around 8,000 by the end of the decade. The dramatic increase in the number of applications continued into the new century and reached a peak of 11,634 in 2002 (Figure 1.4). Indeed the most urgent challenge to

policy makers in the 1990s was to establish a structure for processing asylum applications, as existing structures were completely overwhelmed by the volume of applications and waiting lists became very long. The 1996 Refugee Act was introduced to codify the provisions for dealing with asylum applications, though was not implemented fully until 2000.

The number of asylum applications made in Ireland fell by almost two-thirds from the 2002 high of 11,634 to around 4,300 in 2005 and then further to just under 4,000 in 2007 (see Figure 1.4). Asylum applicants may not take up work in Ireland and if they are unable to source accommodation from their own funds, they must reside in direct provision centres where all food and board costs are met by the State. These direct provision centres are distributed throughout the country and vary considerably in size. Asylum seekers receive a small weekly allowance from the State (€19.10 for adults, €9.60 for children) They can also avail of 'exceptional needs payments', 'urgent needs payments', and 'the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance'. Following the introduction of the Habitual Residency Condition, introduced by the Department of Social and Family Affairs, asylum applicants arriving since 1 May 2004 are not entitled to Child Benefit and other State benefits. Asylum seekers can apply for medical cards and can avail of medical screening and of other sundry services. Most asylum applications in Ireland are unsuccessful. For example in 2004, the number of positive decisions represented 8.7 per cent of the total number of decisions issued in that year.[4]

Figure 1.4: Number of Asylum Applications 1992-2007



Source: Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner.

[4] *Source*: Quinn *et al.*, 2008, based on figures from the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and the Refugee Appeals Tribunal. The calculation of the refugee recognition rate is based on the number of cases processed to the stage where the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform is in a position to grant, or not to grant, a declaration of refugee status. The rate of recognition of cases that go to appeal is higher (Quinn *et al.*, 2008).

A voluntary EU repatriation service is provided to destitute EU12 nationals (members of the accession States plus Bulgaria and Romania) by the Reception and Integration Agency on an agency basis for the Department of Social and Family Affairs.

Unaccompanied minors or separated children are, for the most part, children seeking asylum who have been separated from their parents/guardians, as distinct from the children of asylum seekers who are living with their parents. Joyce (2008a, b and c), citing data from the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner, records 124 unaccompanied minor applications for asylum in 2004, 96 in 2005, 131 in 2006 and 91 in 2007.[5] Most separated children are from Africa, from countries like Somalia, Nigeria and DR Congo, though also Afghanistan. Over 80 per cent are aged between 15-16 years, just under 20 per cent 14-15 years and very few under 14 years (Mooten, 2006). Unaccompanied minors are formally under the care of the Health Service Executive (HSE),[6] and are mostly accommodated in specially designated hostels. Estimates for 2008 are that around 200 separated children were under the care of the HSE Social Work Team for Separated Children Seeking Asylum, though this team is only responsible for children within the East Coast Care area. Unfortunately, figures were unavailable for children in other care areas. The Separated Children Education Service offers an education advice, referral and support service to separated children living within the City of Dublin VEC (CDVEC) area. Depending on their age, many unaccompanied minors are placed in standard second-level school provision. Programmes for older children aged 16-18 years are available in certain CDVEC schools.

Despite not being recognised as refugees under the Geneva Convention, asylum seekers are sometimes allowed to reside in Ireland on other exceptional grounds. For example, an unsuccessful asylum applicant may be granted leave to remain on, inter alia, humanitarian grounds, by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform. During 2005 the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, under a special Irish Born Child (IBC) Scheme, approved almost 18,000 applications for permission to remain in Ireland based on the parentage of an Irish citizen child. Of these 16,700 applications were approved (Quinn, 2006). This was very much an exceptional matter. Persons born in Ireland no longer have an automatic right of 'citizenship'.

Finally, in addition to the above categories, since 1998 under the Refugee Resettlement Programme Ireland has agreed to admit, on a yearly basis, a number of 'special case' refugees (and their close relatives) who do not come under the scope of the Geneva Convention of 1951. 'Programme Refugees', in contrast to asylum applicants, are admitted for the purpose of permanent resettlement rather than for temporary protection. Some 735

[5] Note not all unaccompanied minors now apply for asylum status as a means of regularising their status, so applications for asylum may be an underestimate of flows into the country.

[6] Media reports citing figures released by the HSE stated that, in the period 2001 to 2005, some 328 migrant children had gone missing from State care (see Joyce, 2008c), so it is important to note that in 2007/2008, the period of the fieldwork for this study, not all unaccompanied minors resident in Ireland were under the care of the HSE.

persons were approved for resettlement in Ireland under the Programme between 1998 and 2007, and 636 admitted to the State (Quinn *et al.*, 2008).

1.2.6 ILLEGAL RESIDENTS

The number of illegally resident non-Irish nationals in Ireland is not known. Almost no statistics exist on stocks of illegally resident immigrants beyond the number of outstanding deportation orders (8,902). Data on the number of persons refused leave to land (4,893 in 2005) may be indicative of flows of illegal immigrants to Ireland; however, it should be noted that permission to enter Ireland may be refused for a range of reasons. There are two categories of illegal immigrant: persons who enter the State illegally and continue to reside illegally, and persons who enter legally and whose residence status later becomes irregular[7] (Quinn and Hughes, 2005). Illegal immigrants have no legal entitlements, although any person in Ireland can expect to have their basic human rights protected by the Irish courts. For example, all children resident in Ireland have a right to free education, regardless of their immigration status (see Section 1.6 for further discussion).

1.3 The Characteristics of Non-Irish Nationals

1.3.1 THE AGE STRUCTURE OF NON-IRISH NATIONALS

Table 1.2 presents the age structure of non-Irish nationals compared to the existing population, using data from the 2006 Census. This shows that, compared to the total population, the non-Irish national population is highly skewed towards the working age population (25-44 years), with fewer persons under 20 years. Of the approximately 420,000 non-Irish in 2006, 12.6 per cent or 53,000 are aged between 0-14 years, compared to 20.6 per cent of the total population; 4.5 per cent of non-nationals are between 15 and 19 years of age, compared to just under 7 per cent of the total population. Over half of all non-Irish nationals are between 25 and 44 years, compared to only 31.7 per cent of the total population.

Table 1.2: Age Structure of Non-Irish Nationals, 2006

	0-14	15-19	20-24	25-44	45-64	65+	ALL
				%			
Total Population	20.6	6.9	7.9	31.7	21.9	11.0	100
Non-Irish Nationals	12.6	4.5	13.5	52.2	13.6	3.6	100

Source: *Census 2006*, Vol. 4: *Usual Residence, Migration, Birthplace and Nationalities*, Table 36.

Given that the focus of this report is on children, Table 1.3 considers the nationalities of non-Irish nationals under 20 years residing in the State in April 2006. The age breakdown in the Census does not correspond exactly to that in the Irish school system but is indicative of the national composition of young people. Note that, given recent migration trends, there is likely to be a greater proportion of EU10 nationals in 2007, when

[7] Data supplied by the Immigrant Council of Ireland show that of the illegally resident migrants it deals with, the breakdown between these two categories is approximately 23 and 77 per cent respectively.

the survey was carried out for this study, than in 2006, when the Census was carried out.

Table 1.3: Nationality of Non-Irish Nationals under 20 Years

Age group	UK	EU15	EU10	OTHER EUROPE	US	AFRICA	ASIA	OTHER NAT.	MULTI-NAT.	ALL Non-Irish
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
0-4 years	19.0	7.4	31.6	5.2	7.0	10.8	11.2	6.5	1.4	100
5-9 years	28.6	5.1	16.8	6.7	6.8	17.8	11.1	6.1	1.0	100
10-14 years	38.6	5.4	12.7	6.3	6.5	13.8	9.3	6.6	0.8	100
15-19 years	34.7	7.1	20.4	6.4	4.5	11.4	8.3	6.7	0.6	100

Source: *Census 2006*, Vol. 4: *Usual Residence, Migration, Birthplace and Nationalities*, Table 36. Excludes 'no nationality' and 'not stated'.

Almost 30 per cent of 5 to 9 year olds are of UK origin; this rises to over one-third in the 10-19 age group. Combined with children of US origin and a proportion of other nationalities (i.e. those from Australia, Canada and New Zealand), about 40 per cent of children are from English-speaking countries. A smaller proportion of non-Irish nationals under 20 years are from other EU countries than is the case for the adult population. From Table 1.1 we see that almost 40 per cent of all non-Irish nationals are from the EU15 or EU10 countries, whereas in Table 1.3 this varies by age group, but is, say, 18 per cent for 5-9 year olds. There are also more African children than Asian children in the 5-19 age group, though fewer Africans than Asians in the whole population (see also Table 1.1).

1.3.2 ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

A crucial factor which has been shown in other countries to affect both the integration and labour market success of immigrants is language ability. No estimates are available on the language skills of immigrants or non-Irish nationals, but we can estimate this from a number of sources. For example, Table 1.1 shows that out of 420,000 non-Irish nationals, 127,000 or 30 per cent are from the UK or the US, though this is likely to be an underestimate of English speakers as it excludes Canadians, Australians, and New Zealanders. O'Connell and McGinnity (2008), in an analysis of a sub-sample of Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) data for 2004, find that around 38 per cent of non-Irish nationals are from English-speaking countries. A reasonable estimate might be that just over one-third of non-Irish nationals are native English speakers; two-thirds do not have English as their first language. Of course, within the group of non-native speakers, language ability may vary substantially. For example, a recent survey of non-EU immigrants (from Africa, Asia and Europe) found 14 per cent of the sample classified themselves as fluent or native English speakers; 28 per cent rated their spoken English language skills as 'very good'; 34 per cent rated their spoken language skills as 'good' and 24 per cent as 'fair' or 'poor'.[8] Respondents rated their written language skills as

[8] Own calculations from the survey "Migrants' experience of racism and discrimination in Ireland".

somewhat weaker, on average, than spoken language skills. Self-rated language skills vary by region of origin; for example, Africans report substantially higher levels of English than non-EU East Europeans, with Asians falling in the middle. This survey is the only source of representative data on the self-rated language skills of adult migrants to date.

1.3.3 ETHNICITY

A common perception is that most non-Irish nationals are non-White. While non-Whites may be more visibly different, it is not the case that they are more numerous. Recently published estimates from the Census 2006, based on the ethnicity classification, are that in April 2006, 88 per cent of the population was White Irish; 6.9 per cent (or 289,000) White Other (non-Irish); 1.1 per cent (or 44,300) Black; 1.3 per cent (or 52,300) Asian and 1.1 per cent (46, 400) Other/Mixed Ethnicity. In total, this leaves about one-third of non-Irish (143,000 out of 432,000) as non-White.[9]

1.3.4 EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

While, in general, non-Irish immigrants have a higher level of education than the native population (e.g. Barrett *et al.*, 2006), much of this is a demographic effect caused by the older age profile of the Irish population. Many older Irish men and women ceased their education at primary level. Comparing Irish and non-Irish nationals aged between 15 and 44 years, the differences largely disappear (CSO, 2008). There are marked differences between nationality groups, however. For example, taking the 15-44 age group, while nearly three-quarters of EU15 nationals (excluding UK and Ireland) and over half of all non-EU nationals have third-level education, this is true of less than one-third of Accession State Nationals (EU15 to EU25). Around 40 per cent of Irish nationals in this age group have third-level education (CSO, 2008). Immigration into Ireland is not a predominantly low-skilled phenomenon, like in the US and some other EU countries.

Barrett *et al.* (2006) also find that non-Irish immigrants are not all employed in occupations that fully reflect their education levels. McGinnity *et al.* (2006) find that almost two-thirds of work permit holders they sampled reported being overqualified for their current job. Immigrants also suffer a wage penalty: Barrett and McCarthy (2007) found that, controlling for education and years of work experience, non-Irish immigrants earn 19 per cent less than native Irish.[10] They also find substantial differences in the wage penalty between groups of immigrants. While immigrants from English-speaking countries suffer a small penalty which is not significantly different from zero, immigrants from non-English speaking countries experience a wage gap of 32 per cent. Immigrants from the EU10 experience a penalty of 45 per cent.

[9] Many of those of Black ethnicity have African nationality, though there are significant numbers who are UK and US nationals, for example. This is also true of Asians.

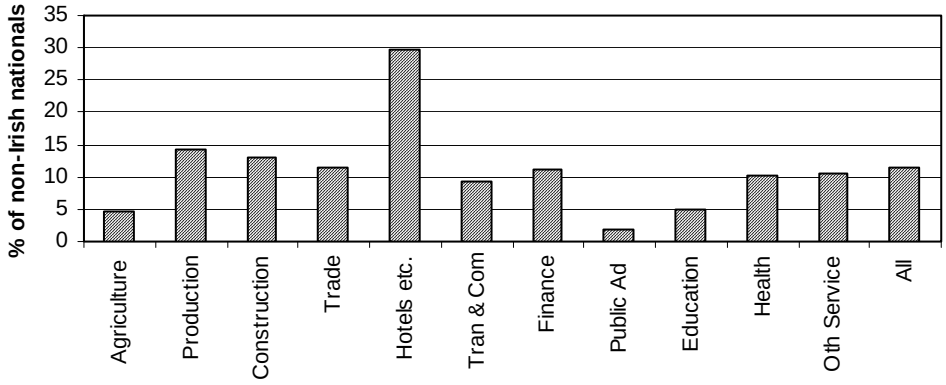
[10] Barrett and McCarthy (2007) define native Irish as Irish nationals who were born in Ireland and immigrants as those born outside Ireland with non-Irish nationality.

Barrett *et al.* (2006) argue that the over-qualification of immigrants may be linked to the fact that qualifications attained abroad may not be recognised. To counter the problem of qualifications recognition, the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, established in 1999, set up the 'Qualifications Recognition Ireland' (QRI) service. QRI provides advice on international qualifications and their equivalence to Irish qualifications, and their work is intended to facilitate improved matching of qualifications and skills to jobs in the Irish labour market.[11]

Non-Irish nationals are employed throughout the labour market in Ireland. To illustrate this, Figure 1.5 presents the share of non-Irish nationals by sector in 2007. Overall, almost 12 per cent of the labour force in Ireland was made up of non-Irish nationals. Non-Irish nationals are particularly concentrated in hotels and restaurants, where they make up almost one-third of the sector. They are also overrepresented, relative to their overall share, in construction and production (manufacturing) sectors. In other respects, immigrants are well spread through the labour market, but with very low proportions in agriculture and public administration. It is interesting to note in the context of this report that the proportion of non-Irish nationals working in education is also very low. Others have noted that the teaching profession in Ireland, especially at primary school level, "is less culturally and ethnically diverse than is the case in other OECD countries" (DES, 2007, p. 7).

In terms of variation by nationality, EU15 nationals (excluding Ireland and the UK) are disproportionately found in hotels and restaurants, and business and finance, compared to Irish nationals. There are high proportions of EU10 (Accession State) nationals in manufacturing, construction and hotels/restaurants. Nationals from the rest of the world are found particularly in hotels and restaurants and in the health sector (CSO, 2008, Table 4).

Figure 1.5: Per Cent of Non-Irish Nationals in Employment by Sector, 2007



Source: Quarterly National Household Survey, 2007, Quarter 3.

[11] Foreign qualifications are also recognised for further study. See www.qualificationsrecognition.ie for more details of their role.

1.3.5 THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF NON-IRISH NATIONALS

The main factors influencing the spatial distribution of immigrants in Ireland are the location of jobs for labour migrants who make up the vast majority of migrants, and the price/affordability of housing, where this is a factor.

Census 2006 revealed there were non-Irish nationals living in every town in Ireland in April of that year. While the majority (over 60 per cent) were living in cities and large towns (with over 10,000 inhabitants), non-Irish nationals were also living in small and medium sized towns (see Table 1.4). This is linked to the industries in which these workers were employed, with construction and services, particularly hotels and restaurants, featuring strongly. Although one in four non-Irish were found to be living in rural areas (see Table 1.4), two thirds of these were UK nationals; excluding the UK, only one in seven non-Irish nationals were living in rural areas (CSO, 2008).

Table 1.4: Irish and Non-Irish Nationals Living in Cities, Towns and Rural Areas

	Irish Percentage Share	Non-Irish Percentage Share
Urban Areas	**58.4**	**76.0**
Cities and Suburbs	32.7	42.7
Towns over 10,000	14.0	18.5
Towns 5,000 - 9,999	6.3	7.9
Towns 3,000 - 4,999	5.4	6.9
Towns 1,500 - 2,999	2.9	3.6
Rural Areas	**41.6**	**24.0**
State	**100**	**100**

Source: CSO, 2008, using 2006 Census data.

In terms of variation between national groups in spatial distribution, the Census report considers EU15 nationals, EU10 nationals and nationals from the rest of the world. Over half of EU15 nationals (excluding UK and Ireland) and nationals from the rest of the world were living in cities and their suburbs. This is generally consistent with international trends of immigrant concentration described in the next chapter. EU10 (Accession State) nationals were more likely to be living in large and medium sized towns than these groups, or indeed than Irish nationals. There was a very small proportion of any of these national groups (EU15, EU10, Rest of the World) living in rural areas, consistent with the overall pattern for non-Irish nationals (CSO, 2008). These distribution patterns are likely to have implications for the distribution of newcomer children across schools.

It is also clear from the 2006 Census that non-Irish nationals differ markedly from Irish nationals in the nature of housing occupancy. Aside from UK nationals, who are more similar to Irish nationals, non-Irish nationals are much less likely to own their house and much more likely to live in rented accommodation than Irish nationals (CSO, 2008). For example, almost 80 per cent of Accession State nationals were in rented accommodation. Some of this accommodation is rented from local authorities, but the majority of non-Irish nationals live in private rented accommodation. While much media attention had been given to spiralling house prices in Ireland, and there had been a rapid increase in house prices,

Fahey and Duffy (2007) argued that the real problems in the Irish housing system are in the private rented sector (and social housing). Here there are particular problems of affordability, and it is likely that the high cost of housing has a strong impact on the spatial distribution of non-nationals in Ireland. A recent report commissioned by the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) notes that while many migrants are living in reasonably good quality rented accommodation and there is little evidence of residential segregation in Ireland, it is a cause for concern that migrants are overly concentrated in the private rented sector, and localised 'clustering' of migrant communities may develop into segregation (Silke *et al.*, 2008). The report also finds evidence of increased homelessness among migrants, linked to the habitual residence condition (HRC) for the receipt of housing benefits (see discussion below). The report recommends introducing incentives for migrants to buy houses, and a review of the benefit regulations for migrants.

1.4 The social and Economic Impact of Immigration

1.4.1 THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION

Despite the difficulties that some immigrants encounter in integrating into the labour market discussed above, the economic impact of immigration in Ireland is judged to be positive. Overall, Ireland gained significant economic benefits from the inflow of immigrants that occurred up to May 2004. Barrett, Bergin and Duffy (2006) estimate that the immigrant inflow in the five years up to 2003 increased GNP by 2.6 per cent and GNP per head by 0.4 per cent. If all of the immigrants had been employed in occupations appropriate to their levels of qualification, both figures would have been about a half percentage point higher. In addition, the increase in the supply of highly qualified immigrants up to that time helped to reduce earnings inequality.

The economic benefits that accumulated up to 2004 occurred in a policy environment in which work permits were issued to overcome skill and labour shortages and to maintain economic growth. Nationals of the ten new EU Member States who joined the EU in May 2004 have been allowed unrestricted access to the Irish labour market. This has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of immigrants from these countries, many of whom are working in low-paid jobs. This could mean that the reduction in inequality that occurred following the earlier immigrations may not be maintained.

1.4.2 THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION

For the most part, legislation does not distinguish between nationals and legally resident non-Irish nationals in the provision of services. This situation was reviewed ahead of the accession of ten new EU Member States in 2004 and a Habitual Residence Condition (HRC) was introduced to protect the Irish social welfare system in the event of large-scale migration from the accession states. The basic requirement for a person to be deemed 'habitually resident' is to have been resident in Ireland or the UK for a continuous period of two years before making an application for social welfare. The implementation of the HRC has been problematic, however, and the European Commission initiated an 'infringement procedure' over the extent to which benefits were being denied to EU citizens. There was a relaxation in the implementation of the HRC towards

the end of 2005, with the effect that EEA nationals with a work history in the State could access benefits under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance scheme. Restrictions on Child Benefit and the One-Parent Family Allowance were also lifted, with the effect that all workers, whether EEA or third-country nationals, may now apply for Child Benefit, and all EEA workers may apply for the One-Parent Family Allowance.

In terms of the impact of immigration on health services, media attention in 2004-2005 centred on the pressure put on maternity services by large numbers of non-EU nationals arriving in Ireland to give birth at short notice. However, this provides only a partial picture of the pressures and impacts of substantial immigration on the Irish health service, and actions taken to address these. The HSE's National Intercultural Health Strategy provides a comprehensive framework within which the health and care needs of people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds are addressed, together with the learning, training and support needs of staff around delivering a culturally competent service (HSE, 2008).

It is also important to note that immigrants in Ireland are providers as well as users of the Irish health service and the Irish health sector is dependent on continued immigration to function effectively. For example, in December 2005, of the almost 14,700 doctors holding full registration with the Medical Council in Ireland, 20 per cent had overseas addresses. Statistics from the CSO show that the proportion of other healthcare workers in the Irish workforce, primarily nurses, has increased substantially in recent years. While only 2 per cent of the health and social care workforce were foreign nationals in 1998, this proportion had increased to 8 per cent by 2004 and 16.5 per cent by 2006 (Barrett and Rust, 2009).[12]

1.5 The Experience of Racism and Irish Attitudes to Immigrants

Ireland has relatively robust legislative provisions around racism and discrimination. Measures such as the Employment Equality Acts, 1998 to 2007, and the Equal Status Acts, 2000 to 2004, provide important protection for immigrants in the labour market and in accessing goods and services, and bodies such as the Equality Authority and the Equality Tribunal have an important role in implementing the legislation.[13] The Garda Racial and Intercultural Office was set up within the Irish police force to develop and monitor strategies to deal with ethnic and racial diversity. The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism was established in 1998, with the role of monitoring and responding to racism in Ireland. The NCCRI was also closely involved in policy development in the area, and drafted the National Action Plan Against Racism (NAPR), which the government launched in January 2005. From a policy perspective, 'interculturalism' rather than 'multiculturalism' has been adopted as an underlying principle:

> *The term 'multiculturalism' is sometimes used to describe a society in which different cultures live side by side without much interaction … the term 'interculturalism' expresses a belief that we all become personally enriched by*

[12] 'Health and social care workforce' includes nurses/midwives, nurses' aids/care assistants and 'other health associate professionals'.
[13] For details of the legislation and the role of the Equality Authority, see www.equality.ie.

> *coming in contact with and experiencing other cultures, and that people of different cultures can and should be able to engage with each other and learn from each other (NCCA, 2006, pp. i-ii).*

Empirical research on racism in Ireland has been limited, partly due to measurement difficulties. McGinnity *et al.* (2006) conducted the first large-scale nationally representative study of immigrants' subjective experiences of racism and discrimination in Ireland. The survey measured perceived discrimination in a range of different situations – in the workplace, in public places, in shops/restaurants, in commercial transactions and in contact with institutions, among a sample of work permit holders and asylum seekers. All of the respondents were non-EU adult migrants, representing a broad range of nationalities from North and South/Central Africa, from Asia and from Eastern Europe. Using a questionnaire developed in Sweden to measure discrimination, adapted for the Irish case, the questions measure discrimination on the basis of national/ethnic origin as perceived by the respondent. In general, the report found marked differences between regional groups in the experience of discrimination, with Black South/Central Africans experiencing the most discrimination of all the groups studied – at work, in public places, in shops/restaurants and in contact with Irish institutions, even after controlling for differences in education, length of stay and gender. Asians are more likely than East Europeans to experience discrimination in public places, and less likely to experience discrimination in commercial transactions, and from institutions. These findings suggest that the overall experience of discrimination may be strongly related to race and national origin.

This report also found that asylum seekers are much more likely to experience discrimination than work permit holders. This is true for all the domains which are relevant to both groups: public places, shops, restaurants and institutions, even after controlling for national/ethnic origin. The authors suggest that this may be to do with Irish attitudes to the two groups: work permit holders are seen as 'legitimate', paying taxes and contributing to the economy. Asylum seekers are seen by some as a burden on the State, and some media reports have suggested that their claims are not genuine. Unfortunately, there are no systematic studies on attitudes towards the two groups, just more general studies of attitudes towards immigrants (see below).

This survey was part of a wider project assessing discrimination in twelve EU countries, and follows a broadly similar methodology to these studies (EUMC, 2006). In general, levels of reported discrimination on the grounds of ethnic/national origin tend to be lower in Ireland than in the other EU member states, particularly Southern European countries.

Concerning attitudes of the population *towards* migrants, MacGreil has published two volumes on attitudes to minorities more generally in Ireland (MacGreil, 1996), and there are qualitative chapters in the volume edited by MacLachlan and O'Connell (1996). Comparative European surveys which measure attitudes to minorities, immigrants and migration include the Eurobarometer surveys and a special module of the European Social Survey (2003). While all surveys of this nature face the problem that respondents may wish to conceal racist attitudes, these surveys ask the same questions and use the same methodology in a number of European countries, and are thus highly comparable and useful for monitoring trends

over time. In general, indicators from the European Social Survey suggest that the indigenous population in Ireland is reasonably open to, and tolerant of, immigrants, though over time comparisons using the Eurobarometer indicate that, in recent years, Irish attitudes have converged to the EU average in terms of the perceived limits to cultural and ethnic diversity (see Hughes *et al.*, 2007 for more details of how attitudes in Ireland have changed in recent years). It is interesting in the context of this study that Eurobarometer data indicate particularly positive attitudes to migrants held by young people in Ireland.

1.6 Irish Policies Concerning Migrants: Immigration and Integration Policies

The evolution of Irish migration can be characterised in terms of three phases:

1. Substantial outward migration from before the Famine to the early-1990s;
2. A dramatic increase in inward migration from the mid-1990s to 2004, predominantly return Irish migrants, linked to the economic boom, entailing state policies of a more ad-hoc nature;
3. Since 2004, a phase of more secure, stable and perhaps permanent immigration, dominated by migration from other EU countries (particularly the new accession States), in which the majority of immigrants are likely to be entitled to a more comprehensive package of economic and civil rights than in the previous phase (Hughes *et al.*, 2007).

Arguably migration policy from the mid-1990s to 2004 (phase 2) was of an ad-hoc nature and assumed that migration would be temporary. Policy was driven mainly by economic necessity, with the work permits system primarily oriented towards the needs of employers to meet short-term labour shortages but on a time-limited basis and linked to one employer. The work permit system assumed that permit holders would leave Ireland when their skills were no longer required. Asylum policy was formed rapidly and subject to many revisions, as Irish institutions struggled to cope with the rising volume of asylum applications.

EU enlargement, which resulted in a dramatic increase in labour supply from within the extended borders of the European Union, as well as a decline in the inflow of asylum seekers and returning Irish nationals, heralded a new phase in Irish migration. Since 2004, nationals of the New Member States enjoy broadly the same rights as EU citizens. In particular, they are free to move in and out of Ireland, to be accompanied by their families, and to settle here. This is in contrast to work permit holders whose residence was time-limited and linked explicitly to an employer. Since May 2004, an increasing number of jobs have been filled by nationals of New Member States, and it is government policy that EU nationals will fill most of Ireland's future skills and labour deficits. This policy of sourcing most labour from within the enlarged EU has already clearly impacted on the composition of flows shown in Figure 1.2.

The Employment Permits Act (2006) introduced a new employment permits system that sought to shift the balance of non-EU economic immigrants towards the highly skilled by introducing more selective

migration, and to extend the rights of those immigrants. A system akin to green cards has been introduced for selected high-skilled occupations with salaries above set thresholds.

While these characteristics of the new phase apply most particularly to EU nationals, they are also reflected in other recent changes in Irish immigration policy. A new body named the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) was established in 2005 within the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to streamline the provision of asylum, immigration, citizenship and visa functions formerly spread across the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Department of Foreign Affairs. The Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill (2008) is the first major shift in law in the area since the 1935 Aliens Act. The Bill, which is in the final stages of the legislative process but not yet enacted at the time of writing, codifies issues such as immigration, residency categories, protection and removal from the State. Features include a new visa scheme; the use of biometric data for non-EEA nationals; longer-term residency permits; enhanced detention and deportation powers; a single procedure for asylum application, and new rules for family reunification.

Policy in this new phase of migration has become increasingly focused on integration. A Minister for Integration was appointed in Summer 2007, which shows the prominence integration has now been given by government in the Irish policy context. A recent statement of policy from this Minister, "Statement on Integration Strategy and Diversity Management", envisages a number of actions to facilitate integration.[14] In addition to supporting the recent reforms of immigration policy and citizenship described above, there is a commitment to reducing inordinate delays in the asylum process. Long-term residency rights may be contingent on proficiency of skills in English language, though how adequate training of adults will be provided has not yet been decided. (At the time of writing, a review of adult language provision was completed but not yet published.) The statement of policy also outlined more targeted support for teachers and parents dealing with diversity in schools, which sets social integration in schools in the context of wider integration measures in Ireland. The Minister for Integration will also set up a structure to assist and reflect the changing dynamics of migration into Ireland, and to establish future policy needs, a Ministerial Council on Integration. As noted above, the National Action Plan against Racism (2005-2008) enhanced protections against racism and discrimination, and is integration driven.[15] As well as government policy measures, a wide range of 'bottom up' initiatives at community level aim to promote integration 'on the ground'.

[14] These are summarised in "Migration Nation. Statement on Integration Strategy and Diversity Management", produced in Summer 2008. Most of the following information is derived from this source.

[15] The NCCRI was closed, with effect from December 31st 2008, as a result of cuts imposed by the government in the Budget in October 2008.

1.7 Education Policy and the Children of Imigrants

It is important finally to reflect on education policy and immigration. There exists European legislation on the right to education of immigrant children. The 25 July 1977 Directive of the Council constitutes the first legislative measure of the European Community concerning the education of the children of migrant workers, though while significant it has not yet been transposed in most member states. It relates solely to the children of immigrants from the Member States and includes provision for education adapted to their special needs, the importance of learning the host language, as well as tuition devoted to their mother tongue and culture of origin.

A number of European documents have considered how education systems attempt to integrate immigrant or newcomer students. These have included *Integrating Immigrant Children into Schools in Europe* (2004). In July 2008 a Green Paper, *Migration and Mobility: challenges and opportunities for EU education systems*, was adopted which the Commission hopes will open the debate on how education policies may better address the challenges posed by immigration and internal EU mobility flows. Such documents tend to view school-based measures for immigrant children as part of a wider EU objective, led by the Lisbon Summit, to become a knowledge-based economy and society by 2010. That is, the integration of immigrants in accordance with law is now an important constituent of European Union policy and the education system has been identified as an arena in which integration can occur. While the European Union is gradually adopting a fully consistent policy for asylum and immigration, Ireland and the United Kingdom may do so at their discretion in accordance with Article 3 of the Protocol to the Amsterdam Treaty.

As a result, there are certain conditions which hold for newcomer students in Irish schools. Migrants from outside the EEA (including children) enter and reside in Ireland subject to a range of immigration and residency categories, with specific education rights/entitlements, as described in an earlier Section. All children, including unaccompanied minors and other asylum-seekers, have access to primary and post-primary education, including YouthReach, on the same basis as an Irish citizen but do not have free access to further (PLC) or third-level education or FÁS training programmes. Recognised refugees may receive grants for third-level education but all other non-EU nationals must pay third-level fees, which are often substantially higher than EU fees.

Adult asylum seekers have no right to free full-time education. Asylum seekers (over the age of 18 years) are eligible for language and literacy provision, as well as mother culture supports through the VEC Adult Literacy Service and ESOL programmes, but have no access to free further education (PLC, FÁS) or third-level education.

All children resident in Ireland have the right to access free primary and post-primary education. Restrictions do exist, however, on whether or not non-EU children may come to Ireland and enter the education system in the first place. These may be revised in the light of the expected

Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill, discussed above. Currently, recognised refugees, work permit holders, green card holders and scientific researchers may either bring their children with them or subsequently apply for family reunification.[16] Family members (i.e. spouse and dependants) may accompany a Green Card holder or a scientific researcher on admission into the State or join later subject to normal immigration rules. For other groups of migrants, entitlements regarding bringing children are less clear. In July 2008, new immigration arrangements were published by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform regarding the children of non-EEA students (children of international students). According to the new guidelines, in cases where non-EEA students enrolled their children in State schools and the child was already in education for some or all of the 2007-2008 school year, and the parent can demonstrate that they have partially completed their own course, the child will be permitted to remain in education until the completion of their parents' course, provided that the parents' course completes on or before July 2010.[17] Parents may not enrol in new courses or transfer between courses. Where the parent's course ends in the middle of a school year, the parent's registration cannot be extended solely for the purpose of allowing the child to finish the year. First-time students presenting for registration with the Garda National Immigration Bureau from Autumn 2008 were asked to confirm that they are neither accompanied by children nor do they intend to have their children join them later on. If they are unable to meet this requirement, they will not be registered unless the placement of the child in education has been expressly approved in writing by the Department of Education and Science or the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

1.8 Summary

Ireland has become considerably more diverse in the last 15 years. EU enlargement in 2004 also impacted considerably on Irish migration flows, shifting the balance towards EU immigrants. Summarising the composition of non-Irish nationals in 2006, two-thirds of them come from the enlarged EU; two-thirds are non-English speaking; less than one-third of them are non-White.

EU nationals in Ireland have permanent resident rights, can move freely into and out of Ireland, and have access to education at all levels. Non-EU nationals have more restricted access to Ireland. Non-EU labour migrants increasingly now need to be highly-skilled, programme refugees or need to apply for refugee status.

Research on the labour market has shown considerable evidence of over-qualification among non-English speaking immigrants; in other words, many are highly educated but not working in jobs commensurate with their skills. Migrants are also concentrated in particular labour market

[16] See "Family Reunification for Work Permit Holders, Green Card Holders and Scientific Researchers" available at http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/print/WP07000160 for further information.

[17] "Children of Non-EEA Students attending State Schools" information note, http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/WP08000025.

sectors. Language has emerged as a key issue in terms of labour market integration. Immigrants tend to be concentrated in urban areas and live in rented accommodation. Research on the experience of racism has found that Black South/Central Africans are much more likely to experience racism than White East Europeans, with Asians in a more intermediate position.

Following a period of somewhat ad-hoc, short-term policymaking, this chapter argues that Irish immigration policy has now entered a new phase, characterised by a longer term perspective. There is also an increased concern, accompanied by policy development, with the area of integration, along with recognition of the fact that a holistic approach is needed in relation to the integration of migrants, though this concern is tempered somewhat by the recent closure of the NCCRI and cuts in funding to the Equality Authority.

Recent inward migration has thrown up a range of challenges to, and opportunities for, existing institutions in Ireland – for example, the health service, the housing system and the social welfare system, some of which were discussed in this chapter. The challenges to schools are the main focus of this study.

2. IMPLICATIONS OF MIGRATION FOR HOST SCHOOLS – A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 explored recent migration trends in Ireland. This chapter reviews existing international and Irish research to highlight the potential implications of migration for host schools. Recent trends of globalisation and migration have important consequences for schools as they are required to cater for the complexities involved in integrating newcomer students into the education systems of host countries (Suarez-Orozco and Boalian Qin-Hilliard, 2004). While societies are undergoing rapid social, economic and cultural transformations, educational change has been relatively slow in responding to these new developments in raising awareness of other cultures and their traditions and promoting inclusion (Gardner, 2004). However, in order to prepare students for the changes taking place in contemporary societies, schools must take account of the fact that cultural diversity is quickly becoming the norm (Cummins, 2001) and understanding diversity in classrooms and how public schooling can best educate all children as civic equals is becoming increasingly important (Guttman, 2004; Haan and Elbers, 2005). However, all too often, diversity is viewed solely as a problem, rather than as an opportunity for schools and society (OECD, 2006). The PISA study demonstrates that many newcomer students are highly motivated and have positive attitudes towards school. Schools could build upon the strong learning dispositions of newcomer students to help them to succeed in the education system of the host country.

There is now a substantial body of international research reflecting recent social and cultural change within schools, especially in countries with a longstanding tradition of immigration such as the UK and the USA. It is important to note when considering international research that migration patterns vary across societies, both in terms of historical roots and the ethnic/national composition of migrants, and this will impact on the nature of diversity within school systems. In general, existing research recognises that immigrants are a heterogeneous group and that their experiences and backgrounds are likely to differ (see Conger *et al.*, 2007). Some school systems have a significant proportion of ethnic minority children from established second-generation minority communities. Others, like Ireland, have only recently experienced inward migration. As the profiles of ethnic

minorities vary substantially across countries and the experiences of different groups of newcomers in the schools of their host country are also likely to be different, it is useful to bear this in mind when interpreting international findings. However, earlier research (see Liebig and Sousa-Poza, 2004; Chiswick, 2000) note that immigrants often tend to be a self-selected highly skilled group.[18] The following sections explore the main topics emerging from existing research on newcomer students in primary and second-level schools. Given the relatively recent development of inward migration of non-Irish groups into Ireland, empirical research on immigrant children in Ireland is ongoing and there is very little published material available. The following sections refer to these Irish studies where possible.

2.2 Language Proficiency and Newcomer Students

This section outlines some of the main findings of existing research in relation to language acquisition among newcomer students. Previous studies have focused on students' unfamiliarity with the language of the host country, issues around bilingual education and the importance of mother tongue. Research shows that bilingual education has often encountered resistance and reluctance (see Luchtenberg, 2002 for the German-Australian perspective). In Canada, Cummins (1996) argues that the identities of bilingual students are often devalued in schools as they are reprimanded for speaking their first language and made to feel embarrassed about their cultural background. In the same vein, a recent study in the United States reveals that despite evidence that the dual language model of bilingual education has the potential to raise the academic achievement of English Language Learners (ELLs), the policies put forward through the No Child Left Behind Act do not support the maintenance of the heritage language which is an integral part of the dual language model (Ray, 2007). Furthermore, Cummins (2001) notes that some North American academics and policymakers view cultural diversity as 'the enemy within' and argue against multicultural and bilingual education (ibid p. 296). Similar sentiments are echoed with regard to educational provision in the mother tongue in a study by Reid and Reich (1992) who suggest that, by and large, mother tongue teaching has remained a marginal activity.

Concerns about the educational outcomes of newcomer students are also expressed by Short (2002) in the US, who notes that a majority of non-native English-speaking immigrant students "…lack English language skills, have weak literacy skills in their native language, and have had limited or interrupted formal education". She sees this as a matter of concern as, in general, schools in the United States increasingly emphasise standards-based curricula and high-stakes assessments for all students. This places newcomer students in a disadvantaged position as they have limited time to learn English; study the required content courses and catch up with native

[18] For example, in the 1960s, Canada introduced a "points system" for skilled workers, and developed an immigration policy that sought to maximise domestic national interests while fulfilling the country's humanitarian and other related duties. This has had implications for the educational attainment of immigrants, and it has implications for the second generation. As a result of both the selection mechanism and the countries from which immigrants were drawn, immigrants to Canada have, on average, more years of schooling than the third Canadian generation (Aydemir and Sweetman, 2006).

students (p. 174). This nationwide survey of newcomer programmes also revealed that temporary strategies, such as placing newcomer students in grades below their age cohorts, have, by and large, been unsuccessful and are developmentally inappropriate (p. 174).

Many newcomer children may start learning a new language at pre-school level. However, a study by Walston and Rathburn (2006), using the US Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, shows that language minority children, unlike other 'at risk' groups, are often not attending full-day kindergarten. The authors argue that attending may have a positive effect not only on reading achievement but on the rate at which non-English speaking children reach English language proficiency by the end of the kindergarten year. Previous international research has also shown that newcomer students benefit from longer exposure to English language support (see Collier, 1987; Cummins, 1981). While children can adopt conversational skills relatively quickly, it can take up to nine years to achieve a level of language proficiency similar to that of native speakers (see Collier, 1987; Cummins, 1981).

OECD (2006) draws on the evidence of the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which tested 15-year-old students in 41 countries in mathematics, reading comprehension, science and problem-solving skills. The report found that first-generation and second-generation students often reported higher levels of interest and motivation in mathematics and more positive attitudes towards schooling. In some countries (such as Canada, Luxembourg, Sweden, Switzerland and Hong Kong-China), second-generation students perform significantly better than first-generation students. Countries with well-established language support programmes with relatively clearly defined goals and standards tend to have smaller performance gaps between immigrant and native students. First-generation students are likely to have most difficulty in terms of school performance, as they have directly experienced the challenges of immigration, such as learning a new language, adjusting to a new culture and social situation, or acclimatising to an unfamiliar school system**.** The OECD (2006) PISA report noted that speaking a language at home other than the language of instruction at school may disadvantage students. According to PISA 2000 and 2003 reports, these students tend to reach lower levels of performance than those who speak the test language at home. According to OECD (2006), performance gaps in mathematics were larger for second-generation and first-generation students who did not speak the language of instruction at home. The results show the need to pay more attention to improving literacy skills in both mathematics and reading for students with diverse language backgrounds. The report also indicates that immigrant students tend to report higher levels of motivation to learn compared to native students. In the same vein, the National Assessment of Reading in 2004 (Eivers *et al.*, 2005) showed that those Irish primary school pupils who spoke a language other than English or Gaeilge had an average score that was significantly below the overall average score on the TARA reading test. In other words, lack of proficiency in English contributes to a performance gap in reading among newcomer students in primary schools.

While several international studies address the importance of language in the settling-in process, research in Ireland is only now beginning to accumulate. In Ireland, a majority of newcomer students do not have English or Irish as their first language. This is reflected in existing research

on newcomer students which identifies language issues among students for whom English is a foreign language as one of the biggest challenges (see Keogh and Whyte, 2003; Devine *et al*., 2004). Several studies note that language-related issues are in the forefront in supporting newcomer students (Ward, 2004; INTO, 2004). The language barrier is generally seen as a major barrier to student achievement, affecting their grasp of subjects (Keogh and Whyte, 2003; Vekic, 2003) as well as their self-esteem (Vekic, 2003). Difficulties in achievement may already arise at the junior level in primary schools as children are introduced to numeracy and literacy through the medium of English. In senior classes, the reading level of texts and the emphasis on written work is likely to pose difficulties for many newcomer students as subject-specific language at this level is more complex (INTO, 1998). This is further complicated by low literacy levels in the mother tongue of some newly arrived students. For example, Ward's (2004) small-scale study on separated children found that over 18 per cent of respondents had difficulties reading in their first or another language and 21 per cent had such writing difficulties. Respondents with literacy difficulties were generally older (over 16 years of age) and not in school.

Low levels of proficiency in the language of the host country is likely to affect newcomer students' academic achievement, and also makes it difficult to access information about their educational entitlements (Keogh and Whyte, 2003). Furthermore, special needs and learning difficulties among newcomer students may not become apparent because of language barriers (INTO, 2004; INTO, 1998). Nowlan (2008) argues for improved English language support for newcomer students as well as increased teacher training and resources. In addition, the author suggests that current language support practices vary widely and do not always reflect international best practice. The need to provide the necessary language skills for children whose mother tongue is neither Irish nor English and the question of appropriate mother tongue support for the children of newcomers have been highlighted as issues by the National Council of Curriculum and Assessment (see Little, 2003) and by the report by Council of Europe and DES (2007).

International research has indicated the importance of mother tongue provision to student achievement (see Cummins, 2001). Such support may take place on school premises, by local agreement, outside of school hours (usually weekends) (OECD, 2004, p. 6). However, in Ireland, such provision has largely remained unsatisfactory and is not available to all newcomer groups[19] (INTO, 1998; Mooten 2006). Furthermore, there are no studies to date exploring the outcomes of such provision in the Irish context.

While the importance of providing adequate language support to newcomer students is widely recognised, limited information is available on the challenges faced by language support teachers. A study by the INTO (2004) found that the role of the language support teacher was not only to teach English so that new arrivals could participate in mainstream classes,

[19] At present, some of the larger immigrant communities in Ireland provide mother tongue tuition to newcomer children. However, it is important to note that there are currently 160 different languages being spoken by newcomer children living in Ireland (CSO, 2006).

but also to liaise with agencies and parents and provide emotional support for the children they take for language support. In addition, these teachers were also expected to promote interculturalism and develop awareness of cultural diversity among other teachers in the school.

2.3 Newcomer Students and the Social Sphere

The successful integration of new arrivals is essential for ensuring social cohesion in the host countries. Settling into the new educational system of the host country is an integral part of this integration process. Schools have a central role to play in the process of helping newcomer students to overcome difficulties associated with settling into the new education system and society in general (OECD, 2006) as well as in helping to develop a more inclusive, intercultural classroom environment and providing children with the knowledge and skills they need to participate in an intercultural society. A report by Eurydice (2004) lists a number of integration and orientation measures for immigrants available in schools across Europe including written information about the school system, provision of interpreters, special resource persons/councils, meetings specially targeted towards immigrant parents, among others. However, it is important to note that successful integration is also closely associated with positive social interactions at school. The next sections review existing research on teacher-student relationships.

2.3.1 TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

Teachers play a key role in implementing intercultural education and helping students develop open and respectful attitudes and behaviour:

> *Our interactions with students in the classroom embody an image of the society they will graduate into and the kind of contributions they are being enabled to make within the society. As educators we are faced with choices and constraints with respect to what and how we teach, the nature of our personal goals in teaching, and the kind of aspirations we have for the students we teach. (Cummins, 2001a, p.299).*

However, while teachers have an important role to play in educating young people and facilitating the integration process, they are not entirely neutral in this process as they bring their own cultural perspectives to the classroom. They are in a position to strongly influence the views, conceptions, and behaviours of students. Elsewhere, Banks (1995) identifies four categories of knowledge necessary for teachers in order to provide education in culturally diverse schools:

1. a knowledge of the major paradigms in multi-cultural education;
2. a knowledge of the major concepts in multi-cultural education;
3. a historical and cultural knowledge of major ethnic groups; and
4. pedagogical knowledge about how to adapt curriculum and instruction to the unique needs of students from diverse cultural, ethnic, and/or social class groups.

There is some research evidence which indicates that social relations between teachers and minority ethnic students are somewhat less positive than those for white students (see Irvine, 1990 for the US context). In the same vein, other studies indicated that minority children had fewer

favourable interactions with their teachers (see Fine, 1991; Nieto, 1992 for the US context). A study by Gay (1993) in the US suggests that positive classroom relationships are becoming more difficult to establish as growing diversity affects social interaction at school. In contrast, Le Roux (2001) notes that with the required empathic understanding, knowledge and skills, which should be addressed in teacher training, teachers can make an exceptional contribution towards creating equal opportunities for all children within a culturally diverse society. In addition, to help newcomer students settle into a host school, teachers now also have to deal with native students' attitudes toward their immigrant classmates, their families, and immigrants in general (Dimakos and Tasiopoulou, 2003).

In general, existing studies do not mention overt racism on the part of teachers who are generally perceived to be supportive and paying adequate respect to students' religion and culture. However, in a study by Caulfield *et al.* (2005) a number of students thought that teachers should be more effective in dealing with peer racism.

The interaction between teachers and immigrant parents has also emerged as a topic of interest. In their comparative study, Shor and Bernhard (2003) found that immigrant parents may have differing expectations about the ways in which teachers and other professionals should discipline their children. The problems that arose were mainly caused by culturally based disagreements about the types of misbehaviour which justify intervention by teachers; the kind of disciplinary measures which should be used; the factors that should be considered when deciding on disciplinary action, and the lack of sensitivity to the impact of immigration-related difficulties on the behaviour of children. The expectations of teachers' behaviour were largely based on immigrants' experiences in their country of origin where practices were often different from those in the host countries.

In Ireland, existing research shows that newcomer students generally feel positive about their teachers (Vekic, 2003; Devine, 2005; Darmody, 2007; Nowlan, 2008). This is likely to reflect, at least in part, the fact that immigrants to Ireland are a highly educated group (Barrett *et al.*, 2006; CSO, 2008) and thus have positive dispositions towards schooling and education in general, in line with international research. With regard to teachers in newly intercultural classrooms, Devine (2005) found that they were concerned with work overload, and with a trade-off between dealing with their 'own minorities' and new arrivals. The author also notes that, while teachers were positive about their experiences of working with newcomer students, often praising their work ethic and respectful behaviour in school, their views also demonstrated both classed and racialised perceptions. Interestingly, the teachers showed more positive views of migrants of East European origin compared to other migrant groups such as African, Muslim, Asian and Roma migrants.[20]

[20] Roma migrants represent a relatively small group among recent newcomers.

2.3.2 SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STUDENTS

The rapid change in the national and ethnic composition in modern societies in recent years has made diversity one of the most important topics (Avery, 1992). Despite increasing diversity in contemporary societies, research on children's friendships and interaction in culturally diverse classrooms is still relatively scarce (Deegan, 1996). Yet these interactions may have an influence on a wide range of instructional and non-instructional processes (ibid. p. 3). Bell (2000) and Caulfield *et al.* (2005) note that schools may provide students with the first opportunity to live in and socialise with others from a culture different than their own. In their study on the association between the ethnic composition of schools and the integration of indigenous and newcomer students in Flanders, Van Houtte and Sevens (2005) found that the ethnic composition of a school is associated with inter-ethnic friendship: that is, the greater the proportion of foreign students at school, the more foreign friends native students have. Thus, inter-group contact is more likely in the case of physical and social proximity. The researchers also found that foreign students in a minority position tended to have more friends of a foreign origin and that foreign students' sense of belonging increased with the proportion of foreign students at the school.

Several studies on social relationships between students at school explore the issue of racism. Caulfield *et al.* (2005) found that nearly all of the children participating in their study had either experienced or witnessed racist behaviour in secondary school.[21] While such racist behaviour was mostly verbal in nature, it occasionally took the form of physical bullying and gang fights. Only a few newcomer students responded to such behaviour with aggression, the majority either trying to ignore racism, offer explanations about difference or use humour. In the same vein, research carried out in the UK found that a significant minority of newcomer pupils in mainly white schools reported race-related name-calling or verbal abuse at school or while travelling to and from school (see Cline *et al.*, 2002).

In the Irish context, addressing the issue of social relationships between students, Gash and Murphy-Lejeune (2004) draw on various research projects dealing with children's perceptions of other cultures. The authors conclude that Irish children are likely to be prejudiced about others whom they see as being different from them "…particularly when these others are not well known" (p. 217). Encountering students from other cultures may sometimes result in racism and bullying incidents at school (Devine, 2005; 2005). At the same time the authors find incidences of bullying to vary to a large extent with regard to minority groups and the consistency of such incidences. A longitudinal study of second-level students has indicated that newcomer students are more likely to have experienced bullying than their Irish counterparts (Smyth *et al.*, 2004). These findings have been confirmed by a recent large-scale Irish study of 10-18 year olds, which indicates a higher incidence of being bullied among immigrant than Irish students (Molcho *et al.*, 2008).

[21] Overall, students commented on a more positive atmosphere in primary school.

The study by Devine *et al.* (2004) highlights the centrality of children's social relationships to their school life and beyond – "…such belonging overlapped with home lives in the invitations to birthday parties, sleepovers and general playing/interaction together in after-school hours. Being good at sport, sharing similar humour, not being favoured by teachers (teacher's pet) and sharing common interests" (p. 199) were likely to determine inclusion or exclusion for newcomer students. Furthermore, the study found that the majority of children (from the ethnic majority) had a limited understanding of what racism meant and identified cases of 'inverse racism' where white children felt themselves to have been victims of a black child. Another recent study highlighted children's perception of difference; for majority-ethnic children, this is firmly embedded in cultural stereotypes about what it means to be 'Irish' (Devine and Kelly, 2006). The authors also noted that newcomer students' experiences of inclusion and exclusion are dependent upon their ability to find common ground with others and to negotiate their entry into relatively exclusive friendship groups. Awareness of 'otherness' in relation to newcomers was also apparent in a study conducted by McGorman and Sugrue (2007). Another study in the Irish context showed that newcomer students can be subject to name-calling in general, and racist name-calling in particular (see Devine, Kenny and McNeela, 2008). According to the authors, some children use such behaviour in the assertion of status with one another, 'consolidating alliances between those who are different and those who are the same'.

2.4 Newcomer Students and the Academic Sphere

The educational experiences and outcomes of newcomer students have been a focus of attention in a number of international comparative studies. In countries with a longer history of immigration, educational performance outcomes are often related to 'generations' of newcomer students, comparing the educational performance of newcomer students versus native students, and first or second generation newcomer students with later generations of newcomer students (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001 on immigrant US students; Bodovski and Banavot, 2006 in the case of former Soviet Union children in Israel; OECD, 2006). In such contexts, the timing of immigration is seen as a key influence on the educational outcomes of students. Overall, second-generation students tend to perform significantly better academically compared to their first-generation counterparts (in countries such as Canada, Luxembourg, Sweden, Switzerland, Hong Kong - China) and this is often attributed to the effects of integration policies or compositional effects of waves of immigration (OECD, 2006). However, it has also been documented that first-generation students are likely to have most difficulty in terms of school performance, as they have directly experienced the challenges of immigration, including learning a new language, adjusting to a new culture and social situation, or acclimatising to an unfamiliar school system. Furthermore, low levels of proficiency in PISA assessments have been found among 40 per cent of first-generation students in Belgium, France, Norway and Sweden. While the Irish experience of immigration differs in the sense that 'waves' of immigration are not directly applicable,[22] we can learn from the experience of other countries.

[22] For an overview of the history of immigration to Ireland see Ward (2004).

While much of the research to date has been conducted on the gap in educational achievement between newcomer students and native students attending second-level education, some research points to a gap at primary level. Data from PIRLS indicate that the performance gap between immigrant and non-immigrant students is already apparent at the primary level of formal education (Schnepf, 2006, Schwippert, Bos and Lankes, 2003; OECD, 2006). Tesser *et al.* (2001) report that in the Netherlands newcomer students are, at the beginning and end of primary education, two years behind their native Dutch counterparts in language skills and half a year behind in mathematics skills in terms of national test scores. These studies highlight the importance of measuring attainment of newcomer students at the primary level.

A recent report by OECD (2006) shows that second-level school systems differ widely in terms of their outcomes for newcomer students. In some countries (e.g. Canada and Australia), newcomer students at second-level are found to perform as well as their native counterparts; however, in the vast majority of systems native students tend to outperform newcomer students. A number of explanations have been offered for the gap in educational attainment of newcomer students relative to native students. These can be categorised according to individual, school characteristics and institutional explanations.

On an individual level, newcomer students have generally been found to be motivated learners who display positive attitudes to school but despite their strong learning disposition perform significantly lower than native students (OECD, 2006). Status attainment approaches argue that family characteristics, especially social class, can offer a significant contribution to the explanation of difference in scholastic knowledge between natives and migrants. A number of studies have highlighted the poor educational achievement of certain ethnic groups relative to native students. In their study, Gillborn and Gipps (1996) found that Afro-Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Pakistani students in the UK have lower than average attainment levels and their progress is slower compared to other pupils, while in secondary schools Asian students make better progress than whites. In the same vein, Runnymede Trust (2000) notes that Afro-Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils consistently underachieve. In the United States, Crosnoe (2005) found that children from Mexican immigrant families were over-represented in schools with a wide variety of problematic characteristics, even when family background differences were taken into account. However, ethnic and socio-economic background factors only partially explain the performance disadvantage of immigrant students (see OECD, 2006); rather background effects together with school composition effects are likely to have a considerable impact on school performance (see Hamnett *et al.*, 2007 in the British context).

At the school level, a number of school characteristics have been used to explain the gap in attainment. The concentration of newcomer students has been used as an explanation, although the findings are mixed. In some studies, ethnic/racial composition is found to influence student outcomes (see Luciak, 2006; Rothon, 2007). Levels and Dronkers' (2008) study indicates that ethnic and socio-economic school segregation has a negative influence on the scholastic achievement of all pupils; that is, students tend to underperform academically when they attend schools with a high concentration of minority students and students from a socially disadvantaged background. The effect of socio-economic school-

segregation is found to be stronger than that of ethnic school-segregation. In Sweden, Szulkin and Jonsson (2007) argue that ethnic density in schools has a negative effect on grades which is not confined to, but most preponderant for, immigrant pupils. They found a threshold effect indicating that ethnic densities up to 40 per cent have little impact on grades, while attending a school with higher concentrations of immigrant pupils is connected with a reduction in grades.

At the institutional level, it has been argued that the educational achievement of immigrant students is related in part, to institutional variations in the model of incorporation of immigrants into the host society. This argument holds that both governmental policies and public attitudes towards immigrants may have enduring effects on the incorporation patterns of immigrants into their host society (Buchmann and Parrado, 2006). Until the 2006 OECD study using PISA data was conducted, little comprehensive empirical research was available on how newcomers fare (socially as well as academically) in different national educational systems. Gilbert Report 2004 highlights the degree to which institutional practices and individual attitudes and prejudices within the institutional context may impact on individual pupil success (Gilbert, Report 2004).

The existing research literature points to a number of concerns for newcomer and/or first-generation students. First, while newcomer students have generally been found to be motivated learners who display positive attitudes to school, this is not generally true for their sense of belonging at school. Jamieson and Stewin (1987) argue that, in Canada, the adjustment of newcomer students to learning appeared to be dependent upon three factors: length of time in the second culture, the proportion of immigrant students within a classroom, and the cultural harmony between home and school settings. Second, school absenteeism and dropout among newcomer students are also issues of concern (Eurydice, 2004) as they are likely to have an effect on the academic progress of students. The 2004 report notes that these young people represent a particularly vulnerable group as their family and socio-economic situation is often uncertain. To address this issue, a few countries (Belgium, Spain and the Netherlands) have designed programmes to combat early school leaving among these students.

While studies identify groups of immigrant students whose educational progress is slow, there have been other studies that point to a general advantage in being an immigrant, despite the obvious difficulties associated with learning a foreign language and new customs (Conger *et al.*, 2007). A number of studies have reported higher educational expectations among immigrant parents than among natives from a similar social background (see Brinbaum and Cebolla-Boado, 2007 on the French context). Portes and Rumbaut (2001) suggest that immigrant parents may often possess a strong work ethic and a value system that can translate into academic success among their children despite their initial difficulties in a new country. Conger *et al.* (2007) report that immigrant students have higher attendance rates, consistent with theories about immigrant achievement; and that immigrant students may be more likely to attend school because their parents place a greater value on school. The authors found, however, that attendance may not actually drive achievement, at least for some immigrant groups. For immigrant groups that generally perform well in school or that are proficient in English, attendance in school may be less important. For example, students from the former Soviet Union have fairly

low attendance rates but higher test score performance, whereas students from Sub-Saharan Africa have relatively high attendance rates but poor performance on tests. OECD (2006) has shown that immigrant students from some countries (e.g. Canada and New Zealand) are performing better compared to other countries. Perhaps this could be explained by higher levels of education of their parents – Australia, Canada and New Zealand have similar immigration policies selecting in particular highly skilled immigrants who could be assumed to foster the educational achievement levels of their children (Schnepf, S. 2008).

Previous research has shown that a transition from one learning environment to another may pose problems for some students (see Smyth *et al.*, 2004). Making a transition from primary to secondary school in a culturally different context may pose added difficulties for newcomer students. This issue was explored by Caulfield *et al.* (2005) with regard to black and minority ethnic students. The authors found that friendships were central to children's experience of transition and that continuity of friendships is as important as continuity of curriculum. In addition, teachers believed that better communication should exist between the two levels of schooling with regard to students' religious, linguistic and cultural needs.

A growing number of studies on the provision of religious education in intercultural classrooms indicate the importance of religious education. Religious education can take the form of teaching specific religious doctrine and preparing children for religious rites of passage (Lodge, 1999). In addition, specific values and belief systems can also be transmitted outside the formal provision of religious education (Lodge, 2004). Several studies have shown that parents are an important influence on their children's beliefs (Gautier and Singelmann, 1997; Helve, 1991; Cornwall, 1989; Sherkatt and Elliott, 1999). The 'dichotomy' of religious education provided in schools and beliefs transmitted by home can sometimes lead to tensions which are likely to affect students' integration (see Abbas, 2003; Vertovec and Rogers, 2004; Jacobson, 1998). Caulfield *et al.* (2005), in exploring the transition to secondary school, found that religion played a big part in the everyday lives of a significant proportion of black and ethnic minority pupils. The study also indicated that about one in ten of the children of Muslim faith felt that their schools did not allow them to follow their religious beliefs as they wished. Another study in the UK on Muslim students notes that most discussions about institutional racism ignore the topic of religion (Gilbert Report 2004). The author notes that prejudice was evident in the attitudes of teachers and school procedures in general; Muslim pupils were either misunderstood or deliberately discriminated against. The study criticises a belief that racism and inequality is based on individual (as opposed to institutional) ignorance and a lack of understanding of cultural diversity. However, educators have the potential to use the positive aspects and dimensions of religion to foster interfaith and intercultural understandings (Gundara, 2000).

Considering the fact that inward migration to Ireland is a relatively recent phenomenon, there is little comprehensive empirical research available on academic achievement among newcomer students. Ireland took part in the PISA 2003 and 2006 studies but to date no details of performance levels for immigrant and Irish students have been published. At national level, the National Assessment of Reading Progress indicated somewhat lower reading scores among immigrant than Irish students in

first and fifth class of primary school. However, no information is yet available on student performance within the second-level system. A study by McGorman and Sugrue (2007)[23] showed that, in addition to academic progress, schools face a number of challenges in relation to newcomer students. These include initial assessment, placement in terms of the child's ability and achievement, special needs of the child, lack of pre-school experiences, absenteeism and integration, among others. The need for professional as well as personal/social support in schools was also highlighted by the authors.

Some research exists on the provision of religious education in Irish schools. Religious diversity among newcomer pupils is a challenge for the Irish school system which is largely denominational in nature, especially at primary level, and under the control of the Catholic and Protestant Churches. Cleary *et al.* (2001) indicate that there is a lack of research on children of minority beliefs in the Irish context. In her study of the experiences of minority belief parents in the denominational primary system, Lodge (2004) concludes that "…differences in belief are denied in the denominational primary system and those whose beliefs are different are rendered invisible and subordinate" (p. 32). The author also suggests that singling out a child as different by taking them out of religion classes may result in them being bullied by other children as well as discomfort and isolation for the child. On the other hand, attending these classes may convey contradictory messages about belief and spirituality if the faith of the family is different. The study found that while some schools enable newcomers to choose whether to participate in religion classes or not, others expected all children to participate in every aspect of school life. Hyland (1989) notes that, since the option of multi-denominational schools became available, there has been a growing demand for these schools as the proportion of population who do not belong to Christian faith has increased.

2.5 The Relevance of Environmental and Situational Factors

In recent years, a number of European countries have experienced an increased inflow of immigrants and refugees including school-age children. There is some research evidence which suggests that new arrivals tend to concentrate in certain geographic areas (OECD, 2006). In addition, in many cases immigrant students tend to be clustered in specific schools: in half of the countries included in the OECD study, second-generation immigrant students disproportionately attend schools where immigrants make up more than a third of their peers. Furthermore, the study shows that immigrant students tend to attend schools with more socio-economically disadvantaged student intakes and, in some cases, poorer learning conditions, (ibid.). Using multiple data sources including official statistics and student-level data from local authorities, Rangvid (2007) in Denmark found that the new arrivals tend to live concentrated around the big cities. She observes that about 30 per cent of residents aged 6-15 years in the City of Copenhagen have an immigrant background. In addition, she found that students are not equally distributed across neighbourhoods and schools. In fact, segregation at the school level in Denmark tends to be

[23] It is important to note that this study focuses on a very specific area in Dublin and includes relatively small numbers of participants.

even more distinct than residential segregation because of school choice processes. This may be a potential problem as contact with Danish children and using the Danish language are important for social integration and future life-chances among newcomer students (see also Burgess, Wilson and Lupton, 2005 for the British context).

Evidence from Denmark also shows that school choice by immigrant parents is influenced by a number of factors, such as ensuring that the home culture, religion and language are passed on to the next generation and the composition of the assigned public schools. On the other hand, some Danish families tend to opt out from schools with high numbers of immigrant students for fear of declining academic standards within the school, and of possible problems with friendships arising from the different cultural backgrounds of students (Rangvid, 2007). Other research has shown that increased school choice in Sweden decreased residential segregation but increased school segregation (see Söderström and Uusitalo, 2004). Exploring individual primary school choice decisions and their impact on ethnic school segregation in Germany, Kristen (2008) found that family resources play a key role in the school selection process and account for substantive differences between the school choice routes typically pursued by immigrants and natives. As immigrants are less likely to possess the country-specific knowledge that can be used in choosing schools, their opportunities for discovering, evaluating and accessing certain schools differ from those of native Germans. Kristen found some evidence that the Turkish are more likely to attend common district schools that accommodate more immigrants than the alternative Catholic elementary schools. The author also observes that native German families, aiming for achievement, are more likely to choose lower immigrant intake schools. In countries with a long history of immigration, there is considerable research on school segregation (see Logan *et al.*, 2002 in the US context and Burgess *et al.*, 2005 in the UK context). In general, there seems to be a consensus in existing research that the level of school segregation is greater than that of residential segregation.

Only a few studies in the Irish context deal with situational and environmental issues that may act as barriers to participation in education. The DES (2007) audit of school enrolment policies provides for the first time information about the degree to which disparities exist between schools in terms of the enrolment of newcomer (and other groups of) pupils in Ireland. According to the audit, primary and post-primary schools within the same local area vary in the proportion of newcomer students enrolled. Ward (2004) found that a significant minority of separated (unaccompanied minor) students were not participating in full-time education and some had dropped out because of a range of situational and dispositional barriers. The barriers generally related to accommodation, difficulties with second-level school places, personal difficulties, and lack of motivation. In the same vein, a small-scale study by Vekic (2003) identified separated students' living arrangements and conditions and their ability to manage limited finances as causes of strain. Unaccompanied minors in particular are seen to be affected by environmental and situational factors and a number of Irish studies have highlighted the need to address their social, emotional and psychological needs (see Mooten, 2006; INTO, 2004; Vekic, 2003). Recent research (NCCRI, 2008) indicates the concentration of newcomer families in the private rented sector, where many experience poor housing conditions, and highlights the need for a joined-up approach

between housing and integration policy in order to avoid segregation and facilitate social inclusion.

2.6 Good Practice in Provision for Newcomer Students

The need to support newcomer students' academic performance and social integration has been recognised widely. Examples of good practice can be derived from existing studies on the schools that most effectively deal with these issues. In the British context, Blair *et al.* (1998) carried out a qualitative study of the primary and secondary school sectors. The researchers concluded that effective schools listened to, and learnt from, their students and parents, and tried to see things from the students' point of view; they also had clear procedures for responding to racist bullying and racist harassment. There were high expectations of both teachers and students and clear systems for targeting, tracking and monitoring individual student progress. Monitoring by ethnicity enabled schools to see whether all groups were achieving equally; to identify unexpected shortcomings in provision, and to target specific areas for attention. Monitoring also raised wider questions about ability grouping and exclusion processes (ibid p. 4).

Effective schools also created links with local communities, and nurtured these links by providing help with interpreting and translation; they made school a welcoming place for families from different cultures and encouraged links with parents (Blair *et al.*, 1998; Swick *et al.*, 1994). Such links provide opportunities for encouraging positive racial, ethnic and cultural attitudes and perspectives.

Elsewhere, Blair (2002) highlights the importance of leadership for the effectiveness of schools. Escobar-Ortloff and Ortloff (2003) note that the job of school principals has changed over time and now incorporates dealing with issues of cultural diversity, understanding the characteristics and expectations of the different cultural groups within the school community, and developing a proactive strategy to address any potential 'cultural' conflicts and misunderstanding that might arise.

Le Roux (2001) recommends that a culturally diverse school needs to embrace the philosophy and practice of culturally responsive education in general rather than attempting to adopt a 'quick fix'. The author notes that effective education for cultural diversity is thus best viewed in terms of successful classroom practices where all students are sensitively accommodated and thus learn successfully. In addition, it is important to pursue a whole-school approach toward building a culturally responsive ethos in which all students are valued and assured equal opportunities for success (Shepherd Johnson, 2003). An effective and inclusive school considers the perspectives of all students regarding school culture (Leeman, 2003).

In sum, this chapter has highlighted the main issues regarding educational provision for newcomer students emerging from international research. It has highlighted the relative lack of recent nationally representative research on newcomer children and young people in the Irish context. The following chapter will present the main objectives and methodology of the present study in attempting to address this gap in knowledge.

3. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3.1 Methodology of the Study

This study is the first national study on provision for the needs of newcomer students in Irish primary and second-level schools. It builds upon previous research to combine national survey data with in-depth case-studies from both school sectors. The aim of the study is to explore the types of schools which have newcomer students relative to those who have none, how different kinds of schools address the language needs of, and provide support to, newcomer students, and to consider the perceived adequacy of the curriculum and teaching methods used in schools in catering for a diverse student population.

The appropriate methodology to be used has been the subject of much debate in social and educational research. Quantitative methods are seen as allowing researchers to make generalisable statements about the characteristics of the study population while qualitative methods yield insights into how and why people act in a particular manner or hold particular views. Mixed methods research, which combines both qualitative and quantitative methods, has emerged as a third paradigm (Johnson *et al.*, 2007). This approach has become well established in social and educational research internationally (see Tashakorri and Teddlie, 2003; Johnson, 2006; Sandelowski, 2003; Morse, 2003) and is seen as the 'gold standard' in school studies. The mixed method approach is adopted in this study for two main reasons: first, very little is known on actual practice regarding language and social supports for newcomer students across schools so we need to find out about the national picture; second, knowing what schools do is not enough because we want to know whether school staff feel this approach is working and what supports they would like to be able to put in place. For these reasons, our study is based on two data sources: a national postal survey of primary and second-level principals; and in-depth case-studies of twelve schools with varying proportions of newcomers and levels of supports. Using the two sources of information in tandem yields rich insights into the experiences of schools in catering for newcomer students.

3.1.1 SURVEY OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

This stage of the research involved a postal survey of all (733) second-level principals and a sample of 1,200 primary principals selected to be representative of all primary schools in size, location and disadvantaged (DEIS) status. The survey focused on the views of principals as it was felt that they would be in the best position to give an overview of available

resources and support structures within the school. The topics included in the survey were based on international research and on prior consultations with key stakeholders in the Irish educational system.

The second-level survey was sent out in March 2007 while the primary survey was sent out in September 2007. This occurred because two other large-scale surveys of primary schools were being carried out in Spring 2007 and it was felt that this might negatively impact on the response rate. The timing is important because it means that the research spans a period of policy change with additional language support resources being allocated to schools following from the DES Circular of May 2007; this issue is further discussed in Chapter 6. A high response rate was achieved from both primary and second-level schools (62 per cent and 63 per cent respectively); analyses presented in the remainder of the study, therefore, reflect information collected from 454 second-level principals and 746 primary principals. The data were reweighted to ensure they are fully representative of the national population of schools.

The questionnaire collected detailed information on a number of aspects of school policy and practice regarding newcomer students, including:

- The number and profile of newcomers in the school;
- Admissions policies in the school;
- General support structures and specific supports for newcomer students;
- Language support provision: practice and perceptions;
- Perceived academic outcomes of newcomers (including achievement, motivation and aspirations);
- Perceived social integration of newcomers.

A copy of the questionnaire is presented in the Appendix.

In the study, we present mainly descriptive analyses, that is, we document the proportion of principals giving certain responses across different kinds of schools. In addition, we use multivariate analyses at certain points, in order to explore the simultaneous impact of different school characteristics on specified outcomes (for example, perceived academic difficulties).

3.1.2 CASE-STUDIES OF SCHOOLS

Information from the postal survey of principals was used to select six primary and six second-level schools for in-depth case-study analysis. In so doing, we are able to place the in-depth case-studies of these schools within the broader context of the school population. The selected schools are outlined in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Characteristics of the Case-Study Schools

		Low/Medium Proportion of Newcomers	High Proportion of Newcomers
Low formal supports (primary)		Jefferson Street	Adams Street
Low formal supports (second-level)		Huntington Road	Wulford Park
Medium formal supports (primary)		Greenway Road	Durango Street
Medium formal supports (second-level)		Lowfield Street	Brayton Square
High formal supports (primary)		Van Buren Street	Thomas Road
High formal supports (second-level)		Bentham Street	Ashville Lane
No Newcomers (primary)	Glendale Avenue		
No Newcomers (primary)	Dobbins Road		
No Newcomers (second-level)	Adwick Street		
No Newcomers (second-level)	Grange Park		

Schools were selected to capture two key dimensions of the experiences of different schools in managing diversity. First, we distinguished between schools with a low/medium proportion of newcomers and those with a high proportion, using cut-offs which reflected the Irish situation. Because of the different distribution of newcomers across primary and post-primary schools (see Chapter 4), different cut-offs are used to determine 'high proportion', namely, 10 per cent or more in second-level schools and 20 per cent or more in primary schools. Second, survey information was used to determine the level of formal supports for newcomer students within a school based on the number of such supports reported and the number of different kinds of personnel involved in providing such support. We distinguish between 'high', 'medium' and 'low' supports in order to capture the differing responses at the school level.

The twelve case-study schools all have newcomer students. However, analyses indicated that not all primary and post-primary schools have newcomer students (see Chapter 4). In order to tap into the experiences of such schools, we selected two primary and two second-level schools without newcomers and interviewed their principals. Analyses of these interviews are presented in Chapter 4 in exploring the nature of school admission policies.

The case-study schools vary in terms of sector, size, location and designated disadvantaged (DEIS) status, thus allowing us to explore the extent to which contextual factors influence policy and practice at the school level. A profile of the case-study schools is presented in Table 3.2; a profile of the schools without newcomers included in the study is also included in this table.

Table 3.2: Profile of the Case-Study Schools

School	Size	Rural/ Urban	Disadvantaged (DEIS) Status	Proportion of Newcomers
Primary Schools				
Adams Street	Small (<100)	Rural	Disadvantaged	High (>20%)
Dobbins Road	Large (>300)	Urban	Not Disadvantaged	None
Durango Street	Large (>300)	Urban	Not Disadvantaged	High (>20%)
Glendale Avenue	Small (<100)	Rural	Not Disadvantaged	None
Greenway Road	Large (>300)	Urban	Not Disadvantaged	Low/medium (<10%)
Jefferson Street	Small (<100)	Urban	Not Disadvantaged	Low/medium (<10%)
Thomas Road	Small (<100)	Urban	Disadvantaged	High (>20%)
Van Buren Street	Large (>300)	Rural	Disadvantaged	Low/medium (<10%)
Second-level Schools				
Adwick Street	Large (600+)	Urban	Not Disadvantaged	None
Ashville Lane	Small (<400)	Urban	Disadvantaged	High (>10%)
Bentham Street	Medium (400-599)	Rural	Not Disadvantaged	Low/medium (<10%)
Brayton Square	Medium (400-599)	Rural	Disadvantaged	High (>10%)
Grange Park	Small (<400)	Urban	Disadvantaged	None
Huntington Road	Medium (400-599)	Urban	Not Disadvantaged	Low/medium (<10%)
Lowfield Street	Medium (400-599)	Urban	Not Disadvantaged	Low/medium (<10%)
Wulford Park	Small (<400)	Rural	Not Disadvantaged	High (>10%)

Note: Pseudonyms are used to protect the anonymity of schools.

Within each of the twelve schools with newcomer students, interviews were carried out with key personnel, including principals, language support teachers, learning support/resource teachers, other teachers, and home-school-community liaison co-coordinators (where present). Within second-level schools, guidance counsellors were also interviewed. Interviews in the case-study schools explored the issues raised in the postal survey in much greater detail, allowing us to explore potentially different perspectives within the schools. A total of 82 in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with key personnel in the primary and second-level case-study schools. These interviews covered topics such as:

- Admissions policy;
- Settling-in issues among newcomer students;

- Academic progress of newcomer students and curriculum-related issues;
- Social interaction of newcomer students with peers and teachers;
- Personal and social support available to all the students and newcomers in particular;
- Parental involvement in school life (with the focus on newcomer parents);
- Teacher training and support for teachers teaching newcomer students.

These case-studies yielded more detailed insights into issues relating to diversity 'on the ground' in schools than could be obtained from the survey data alone. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded with the qualitative software N6 and later analysed. This approach allowed for the identification of common themes across the case-study schools.

The main focus of the study was on issues at the school level regarding provision for newcomers. However, it was considered vital to obtain students' own perspectives on school life. Group interviews were, therefore, conducted with primary and second-level students, with separate interviews carried out with newcomer and Irish students. Within primary schools, group interviews were generally carried out with older students in the school. Within second-level schools, interviews were carried out with separate groups of junior and senior cycle students. These interviews took place with parental consent. A total of 43 focus group interviews were conducted with Irish and newcomer students across the case-study schools. Each group included approximately six students so, in total, approximately 258 students participated in focus group interviews. The interviews covered topics such as:

- The process of settling into the school;
- A comparison of Irish and other school systems;
- Social interaction with peers and teachers from both the newcomer and Irish perspective;
- Academic issues and curriculum;
- Parental involvement in schooling;
- Irish students' contact with, and perceptions of, newcomer students.

As with the staff interviews, group interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded with the qualitative software N6 and later analysed to identify the central themes emerging.

In sum, the use of a number of different sources of information enriches the analyses of school provision for newcomer students presented in the remainder of the study.

3.2 Definition and Terminology

A number of different terms have been used to delineate immigrant populations (see NCCRI, 2008). 'Newcomer' is now commonly used in educational policy circles and so is the term adopted in this study. Our definition of 'newcomer students' refers to students from families where both parents are from outside Ireland, whether or not the student's first language is English/Irish. This excludes children born abroad with Irish parents (return migrants), and those with one Irish and one immigrant parent. The latter group are likely to differ from the newcomer group as we define it since one of the parents will have English language competency and knowledge of, and familiarity with, the Irish educational system. Although 'newcomer' is used in the remainder of this study, teachers and students use a range of different terms so the quotes cited in the text reflect ordinary usage.

In order to preserve the anonymity of the interviewees, the term 'teacher' is used throughout the report to include principals, specialist and mainstream teachers. The term 'student' is used to refer to children and young people in both primary and second-level schools.

3.3 Profile of Primary and Post-primary Schools

This section outlines the main dimensions of differentiation among primary and post-primary schools in order to contextualise the findings presented in the following chapters. There are a number of marked differences between the primary and second-level sectors in Ireland. The main difference relates to the number of schools in each sector. For example, in the school year 2006-2007 there were 732 second-level schools and 3,284 primary schools (including special schools). Primary and second-level schools, therefore, differ significantly in terms of size. The mean size of second-level schools in the study sample was 447, while the mean size of primary schools was 143 (Table 3.3). Over half of second-level schools had more than 400 students; just over half of primary schools had less than 100. In fact, just over 20 per cent of primary schools had fewer than 50 students. While second-level schools have an average of around 31 teachers, primary schools have an average of nine.

Table 3.3: Characteristics of Primary and Post-primary Sector Schools in the Sample

	Primary	Post-primary
Average school size	143	447
Average no. of teachers	31	9
Second-level sector:		
Voluntary secondary	-	55
Vocational	-	33
Community/comprehensive	-	12
Fee-paying school	-	8
Primary sector: Catholic school	92	-
Designated disadvantaged (DEIS) status, of which:	19	28
Urban band 1	5	
Urban band 2	4	
Rural	10	
Gaelscoileanna (including Gaeltacht schools)	8	8
Urban	19	30

Primary schools in Ireland are predominantly denominational, mainly Catholic in nature, with a small proportion of multi-denominational schools. Second-level schools comprise three sectors: voluntary secondary schools (mainly founded by religious orders), vocational schools (including community colleges) and community/comprehensive schools. The three sectors come within a common curriculum and assessment framework but differ in their management and funding structures. In addition, they have been found to differ in their student intake, with more middle-class and higher 'ability' students over-represented in voluntary secondary schools (Hannan *et al.*, 1996; Smyth *et al.*, 2004). Eight per cent of second-level schools charge fees to their students. Furthermore, eight per cent of both primary and post-primary schools are Irish medium schools.

In the analyses that follow, we define urban schools as those located in the five main cities of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford. The higher proportion of urban schools in the second-level sector reflects the significant number of small primary schools located in rural areas.

Under the DEIS programme, additional funding is allocated to schools which have a greater concentration of students from more disadvantaged backgrounds. This measure can be used as a rough proxy for the social mix of the school. For primary schools, somewhat different criteria are used to target urban and rural schools. A further distinction is made between urban band 1 and band 2 schools, with the former having the highest concentration of disadvantage.

4. A Profile of Schools Catering for Newcomer Students

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 documented the recent rapid increase in inward migration of non-Irish nationals. In this chapter we describe how non-Irish national school-age children are distributed across Irish schools.

Chapter 2 reviewed international research on the topic, and an important issue emerging from this international research is whether immigrant students are clustered in certain schools. In a number of European countries that have experienced an increased inflow of immigrant children, evidence suggests that the new arrivals tend to concentrate in certain geographic areas, and in many cases immigrant students tend to be clustered in specific schools: in half of the countries studied, second-generation immigrant students disproportionately attend schools where more than a third of the student body are immigrants (OECD, 2006). This may have implications both for social integration and for school provision. Using data from a representative sample of primary and second-level schools in Ireland, we investigate what proportion of the school population newcomer students represent, and whether newcomer students are clustered in schools with high proportions of newcomer students, as in other countries (Section 4.1).

International research has also highlighted patterns in the kinds of schools immigrant students attend, compared to native students. For example, the OECD study shows that immigrant students tend to attend schools with a socio-economically more disadvantaged student intake and, in some cases, poorer learning conditions (OECD, 2006).[24] Kristen (2008) found some evidence that the Turkish are more likely to attend a different school type, namely common district schools that accommodate more immigrants and are associated with lower academic achievement than the alternative Catholic elementary schools. In Denmark, Rangvid (2007) found that the new arrivals tend to live concentrated around the big cities. Given what we know about the spatial distribution of migrants in Ireland from Chapter 1, i.e. that migrants are more likely to live in urban areas, we

[24] Notable exceptions to this general trend are Canada, Australia and New Zealand (OECD, 2006).

might expect to find more newcomer students in urban schools. In Section 4.2 we look at how schools with newcomer students differ from those without newcomers in Ireland. Here we consider factors like school type, whether the school is designated disadvantaged, school size and location (urban/rural), to see if patterns in Ireland are consistent with international findings. We also look at the proportion of newcomers in schools and how this varies. Which schools have a large proportion of newcomer students, which schools have very few?

In Section 4.4, we examine the nationalities of newcomers in Irish schools, and the extent to which national groups are segregated or mixed in schools. Do we find evidence that certain nationalities/national groups are dominant in a school? This may have implications for both social integration and school provision (for example, in terms of language training and other supports). For example, if the majority of newcomers are non-English speakers, there will be increased need for language support. In terms of social integration, previous Irish research has found differences in the attitudes of teachers to newcomer students by nationality (Devine, 2005) and in the incidence of name-calling and bullying by nationality and ethnicity (Devine, Kenny and McNeela, 2008).

International studies have shown that school segregation of immigrants tends to be higher than residential segregation (Rangvid, 2007 in Denmark; Kristen, 2008 in Germany; Logan *et al.*, 2002 in the US; Burgess *et al.*, 2005 in the UK). This may be related to parental choice, and how parents select schools, as well as to admissions policies and how schools select students. In Section 4.4 we investigate admissions policies, and how these are related to the presence and proportion of newcomer students. While earlier sections draw exclusively on data from the surveys of primary and second-level principals, in this section we also use data from the qualitative interviews in case-study schools and from detailed interviews with principals in selected schools without newcomers.

4.2 Distribution of Newcomer Students Across Irish Primary and Second-level Schools

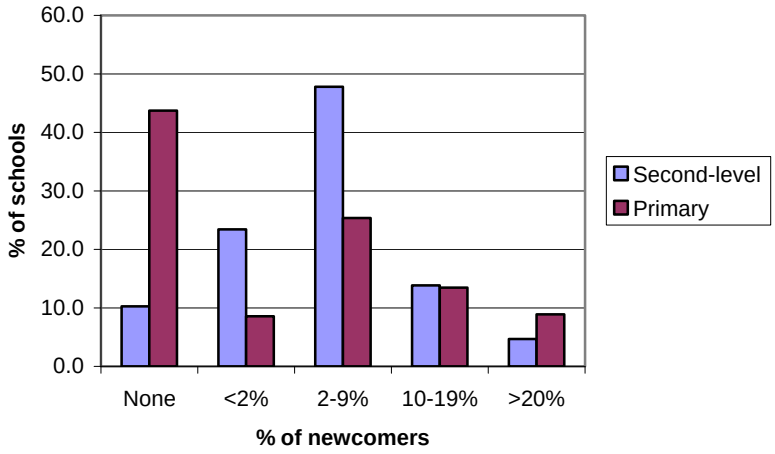
There are a number of marked differences between the primary and second-level sectors in Ireland, particularly regarding the number of schools and the average number of pupils and teachers. These have been discussed in Section 3.3. In this section we focus on how newcomer students are distributed across Irish schools. Based on estimates from the survey, adjusted using information from the Department of Education and Science, we estimate that in a second-level total school population of around 327,000, there were approximately 18,000 newcomer students.[25] Thus newcomer students made up 6 per cent of the total second-level school population in Spring 2007. Based on these estimates, at second level, about 70 per cent of newcomer students are non-English speaking. At primary level, based on the survey data, we estimate that out of a total

[25] At second level, the estimates from the survey have been adjusted using supplementary information from the Department of Education and Science and the 2006 Census of Population. This is because the survey underestimates the number of English-speaking newcomers at second level, based on comparisons with the 2006 Census and with the Department of Education and Science Post-Primary Pupil Database. Estimates of the total number of newcomers given in this chapter are all based on adjusted figures for second level. There was no evidence of an underestimate of newcomer students at primary level so these figures are unadjusted. For further details of the adjustment, please contact the authors.

school population of 476,600, there were 45,700 newcomer students, making up around 10 per cent of the total primary school population in September 2007. At primary level, over three-quarters of newcomers are non-English speaking.[26]

Yet these overall figures tell us very little about the number of newcomers in individual schools, and this may matter a great deal for the school's approach to newcomer students and to how they integrate into the school. One simple measure of the representation of newcomers is the proportion of newcomer students, that is, the number of newcomers expressed as a proportion of the school population. There are marked differences between primary and second-level schools, as shown in Figure 4.1. While at second-level, approximately 90 per cent of second-level schools in Ireland record newcomer students, only 56 per cent of primary schools record newcomer students. Almost half of the second-level schools in Ireland have between 2 per cent and 9 per cent newcomers. Primary schools in general tend to have higher proportions of newcomers, or none at all. Almost one in ten primary schools has over 20 per cent newcomers.

Figure 4.1: Irish Schools, Showing the Proportion of Newcomers (School Level)



At the beginning of the chapter, we discussed how in many countries, immigrant students tend to be clustered in specific schools. Among first-generation students, which make up the vast majority of newcomers in Irish schools, the level of clustering is somewhat less pronounced than among second-generation students. Nevertheless, more than 30 per cent of first-generation students attend schools where at least half of the student population has an immigrant background in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, Hong Kong and Macao (OECD, 2006). The OECD average in the study is just under 30 per cent (i.e. 30 per cent of students attend schools where more than half of the student population has an immigrant background). We now explore what percentage of newcomers in Ireland are in schools where there is a high proportion of newcomers and what percentage of them are in schools where there is a low proportion (Figures 4.2a and 4.2b). Note that to

[26] These figures are reasonably consistent with the DES Enrolment Audit report, based on figures from March 2007. It is not possible to make direct comparisons, given differences in the sampling used.

address this question we need to take the sample of newcomer students as the unit of analysis, rather than the sample of schools, as in Figure 4.1.

It is clear from Figure 4.2a that most second-level newcomer students in Ireland are in schools with a relatively low proportion of newcomer students. Almost half of them are attending schools where newcomers make up 2-9 per cent of the total school population. This is significant: most newcomers do not attend second-level schools with a high concentration of newcomers: 16 per cent attend schools with over 20 per cent newcomers. In fact, only 2 per cent of newcomers attend second-level schools with 40 per cent newcomers or more (see Figure 4.2a), and none of them attend schools with over 50 per cent newcomers (there are no second-level schools with more than 50 per cent newcomers). Overall, this implies that, in general, newcomer students are well dispersed in schools throughout the second-level sector. It is certainly a very different picture from the international one described in the PISA study, where on average 30 per cent of students attend schools where over half of the students are immigrants.

Figure 4.2a: Percentage of Newcomer Students in Second-level Schools with Different Proportions of Newcomer Students

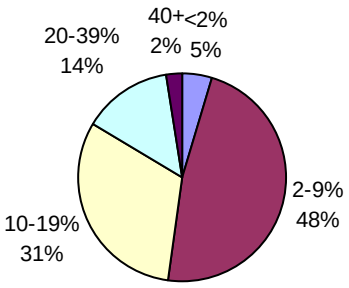
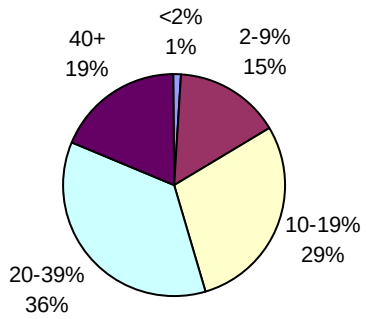


Figure 4.2b: Percentage of Newcomer Students in Primary Schools with Different Proportions of Newcomer Students



For primary schools, the story is rather different. Here relatively few (16 per cent) are in schools with under 10 per cent newcomer students. Over half are in schools with over 20 per cent newcomers: almost one in five (19 per cent) newcomers are in schools with over 40 per cent newcomers (see Figure 4.2b). Of newcomers 10 per cent are in primary schools with over 50 per cent newcomers (not shown separately in the graph). The finding that second-level schools are more likely to have newcomer students but a smaller proportion than in primary schools is consistent with how the two sectors operate and interact in the Irish education system. Primary schools tend to draw students from their local area, while second-level schools have a much larger catchment area. Typically, a number of primary schools feed into any given second-level school, so even if one feeder primary school had no newcomers, the second-level school in the area would record newcomers if there were newcomer students in other primary schools in the area.

The pattern at the two levels then is quite distinctive. At second-level, most schools have some newcomer students, but for the majority of schools the proportion of newcomers is relatively modest. At primary level, a substantial minority (40 per cent) have no newcomer students, but those that do tend to have higher proportions. At second level, there are no newcomer students attending schools with over 50 per cent newcomers; at primary level, 10 per cent of newcomers students attend schools with over 50 per cent newcomers. Compared to the 30 per cent OECD average, this data suggests that segregation, even at primary level, is still not high by international standards. This may be partly related to the recent history of migration, and also the low proportion of immigrant students, at least by international comparison. In the next section, we consider whether and how schools with newcomers differ from those without.

4.3 Characteristics of Schools with Newcomer Students

In this section, we consider which schools in Ireland have newcomer students and what proportion of newcomer students different schools have. In Section 4.1 we discussed how international findings suggest immigrants may be more likely to be found in schools with certain profiles. On the basis of these findings, we might expect that newcomers in Ireland are more likely to be found in designated disadvantaged schools, for example. Given previous research and the spatial distribution of non-Irish nationals indicated in the 2006 Census (CSO, 2008 and Chapter 1 above), we would expect newcomers to be more likely to attend urban schools. No research has been conducted on school size, though this might be expected to influence whether the school has newcomers or not, with bigger schools more likely to have newcomer students. Irish-medium schools, which make up about 8 per cent of schools at primary and second level (see Section 4.2), may be less likely to have newcomers. This is because in these schools newcomer students would need to come to terms with two languages (English and Irish) if their first language is not English, or one language (Irish) if their first language is English.

4.3.1 SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOLS

There are additional differences that we might expect to operate within the second-level sector. Research from Germany has found that immigrants are more likely to be found in certain types of schools (Kristen, 2008). Irish second-level schools differ according to whether they are fee-paying or not (about 8 per cent are), and by school type (secondary, vocational,

community/comprehensive). Previous research in Ireland has found that secondary schools have a more middle class profile than either vocational schools or community/comprehensive schools, and are more likely to be oversubscribed (Hannan *et al.*, 1996; Smyth, 1999). For this reason, we might expect newcomers to be more likely to attend vocational and community/comprehensive schools. We might expect fees to be a deterrent to parents of newcomer children, so newcomers would be less likely to attend fee-paying schools.

So how do the 90 per cent of secondary schools with newcomer students differ from those that have no newcomers? Table 4.1a presents the factors associated with the presence of newcomer children in second-level schools identified from a logistic regression model. This method allows us to look at the effect of each school characteristic while holding other characteristics constant. This is important. For example, it may look as though vocational schools[27] are much less likely to have newcomers but actually this is because they are located in rural areas and are smaller schools, not because they are vocational schools *per se*. In the tables, a minus sign indicates that schools with that characteristic are less likely to have newcomer students compared to the reference category, a plus sign the opposite. Stars are used to indicate statistical significance, with more stars indicating a more robust finding, i.e. a very low probability that the results were generated by chance. Full model results are presented in Supplementary Table A4.1a.

Model 1 presents the results using school type, while Model 2 adds in other school characteristics, like size, location (urban/rural), designated disadvantaged (DEIS) status and whether the school is fee-paying or not. In Model 1, which just includes sector, we find that, compared to girls' secondary schools, boys' secondary schools are somewhat less likely to have newcomer students, and, in particular, vocational schools are much less likely to have newcomer students.

Table 4.1a: Factors Associated with Having any Newcomer Students (Second-level Schools)

	Model 1 Coefficients	Model 2 Coefficients
School Type:		
Ref: Girls' Secondary		
Boys' Secondary	(-)~	(-)~
Coed Secondary	n.s	n.s.
Vocational	(-)**	n.s.
Community/Comprehensive	n.s.	n.s.
Urban		n.s.
Designated disadvantaged status		n.s.
Fee-paying school		(-)*
Gaelcholaistí		(-)***
School Size:		
200 to 399 students		(+)**
400 to 599		(+)***
Over 600		(+)***
(Ref: Less than 200)		
Constant	(+)***	(+)**

Notes: From a logistic regression model. *** p<=0.001; **p<=0.01; *p<=0.05; ~<=0.1.
Source: Survey of Principals, second-level schools.

[27] Throughout the report, 'vocational school' is taken to include community colleges.

But are these sectoral differences related to factors like school size and location? We control for other school characteristics in Model 2. Here we find that sectoral differences disappear, that is, they are accounted for fully by other characteristics. Thus, vocational schools are no less likely than other school types to have newcomers once we take into account their smaller average size and overrepresentation in rural areas. The model 2 results indicate that fee-paying schools and gaelcholaistí are less likely to have newcomer students, other things being equal, as we might have expected. School size is an important factor: the bigger the school, the more likely they are to have newcomer students. In particular, very large schools are much more likely to have newcomer students than very small second-level schools. There is no association between school type and whether or not the school has newcomer students, nor are newcomer students more likely to be found in disadvantaged second-level schools. While somewhat surprising, both these findings may be related to the fact that newcomer students are widely spread across second-level schools.

Having investigated which schools have any newcomers, we now focus more closely on schools with newcomer students. What factors are associated with a high proportion of newcomers? Table 4.1b presents the results of a linear regression model for second-level schools with newcomers (detailed findings in Table A4.1b). Here we see that urban schools have a higher proportion of newcomer students relative to rural schools. Designated disadvantaged schools also tend to have a higher proportion of newcomers than non-disadvantaged schools. These are both consistent with international findings.

While larger schools are more likely to have newcomer students (see Table 4.1a above), larger schools have a lower proportion of newcomer students compared to schools with less than 200 students. This is particularly true of schools with more than 400 students. This makes sense: 20 newcomers will represent 10 per cent of a second-level school with 200 students but only 3.3 per cent of a school with 600 students. The proportion of newcomers does not vary by type of school.

Table 4.1b: Factors Associated with a Higher Proportion of Newcomer Students in Schools with Newcomers (Second-level Schools)

	Coefficients
(Constant)	(+)***
Urban	(+)**
Designated disadvantaged status	(+)**
Fee-paying school	(+)**
Gaelscoil	n.s.
School Size:	
200 to 399 students	n.s.
400 to 599	(-)**
Over 600	(-)*
(Ref: Less than 200)	
School Type:	
Ref: Girls' Secondary	
Boys' Secondary	n.s.
Coed Secondary	n.s.
Vocational	n.s.
Community/Comprehensive	n.s.
Number of schools	403
R^2	0.128

Notes: From a linear regression model. *** p<=0.001; **p<=0.01; *p<=0.05; ~<=0.1.
Source: Survey of Principals, second-level schools.

4.3.2 PRIMARY SCHOOLS

How do the 56 per cent of primary schools with newcomer students differ from the 44 per cent of those without? Table 4.2a presents the results of the model which investigates the association between denomination of the school (Catholic/Non-Catholic); school location (urban/rural); disadvantaged status; *Irish medium* and school size, and the presence of newcomer students (detailed model results presented in Table A4.2a). The model indicates that urban primary schools are more likely to have newcomer students than rural schools. This is presumably related to the distribution of jobs and the fact that the families of newcomer students are more likely to live in cities (see Chapter 1). Disadvantaged schools are almost twice as likely to have newcomer students as non-disadvantaged schools: this is consistent with international patterns. Irish medium primary schools are less likely to have newcomers than other schools. Catholic schools are slightly less likely than non-Catholic schools to have newcomer students, most likely reflecting religious diversity among the immigrant population. Finally, school size is strongly associated with the presence of newcomer students: the larger the school, the more likely it is to have newcomer students. This is particularly true of schools with over 200 pupils (see Table A4.2a).

Table 4.2a: Factors Associated with Having any Newcomer Students (Primary Schools)

	Coefficients
Catholic School	(-)~
Urban	(+)*
Designated disadvantaged status	(+)*
Gaelscoil	(-)***
School Size:	
100 to 199 students	(+)***
200 to 399	(+)***
Over 400	(+)***
(Ref: Less than 100)	
Constant	n.s.

Notes: From a logistic regression model. *** p<=0.001; **p<=0.01; *p<=0.05; ~<=0.1.
Source: Survey of Principals, primary schools.

Table 4.2b presents a model that looks at the factors associated with the proportion of newcomer students in primary schools (Table 4.2b and Table A4.2b in the Supplementary Tables). Urban primary schools have a substantially higher proportion of newcomers than rural schools; once again this is related to the fact that immigrants are more likely to live in urban areas. Compared to non-disadvantaged schools, urban disadvantaged schools have a much higher proportion of newcomer students, even controlling for whether the school is urban or rural. Rural disadvantaged schools do not differ from non-disadvantaged schools in this regard. School size plays much less of a role in understanding the proportion of newcomers than in understanding whether the school has newcomers or not.[28] The proportion of newcomer students is somewhat lower in Catholic

[28] The one exception to this pattern is that the small number of primary schools with more than 400 pupils have a higher proportion of newcomers than schools with less than 100 pupils.

schools than in non-Catholic schools, most likely reflecting the diversity of religious beliefs found among the newcomer population.

Table 4.2b: Factors Associated with a Higher Proportion of Newcomer Students (Primary Schools)

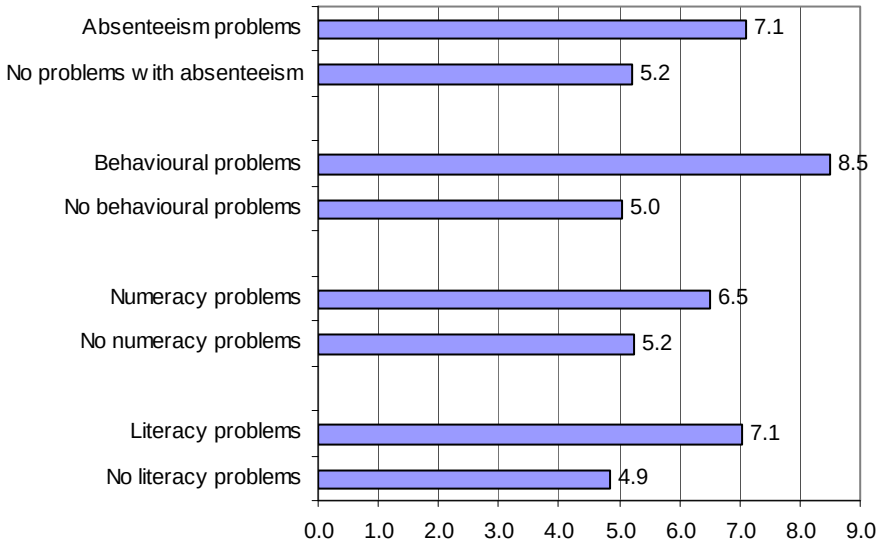
	Coefficients
Constant	(+)***
Catholic School	(-)~
Urban	(+)**
Designated disadvantaged status - rural	n.s.
Designated disadvantaged status - urban	(+)***
Gaelscoil	n.s.
School Size:	
100 to 199 students	n.s.
200 to 399	n.s
Over 400	(+)~
(Ref: Less than 100)	

Notes: From a linear regression model. *** p<=0.001; **p<=0.01; *p<=0.05; ~<=0.1.
Source: Survey of Principals, primary schools.

The models of distribution show some variation by known characteristics, but overall much of the variance in both which schools have newcomers and the proportion of newcomers remains unexplained. This is presumably because some of the distribution of newcomer students is explained by factors unrelated to schools, for example, the spatial distribution of migrants in Ireland. Some schools have newcomer students because migrants and their children are living in the school catchment area; others do not, as there are no migrants in that area. The distribution of newcomers may also be related to whether there are sufficient places available in the school, and if not, what mechanisms schools use to select applicants. This latter point we investigate further in Section 4.3 on admissions below, which draws on both survey data and qualitative interviews.

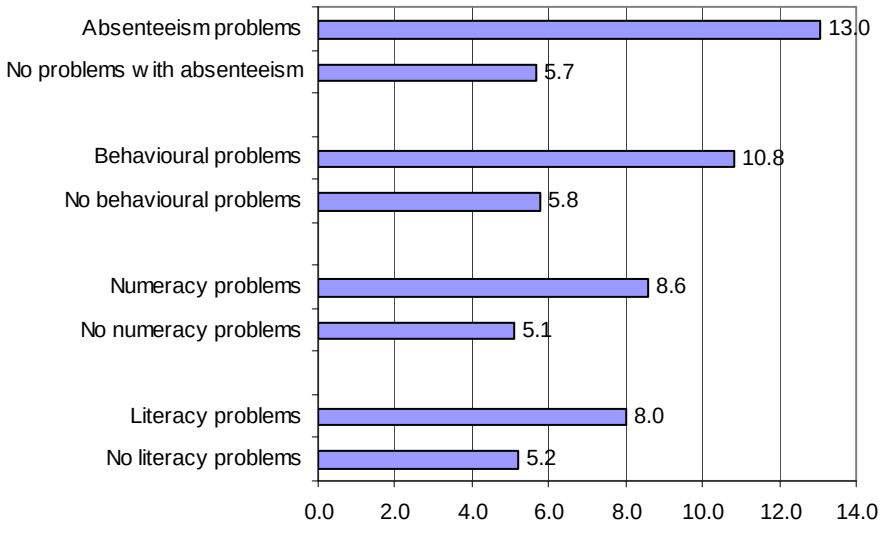
We find some evidence, consistent with international findings, that newcomer students in Ireland tend to attend schools with a socio-economically more disadvantaged student intake. Designated disadvantaged schools are both more likely to have newcomer students at primary level and, at both primary and second level, disadvantaged schools tend to have a higher proportion of newcomer students. To investigate this further, we look at the associations between more general indications of learning difficulties in the school and the proportion of newcomers in the school. These indicators are whether over 10 per cent of the students in the school have literacy problems, numeracy problems, emotional/behavioural problems and absenteeism. They are derived from a survey question which asks all school principals to estimate, in bands, what proportion of students in their school have difficulties in these areas (for the exact wording of the questions see the questionnaire in Appendix 1). Figures 4.3a and 4.3b compare the proportion of newcomers in schools with and without these difficulties in second-level and primary schools respectively.

Figure 4.3a: Proportion of Newcomers in Schools Where More than 10 Per Cent of Students Have Learning and Behavioural Problems, Compared to Schools Where Less than 10 Per Cent Have Learning and Behavioural Problems (Second-level)



There is an association between all of these factors and the proportion of newcomer students at both primary and second-level schools. For example, at second-level, the proportion of newcomers is 8.5 per cent in schools where over 10 per cent of students have behavioural problems, and 5 per cent in schools where fewer than 10 per cent of students have behavioural problems. Thus, newcomers are more likely to attend schools where there is a higher prevalence of behaviour problems among the existing intake of students. A similar pattern is repeated for other difficulties.

Figure 4.3b: Proportion of Newcomers in Schools Where More than 10 Per Cent of Students Have Learning and Behavioural Problems, Compared to Schools Where Less than 10 Per Cent Have Learning and Behavioural Problems (Primary Level)



At primary level, schools with over 10 per cent of students having behavioural problems have almost 11 per cent newcomers, compared to just under 6 per cent newcomers in other schools. Similar patterns emerge for the other problems listed at primary level and these are all statistically significant.

Schools with a greater proportion of Travellers also have a greater proportion of newcomer students. There is a positive correlation[29] of 0.28 between the proportion of newcomers and the proportion of Travellers within second-level schools, 0.35 at primary level; both correlations are statistically significant. In second-level schools, there is also a statistically significant correlation between the proportion of newcomers and the proportion of students with learning disabilities (0.23).

This suggests that some schools are dealing with, not only a larger proportion of newcomer students, but also considerable literacy, numeracy, behavioural and attendance difficulties, and a high proportion of other disadvantaged groups like Travellers, which could place a considerable burden on their resources. There is also a possibility that newcomer students may raise the standard and learning expectations in schools with a disadvantaged student intake.

4.4 Nationalities of Newcomer Students

The nationality of newcomer students is important in a number of respects. The nationality of a student is usually a good indicator of English language competency, which may have a crucial impact on learning outcomes. Nationality may also indicate cultural distance, where certain nationalities may be seen as 'further' from Ireland than others, in terms of customs, cultural reference points, religion and a shared identity (or lack of it). A previous Irish study found differences in the attitudes of teachers to newcomer students by nationality. Devine (2005) indicated that teachers showed more positive views of migrants of East European origin compared to other migrant groups such as African, Muslim, Asian and Roma migrants. Nationality may also indicate ethnic background (i.e. White, Black, Asian or Other, mixed background), which may influence experience of racism or racist bullying.[30] Devine, Kenny and McNeela 2008) found that the incidence of name-calling and bullying varied by nationality and ethnicity of students.

Equally, the mix of nationalities in a school may have a profound effect on how newcomer students settle in, integrate and develop both socially and academically. If a newcomer child is surrounded by co-nationals who speak their language in schools, this may be a rather different experience from attending a school where nobody speaks their language. This child may settle in initially, though their social and linguistic integration may be delayed. Similarly, if the school wants to translate some school information, this is a different task if there are two languages in the school rather than thirty. Research from the US highlights the fact that there is not only segregation of immigrants and ethnic minorities in schools, but also of particular national groups, like Asians, African-Americans and

[29] The value of a correlation coefficient ranges from zero (indicating no relationship between the two factors) and one (indicating a perfect relationship).

[30] Questions on the newcomer students' ethnic backgrounds were not included in the survey as the principals may not know this information or have it on file.

Hispanics/Latinos (Laosa 2001; Logan *et al.*, 2002), and high levels of segregation may have profound effects on learning and social outcomes.

Information is available from the DES Post-Primary Pupil Database on the nationality of second-level students[31], as reported by school principals. In 2007, young people from fifteen countries made up three-quarters of all newcomer students attending second-level schools. Table 4.3 indicates the 'top fifteen' countries; the largest single group is UK nationals, followed by young people from Poland, Nigeria and Lithuania.

In our survey, principals were asked about the country of origin of the newcomer students in their school.[32] For ease of completion, nationalities were supplied with tick boxes, grouped by national groups (i.e. Europe; America/Australia; Asia and Africa), rather than the more detailed information collected by the Department of Education and Science. It was not possible to list all possible nationalities, but each column had a heading for other, e.g. 'other Asian'.[33] Most, though not all, principals supplied this information: the discussion which follows is based on 360 second-level schools and 421 primary schools which gave information on the nationalities of the students.[34]

Table 4.3: Proportion of Newcomer Students in Second-level Schools from 'Top Fifteen' Countries

Country	% of Newcomers
UK	22.5
Poland	11.7
Nigeria	6.0
Lithuania	5.7
Spain	4.5
USA	4.1
Germany	3.8
Philippines	3.4
Latvia	2.6
Romania	2.6
South Africa	2.2
Pakistan	1.8
India	1.8
Brazil	1.4
Russia	1.4
Total	75.6

Source: DES Post-Primary Pupil Database.

Responses were grouped into the following eight national groups: UK nationals; Other EU15, excluding Britain and Ireland, that is nationals from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden; EU10 (Accession State Nationals, that is nationals of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia) plus Romania and Bulgaria; non-EU Eastern European nationals; nationals of

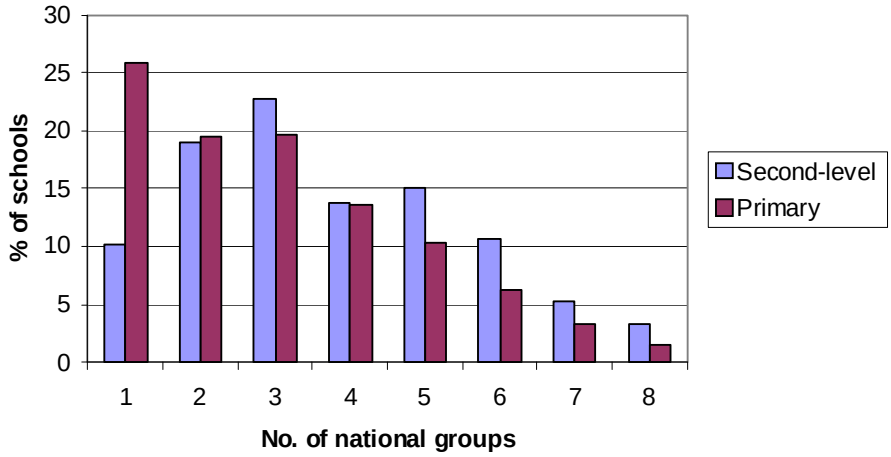
[31] Unfortunately, no such information is available on primary students.
[32] Country of origin is used here synonymously with nationality although in a small number of cases these may differ.
[33] For full details see the copy of the questionnaire in Appendix 1.
[34] This covers 93 per cent of the primary and second-level schools included in the survey.

USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia; Latin American nationals; Asians, and African nationals. Note that these are national *groups*, and even within the groups there will be a mixture of nationalities. Figure 4.4 presents how many of these national groups are represented among newcomer students at second-level and primary level. It is clear that many schools have a number of different national groups, particularly at second-level. Around one-third of second-level schools have five national groups or more.[35] Detailed nationality information was not recorded in our survey, but the post-primary school database records students of around 160 nationalities attending post-primary schools in the school year 2006/2007.

The national groups are not so mixed at primary level, though there too, three-quarters of schools with newcomers have two or more groups. Having more national mixing at second-level suggests that there may be a certain amount of local residential segregation, which influences primary school intakes, but this gets 'diluted' at second-level, where schools have a much larger catchment area.

These figures are consistent with recent migration patterns and the discussion in Chapter 1, though are in strong contrast to many other European countries, many of which have a few dominant nationalities, four or five of which may account for most newcomer students. In other countries, particular national groups, or even nationalities, may be concentrated in particular schools. This is particularly so where there is a long history of migration and established second-generation minority groups. This is certainly not the case in Ireland.

Figure 4.4: Number of National Groups in Schools with Newcomers



Note: National groups are the following – UK nationals; Other EU15, excluding Britain and Ireland (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden); EU10 (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia), plus Romania and Bulgaria; non-EU Eastern European nationals; nationals of USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia; Latin American nationals; Asians; and African nationals.

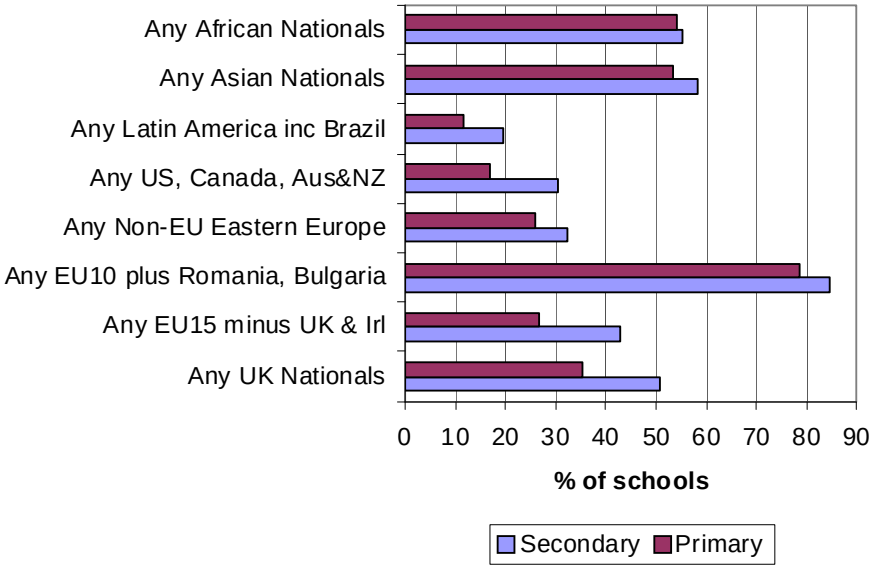
While the overall picture is of a mix of nationalities in most schools, there are some national groups more prevalent in schools than others if we

[35] The nationality information in this section is based solely on survey information with no adjustment.

look at the proportion of schools with any newcomer students from a particular national group.

From Figure 4.5 we see that at second-level, 85 per cent of schools with newcomers have students from the EU10 Accession States (including Romania and Bulgaria). This reflects the recent rapid increase in the number of East European nationals in Ireland (as is evident from Figure 1.2). Fifty-one per cent of schools have UK nationals. Compared to the nationality estimates from the Census (see Figure 1.1 and Table 1.3), this is likely to be an underestimate of UK nationals. Though principals were asked to include UK nationals in the newcomer body, it is likely that some UK nationals were not included, either because they had one parent who was Irish, or because they are seen as more similar to Irish students, do not require language provision and principals do not 'register' them as newcomers. At second-level 58 per cent of schools have Asian nationals; 55 per cent have African nationals. At primary level, 79 per cent of schools have EU10 Accession State nationals; 53 per cent have Asian nationals and 54 per cent have African nationals. Of course, this measure records any newcomer students from these countries: in some cases the numbers concerned could be very small, as low as one student.

Figure 4.5: Proportion of Schools with Newcomer Children from Various National Groups

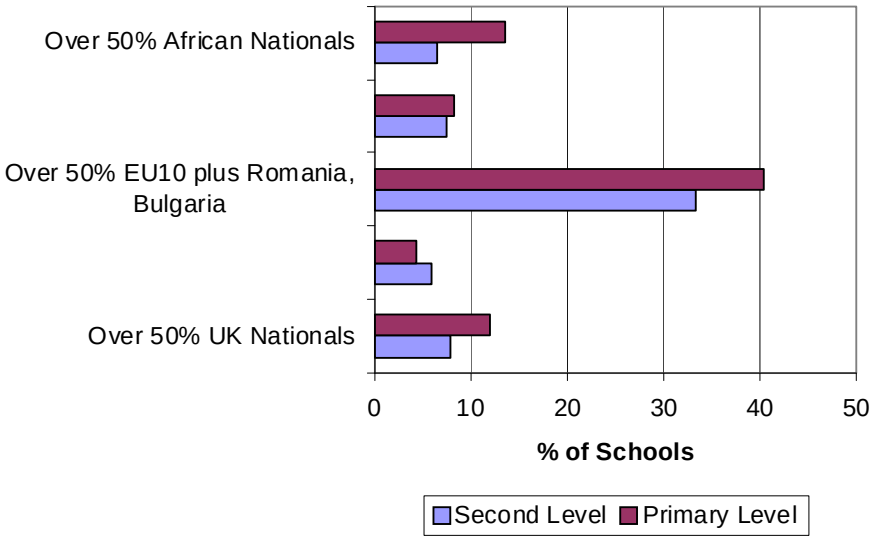


Note: National groups are the following – UK nationals; Other EU15, excluding Britain and Ireland (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden); EU10 (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia), plus Romania and Bulgaria; non-EU Eastern European nationals; nationals of USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia; Latin American nationals; Asians, and African nationals.

With such a mix of nationalities, it is not possible to characterise schools as 'Asian' or 'East European' in profile. The closest we can get to the national 'character' of the newcomer body is to look at what proportion of schools have one 'dominant' national group. In Figure 4.6 we present these figures for primary and second-level schools for the national groups most prevalent in Irish schools.

Here it becomes clear that East European nationals are most likely to be the dominant group – in one-third of second-level schools and 40 per cent of primary schools. A much smaller proportion of schools have a majority of Africans, Asians or West Europeans. While 61 per cent of second-level schools and almost 80 per cent of primary schools have one of these national groups with over 50 per cent, it should be stressed that these are national *groups*, not nationalities, and each group may have quite a mixture of nationalities. Second, over 50 per cent may mean 55 per cent so the remaining 45 per cent are actually a further mix. From the data in this survey, we can only conclude that there is no strong evidence of segregation by nationalities in Irish schools; in fact, there is a variety of nationalities in many schools with newcomers.

Figure 4.6: Proportion of Schools with One 'Dominant' National Group Among Newcomers



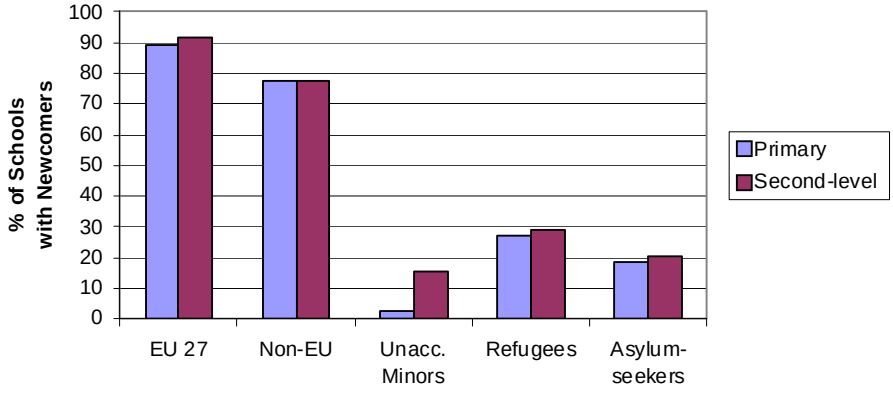
Notes: *EU 15 minus UK and Ireland is Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden.
**EU 10 is Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia plus Romania and Bulgaria.

This has implications for school policy and procedures. Dealing with children with a wide variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds offers a considerable challenge to schools as will become evident in later chapters in this report. That said, it is a positive feature of Irish schools that there is no national or ethnic clustering, given the experience in the US.

The mixture of nationalities also limits what a survey of school principals can say about whether there is variation in the experience of schools and the newcomer children in those schools with different nationalities. Principals were asked to comment on the newcomer body as a whole, and particular nationalities are rarely distinguished. Previous qualitative research (e.g. Devine *et al.*, 2002) has brought out differences between ethnic and national groups. Our study also collected a rich range of qualitative data which gives more detailed information on differences between national groups, particularly in Chapter 5. Larger-scale studies on the experience of different nationalities would be one avenue for future research.

It was noted in Chapter 1 how immigrants come to Ireland for rather different reasons. Figure 4.7 shows the proportion of schools with newcomers from families recording different legal statuses. Around 90 per cent of both primary and second-level schools have EU nationals, with just over three-quarters having non-EU nationals. Unaccompanied minors[36] are very rarely found in primary schools, but are found in 15 per cent of second-level schools with newcomers. These children or young adults may have experienced trauma or very distressing situations in their home countries. As is obvious from the qualitative material in this survey, these students present considerable challenges for schools.

Figure 4.7: Proportion of Schools with Newcomers with Specific Newcomer Groups



Almost one-third of schools with newcomers have refugees, and around one-fifth have asylum seekers. Asylum seekers, as described in Chapter 1, usually live in direct provision centres, are not legally allowed to work and receive a very modest allowance from the State while awaiting the asylum decision. About two thirds of asylum seekers are from Africa.[37]

4.5 School Admission Policies

While residential patterns clearly play a role in the distribution of newcomer students across schools, international evidence also suggests that school segregation of immigrants is often higher than residential segregation (Rangvid, 2007 in Denmark; Kristen, 2008 in Germany; Logan *et al.*, 2002 in the US; Burgess *et al.*, 2005 in the UK). 'School segregation' generally refers to the degree to which two or more groups attend schools separately from one another, in different parts of a specific area, e.g. in a district, city, or region (Massey and Denton, 1988). The DES Enrolment report does suggest that, even in specific areas, there is great variation in the proportion of newcomer students across different schools. Yet, even where very detailed information on school segregation and residential segregation is available, it is often difficult to disentangle the effect of school choice of either immigrant or native parents (or the students themselves) from the role of the school in selecting or limiting intake of

[36] There are unfortunately no national figures on the number of unaccompanied minors. In late 2008, 180 unaccompanied minors were under the care of the HSE Social Work Team for separated children. However, this figure excludes those outside Dublin as well as those under the care of local community care teams within Dublin.

[37] Detailed statistics on asylum seekers are posted on the website of the Reception and Integration Agency (www.ria.gov.ie).

various kinds of students. Kristen (2008), for example, stresses the role of parental resources. Her research from Germany suggests as immigrants are less likely to possess the country-specific knowledge that can be used in choosing schools, their opportunities for discovering, evaluating and accessing certain schools differ from those of native Germans. The author also observes that native German families, aiming for achievement, are more likely to choose lower immigrant intake schools.

The issue of school choice has been relatively under-researched in the Irish context, especially at primary level. Research on second-level students indicates very active choice of schools on behalf of parents (and students); around half of second-level students do not attend their nearest or most accessible school (Hannan *et al.*, 1996; Smyth *et al.*, 2004). Qualitative research indicates that parents use a combination of factors in deciding upon a school, including location, prior decisions about older siblings, the reputation of the school and school facilities (Smyth *et al.*, 2004).

In this section we focus primarily on school admissions policies. Indeed, school admissions policies and their consequences for the distribution of newcomer students have received considerable attention in the media in recent months, with new forms of school governance (namely, 2 VEC-run State community primary schools) emerging within the primary sector. In the following section, we draw on evidence from both surveys of primary and second-level principals and from detailed qualitative interviews with case study principals to investigate this issue. One factor we cannot look at explicitly is the role of parental choice and why newcomer parents may choose schools in different ways from Irish parents. This is because interviewing newcomer parents was beyond the scope of this study. There are some observations from the qualitative material which are suggestive of parental choice, both relating to parents of newcomer students and parents of Irish students.

4.5.1 SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

Survey Data on Admissions Policy

Principals were asked a number of general questions about student intake and admissions policy, including whether the total number of first year students coming to the school has increased, decreased or remained stable over the past five years. Of all second-level schools, 30 per cent said 'the number has increased,' 29 per cent 'decreased' and 42 per cent 'have remained stable.' The next question concerned whether there were other schools to which first year students might go, to which 87 per cent of principals answered 'yes'. Then principals were asked whether all of the students who apply are usually accepted: 80 per cent of principals said 'yes, all applicants are usually accepted,' with 20 per cent saying 'no.' This is a higher number than expected, and implies that in 80 per cent of schools there is no selection taking place. Note that these questions will not pick up whether schools informally recommend a student attend another school.

Those principals who answered that not all applicants were accepted were then asked what criteria are used to admit students, and requested to tick as many options as apply. Of those principals using some selection criteria, 49 per cent ticked 'lives in local area'; 87 per cent ticked 'siblings in the school'; 63 per cent ticked 'primary school attended'; 40 per cent ticked 'date of application'; 23 per cent ticked 'religion' and 36 per cent 'other'.

A number of these selection criteria may by nature disadvantage newcomers. For example, the widespread practice of taking students who already have siblings in the school will tend to disadvantage newly arrived immigrants. 'Date of application', applied in 40 per cent of these schools, will disadvantage newcomers if, as seems to be common practice, the date of application was years before. 'Other', when specified, tends to be mainly either children of past pupils or children of staff, both of which will tend to disadvantage newcomers, particularly the former, as migration to Ireland is a very recent phenomenon. Other selection criteria will disadvantage some groups of newcomers but not others. 'Religion', though not cited widely as a selection criterion, may also tend to disadvantage newcomers who are not Catholic. 'Primary school attended' will affect all those who have not been to primary school in Ireland. The only obvious means of selection which will not tend to disadvantage newcomers in some respect is, in fact, 'lives in local area'.

We now estimate models of whether the school has newcomers or not, both to investigate admission factors together, and also to figure out whether distribution is mediated by admission factors (Table 4.4 and Table A4.3). Model 1 replicates the previous model of factors associated with the presence of newcomer students in a school, presented in Table 4.1a. Given the prevalence of active school choice, we might expect there to be competition for students among schools in particular areas. Model 2 therefore introduces a variable to measure between-school competition. This is assigned the value one when the school accepts all students and there are other second-level schools in the local area newcomers can go to. In Table 4.3 the model indicates that schools subject to between-school competition are more likely to have newcomer students. They take the newcomer students in an area where other schools may not.[38]

Table 4.4: Factors Associated with Having any Newcomer Students, Including Admission Criteria (Second-level Schools)

	Model 1	Model 2
School Type:		
Boys' Secondary	(-)~	(-)~
Coed Secondary	n.s.	n.s.
Vocational	n.s.	n.s.
Community/Comprehensive	n.s.	n.s.
Ref: Girls' Secondary	n.s.	n.s.
Urban	n.s.	n.s.
Designated disadvantaged status	n.s.	n.s.
Fee-paying school	(-)*	(-)*
Gaelcholaistí	(-)***	(-)***
School Size:		
200 to 399 students	(+)**	(+)**
400 to 599	(+)***	(+)**
Over 600	(+)***	(+)***
(Ref: Less than 200)		
Subject to between-school competition[1]		(+)*
Constant	(+)**	n.s.

Notes: From a logistic regression model. *** p<=0.001; **p<=0.01; *p<=0.05; ~<=0.1.
[1]'Subject to between-school competition' = accepts all students in a local area where there are other schools.
Source: Survey of Principals, second-level schools.

[38] Detailed criteria are not statistically significant in the model, partly because of small sample size, and are not presented here.

Note that the effects of the other factors – school size, whether the school is fee-paying or Irish medium – remain the same between both models. This indicates that these are not influenced by the introduction of this between-school competition variable.

Admissions Policies in the Case-study Second-level Schools

Principals in the six case-study schools were asked about their general admissions policy, whether they are oversubscribed, selection criteria and competition from other schools. The case studies give much additional information not available in the survey, and shed some light on the overview provided by the survey. Detailed interviews with school principals were also carried out in two second-level schools without newcomer students to explore these issues (see Chapter 3 for an overview of both these schools and the case-study schools).

Of the two schools without newcomers, one of them, Adwick Street, was oversubscribed and has to refuse a lot of applicants. They have strict selection criteria: siblings and daughters of past pupils get preference, then there is a waiting list in order of application, and many names are put down when the children start primary school. Each of these criteria would disadvantage newcomers, so selection criteria may explain their absence from the school. In Grange Park, the story is rather different. The school did not have a feeder primary school and other schools in the local area were seen as attracting newcomers. The principal attributed this pattern to their smaller school size:

> *I would imagine … you know they see the larger school, whereas nationals would be more inclined to see the benefit of a small school. Newer communities would be inclined to see the advantages, the other advantages of larger schools in terms of resources.* (Principal, Grange Park second-level school)

In the six case-study schools which had newcomer students, three had low to medium proportions while three had relatively high proportions of newcomers. The reasons for the differing patterns related partly to differences in admissions policies but also to more complex processes.

The oversubscribed Huntington Road, a medium sized girls' secondary school, had a clear admissions policy. Preference was given to the sisters of students, daughters of past pupils, those who had attended the feeder school, and those who had put their names down, often when the child was two years old. Given the selection policy, the only route for newcomers without siblings in the school into first year would be through the primary school system, though not if there are no newcomers in the primary school. They do have newcomer students, but very often it would not be for first year but only in the older classes, if they have the space.

Bentham Street is located in a rural area and it draws on the local catchment area, accepting all who apply. The number of newcomer students applying to the school is, therefore, closely related to the number of migrants in the local area:

> *They do [go to school] where they live basically. In rural Ireland there is normally only a standalone school, it's not like in an urban city.* (Principal, Bentham Street second-level school)

Lowfield Street school had experienced declining numbers in recent years. One of the local schools was highly selective in nature but the other schools tended to have similar numbers of newcomers:

> *I think it boils down to geographic location and perhaps previous experience, like we do have students who come on the basis of a relative or a friend or a work colleague or a father or a mother says you know that they've sent their child here so we have a fair bit of that yeah.* (Principal, Lowfield Street second-level school)

The three second-level schools with higher proportions of newcomers tend to have available places. Wulford Park had experienced declining numbers of Irish students in recent years as students were attracted to schools further afield and now catered for newcomers in the local area:

> *If they're coming to this area … I think they're going to come to this school, they tend to come to the school closest to where they're staying.* (Principal, Wulford Park second-level school)

As well as having an open admissions policy, two of the other schools, Ashville Lane and Brayton Square, also accepted referrals from statutory agencies:

> *Applications mid-year from outside the area go to the Board of Management for consideration. Referrals from other agencies, we do often get referrals from HSE or from social services, would you take this student in. Or from the newly constituted Education Welfare Board. They might have a student who's been expelled somewhere and it's their job then to find a school so they might come looking here.* (Principal, Brayton Square second-level school)

Across all of the schools, principals stressed that applications from newcomers were often not made through the usual channels, and frequently occurred just before the school year begins or during the school year. Newcomer students arrive:

> *[D]ay before school starts.* (Principal, Wulford Park second-level school)

> *Any time, if not coming from primary ... very often they just knock on the door, walk in.* (Principal, Bentham Street second-level school)

> *But any time of the year, up to yesterday. I took two in yesterday.* (Principal, Brayton Square second-level school)

Many principals mentioned the problems that late or mid-year applications can cause for resource allocation:

> *But the 1st October is a significant date in Irish education, because as of that date, Departments make up their numbers, and resources are decided, and allocation of teachers and capitation are decided on that basis, and up to this year there are no changes in that, until the following year. So anybody who was taking in students after the 1st October would not get any recognition for them, until the following October again, and by their nature, some of the foreign students in particular can be quite mobile, insofar as they can be moved around the country,*

> *or they may move back to their own area when a position becomes available, because schools might take them in again maybe, so some schools, like ourselves, who are taking the students, because that was our policy, and we decided to do that, not to refuse the kids entry, we may never have got any support for some of the students that we have taken.* (Principal, Ashville Lane second-level school)

Even without the residential mobility which is more frequent among newcomer families, the fact that resources are allocated to schools on the basis of enrolments by a specified date may act as a significant disincentive for schools to accept newcomer students.

In sum, the survey results show that schools subject to between-school competition, i.e. those which accept all students in areas where there are other schools newcomers can go to, are more likely to have newcomer students (Table 4.4). From the case-study material, geographical distribution is cited frequently as the main cause for the differential distribution of newcomers across schools. Other principals mention the fact that once newcomers are in a school, they tend to attract others, a common feature of migration more generally. Finally, the way newcomers come in the middle of the year is a challenge for schools set up to take in students in September, with the double burden of lacking resources if students arrive after the cut-off date for resource allocation.

4.5.2 PRIMARY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

Survey Data on Primary School Admissions

At primary level, the numbers of students coming to the school are more likely to have increased than at second-level due to recent demographic trends. Here, 45 per cent of schools have seen an increase in infant classes in the previous five years, with 12 per cent of principals saying there was a decrease and 44 per cent saying the numbers have remained stable. Four-fifths (82 per cent) of primary principals said that there were other local schools that students may go to. Similar to second-level, 81 per cent of principals said that all students were accepted. This suggests that there is selection taking place in 19 per cent of schools.

As at second-level, primary principals who said that not all applicants were accepted were asked about the selection criteria used in deciding which students to accept. Of principals using some selection criteria, 59 per cent ticked 'lives in local area'; 73 per cent ticked 'siblings in the school'; 4 per cent ticked 'attended Early Start in the school'; 32 per cent ticked 'date of application'; 31 per cent ticked 'religion' and 41 per cent ticked 'other'. The 'other' category implies something different in primary schools than at second-level. Here a wide range of factors are mentioned, though ones which feature prominently are: age (e.g. 'must be 4 years by a certain date'); Irish language ability; students with special needs; children of staff or past pupils.

Once again the same factors might be assumed to disadvantage newcomer students: siblings, date of application, religion. Among the other criteria used, age is unlikely to disadvantage newcomers, though Irish language and children of staff or past pupils will.

In Table 4.5 we present two models of factors associated with having any newcomer students, to explore the impact of admissions policies on having newcomers at primary level. Model 1 replicates the previous model of factors associated with the presence of newcomer students in a school, presented in Table 4.2a, and Model 2 adds admissions factors. Three selection criteria show a significant association with the presence of newcomers in primary schools. Schools that select students from the local area are more likely to have newcomer students, as we might have expected; schools that select on the basis of siblings in the school are less likely to have newcomer students. The final selection mechanism associated with more newcomer students at primary level is religion. This is somewhat surprising, given that almost all primary schools are Catholic, and a significant proportion of newcomer students would not be Catholic. It may be explained by the fact that some schools which very openly select on religion are actually minority faith schools, and these schools are more likely to have newcomer students.

Table 4.5: Factors Associated with Having any Newcomer Students, Including Admission Criteria (Primary Schools)

	Model 1 Coefficients	Model 2 Coefficients
Catholic School	(-)~	n.s.
Urban	(+)*	(+)~
Designated disadvantaged status	(+)*	(+)*
Gaelscoil	(-)***	(-)**
School Size:		
100 to 199 students	(+)***	(+)***
200 to 399	(+)***	(+)***
Over 400	(+)***	(+)***
(Ref: Less than 100)		
Criteria for being admitted:		
Local area		(+)~
Sibling(s) in school		(-)~
Attended Early Start in school		n.s
Date of application		n.s.
Religion		(+)*
Other criteria		n.s.
Constant	n.s.	n.s.

Notes: From a logistic regression model. *** p<=0.001; **p<=0.01; *p<=0.05; ~<=0.1.
Source: Survey of Principals, primary schools.

This interpretation is given some support by the results for whether newcomers are more likely to be found in Catholic schools. Here we see that whereas in Model 1, newcomer students were slightly less likely to be found in Catholic schools, this effect is reduced and no longer significant when we account for admission criteria in Model 2. This is consistent with an explanation that selection by religion may be going on in non-Catholic schools, and these schools are more likely to have newcomer students.

The other admission criteria are not significant, and the other factors from Model 1 – school size, designated disadvantaged status and whether or not the school is urban or rural or a Gaelscoil – are all still strongly associated with whether or not a school has newcomers.

Admissions Policies in the Case-study Primary Schools

As at second-level, principals in the six case-study primary schools were asked about their general admissions policy, whether they are

oversubscribed, selection criteria and competition from other schools. At primary level too, interviews were conducted with principals in two schools without newcomers addressing the same issues (See Chapter 3 for an overview of these schools).

In the two schools without newcomers, the factors influencing this were different in the two cases. Greendale Avenue takes all who apply but is a small school in a rural area which has very few migrants. Its profile therefore reflects that of its catchment area. In Dobbins Road, the school has more applicants than places. Priority is given to siblings of existing students, followed by local parishioners (parents are required to supply a baptismal certificate for their child) and the child's place on the waiting list. These factors, combined with the school's location in a middle-class area with expensive housing, serve to reduce the likelihood of newcomer students attending the school.

Selection criteria are also evident in Greenway Road, a school with few newcomers. Here parents begin to put their child's name down for entry to the school as soon as they are born or as soon as they arrive in the area, and religion and having a sibling in the school are also taken into account:

> *We get two applicants for each place … so the prioritisation in our enrolment policy is brothers and sisters of children already enrolled… and because it is a Catholic school, Catholic children of this parish. So usually we fill our places from those cohorts, so that can sometimes make it difficult for a child from another country who does not have a brother or sister with us or who is not a Catholic.* (Principal, Greenway Road primary school)

In Jefferson Street, the school draws mainly on the local catchment area, which consists mainly of social housing. The school accepts all who apply and does not have a high proportion of newcomers because of local residential patterns but has a high proportion of Traveller children. Similarly, in Van Buren Street, the catchment area was mainly one of social housing but the proportion of newcomers had increased significantly in recent year and the school had become known locally as 'the school for newcomers':

> *Although we're not the largest school, we have the largest number of immigrant children. I know a number of the children who applied here subsequently live on the other side of the river and applied to another school for admission but the other school told them that the classes were full. That may very well be the case, the classes may have been full, I don't know.* (Principal, Van Buren Street primary school)

Three of the case-study primary school had relatively high proportions of newcomers. This pattern reflected an open admissions policy, the geographical distribution of migrants locally, and the tendency for more newcomers to come to the school once an initial group of newcomers had joined. Thomas Road is an inner city school and so has no natural catchment area. They take everyone who applies, at whatever time of year, as the physical space in the school far exceeds the school population. In fact, their numbers had dropped over a number of years and then risen again with the advent of newcomers. Adams Street has an open admission policy and in fact is proactive in trying to attract newcomer students.

Enrolment to the school is advertised in the paper every year to let people in the area know and in the past they have advertised in Russian and Polish. This school is Catholic and this is seen as driving their inclusive nature:

> *The Catholic ethos is something that the school espouses and we don't turn away regardless of colour or creed.* (Principal, Adams Street primary school.)

As in Van Buren Street, Adams Street school, with 30 per cent newcomers, has become known locally as the school for newcomers:

> *I think it is well known in the locality as having a high proportion of newcomer students. I know that there is a few in most schools around this area, particularly there is a few in [school X] but in [school Y] I don't think they've got too many, maybe one or two but that's it, they wouldn't have nearly the number that we have.* (Principal, Adams Street primary school)

Their profile reflects not just an increase in the numbers of newcomer students but the withdrawal of some Irish students from the school by their parents:

> *But some [Irish] parents have taken their children out of the school because they felt that their education was being compromised because of the presence of newcomer students in the classroom and the extra attention teachers had to give to them because of language difficulties.* (Principal, Adams Street primary school)

This is consistent with international research showing that some native families opt out from schools with many immigrants, often for fear of declining academic standards (see Rangvid, 2007 for Denmark; Kristen, 2008 for Germany).

Durango Street represents an interesting case-study of a school which has tried to balance the needs of newcomer and Irish students in their admissions policy. The school is located in an area of population growth and a shortage of school provision. Their admissions policy had originally prioritised older students; however, this caused local resentment as some of the local Irish children were not allocated places in the school:

> *There was uproar because immigrant children that were only in the area for a very short period of time got places over indigenous Irish children that had been living in the area, whose parents had been living in the area for a long time, and there was huge hassle and bad feeling and an awful lot of that hassle came to this door here.* (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

The school subsequently adapted their admissions policy to prioritise siblings of existing students and those from the local Catholic parish:

> *We examined our enrolment policy and as a result of pressure from a lot of quarters the following year took the Catholics first. It didn't sit well with us, the decision to do that, but we had no choice because we're a Catholic school.* (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

However, they were unhappy about the consequences of this policy for newcomers so were in the process at the time of the interview of changing

the admissions criteria to take a certain proportion of non-Catholics. Durango Street is a very interesting example of how admissions policies promoting equality can be contested by the local community, and more generally the challenges that newcomer students can bring for school admissions policies.

As in second-level schools, the tendency for newcomer children to start throughout the year is seen to cause problems for primary schools:

> *For the most part, they literally just come in ... out on the doorstep, just out on the doorstep, which can be difficult at times, all through the year. All through the year, all through the year for next year and all through the year for the current year. They just come.* (Principal, Thomas Road primary school)

The example of Van Buren Street, where a large number of newcomer students arrived unexpectedly, offered considerable logistical challenges for the school:

> *We have had last year when we got the influx but we set up a few extra classes to cater for it and the Department have been very slow in addressing the issue of accommodation for that . they more or less expected us to fit them in here into existing accommodation. They've now agreed to give us two extra rooms, which they've approved only last week [June] but we took in the children last September and that had a knock-on effect, I had to rearrange classes here considerably in order to accommodate the children.* (Principal, Van Buren Street primary school)[39]

In sum, admissions issues emerged, particularly from the case-study material, as much more prevalent and contentious at primary level than at second-level level, partly because there may be more pressure on places. A much greater proportion of primary schools reported that their numbers were increasing than at second-level. More selection being reported is also entirely consistent with there being no newcomers in 40 per cent of primary schools but in only 10 per cent at second-level. Two case-study schools described admissions crises linked to newcomer students, and other case study schools brought up the issue of selection or being labelled a 'newcomer' school. The analysis earlier in this chapter did not indicate strong evidence of segregation of newcomer students which has been criticised in other countries, though there are some notable exceptions (i.e. a number of schools with over 50 per cent newcomers), but the case-study material brought to light practices at primary level which may lead this pattern to change in the future.[40]

[39] In Van Buren St, 25 children of varying ages arrived unexpectedly the day before school started.

[40] Survey estimates indicate that there are around 45 schools out of the total of nearly 3,300 that have more than 50 per cent newcomers.

4.6 Conclusions

Some interesting patterns emerge in the investigation of how newcomer students are distributed across Irish schools. First, the distributions are rather different at primary and second-level. At second-level, the vast majority of schools have newcomers, around 90 per cent of them, but many of them have a rather small proportion of newcomer students, between 2 and 9 per cent. At primary level, over 40 per cent of schools have no newcomers at all, but those that do, tend to have a greater proportion of newcomer students.

Second, most Irish schools with newcomer students have students from a wide range of nationalities. This is particularly true at second-level. The representation of East European nationals is greater than that from other national groups but, in general, there is a substantial mix of nationalities within individual schools. While this indicates an absence of segregation on the basis of nationality, which is positive, it also offers considerable challenges for schools, given the variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds of newcomer students. A further challenge for schools is that newcomers are somewhat more likely to be in schools that have a disadvantaged intake, that is, more socio-economically disadvantaged students or students with learning or behavioural problems.

Overall the evidence from the survey data suggests that the extent of segregation of the newcomer population is relatively low, compared to the experience of other countries. There seems to be somewhat more clustering at primary level than at second-level, and a few primary schools have a very high proportion of newcomer students. However, schools with over 50 per cent newcomers represent less than 2 per cent of all primary schools, approximately 45 schools out of a total of nearly 3,300 primary schools in the country. There are some hints from the case-study material that this could be a potential problem in the future, with some schools being labelled as 'newcomer schools' and some Irish parents taking children out of a school with a high proportion of newcomer students. This phenomenon has been observed in other countries, for example in Germany (Kristen, 2008), and particularly in the US (Logan *et al.*, 2002).

Given our study relates to schools rather than local areas, we were unable to investigate in depth the issue of the spatial distribution of immigrants across Ireland and how this relates to the distribution of newcomer students across schools. The case-study material did suggest that many principals feel that residence patterns play a strong role in the distribution of newcomer students. This issue merits further research, by, for example, matching data from schools with data on residential patterns (e.g. small area population statistics (SAPS) from Census data).

The availability of places in the school is also a crucial issue in influencing the distribution of newcomer students. In the one in five schools which are oversubscribed, many of the enrolment criteria tend to favour settled communities, particularly where parents are required to sign up long in advance and preference is given to the siblings of those already in the school. Much inward migration into Ireland is relatively recent and recent immigrants tend to be very geographically mobile. Therefore, newcomer children will inevitably end up in schools which are under-subscribed, as in other schools the places are already filled. This will apply in particular to newcomer children who arrive during the course of the school year. Starting in the middle of the school year, or at very short notice before term starts, does pose considerable logistical and, in some

cases, resource challenges for schools, as resources are typically allocated on the basis of information collected on fixed dates early in the school year. Some flexibility in the timing of resource allocation would assist schools dealing with the arrival of newcomer students during the school year, particularly substantial numbers of them.

SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES

Table A4.1a: Factors Associated with Having any Newcomer Students (Second-Level Schools)

	Model 1 Coefficients	Model 2 Coefficients
School Type:		
Ref: Girls' Secondary		
Boys' Secondary	-1.165~	-1.229~
Coed Secondary	-0.818	-0.133
Vocational	-1.521**	-0.844
Community/Comprehensive	0.000	-0.193
Urban		0.105
Designated disadvantaged status		0.357
Fee-paying school		-1.522*
Gaelcholaistí		-3.041***
School Size:		
200 to 399 students		1.302**
400 to 599		1.536***
Over 600		3.883***
(Ref: Less than 200)		
Constant	3.157***	2.036**
Nagelkerke R^2	0.059	0.396
Number of schools	448	448

Notes: From a logistic regression model. *** p<=0.001; **p<=0.01; *p<=0.05; ~<=0.1.
Source: Survey of Principals, second-level schools.

Table A4.1b: Factors Associated with a Higher Proportion of Newcomer Students in Schools with Newcomers (Second-Level Schools)

	Coefficients
(Constant)	6.986***
Urban	2.350**
Designated disadvantaged status	2.582**
Fee-paying school	3.683**
Gaelcholaistí	1.295
School Size:	
200 to 399 students	-1.572
400 to 599	-3.455**
Over 600	
(Ref: Less than 200)	-3.475*
School Type:	
Ref: Girls' Secondary	
Boys' Secondary	-0.278
Coed Secondary	0.855
Vocational	-0.102
Community/Comprehensive	1.070
R^2	0.128
Number of schools	403

Notes: From a linear regression model. *** p<=0.001; **p<=0.01; *p<=0.05; ~<=0.1.
Source: Survey of Principals, second-level schools.

Table A4.2a: Factors Associated with Having any Newcomer Students (Primary Schools)

	Coefficients
Catholic School	-0.528~
Urban	0.580*
Designated disadvantaged status	0.617*
Gaelscoil	-1.272***
School Size:	
100 to 199 students	0.776***
200 to 399	1.954***
Over 400	4.138***
(Ref: Less than 100)	
Constant	0.252
Nagelkerke R^2	0.272
Number of schools	744

Notes: From a logistic regression model. *** p<=0.001; **p<=0.01; *p<=0.05; ~<=0.1.
Source: Survey of Principals, primary schools.

Table A4.2b: Factors Associated with a Higher Proportion of Newcomer Students (Primary Schools)

	Coefficient
Constant	13.777***
Catholic School	-4.430~
Urban	5.165**
Designated disadvantaged status – rural	-1.749
Designated disadvantaged status – urban	6.395***
Gaelscoil	-4.823
School Size:	
100 to 199 students	-0.922
200 to 399	1.331
Over 400	4.246~
(Ref: Less than 100)	
R^2	0.10
Number of schools	453

Notes: From a linear regression model. *** p<=0.001; **p<=0.01; *p<=0.05; ~<=0.1.
Source: Survey of Principals, primary schools.

Table A4.3: Factors Associated with Having any Newcomer Students, Including Admission Criteria (Second-Level Schools)

	Model 1	Model 2
School Type:		
Boys' Secondary	-1.229~	-1.241~
Coed Secondary	-0.133	-0.123
Vocational	-0.844	-0.803
Community/Comprehensive	-0.193	0.035
Ref: Girls' Secondary		
Urban	0.105	0.134
Designated disadvantaged status	0.357	0.173
Fee-paying school	-1.522*	-1.270*
Gaelcholaistí	-3.041***	-2.969***
School Size:		
200 to 399 students	1.302**	1.309**
400 to 599	1.536***	1.744**
Over 600	3.883***	4.234***
(Ref: Less than 200)		
Subject to between-school competition[1]		0.939*
Constant	2.036**	1.315
Nagelkerke R^2	0.396	0.413
Number of schools	448	448

Notes: From a logistic regression model. *** p<=0.001; **p<=0.01; *p<=0.05; ~<=0.1.
Source: Survey of Principals, second-level schools.
[1] 'Subject to between-school competition' = accepts all students in a local area where there are other schools.

Table A4.4: Factors Associated with Having any Newcomer Students, Including Admission Criteria (Primary Schools)

	Model 1 Coefficients	Model 2 Coefficients
Catholic School	-0.528~	-0.230
Urban	0.580*	0.567~
Designated disadvantaged status	0.617*	0.608*
Gaelscoil	-1.272***	-1.055**
School Size:		
100 to 199 students	0.776***	0.741***
200 to 399	1.954***	1.926***
Over 400	4.138***	4.053***
(Ref: Less than 100)		
Criteria for being admitted:		
Local area		1.144~
Sibling(s) in school		-1.152~
Attended Early Start in school		-1.633
Date of application		0.939
Religion		1.547*
Other criteria		-0.277
Constant	0.252	-0.056
Nagelkerke R^2	0.272	0.291
Number of schools	744	744

Notes: From a logistic regression model. *** p<=0.001; **p<=0.01; *p<=0.05; ~<=0.1.
Source: Survey of Principals, primary schools. .

5. Social Interaction and Social Support Structures for Newcomer Students

5.1 Introduction

Within the last decade, there has been a marked increase in the number of newcomer families coming to Ireland accompanied by school-aged children (see Chapter 1). While some Irish schools do not have newcomer students, there are a significant number of these students in both primary and second-level schools. International studies indicate that the successful integration of new arrivals is essential for ensuring social cohesion in host countries (OECD, 2006; Eurydice, 2004). Settling into the new educational system of the host country is an integral part of the integration process where schools play an important role (Gitlin *et al.*, 2003). International and Irish research indicates that moving to a new school setting can require considerable adjustment on the part of young people (Caulfield *et al.*, 2005; Smyth *et al.*, 2004). Previous studies have identified a number of factors that can act as barriers to newcomer students' successful integration into a new school, including linguistic, social/personal, academic, situational and psychological influences (see Mooten, 2006; Devine, 2005; Devine and Kelly, 2006; Ward, 2004). Furthermore, in recent years there has been a growing interest in the interaction between immigrant parents and teachers of the host country in supporting young people (see Shor and Bernhard, 2003). A Eurydice report (2004) shows that schools across Europe use a variety of measures to support newcomer students. While countries vary in the provision of different support measures, a number of schools offer written information about the education system, provide interpreters and special resource persons, and organise meetings specifically geared towards newcomer families (ibid.). However, compared to language support for newcomer students, the nature of social support structures within schools is less well documented.

To date, there is very little comprehensive research evidence available on the social experiences of newcomer students in Irish primary and second-level schools, particularly on the role of support structures in facilitating the settling-in process and longer term social integration of newcomers. This chapter aims to address this gap in research and draws on extensive survey data (involving 1,200 schools) as well as interviews conducted with staff and students in twelve case-study schools. As proficiency in English and academic issues can be seen to have a significant

impact on settling-in difficulties, these topics are dealt with separately in Chapters 6 and 7 respectively.

The first section presents staff and newcomer students' perceptions of the settling-in process in general. The following sections focus specifically on various factors that are seen by primary and second-level school teachers and students to contribute to challenges associated with the settling-in process.

5.2 General Perceptions of the Settling-in Process

In-depth interviews with staff in primary and second-level schools as well as focus group interviews with newcomer students were used to explore views on the settling-in process. In general, primary and second-level school teachers had mixed views about the ease with which newcomer students settled into their schools. Second-level teachers were more inclined to note that the majority of these students settle in relatively quickly, especially if they had transferred from local primary schools:

> *Newcomer students settle in very quickly, but most of them are coming from primary schools.* (Teacher, Huntington Road, second-level school)

However, it was generally acknowledged that moving to a new country constitutes a major change and upheaval in the lives of these students:

> *I've no doubt they do [have settling-in difficulties], I mean it's a new country, a new language, new culture, new system, it must be very difficult for some of them. … I wouldn't even go to estimate how difficult it is for them, very difficult I'd say.* (Teacher, Ashville Lane, second-level school)

Teachers also commented on the length of time it takes for newcomer students to adjust to the new circumstances. Settling into a new school was seen to take anything from a couple of weeks to a year:

> *I would say initially sort of in the first couple of weeks huge, huge in so much as the settling-in period, very daunting for them.* (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

> *I'd say it takes them a year; it would take them a year to settle in anywhere. Not so much the school but the education system itself as well, you know.* (Teacher, Adams Street primary school)

Information was also collected from newcomer students at both primary and post-primary level. Most newcomer students did not know anyone in the school before they came, which was seen as making the first day at school particularly daunting:

> *I found it hard because I didn't know that much people coming.* (Newcomer second-level students, Brayton Square)

> *I think it's still hard because you're used to the people that were in your other school or where you are from and then if you move to a new school you kind of like feel scared because there's not much people you know.* (Newcomer primary students, Durango Street)

In contrast, knowing someone in the school beforehand was seen as easing the transition process:

> *Yeah, I already knew someone here and I had a basic idea of what it would be like so I didn't find it that hard.* (Newcomer second-level students, Huntington Road)

> *I found it easy because when I got here I had some friends so they helped me out. (Newcomer second-level students, Bentham Street)*

Newcomer students generally felt that Irish students were welcoming when they first arrived:

> *I was going to say that when I first came into the school, everybody like wanted to be my friend so it was not that hard for me.* (Newcomer primary students, Durango Street)

> *Generally people are nice, they talk to you and they help you if you don't know where to go.* (Newcomer second-level students, Lowfield Street)

It is important to note that the majority of newcomer students seemed to settle into the new environment relatively quickly. However, both teachers and newcomer students identified a number of factors that can act as barriers to a successful settling-in process. The following sections of this chapter take a detailed look at these factors, drawing on survey data and interviews with teachers and students.

5.3 Proficiency in English

The profile of migrant students in Ireland is very heterogeneous. Immigrants, coming from over 188 countries, now make up over 10 per cent of the population in Ireland (CSO, 2006). Many of these countries do not use English as their first language. Not surprisingly, existing research on newcomer students in the Irish context identifies language issues among students for whom English is a foreign language as one of the biggest challenges (see Keogh and Whyte, 2003; Devine *et al.*, 2004). In the same vein, in this study we found that language difficulties among students and parents were by far the most commonly cited factors associated with settling-in difficulties, with 75 per cent and 70 per cent of primary and second-level principals respectively citing them. Around half of the second-level school principals reported that literacy and starting in the middle of the school year was contributing 'quite a lot' or 'a lot' to newcomer students' difficulties.

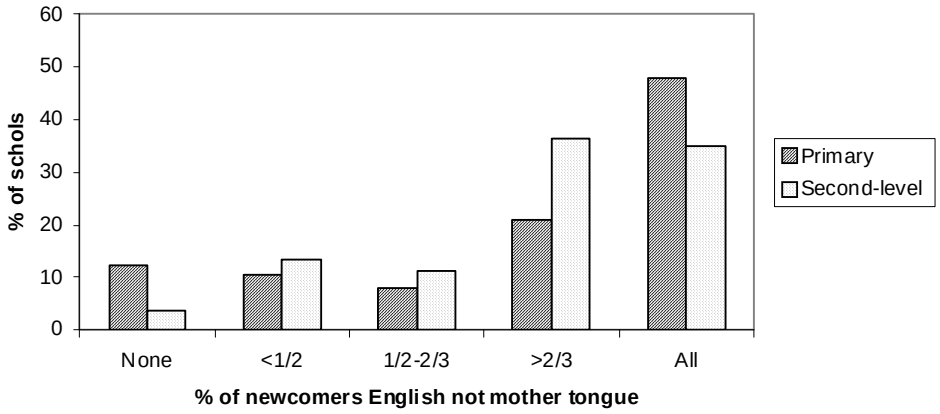
In primary schools, language difficulties among students and parents were again by far the most commonly cited factors as contributing to settling-in difficulties, though here parents' language difficulties (74 per cent) feature even more strongly than students' own difficulties (68 per cent). Around half of the schools reported that literacy difficulties were contributing quite a lot or a lot to newcomer students' difficulties, though in some cases language and literacy difficulties may be hard to distinguish.

5.3.1 MOTHER TONGUE OF NEWCOMERS

At primary level, there is substantial variation in the extent to which newcomer students have a mother tongue other than English/Irish.

Almost half of primary schools with newcomers report that they are all non-English speaking (Figure 5.1). Among primary schools with newcomers, just 12 per cent do not have any non-English speaking students while such students form a minority of the newcomer population in a further tenth of schools. There is some variation across schools in this pattern, with a greater representation of non-English speakers in urban schools and disadvantaged (DEIS) schools in urban areas.

Figure 5.1: Proportion of Newcomers Whose Mother Tongue is Not English



Among second-level schools, a third of schools with newcomers report that they are all non-English speaking (Figure 5.1). Only a very small number of second-level schools do not have any non-English speaking students while such students form a minority of the newcomer population in over a tenth of schools. There is no significant variation in this pattern by disadvantaged status, school sector, gender mix, location or school size.

5.3.2 PERCEIVED LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES AMONG NEWCOMERS

In the survey of schools, principals were asked to estimate the proportion of newcomer students in their school who have English language difficulties "…to the extent that they significantly impact on their participation in school".[41] Schools varied in the perceived language competency of their students. The patterns were broadly similar for written and spoken English.

Over half of both primary and second-level principals reported language difficulties among 'nearly all' or 'more than half' of their students. On the other hand, however, around a quarter reported difficulties among 'only a few' students. Not surprisingly, perceived language difficulties were more prevalent in schools with a higher proportion of students whose mother tongue is not English.

[41] Principals were required to provide an overall view on newcomers in their schools. Views could obviously differ in relation to different groups of newcomers within the same school, an issue which could be further explored in the case-study schools.

Figure 5.2: Principal Perceptions of Prevalence of Difficulties in Spoken English

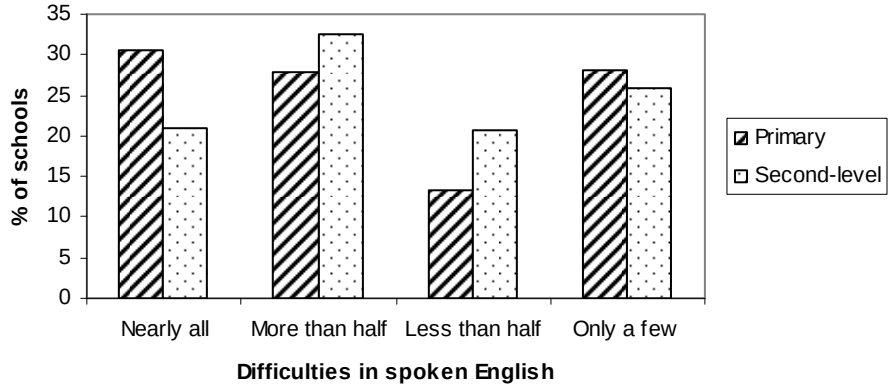
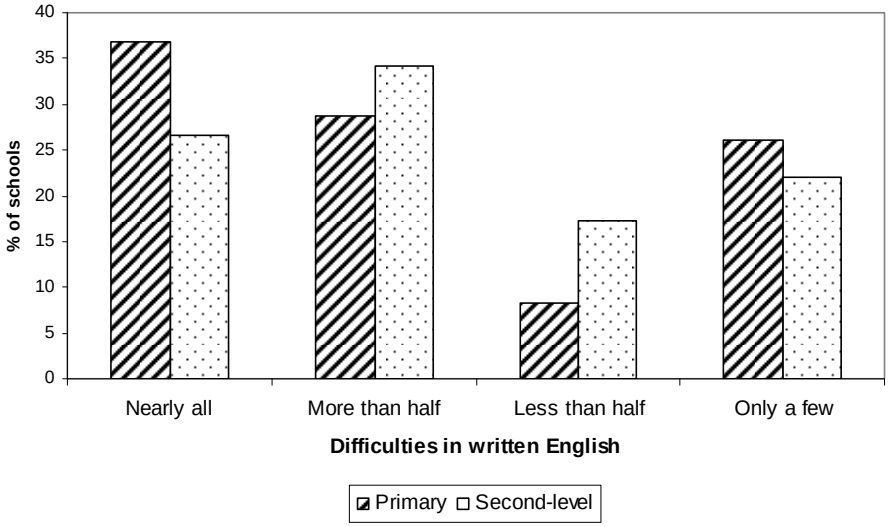


Figure 5.3: Principal Perceptions of Prevalence of Difficulties in Written English



In the same vein, several teachers in the case-study schools highlighted poor proficiency in English as a potential cause of difficulties for newcomer students in primary and second-level schools.[42]

> *I see them mixing very poorly for the most part. The students that integrate well are those that have some English …. and I think it is hard to do when they come in and they are that bit older, it can be difficult as well but I think the English is the biggest thing, if they, you know, don't have the confidence and I'm not blaming the girls it is just, you know, and for the most part they will say that everybody is friendly to them but in terms of being friendly and making friends are kind of different things.* (Teacher, Huntington Road second-level school)

[42] Considering the importance of this topic, language-related issues are discussed in greater depth in Chapter 6.

Many staff emphasised the diversity apparent among the newcomer population, with varying levels of language competence among different groups of students:

> *Where we were finding we had maybe a significant number, and also very quickly, I mean the diversity began to show itself, because you had extremes, where you would have somebody from Nigeria, who could speak perfect English, to somebody from Iraq who never heard even one word of English before they probably came to [our] school, and we had a whole lot of shades in between that as well with regard to the English.* (Teacher, Ashville Lane second-level school)

Variation was found to be evident not only between national groups but also in terms of the individual facility of students to acquire the language. In particular, age was seen as an influential factor in the speed of language acquisition, with many teachers viewing younger children as adapting more quickly:

> *I think the younger children pick up the language a lot quicker as well. Yeah because [that] girl when she came into junior infants last year she had very little English and now she would just talk, talk, talk over the other children, she has got fantastic English and I know it is not as easy for the older children to pick it up.* (Teacher, Jefferson Street primary school)

> *When they arrive at the beginning there are fairly big language difficulties I would think, now I would find teaching the older kids especially they tend to have more problems than the younger children. … The ones that come in in Junior Infants don't seem to find it as daunting because … they're learning along with everyone else whereas when they come in in Fifth and Sixth Class I've noticed the kids will have very big difficulties at the beginning.* (Teacher, Van Buren Street primary school)

Across the case-study schools, language difficulties were seen as having profound implications in terms of both the academic progress and social integration of newcomer students.

> *Some of them have big difficulties, some of them are extremely bright but they are not getting on as well as they should or could because of the language barriers and difficulties.* (Teacher, Bentham Street second-level school)

In discussing the academic implications of language difficulties, teachers emphasised the differential acquisition of oral and written skills.

> *They pick up vocally much quicker than they do written. Written is still, even the styles of writing, different alphabets … you have huge difficulties there. ... E's and I's ... little things that you notice. Squiggles that you get maybe as a student from the Czech republic or possibly Russia … you would ask them 'what's that' and there are even difficulties, more so in hand writing, more so in written than in oral.* (Teacher, Bentham Street second-level school)

> *Now written I'd definitely see a difference, but verbally they are very good in general. They call the answers out when I ask a question, whereas writing long say geography essay-type questions they do find difficulty and I find it difficult to*

read at times. But I know pretty much what they are saying. (Teacher, Brayton Square second-level school)

However, in contrast to the situation described in the latter quote, some teachers felt that language difficulties impinged on students' ability and willingness to participate in class, even where they had good comprehension skills:

I noticed that one of my students in particular she absolutely understands everything that I would say, everything that everybody else would say, yet she contributes vocally very little to class and is uncomfortable contributing to class. (Teacher, Bentham Street second-level school)

Even where students had some English language competency before they came to the school, the specialised vocabulary needed for certain subjects along with the subtleties of grammatical structure were seen as causing further academic difficulties:

Like for science I know that the language is difficult anyway for all students. Because it's all new words they are learning, you know, gestation and whatever else like. So there are a lot of new things for everybody there. But if they have the English …, you know, they have the extra, you know they are all starting on the same line we'll say. (Teacher, Bentham Street second-level school)

They can converse very easily, yeah their spoken English, but their grammar or their sentence structure wouldn't be as refined as you would want it to be. … So they could talk to you fine, you can understand what they are saying, they understand you but then they will say something backwards or they will put something wrong. (Teacher, Greenway Road primary school)

In addition to causing academic difficulties, staff in the case-study schools felt that limited English language competency makes it more difficult for newcomer students to communicate with and develop friendships with Irish students.

The language barrier is the biggest one, definitely. … It can be quite isolating I think for the students themselves when they don't have the language and their peers all around them are having conversations and laughing and messing at lunch time and they don't know what's going on, I think that's the biggest issue really. (Teacher, Lowfield Street second-level school)

Several schools use 'Buddies' or student mentors in order to help the newcomer students to make friends. The issue of social relations between Irish and newcomer students is discussed in greater detail later in the chapter.

In some cases, the presence of newcomer students caused teachers to question their own teaching approaches:

And you take so much … so many things for granted as an English speaker you know, even like sit down, be quiet, shut up or whatever. You just forget that some people don't know, you know, what does that mean you know or take out your journals or you know. (Teacher, Bentham Street second-level school)

Many mainstream teachers felt that they did not have adequate training[43] to assist newcomer students:

> *I certainly felt completely inadequately trained to help deal with the students.* (Teacher, Huntington Road second-level school)

This could cause difficulties in providing the kind of differentiated learning opportunities that are needed to ensure academic progress:

> *And that gives ferocious problem, they just land into a class. I mean can you imagine trying to teach Leaving Cert geography and there's a kid there looking, how, look at the guilt from the teacher's point of view.* (Teacher, Brayton Square second-level school)

> *I'm just thinking of one child in my class that has no English and he goes to language support for half an hour everyday but for the rest of the day he is completely lost.* (Teacher, Adams Street primary school)

> *I suppose the class, the class carries on. It's very subtle really. I suppose unless you are very much aware of it I could see how a student could be forgotten about maybe.* (Teacher, Bentham Street second-level school)

In contrast, some teachers considered that having newcomer students in the class provided a positive contribution to understanding diversity:

> *I think it's good for the class actually, … I think it gives them an awareness of what it is like to be in a minority situation, I think it's a healthy thing and I think it's positive, you know I think the children now they would be very willing to kind of help the young person you know.* (Teacher, Lowfield Street second-level school)

In sum, language difficulties, both spoken and written, among newcomer students were seen to impact on their academic progress and social integration. The issue of appropriate curriculum and teaching for newcomer students is discussed further in Chapter 7.

5.3.3 NEWCOMERS' OWN PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCY

International and Irish research indicates that moving to a new school setting can require considerable adjustment on the part of young people (Caulfield *et al.*, 2005: Devine *et al.*, 2002). Newcomer students at both primary and post-primary levels were asked about the process of adjustment to their new school. While many students settled into the new environment relatively quickly, three sets of issues were seen as contributing to transition difficulties – a new peer group, language proficiency, and institutional differences in the school system. Probably the greatest challenges for them in settling into the new school centred on their lack of English language proficiency. Language difficulties were seen as

[43] While the NCCA has provided guidelines for intercultural education in primary and second-level schools, some teachers felt that they also needed training in how to use these materials.

making it difficult to mix with other students in the initial stages of coming to the school:

> *Yeah, I remember the first day, it was really hard because I didn't understand anything, it was like oh how are you, what's your name, where are you from, please, slowly, slowly, I can't understand (laughs).* (Newcomer second-level students, Huntington Road)

> *Because when people like ask you to play with them like, they could be asking you forever because you don't know what they're on about or anything.*
> …
> *The girls brought me around with them and all and I didn't know what was happening.* (Newcomer primary students, Jefferson Street)

Even where students already had English language skills, accent and the informality of day-to-day speech made the situation difficult:

> *My English is not perfect, I learn English in Poland but here I cannot understand sometimes because I learn pure English, not here, it's different.* (Newcomer second-level students, Brayton Square)

> *In Ireland, English is different, different accent and I don't understand what people say to me. (Newcomer second-level students, Bentham Street)*

The necessity of taking a broad range of subjects requiring competency in English was seen as posing difficulties for newcomers. In particular, the use of specific academic terminology made the transition more problematic:

> *I know like how to speak you know but I don't know the words like [in History or Geography], what they are talking about.* (Newcomer second-level students, Bentham Street)

> *Well I knew English before I came, not much but I knew a lot so it helped me out. But I did find it hard like … you know the terminology in maths and everything I was just like oh my god what is he talking about.* (Newcomer second-level students, Bentham Street)

Other aspects of the settling-in process are discussed in later sections of this chapter.

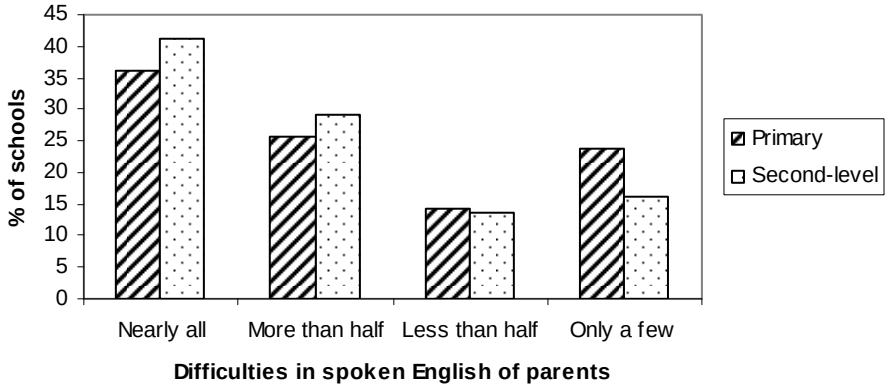
5.3.4 NEWCOMER PARENTS' PERCEIVED LANGUAGE COMPETENCY

At present, very little is known about the involvement of newcomer parents in their child's education in Ireland.[44] In addition to being asked about newcomer students themselves, principals and teachers were asked about the language competency of newcomer parents. The majority of school principals at both primary and post-primary levels reported language difficulties among 'nearly all' or 'more than half' of the parents of

[44] In order to address the challenges faced by immigrant parents, research for the All Ireland Programme for Immigrant Parents (AIPIP) was started in 2006.

newcomer students. However, it is worth noting that second-level schools were more likely to report such difficulties and indicated a greater gap between the language difficulties of parents and children than in the primary sector.

Figure 5.4: Principal Perceptions of Prevalence of Language Difficulties Among Parents of Newcomers



In general, staff within the case-study schools felt that newcomer parents' limited (or lack of) English makes it difficult for the school to communicate with parents.

> *Probably the biggest one is language if that is applicable, because if they can't communicate with the school they can't let the teachers know if they have concerns … and the school can't let them know.* (Teacher, Jefferson Street primary school)

> *Interviewer: What about the level of English that the parents have?*
> *Teacher: Very little, they would have much, much less than the children, much less, much less.* (Teacher, Huntington Road second-level school)

> *Some parents have a very poor command of the English language and … because of this language barrier sometimes they do not make enough contact. And even when we are writing out some simple notes to parents … when the note goes out in English sometimes the family don't understand the contents of the note.* (Teacher, Greenway Road primary school)

As a result, in many cases principals and teachers were reliant on parents bringing informal 'interpreters' with them to school meetings:

> *When we have to contact home, it's extremely difficult. … There is some neighbour, or some friend of theirs, who negotiates with them … or even when you go down [to their homes], you do sign language, or you play … charades.* (Teacher, Brayton Square second-level school)

At times, the students themselves were required to interpret between the school and their parents, which causes obvious difficulties for dealing with behaviour issues:

> *I had to contact the parents on the phone and … I just couldn't communicate with them, I had to get the child to say in her own language what I wanted so it*

was virtually impossible through the phone anyway to communicate with them. (Teacher, Huntington Road second-level school)

It's a matter of meeting them … trying to communicate with them if they haven't got English. And that may mean that I'm taking students from 5th or 6th year down who would be maybe Slovakian or Polish or whatever else, and they would act as translators. Basically telling them you know a little bit about the Irish education system (Teacher, Ashville Lane second-level school)

Chapter 6 explores access to more formal translation or language supports for schools. While proficiency in English was seen to contribute a great deal to settling-in difficulties, social interaction with peers was also seen to impact on the adjustment process of newcomer students, in line with international research (see Gay, 1993; Avery, 1992; Caulfield *et al.*, 2005). The following section presents teachers' and students' perceptions on social interaction between newcomer and other students in the case-study schools.

5.4 Social Interaction With Peers

In addition to language-related difficulties, social interaction with peers was identified as a potential source of concern by teachers as well as students. Bell (2000) and Caulfield *et al.* (2005) note that schools may provide students with the first opportunity to socialise with others from a culture different than their own. The analysis presented in this section draws on the principals' survey, in-depth interviews with teachers and focus group interviews with students. The focus group interviews allowed us to explore the nature of interaction among students in general and relations between newcomer and Irish students in particular.

5.4.1 INTERACTION BETWEEN NEWCOMER AND IRISH STUDENTS

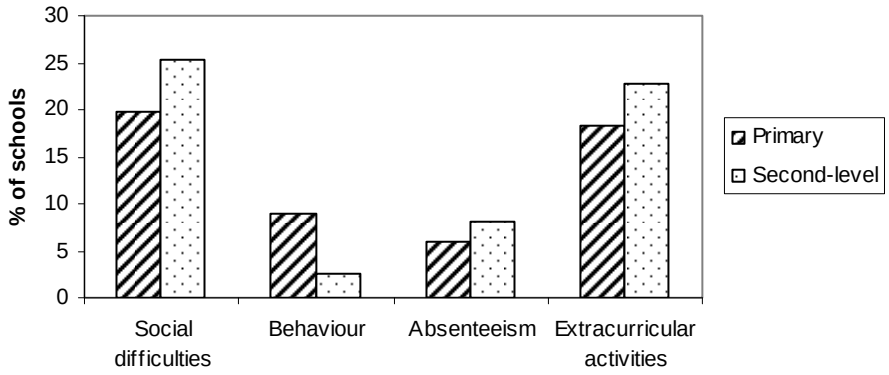
In the postal questionnaires, principals were asked about the social and personal difficulties experienced by newcomer students. Specifically, they were asked 'in your assessment, what proportion of newcomer students experience sustained difficulties in the following areas?': social interaction with peers; behaviour in class; absenteeism; involvement in extra curricular activities (see Figure 5.5). Response options were 'nearly all', 'more than half', 'less than half' or 'only a few'.[45]

Figure 5.5 demonstrates a broadly similar pattern at primary and second-level: in most schools, principals see social difficulties as confined to a minority of newcomer students. However, social difficulties as well as extra-curricular activities among a larger group of newcomers are prominent issues for a significant minority of schools in both sectors. A slightly higher proportion of newcomers in second-level schools seem to experience social difficulties. The majority of second-level and primary school principals did not consider social interaction with peers a challenge for newcomer students. However, at second level, 26 per cent of principals in schools with newcomer students reported that more than half of the newcomer students experience social difficulties. At primary level, the

[45] Behaviour difficulties, absenteeism and extra-curricular activities are discussed later in the chapter.

proportion of principals was lower with 19 per cent of principals with newcomer students reporting that nearly all or more than half of the newcomer students experience difficulties in social interaction with peers. Thus, in both sectors the majority of newcomers were perceived to do well in the social sphere.

Figure 5.5: Proportion of Primary and Second-level Schools Where More Than Half of Newcomer Students Experience Sustained Difficulties



The fact that some newcomer students experienced difficulties in social interaction was supported by the case-study data. The social sphere was considered to be a potential source of difficulties according to primary and second-level teachers as well as students. Overall, teachers in both primary and second-level schools felt that newcomer students tend to get on well with Irish students and highlighted the importance of friendship patterns.

> *They [newcomers] get on great, I mean it can be difficult, the Irish pupils they're always very, very eager once anybody new comes into the class and they don't really, they don't see a difference, it's just someone new, a potential new friend, they don't really decide, it doesn't matter where they've come from, you know, they don't really differentiate and they really, they're very welcoming even sometimes the pupils come with very little English but you'll still see them out in the yard trying to get them to join in. They like to have somebody they can put under their wing as well, you know. Yeah, friendship is very important to them so that's their idea of a nightmare to be taken away from their friends and put into a new situation.* (Teacher, Thomas Road primary school)

Not surprisingly, proficiency in English was seen to have an impact on social interaction between students:[46]

> *I see them mixing very poorly for the most part. The students that integrate well are those that have some English* (Teacher, Huntington Road, second-level)

> *There have been incidents on the yard where, probably due to lack of language there are misunderstandings, where he wanted to play and he wasn't let into the game or whatever.* (Teacher, Jefferson St primary school)

[46] See Chapter 6 for a more detailed discussion of language-related issues.

In the same vein, focus group interviews with students revealed that language issues were seen as making it more difficult to develop friendships, at least initially:

> *Friends are difficult because I can't speak English so this is difficult.* (Newcomer second-level students, Bentham Street)

> *Like the ones that speak perfect English they are talking to people but the ones that like aren't that good at English can't really talk, they sit by themselves a lot.* (Irish second-level students, Brayton Square)

Analysis of the survey data also revealed a strong association between problems with social interaction and language difficulties. For example, in second-level schools where nearly all the newcomer students have difficulties with spoken English, principals were much more likely to report that nearly all or more than half of newcomer students have social difficulties (47 per cent versus 20 per cent in other schools).[47]

A number of teachers in the case-study schools observed differences in the nature of social interaction depending on students' national or ethnic background. Several teachers commented on the tendency of newcomer students to 'group together', particularly if they were recent arrivals. This tendency was seen as particularly evident in second-level schools and less so in primary schools.

> *The Eastern Europeans mix very well. The Africans tend to stay among themselves.* (Teacher, Brayton Square second-level school).

> *The Chinese in particular are a very close knit group that won't mingle with other students. (*Teacher, Ashville Lane second-level school)

> *I think that the children of colour tend to stay together too, now that is probably because … they're in communities too, you know they are meeting at weekends and … like with Nigerian children and they all go to the same church and they all … know each other at home you know. But I don't know how we are going to address the whole race and full integration and still have respect for differences and diversity and culture you know.* (Teacher, Jefferson Street primary school)

A number of Irish students reported that, while inter-group relations were not in any way hostile, newcomers tended to socialise with each other at break times, leading to a degree of segregation in friendship patterns:

> *They all kind of make their own little groups and they're all from different countries.* (Irish second-level students, Huntingdon Road)

> *The … boys in our class who are from Africa, they usually play together but they don't get on well and they don't get on well with other people like from Ireland or*

[47] Considering the nature of this study, it is difficult to comment on how social difficulties may change over time. However, according to Devine and Kelly (2006), these difficulties are not necessarily limited to the time of arrival at the school.

from different countries, they don't get on with that many people. (Newcomer primary students, Durango Street)

They go to like other girls who came from where they came from.
Yeah they'd go to groups.
They'd speak their own language. (Irish second-level students, Lowfield Street)

Any time there's a person from a different country and her friend came back in the same school, they only want to play with each other and they won't leave anybody else play with them. (Newcomer primary students, Thomas Road)

They used to sit on their own but now that there are so many foreign people here that they all formed a group so they're ok now.

Yeah like it's not just us not talking to them though because they have their own group as well so.
But I think they just prefer to be with people from their own countries.
There's actually loads of them now. (Irish second-level students, Lowfield Street)

But usually, you don't see them integrating, you don't see people integrating, just like they stay in their own gang, and we stay together.
But you know there is some integration. … It's not we are distant from them, they come over and talk to us. It's just I think people prefer to hang out with people who are like them. I don't want to seem racist or anything just… (Irish second-level students, Wulford Park)

According to second-level teachers, it is harder for older students to integrate into already established friendship groups, whereas younger students coming into first year may find making friends with Irish students easier as everybody is 'new' and they can gradually build up friendships:

I just think the girls, especially when they are coming in at the likes of fourth year, you know the groups are very much established and friendships are kind of established and it can be difficult for you know anyone regardless of race to kind of mix in at that point, I think the younger they are, the easier, like if they come in in first year or second year when everybody is new, they tend to mix better. (Teacher, Huntington Road second-level school)

If the students start in first year, and they kind of grow up with the kids, they become part of the class an awful lot sooner. If they haven't, we'll say, been part of the class until maybe fifth, a later stage, it's much more difficult then for them to sort of get into the class, you know, as a sort of a free and accepted agent. (Teacher, Ashville Lane second-level school)

In describing their relations with Irish students, newcomer students at primary level were more likely to see these relations as 'good' than those at second level, where many students characterised such interaction as mixed in nature. A similar difference in the perceived quality of interaction between primary and post-primary levels was found among Irish students. Schools with high proportions of newcomers were somewhat less likely to

report good relations between Irish and newcomer students than those with low or medium proportions.

All groups of newcomer students reported having at least some Irish friends. Similarly, the majority of Irish students reported having friends from other countries:

> *We don't really think about that [nationality], we just play with who we think we like so we don't really think oh she's from a foreign country so I'm not going to play with her … if we want to play with somebody we'll play with them.* (Newcomer primary students, Durango Street)

Among newcomer students, different individuals reported different experiences in terms of developing friendships with Irish students:

> Interviewer: *And have you made friends in this school?*
> *Yeah.*
> *Yes.*
> *Not really.*
> *No, not really.*
> *I have. I've made friends.*
> *Friends like, in a big way, you meet people you talk to.*
> *You might talk to people but you mightn't still have really friends to hang around with all the time.* (Newcomer second-level students, Brayton Square)

Similarly, Irish students reported a variation in the social integration of newcomer students:

> Interviewer: *Right, and do you think foreign students are included during break time?*
> *No.*
> *No.*
> …
> *Some of them.*
> *Some of them, yeah.*
> *Yeah, some of them.*
> *Some of them play football.*
> *He just stands outside the principal's office.*
> *Yeah he just stands outside the principal's office.*
> *You ask him if he wants to play.*
> *He just stands there.*
> *Just says no.*
>
> Interviewer: *Right, and what about the others?*
> *Some of them play football and basketball and whatever.* (Irish second-level students, Wulford Park)

However, as with Irish children, there is variation among newcomer students in terms of personality. This was seen by some staff members to act as a barrier to interaction with other students:

> *She is Lithuanian and she has been coming to me, she is in second year, she has been coming to me every three weeks like about her problems with friends, because*

she is finding it very, very difficult. Now, there is guilt on both sides, she is not making an effort and we have tried to get her to make the effort. (Teacher, Huntington Road second-level school)

[Student K] is much more introverted and quiet as a student and I have seen her sending emails to her friends back in Latvia, photographs and ... she has not settled in possibly as good as some. I feel for her because it's tough at lunch time, at break times, those are the times really. (Teacher, Bentham Street second-level school)

I think again [newcomers] get on very well and again I think it comes down to the students themselves, like some students would come in and they will fit in and it is like they were always here you know and then you have another student who would be very quiet. (Teacher, Huntington Road second-level school).

If they are being left out on the whole their own personality has something to do with it. (Teacher, Huntington Road second-level school)

Interestingly, in Jefferson Street teachers commented on negative interaction between Travellers and newcomers:[48]

Well the children get on very well, now the only difficulty that we have would have is that some of our Traveller children don't take well to newcomers and it is as if they've suffered at the hands of discrimination themselves along the line, you know families, generation wise and they do tend to be very quick to call names and things like that and we do an awful lot of work on that. (Teacher, Jefferson Street primary school)

There appears to be no systematic variation in the nature of social interaction by school type, whether the school is designated disadvantaged, the proportion of newcomers or the size of the school.[49]

Sports and other social activities were seen as providing a way to get to know their classmates and 'break the ice':

If you just play football, I just play football and from then like everybody just knew me. Or just play basketball or any sport, any sport you like. (Newcomer second-level students, Brayton Square)

There was lots of kids always like making me feel happy when you don't know anybody, like when I was in yard in junior infants I was so scared but [she] came over and she said would you like to play and I said yes, that's why I got happy and I started liking her and I was like playing. (Newcomer primary students, Greenway Road)

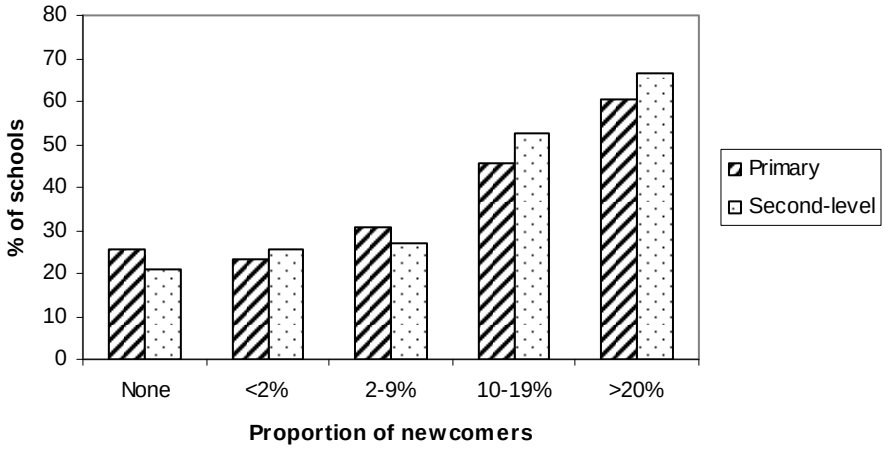
[48] While some other case-study schools also had Traveller students, this topic did not emerge in other schools.

[49] Principals do report more difficulties in Gaelscoileanna and Gaelcholaistí than in English-medium schools (50 per cent versus 25 per cent), but this pattern should be interpreted with caution due to the small number of newcomers attending Irish-medium schools (see Chapter 1).

However, the survey of school principals revealed that a significant minority of newcomers in primary and second-level schools have sustained difficulties in relation to participation in extra-curricular activities.

While this section has focused on informal relations within the school, a number of schools had a formal written policy in place on interculturalism or anti-racism. Figure 5.6 shows that the proportion of schools with such a policy in place increases broadly in line with the proportion of newcomer students in the school. This indicates that schools are responding to the presence of newcomer students in adapting school policies. However, it is also worth noting that a significant minority of schools without newcomers signal that interculturalism is relevant to all students by having a written policy in place.

Figure 5.6: Proportion of All Schools with a Written Policy on Interculturalism/Anti-racism by the Proportion of Newcomer Students



5.4.2 PERCEPTIONS OF NEWCOMERS AMONG IRISH STUDENTS

This section focuses specifically on Irish students' perceptions of newcomers. Previous studies have shown that Irish children are likely to be prejudiced about others who they see to be different from them "…particularly when these others are not well known" (Gash and Murphy-Lejeune 2004, p. 217). In the group interviews, Irish students were asked about their perceptions of the experiences of newcomer students in particular and newcomers in general. Generally, the Irish students displayed a good deal of empathy towards the situation of newcomer students, considering that it would be 'hard' and 'scary' to come to a new school, especially if the student did not speak English.

> *It would be kind of sad because you'd be leaving all your best friends from where you're from and your family.* (Irish primary students, Van Buren Street)

> *I'd say it would be scary as well because … you come into school, people are talking to you, you don't know what they're talking about and then they say oh that girl, you know I don't think she understands what you're saying and they might feel left out or whatever.* (Irish second-level students, Huntington Road)

I think it would be difficult because if you were from a different country and you speak a different language you wouldn't understand what a person is asking you. (Irish primary students, Thomas Road)

The majority of the Irish students interviewed expressed positive views about the number of newcomers coming to Ireland, feeling it made Ireland a more diverse society and allowed exposure to different cultures:

Ireland would be a very boring place if there was only Irish people. (Irish primary students, Durango Street)

It's good that we are getting to see all the different types of people and what they are like. (Irish second-level students, Brayton Square)

No it's cool because you get to learn about different religions and.
Cultures.
Cultures.
And you learn different languages and stuff. (Irish primary students, Jefferson Street)

However, some students expressed more negative views about the potential impact of immigration on employment and working conditions:

Some people are losing jobs because new immigrants are coming over and they're getting minimum pay for the jobs and the bosses are paying them the least that they have to pay so they don't have to spend so much money. (Irish primary students, Durango Street)

Other people need jobs and they are giving them to people from different countries because they'll work.
…
And the Irish people don't really have jobs like.
And like they would get them easier and all than kind of you would. (Irish second-level students, Brayton Square)

If I were going to vote I'd say no because there's too many here and all, it's like they're taking over all our jobs and all. There's a lot of Polish people and all taking over half of our jobs and if people, like English people trying to get jobs and they can't get them because there's Polish people taking them all. (Irish primary students, Van Buren Street)

One group of students expressed the dichotomy between negative views about newcomers in the abstract and positive views about people they actually knew:

Well if you don't know any of them you probably judge them like they shouldn't be here.
Yeah.
When you actually talk to them it's a different story. (Irish second-level students, Lowfield Street)

In terms of cultural awareness, some schools had celebrated specific festivals or events while some classes had done projects on different countries.

> *We have an international day for international kids.*
> …
> *Like they dress up in their national costumes and …*
> *They bring in their food.* (Irish primary students, Thomas Road)

> *At Christmas we had a carol service and there was loads of foreign students and they all went up and told about Christmas in their own countries.* (Irish second-level students, Huntington Road)

> *Like if there's some special occasion on in Lithuania or Latvia they tell us.*
> …
> *We did one [project] on festivals from all over the world.* (Irish primary students, Adams Street)

In other cases students asked informally about the newcomer's country in the course of everyday conversation.

> *We sometimes ask [him] about how to say things and stuff in Lithuanian.* (Irish second-level students, Wulford Park)

> *Sometimes we ask them what do they do over there and how is it different from here.* (Irish primary students, Adams Street)

> *Well if you get into a conversation with them … sometimes you end up talking about like where they are from. And that can be like really interesting.* (Irish second-level students, Brayton Square)

However, many Irish students reported knowing little about other cultures, especially non-European countries. One group of newcomer students described a lack of awareness among Irish students of religious differences:[50]

> *I don't think people from Ireland know much about our culture because they have a different one like I'm Orthodox and they're Christian so I don't think they'd know much about Orthodox since they haven't really been there or they're not Orthodox.* (Newcomer primary students, Durango Street)

Furthermore, one group of newcomer students felt that Irish young people had very stereotyped notions of their countries:

> *I'll tell you what happened like. They don't care, just because they show in the Trocaire right, they are going to show children in Trocaire in Sudan with no water and all messy shoes, no shoes on, all carrying big pillows on their heads. Everybody thinks ah jungle boy! And they call me (laughing) jungle boy.*
> …

[50] While the Religious Education curriculum in Irish second-level schools provides students with an overview of world religions, primary schools (with the exception of Educate Together schools) generally provide Religious Education along denominational lines.

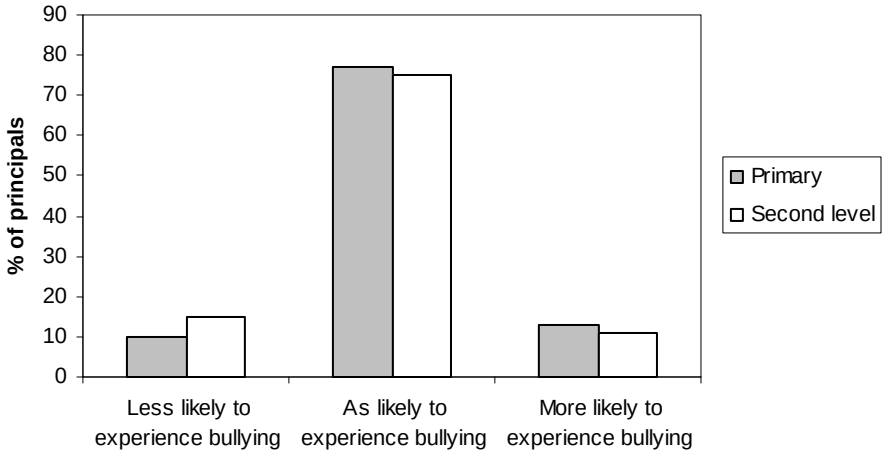
*They think Africa is one country. But they don't realise that there's a difference between Nigeria and Sudan. Sudan is like as far from Ireland, the same distance from Ireland to Russia that is the same difference from Nigeria to Sudan. But people think ah just because it's Africa it's so defined and jungle, they all live in huts. (*Newcomer second-level students, Brayton Square)

5.4.3 BULLYING AND RACISM ISSUES

Bullying and racism was mentioned as contributing a lot or quite a lot to difficulties among newcomer students by only 8 per cent and 6 per cent of principals in primary and second-level schools. This is consistent with the 75 per cent of second-level principals who report that newcomer students have the same risk of experiencing bullying as other students (see Figure 5.7). It is important to note, however, that this is the perspective of principals, and some incidents of bullying/racism may not be reported to school staff. Previous research on Irish students has indicated that only a minority ever report being bullied to an adult (Smyth *et al.*, 2004). Furthermore, studies have indicated a greater proportion of newcomer than Irish students have experienced bullying (Smyth *et al.*, 2004; Molcho *et al.*, 2008).

All primary and second-level schools had an anti-bullying policy in place with a strong focus on respect for all students. However, in only 56 per cent of second-level schools and 40 per cent of primary schools did the policy explicitly deal with racial harassment.

Figure 5.7: Principal Perceptions of Newcomer Students' Experience of Bullying Compared to Irish Students (Primary and Second-Level Schools)



Generally, students were encouraged to inform teachers of any unacceptable behaviour and were assured of the confidentiality of information conveyed to teachers. Interviews with teachers revealed that bullying was, by some, considered to be an issue 'to some extent' in the schools participating in the study. Incidences of bullying were considered a serious issue and were dealt with according to the policy adopted by the school. However, one teacher noted that bullying can take many forms and is sometimes difficult to identify:

In an all girls' school you also have a lot of subtle behaviour and a lot of behaviour that you don't always pick it up. (Teacher, Huntington Road, second-level school)

A teacher in Lowfield Street felt that if defined as 'persistent, ongoing, and unwarranted attention', there were very few instances of such behaviour. Teachers were also asked whether bullying is an issue with newcomer students. The majority of second-level school teachers felt that this was not the case:

I don't think it would be our experience that there would be bullying of a foreign student. Sometimes actually it can happen in reverse. (Teacher, Huntington Road second-level school)

However, one teacher in Ashville Lane second-level school noted that incidences of racist bullying occurred in their school:

There is a certain element of racism within the school but … the kids here you know hear a lot of stuff at home and they'll come in and say it but it's just bullying and there'd be bullying no matter what. So you know not as much as you'd expect but still there is a low level element of it there all the time you know but they tend to get on fairly well. (Teacher, Ashville Lane second-level school)

In addition, a teacher in Bentham Street admitted that racial name-calling took place in their school:

You're going to get some ignorant people who'll say go back to where you come from or you know call them names or whatever, things like that it has, it can happen. (Teacher, Bentham Street second-level school)

In three second-level schools, teachers observed that newcomer students were reluctant to approach a teacher if there is an issue with interaction with other students:

[Newcomer students are] more inclined to close up and be more keep their problems to themselves, in my experience, you know, even if there was an incident of bullying, as there was, it was very difficult to get them to breakdown, they don't trust you, they almost think there's going to be some fallout from this so they're not trying to tell you anything. (Teacher, Wulford Park second-level school)

In general, schools tried to address potential issues of bullying and racism by raising students' awareness of the issue and of different cultures:

Well we'd be very proactive in the RE class, we've signs up all over the place. The international week, racism isn't tolerated. Every kid would be told when they come in in first year anti-bullying, this includes calling people from different countries names and stuff like that. So they'd all be aware of it. (Teacher, Ashville Lane second-level school)

The topic was further explored in focus group interviews with students. Only a minority of school principals felt that newcomer students were

more likely to be bullied than Irish students. This perspective was supported by some students, both Irish and newcomer, who reported that newcomers in their school did not get teased or bullied on the basis of their nationality. In contrast to the perspectives of school principals and in keeping with previous research from the student perspective, students in a number of schools reported being bullied or seeing their classmates bullied on the basis of nationality.

> Interviewer: *Do people ever get slagged or teased because they came from a different country in this school?*
> *Yeah.*
> Interviewer: *What do they say?*
> *Oh go back to your country.*
> …
> *Everybody gets a bit of that when they come in.*
> …
> *Yeah and I don't think Irish people mean it in that way, you know go back, they are just I don't know they hear it from other people but they think they are cool when they are using it.* (Newcomer second-level students, Bentham Street)

> *Sometimes they get bullied a bit more than other people.* (Newcomer primary students, Durango Street)

> *Still the Irish guys weren't used to see so many foreign nationals.*
> …
> *The only way they think is to slag and throw stuff, do whatever, just anti-social behaviour. Well they think that, well only one or two of them 'ah foreigners' you know, because they are in our country.* (Newcomer second-level students, Ashville Lane)

> *When [she] first came to this school the boys used to call her like Smarty and.*
> *M&M's.*
> *Chocolate.*
> *Chocolate with chocolate fudge on top and stuff.*
> …
> *It was horrible.*
> *And I remember then one day she called [him] something.*
> *Yeah.*
> *Yeah, she called [him] a little ice cream.*
> *Yeah so like we're being treated back, we're being treated rotten back.* (Irish primary students, Jefferson Street)

One Irish student remarked that racist comments might be made in the context of fighting:

> Interviewer: *And would people in this school ever get slagged or teased because they come from a different country?*

> *I think it's possible, yeah, very possible. So I wouldn't imagine it goes on that much, because I think it would be more of a reactionary thing with two people fighting and you know an argument or whatever. I don't think anyone actively*

goes around you know trying to be racist. (Irish second-level students, Brayton Square)

In post-primary schools, such bullying was seen as more common among younger students:

Oh, oh, I got a good one. When I talk to everybody like, I like everybody in the school but before when I was in 1st year my second year I had a fight with some fellow because I was working at this table and the guy just got given out to by his teacher and I was working at this table and it was mine, I just walked back in and he turned around and told me 'what are you doing here, get back to Africa'.
…
Yeah some students are just rude.
Some of them are but some, the majority are like.
In the middle like.
Slag you and saying that we, like when they say go back to Africa slagging your colour. (Newcomer second-level students, Brayton Square)

Another group commented that boys were more likely to engage in such behaviour than girls:

Girls wouldn't do it, it would be more lads. (Irish second-level students, Bentham Street)

In some cases, Irish students reported that those who made racist comments were in the minority and were usually students who caused trouble more generally:

Like there's some girls now don't like other girls now who would mock them a bit but [they] just have no hearts anyway. (Irish second-level students, Lowfield Street)

And there's one person that doesn't like them [newcomers] at all, if they're not good at football then he just makes fun of them.
…
Yeah and starts fighting with them.
…
Say oh go home you stupid Lithuanian and stuff like that. (Newcomer primary students, Adams Street)

Almost all groups of second-level students, both newcomer and Irish, expressed a reluctance to approach teachers about very personal problems, especially bullying. Primary school students were more likely to say they would approach a teacher if they had been bullied. In other cases, however, informing teachers about bullying was seen as escalating rather than reducing potential difficulties:

I'd prefer to sort out things yourself because that way … you know what's going to happen without telling someone because then if you tell someone and they're going to go tell this person whatever you said and then that person is going to come back to you and then that person is going to go around saying that you ratted on them and then you can have even more problems. (Newcomer second-level students, Huntington Road)

If you are being bullied or anything like …no matter how much they [the teachers] try, the bullying just gets worse and worse. You'd rather get beaten for one and not be beaten for next year.
Than telling the teacher and getting beaten every time. (Newcomer second-level students, Ashville Lane)

From a policy perspective, this may mean that school principals and teachers are unaware of the extent of racist bullying, making it hard to intervene effectively. In two schools located in a working-class area, students distinguished between a lack of racism in the school and racist behaviour in the local neighbourhood:

Most people are racist around here.
Yeah because like if you were a foreign person like there's probably some people from outside and all that and they slag you and all.
I used to hang around with foreign people and people slag you.

Interviewer: *What sort of things do they say?*
Ah bad word like they'd say nigger lover and all that. And that sort of stuff.
…
They don't really get slagged in the school.
Yeah the school is all right.
But like outside.
Just outside you get slagged. (Irish second-level students, Brayton Square)

Some people are racist, call them names and not letting them join in games because they're a different colour.

Interviewer: *And does that happen in the school?*
No.
No.
Not in our school anyway.
Not in our school.
Outside the school.
Yeah, people would be like fighting in the … graveyard.
…
With like, fighting with foreign people, like they're a different colour and different language and all that.
…
Sometime they do be older and sometimes they do be our age, be throwing stones at them and everything, hitting them with bars.
Yesterday I saw a young fella from Pakistan and this young fella goes for him, you Paki and the young fella ran home crying.
They do that a lot around here. (Irish primary students, Jefferson Street)

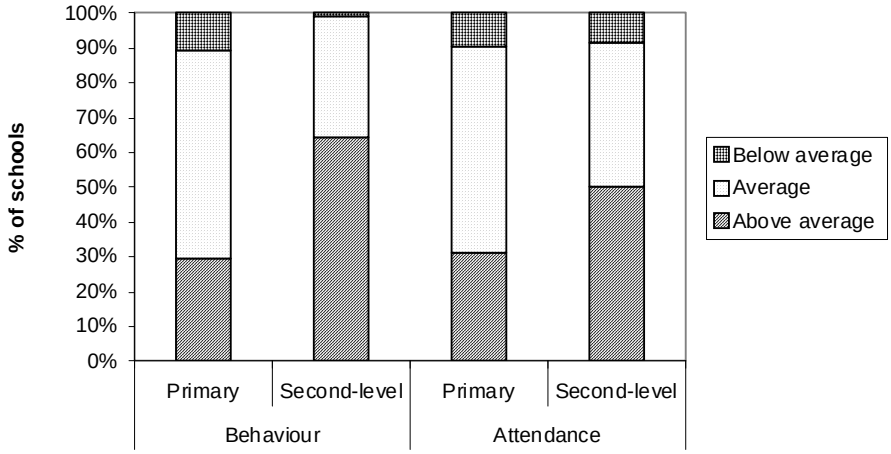
In sum, the student interviews indicate a degree of racist bullying of which principals may be unaware.

5.5 Social Interaction Between Newcomer Students and Teachers

While the previous section focused on social interaction between students, this section takes a closer look at social interaction between teachers and students. Teachers play a key role in implementing intercultural education and helping students develop more open and inclusive attitudes (Cummins, 2001a). There is some research evidence which indicates that social relations between teachers and minority ethnic students are somewhat less positive in certain countries (see Irvine, 1990; Fine, 1991; Nieto, 1992) and immigrant students are seen to have issues with discipline (Monroe, 2005). Existing research shows that newcomer students in Ireland feel generally positive about their teachers (Vekic, 2003; Devine *et al.*, 2002; Darmody, 2007).

In order to explore staff perceptions in the Irish context, principals in primary and second-level schools were asked about their perceptions of newcomer students. Specifically, they were asked: 'Compared with other students in your school, how would you rate newcomer students on the following dimensions on average?'. Two of these dimensions were behaviour in class and attendance, and the response categories were 'above average', 'average' or 'below average'.

Figure 5.8: Principal Perceptions of the Relative Rating of Newcomer Students in Relation to Behaviour and Attendance



At both primary and post-primary levels, principals tended to view behaviour and attendance levels among newcomers as at least as good as those among Irish students. At second-level, principals' perceptions of newcomers' behaviour in class and attendance were generally positive: 65 per cent of principals said the behaviour of these students was above average, and 51 per cent said their attendance was above average, compared to other students in the school (Figure 5.8). There is some evidence that principal views of newcomers depends on the reference group they adopt, that is, the group of Irish students with whom they are comparing newcomers. Thus, principals in disadvantaged (DEIS) schools, urban schools and girls' secondary schools view the behaviour and attendance of newcomers much more positively than those of their Irish counterparts. At primary level, the vast majority of principals view the behaviour and attendance of newcomers as 'average' (59 per cent) or 'above average' (32 per cent). Schools with designated disadvantaged status are more likely to perceive newcomers' behaviour and attendance as above average than other schools.

According to Conger *et al.* (2007), immigrant students have higher attendance rates, consistent with theories about immigrant achievement. As we could see from the survey analysis, based on the perceptions of school principals, in general, levels of attendance among newcomer students are good. However, the interviews with staff revealed that attendance was considered to be a problem with some newcomer students. Attendance was seen to be linked to newcomers' own ambition to do well, allied with parental attitudes:

> Interviewer: *And now could you tell me a little bit about attendance, as you mentioned attendance?*
>
> *Teacher: Terrible, terrible, I actually was down at lunch time there, I met two of the pupils in the shop yeah and their mother, so that tells you all you need to know … I'd say that those people that attend and that are attending school are eager to get on and probably learn English basically, those that aren't attending, you mightn't see them next year, do you know what I mean, they could be gone.* (Teacher, Adams Street primary school)
>
> *The children that wouldn't be attending would be the ones whose parents aren't working so if the mother is at home or the mother is not working, then the tendency is that they will stay at home, whereas if the mother is working and the father is working, then the child is out to school and that is it. And a lot of the time … once in a while if they do stay home, it is more than likely because the mother was off work, I do find that they are very connected to their parents and there is a lot of affection being shown when they pick them up at school or whatever, you know they are very close, very, very close. So probably if they see their mother staying at home from work they probably kick up a fuss and want to stay home, I'd imagine that there mightn't be a whole lot of contact between them either you know, if the mother is working late or working shift work, that could be reasons behind them being kept back.* (Teacher, Adams Street primary school)

Similarly, in second-level schools, absenteeism was seen to be a problem with some students. Ashville Lane second-level school identified unaccompanied minors as having problems with school attendance because of re-location:[51]

> *One of the issues that can be difficult, can be chasing up attendance for certain people, particularly people who … are not with parents, who are unaccompanied, because in some cases you can find that, at the drop of a hat, they're moved.* (Teacher, Ashville Lane second-level school)

However, in another second-level school teachers commented on good attendance rates among unaccompanied minors:

> *I know, I remember in the early days in particular, those who were down in the [X] hotel, there was nothing more they hated than when the school had a day off, because they were down in the [X] hotel then and they hated that. Whereas when*

[51] While a small group in number, unaccompanied minors were seen as having a distinctive profile and set of needs.

*there was school, there was something going on and they loved it, they never ever missed a day, they really don't. (*Teacher, Huntington Road second-level school)

In general, primary and second-level school teachers held positive views on newcomer students, in line with Devine and Kelly (2006):

They would be very intelligent most of them" (Teacher, Huntington Road second-level school), 'they're very motivated, and sometimes they're more motivated than normal students … They're not problematic people, they're lovely to deal with, they're gorgeous in fact … diligent workers. (Teacher, Brayton Square second-level school).

The perceived academic progress and motivation of newcomer students is discussed further in Chapter 7.

5.6 Factors Associated with Social/ Personal Difficulties Among Newcomer Students

This section presents a more detailed analysis of the factors associated with the social and personal difficulties experienced by newcomers.

The four dimensions of difficulties among newcomer students (social, behavioural, absenteeism and extracurricular activities) are combined in an overall scale which varies from 0 to 4 (with a reliability of 0.64), with a high score indicating more difficulties.[52] This scale is then modelled as a linear regression, to allow us to introduce the combined effects of school characteristics. The results are presented in Table 5.1.[53]

The model confirms some of the descriptive patterns discussed earlier in this chapter and indicates some new findings. One is that second-level principals are somewhat less likely to report social/personal difficulties among newcomer students in schools that are designated disadvantaged. This can perhaps be explained by a reference group effect; that is, principals are comparing newcomers with Irish students from more disadvantaged backgrounds who experience greater difficulties in school. International research presented in Chapter 2 showed that newcomer families are often highly educated and many newcomer children have high aspirations.

Newcomers in larger schools (>200 students) are more likely to have problems than newcomer students in small second-level schools. Previous international research on school size has shown that small schools are safer, more personalised, and more equitable than larger schools (Cotton, 1996; Raywid, 1999). Thus, attending a smaller second-level school may provide newcomers with more personal attention and involve them more in school life, thus reducing the occurrence of personal and social difficulties.

[52] For the scale all measures in the original questions are used ('nearly all/more than half/less than half/only a few') to maximise the information.
[53] Coefficients are presented in the Appendix at the end of the chapter.

Table 5.1: Factors Associated with Social/Personal Difficulties Experienced by Newcomers, Scale (Second-Level Schools)

Constant	n.s.
School Type:	
Girls' Secondary	n.s.
Boys' Secondary	n.s.
Vocational	n.s.
Community/Comprehensive	n.s.
Ref: Coed Secondary	
Gaelcholaistí	n.s.
Fee-paying school	n.s.
Designated disadvantaged (DEIS) status	(-)*
Urban	n.s.
School Size:	
200-399 students	(+)*
400-599 students	(+)*
600 or more students	(+)*
Ref: Less than 200 students	
Proportion of newcomers in school:	
Less than 2%	n.s.
Less than 2-9%	n.s.
Less than 10-19%	n.s.
Ref: greater than 20%	
Spoken English difficulties among newcomers:	
Nearly all	(+)***
More than half	(+)**
Less than half	(+)**
Ref: almost no newcomers	
Overall school climate	(-)***

Note: Coefficients are provided in Table A5.1 at the end of the chapter.
*** p<=0.001; **p<=0.01; *p<=0.05
Source: Survey of Principals, second-level schools.

That language difficulties are associated with social/personal difficulties is very clear from the model. There is a particularly marked association where nearly all newcomers have problems with spoken language. Low proficiency in the language of the host country may hinder making friends with local children and may give rise to feelings of isolation and loneliness (see Kirova, 2001).

In this analysis we also measure school climate, using a series of questions on principals' perceptions of all students, their parents, teachers and the motivation and interactions between these groups. A measure of overall school climate was derived by asking school principals the extent to which the following statements were true for 'nearly all', 'more than half', 'less than a half' or 'only a few' of the groups in their school:

- Students are well-behaved in class;
- Students are motivated about their schoolwork;
- Students show respect for their teachers;
- Parents attend parent-teacher meetings in the school;
- Parents give their children help and support with schoolwork;
- Teachers are positive about the school;
- Teachers in the school are open to contact with parents;
- Teachers are open to new developments and new challenges.

High values on the overall measure of school climate, therefore, indicate more positive relations within the school as a whole and more commitment on the part of students, teachers and parents to the school. The overall school climate is seen to have a significant effect on newcomer students. Schools with a less positive school climate (lower score) have greater difficulties, and this is statistically significant. Thus, a more positive school climate contributes to the social integration of newcomer students.

Table 5.2 shows that at primary level the factors associated with overall difficulties settling in are similar to those at second-level. In particular, language difficulties are strongly associated with social and personal difficulties. School climate is also a significant factor: newcomers experience more difficulties where the school climate is less positive. Otherwise, there are no significant associations with school characteristics, as at second-level.

Table 5.2: Factors Associated with Social/Personal Difficulties Experienced by Newcomers, Scale (Primary Schools)

	Coefficient
Constant	n.s.
Catholic school	n.s.
Gaelscoil	n.s.
Designated disadvantaged (DEIS) status	n.s.
Urban	n.s.
School Size:	
100-199 students	n.s.
200-399 students	n.s.
400 or more students	n.s.
Ref: Less than 100 students	
Proportion of newcomers in school:	
Less than 2%	n.s.
Less than 2-9%	n.s.
Less than 10-19%	n.s.
Ref: greater than 20%	
Spoken English difficulties among newcomers:	
Nearly all	(+)***
More than half	(+)**
Less than half	(+)**
Ref: almost no newcomers	
Overall school climate	(-)***
Number of schools	383
Adjusted R^2	0.175

Note: Coefficients are provided in Table 5.2. B at the end of the chapter.
*** p<=0.001; **p<=0.01; *p<=0.05.
Source: Survey of Principals, primary schools.

Within both primary and second-level schools, the majority (four out of five) of principals report no gender differences in the adjustment of newcomer students to Irish schools. Where any such differences were reported, girls were seen as experiencing less difficulties, as illustrated by the following quote:

> *So far from what I've seen for the last few years the girls seem to have settled in much quicker. […] 14 year old girls are mentally maybe 2 or 3 years ahead of the boy anyway, just simply from maturity. Some amount of sense, you know, the boy would possibly be not as mature at that age. But I have noticed that definitely, the girls tend to look after each other and if you were to take those two*

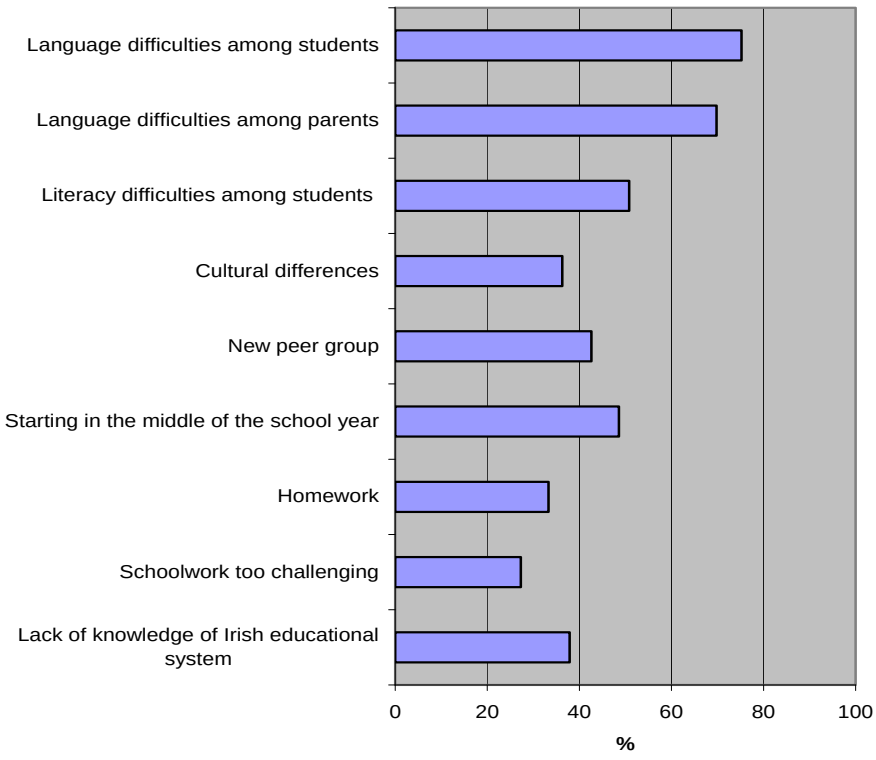
students [student A, girl] seems to have settled in, made friends, become very comfortable and popular whereas [student T, boy] seems to be you know just a different situation there. (Teacher, Bentham Street second-level school).

5.7 Institutional, Situational and Background Factors

Figures 5.9 and 5.10 present the nine factors most frequently felt by school principals to contribute 'quite a lot' or 'a lot' to difficulties. As language-related issues were discussed in an earlier section, we focus in this section on other factors identified by principals as contributing to difficulties. The pattern of difficulties reported is broadly similar in primary and second-level schools. Lack of parental involvement was cited by almost one-third of second-level principals, and financial difficulties by one quarter. Issues such as mobility between schools or assessed special needs were cited much less frequently. In primary schools, starting in the middle of the school year was felt to be contributing a lot to difficulties in 38 per cent of schools, with lack of knowledge of the Irish education system[54] contributing to difficulties in 33 per cent of cases.

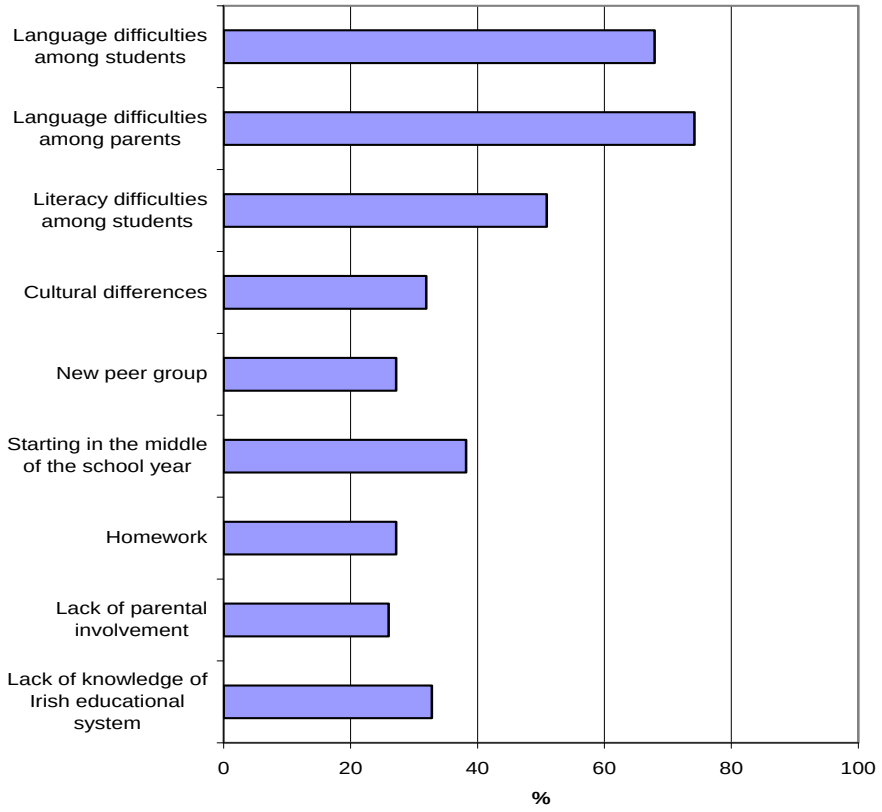
Other factors were cultural differences, lack of parental involvement, problems with homework and new peer groups, all cited by just under one-third of principals as contributing 'a lot' or 'quite a lot' to difficulties.

Figure 5.9: Percentage of Principals Who Said these Factors Contribute Quite a Lot or a Lot to Difficulties Experienced by Newcomer Students (Second Level)



[54] While information on the Irish educational system is available in a number of languages from the DES and via NCCA guidelines, it is clear that not all newcomer parents have access to these.

Figure 5.10: Percentage of Principals Who Said These Factors Contribute Quite a Lot or a Lot to Difficulties Experienced by Newcomer Students (Primary Level)



In the case-study schools, several teachers commented on issues stemming from the different cultural background of newcomer students. In two second-level schools, there were perceived problems with social interaction between female teachers and some male newcomer students:

> *But that case now there's a young fellow there in third year from Iraq and he's a very aggressive young fellow and he doesn't like women. And he gets very aggressive and sometimes really aggressive towards female teachers and other students … There's also I suppose there's in some of the other cultures there's an anti-women thing. In the Islamic lads more so you'd notice that they, like one young fellow as being dealt with by his year head, a woman and I won't talk to her, I won't talk to Ms. [name] I won't talk to you. Like you are a woman. And they'd make those sounds; you know I won't talk to her. And imagine a teacher getting that?* (Teacher, Brayton Square second-level school)

> *Once or twice over the years, maybe there might have been a little problem with female teachers, let's say, for some students, where they might be coming from a culture where they perhaps weren't used to having female teachers, or whatever, that's more the exception rather than the norm, something like that.* (Teacher, Ashville Lane second-level school)

Teachers in Brayton Square commented on other types of culturally specific behaviour that they have encountered in their schools:

> *There are little cultural things that are different in different cultures, you know and I know, some people won't look at you in the face. Romanian people kiss your hand. I mean I don't want anyone kissing my hand in here, other people bow at me. When they see the principal of the school like some kind of big [boss] or something. I'd say stop, don't be doing that. You know?* (Teacher, Brayton Square second-level school)

> *For me here, they would say that the Africans would keep things among themselves, they will not come forward, in relating to personal problems or difficulties. And we have difficulties here with some parents who will come up, and who will, in front of us, will hit their children, the Africans in particular* (Teacher, Brayton Square second-level school)

Teachers in Brayton Square commented on the personal difficulties and trauma experienced by unaccompanied minors,[55] factors that are likely to affect their settling-in process:

> *We're all very conscious, all the teachers are conscious that … they live in hostels … and [Student T] now at the moment, is between houses … and it's very difficult. [Student W], in first year, who moved … and they have two buses to get. So that's now that must be very difficult. …We had one girl, a number of years ago, who had experienced savage [events], I mean this girl had seen slaughter and you name it.* (Teacher, Brayton Square second-level school)

In Ashville Lane, teachers acknowledged additional difficulties posed by the processes involved in applying for asylum:

> *I mean we had [a large number of] unaccompanied minors in the ages between fifteen and seventeen and eighteen, and they were going through the asylum process, on their own, and this was impacting on them significantly because in most cases, in the initial stages, I mean it is quite a complicated process, it's a very legalistic process, and for a young lad to be going through that on his own! And things were happening quite quickly for them because they would be in school, and letters and inviting them to go to certain places, mightn't arrive until the Friday, we mightn't see it until Monday or Tuesday, and respond to it* (Teacher, Ashville Lane second-level school)

For these students, accommodation-related issues may be an additional difficulty; this is mostly the case with newcomer students who are housed by the State after arrival to Ireland.

> *I'm just thinking about one girl now from Nigeria, she is living in a hostel at the moment so she would find it very, very difficult, you know from a study point of view. Now she stays in, she has study facilities here in the evening but she in particular is finding it very hard to mix as well with our, with the kids* (Teacher, Huntington Road, second-level school)

[55] While the numbers of these students are relatively small, it is important to note that these students face particular challenges with regard to settling into school.

In one school, teachers commented on additional difficulties caused by the specific background of some groups of newcomer students, some of whom may have had limited experience of formal education:

> *Has this child been in formal education at all, you know. Because I think sometimes they arrive and they don't and they really don't cope. We've seen that with certain students that have come from Kurdistan here that I think were in refugee camps and things like that and they become very aggressive then I think because they are not coping at all, socially either they are not able to cope.* (Teacher, Brayton Square second-level school)

In one school, major difficulties around religion were reported:

> *They had a huge difficulty around religion, because it is a Catholic school and they were Muslim themselves, but they had a fear, somewhere along the line they had a fear that we would try to change their children to Catholics and we didn't have Kurdish and they didn't have English to explain, every child is welcome, … if we say a prayer they don't say their prayer, they get quiet time and things like that, you know.* (Teacher, Jefferson Street primary school)

In second-level schools, religion was not seen by staff as an issue; in most cases students attended Religious Education classes, but some did not participate.

> *[Newcomer students come to RE classes] and actually I would say a 100 per cent of them want to be there, and … we would be very careful if we were having a religious practice that we would give them the option, but religious class they go to, but some of them will go to religion class but won't necessarily say at home that they are going but they want to be there and they want to be part of what is happening. That is an interesting one.* (Teacher, Huntington Road, second-level school)

> *Religion class they just go with the class that's here. I haven't found any of them asking to stay out of religion, not that I'm aware of.* (Teacher, Wulford Park second-level school)

In one second-level school, a prayer room was made available for children from different cultural/religious backgrounds:

> *Even though we are a Catholic school, we have developed a policy here which will cater for, and be open to all other religions. We did have an oratory which was just primarily a Catholic church, if you like, part of it, that is now being developed into what we would call a prayer room, but we won't lose our own identity within that, but we would certainly be open to, and cater for all others. Now nobody has made it an issue, it has been an issue in some other schools.* (Teacher, Ashville Lane second-level school)

For many students, moving to a new school also involved making the transition from one schooling system to another. Almost all of the students had experience of school in their home country, although some of the younger primary students had begun their education in Ireland. School experiences in Ireland were seen as very different from those in their home

countries. First, Irish schooling, especially at second-level, is generally seen as less strict, with less formal relations between teachers and students.

> *In Ireland I think a lot of people use bad words. I think in Poland when you use bad words …*
> *Yeah*
> *You are suspended.* (Newcomer second-level students, Bentham Street)

> *In Poland when you don't do your homework you get in lots of trouble.* (Newcomer primary students, Van Buren Street)

A number of students remarked on the absence of corporal punishment in Ireland:

> *It would be less strict than in Nigeria, yeah. They are really, really strict, they are like … if you don't do your homework you are hit with a cane, if you are late you get hit with a cane, anything you do they hit you.* (Newcomer second-level students, Brayton Square)

Second, many students mentioned the lack of a school uniform in their home country but had mixed views about having to wear a uniform. The absence of religion in their original schools was also mentioned as was the concept of single-sex schooling in Ireland.

A number of students referred to a difference in academic demands, mainly finding the schoolwork easier than in their home country.

> *Yeah, they are different to Poland schools because in Poland it's very difficult, it's a lot of subjects, lots of study but here it's not bad.* (Newcomer second-level students, Bentham Street)

> *I think school is harder in my country.* (Newcomer primary students, Adams Street)

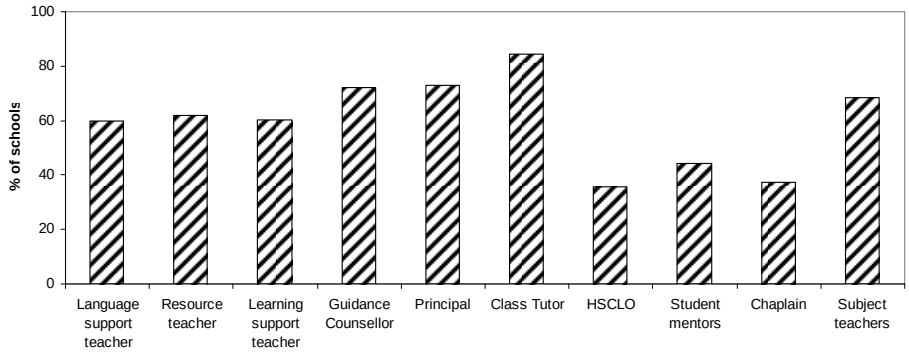
This issue is discussed further in Chapter 6 in terms of the academic progress of newcomer students. Other differences mentioned by students included the type of subjects, school or class size, and the length of the school day:

> *Here you have to stay 'til four, we only had to stay 'til one.* (Newcomer second-level students, Wulford Park)

5.8 Social and Personal Support for Newcomer Students

This section discusses social and personal support available within schools for newcomer students. In the postal survey, principals were asked about their general approach to helping newcomer students settle into the school. They were also asked to specifically list the school staff involved in supporting newcomer students, and the measures used to support them. Figure 5.11 presents findings on the school staff involved in supporting newcomer students at second level.

Figure 5.11: School Staff Involved in Supporting Newcomer Students, Second Level



As can been seen from Figure 5.11, a wide range of staff were mentioned. The most commonly mentioned were the class tutor or year head, but principals and guidance counsellors were also mentioned in three-quarters of schools. More than half of schools mentioned language support teachers, resource teachers, learning support teachers or subject teachers. Home School Community Liaison Coordinators, student mentors and chaplains were less frequently mentioned.[56] While this figure does not show the particular combinations used in individual schools, the high frequencies imply that in many schools, a variety of staff members support newcomers.[57]

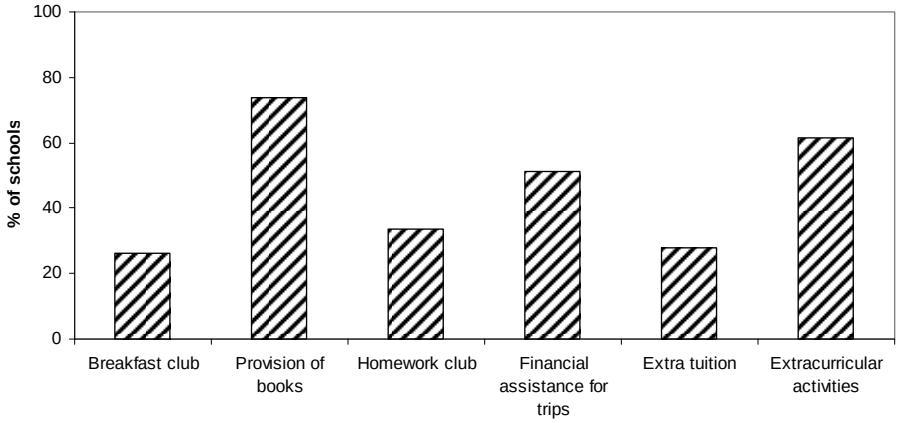
In addition to staff members involved, principals were asked about measures used to support newcomer students (Figure 5.12). Over three-quarters of second-level schools provided books and other learning materials to (some) newcomer students.[58] Many schools also used extra-curricular activities, including sports, as a means of supporting newcomers. Over half of the schools provided financial assistance of trips and outings; around one-third used a homework club. Extra tuition outside school hours and a breakfast club were less commonly used, by around one-quarter of schools. Summer camps (not shown) were only used by 10 per cent of schools.

56 'Others' were mentioned in 14 per cent of cases.

57 The high proportion of principals involved in supporting newcomers is also encouraging from the perspective of this survey as it implies that the school principals who filled out this survey will be well-informed about the needs of newcomers and supports in place.

58 Books are also available for some Irish students under the 'free book scheme'.

Figure 5.12 Supports for Newcomer Students, Second Level



Many staff involved suggest a 'whole school approach' being used in the school, whereas fewer staff suggests a more specialised approach.[59] In most schools, five or six different types of staff members are involved, though in some schools as many as ten or eleven different kinds of personnel support newcomers.[60] The number of support measures in each school also varied; most schools tend to use three or four of the specified measures, though some schools use none of these (12 per cent) and some use many more (seven or eight).

There are some differences across different types of schools in the variety of staff and number of measures used to support newcomer students. In boys' secondary schools, we find fewer staff involved in supporting newcomers and fewer supportive measures than in other schools; this is consistent with earlier research which indicates less emphasis on social and personal support for students in boys' schools (Smyth *et al.* 2004). The social mix of the school is also influential: schools with designated disadvantaged status have both a higher number of staff who support newcomers, and more supportive measures. By contrast, fee-paying schools have significantly fewer supportive measures and fewer staff members supporting newcomers. This pattern is likely to reflect the perceived needs of the student body; disadvantaged schools have been quite active in developing structures to provide support to their students as well as having greater links with the community-based services (see Smyth *et al.*, 2004).

Interestingly, there is little variation by size of school, except that schools with more than 600 students tend to have more supportive measures (available for all students), on average, than smaller schools. We find that in schools with fewer than 2 per cent newcomers, there are significantly fewer staff involved in supporting newcomers, and fewer measures to support them. In schools with more than 10 per cent newcomers, there are both more different staff members involved in

[59] Note that this is a very approximate measure of school effort, concentrating on what is easy to measure in a survey.
[60] Note this is a measure of the number of different types of staff involved, which is not exactly the same as the total number of staff. For example, two language support teachers would only count as one type of personnel on this scale.

supporting them and more measures in place. We find no association in second-level schools between the supports for newcomers and overall settling-in difficulties. It is thus not the case, for example, that in schools with fewer supports, newcomers tend to have greater difficulties. It may be that informal support from teachers and peers may compensate for the lack of formal structures. However, we cannot directly assess the direction of the effects operating here: it may also be the case that schools have developed more supports precisely in situations where a greater number of students are experiencing difficulties.

Figure 5.13: School Staff Involved in Supporting Newcomer Students (Primary Level)

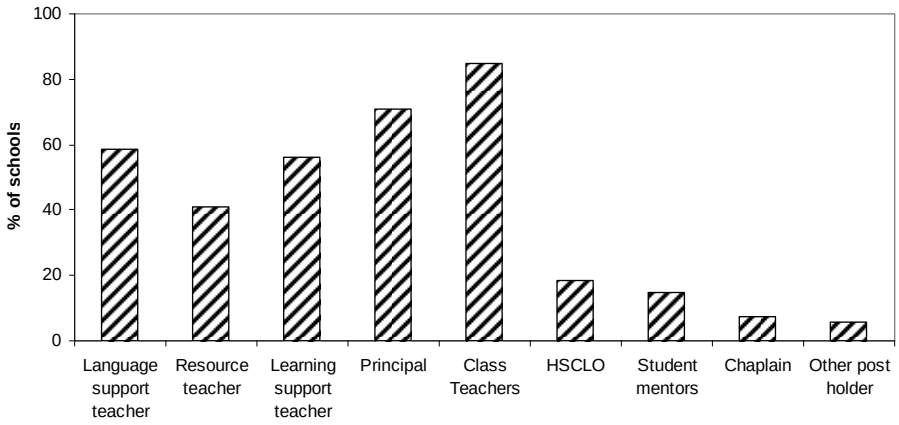
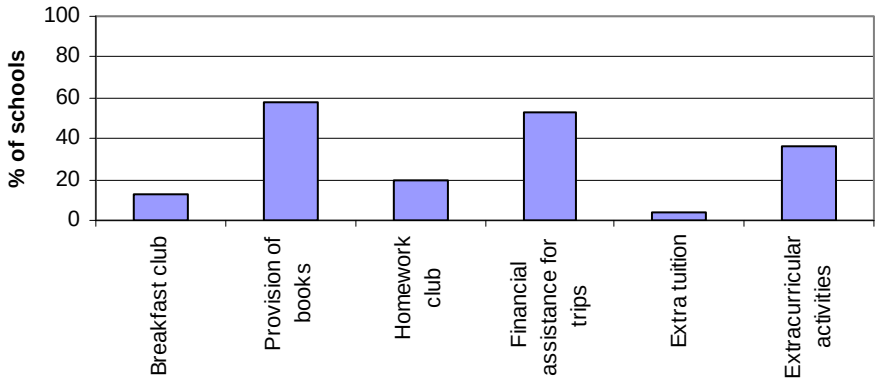


Figure 5.13 presents the school staff involved in supporting newcomer students at primary level. While in primary schools a wide range of staff are involved in supporting newcomers, the most frequently cited staff member was the class teacher, who was involved in supporting newcomers in 85 per cent of schools. This reflects the approach used in primary school, where most teaching is done by one teacher. Principals are also heavily involved in supporting newcomers, mentioned in just over 70 per cent of schools. Other staff members frequently mentioned were language support teachers (in 59 per cent of schools) and learning support teachers (in 56 per cent of schools). Resource teachers were mentioned in 41 per cent of primary schools. Other staff members were much less frequently mentioned by primary school principals.

Figure 5.14: Supports for Newcomer Students, Primary Schools

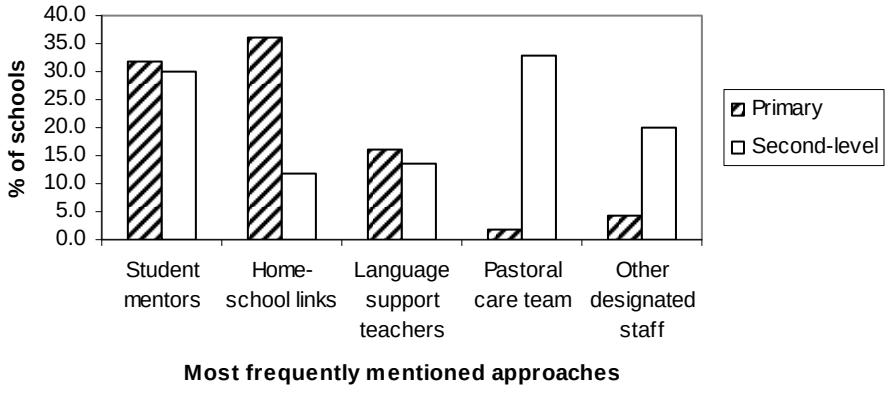


In terms of measures to support newcomer students in primary schools, by far the most commonly mentioned was provision of books (in 58 per cent of schools with newcomers). Financial assistance for trips is provided in 43 per cent of schools; and in 37 per cent of primary schools extra-curricular activities are mentioned as a means of supporting newcomer students. Other measures, like breakfast club, homework club or extra tuition, are infrequently used.

As for second-level schools, we create a measure of the total number of different kinds of staff involved in supporting newcomers, and the number of measures used. In primary schools, there are somewhat fewer staff involved in supporting newcomers than in second-level schools – on average about three or four, in very few cases more than seven. This may partly reflect the fact that there tend to be fewer staff of different types in primary schools and that primary schools are smaller on average than second-level schools (see Chapter 3). It is only in a few cases though that support for newcomer students is just the responsibility of the class teacher. In terms of measures supporting newcomers, there are also fewer in primary schools than in second-level schools, with most schools citing three or fewer measures.

We also investigated the way in which these patterns of support vary across primary schools. As in the second-level sector, designated disadvantaged schools have more measures for newcomer students and more staff involved in their support. Support patterns are associated with school size: small schools (less than 100) have fewer measures and fewer staff involved, while schools with over 200 pupils, and particularly large primary schools with over 400 pupils, have a higher number of measures and a higher number of staff involved in supporting newcomers. Support patterns for newcomer students also vary by the proportion of newcomers. In schools where there are fewer than 10 per cent newcomers, there are fewer staff members involved and fewer supportive measures. Conversely, in primary schools with over 20 per cent newcomers, there are significantly more staff involved, and more measures on offer. This suggests that support patterns respond to perceived need.

Figure 5.15: Main Formal Support Structures for Newcomer Students



Note: School Principals may mention more than one form of support.

The discussion so far has focused on the extent to which schools use *existing* structures and personnel to support newcomers. School principals were also asked whether they had *specific* approaches in place to support newcomer students in their school. Around a third of primary schools and two-thirds of second-level schools reporting having formal structures in place to support newcomer students. Figure 5.15 shows the most frequently mentioned approaches. It is clear that to some extent the needs of newcomer students are addressed within existing structures, for example, through the pastoral care team. However, specific measures, including having a designated staff member dealing with newcomers, were also put in place. Student mentors operate as an important source of support for newcomers across both primary and second-level sectors (see also Figures 5.11 and 5.13). However, differences are also evident between the two sectors. Designated staff and pastoral care teams are more commonly mentioned by second-level principals. At primary level, the fostering of home-school links, with a particular emphasis on targeting newcomer parents, assumes a more prevalent role, reflecting the potentially more direct involvement of parents at this educational level. In one-sixth of schools reporting structures for newcomers, such supports were seen as confined to the role of the language support teacher(s) rather than being part of a broader whole-school approach. However, it should be noted that across the majority of schools, language support teachers operate as an important source of support to newcomers (see above).

Teachers in primary and second-level schools were asked what social and personal supports were available for students in general and newcomer children in particular. Teachers in second-level schools noted that social and personal support to all students is most often provided by a Pastoral Care Team (most often consisting of Class Tutor, Guidance Counsellor, Year Head, Principal, and Chaplain).

> *Well the first thing I would say to you, we have a pastoral care team, in this school, and it's a very, very active pastoral care team. … So at that meeting, we are able to identify from what we know ourselves, from feedback from year heads, feedback from tutors, all of the students across the board, if there are difficulties, or if somebody is not responding the way they usually do, what the difficulties are? So we work on that then, we work on it, and investigate maybe what the problem is. One person will be assigned to a student.* (Teacher, Brayton Square, second-level school)

Across all second-level schools, newcomer students could avail of the supports that were also available to other students.

> *[Support] would be the same as for our own students, I mean they [newcomers] would be treated, if they have any issues, the Chaplin and the career guidance, everybody is available to them as much you know.* (Teacher, Huntington Road second-level school)

In addition, newcomer students could avail of additional English language tuition, generally seen as a specific support for newcomer students across second-level schools (see Chapter 6 for further discussion of language support).

Specific supports, I suppose the biggest thing is the, you know, the English lessons. They do visit … the chaplain. And if needs be they would come to me then. But specifically the chaplain kind of deals with [them], and also home school [community liaison coordinator]. (Teacher, Bentham Street second-level school)

In the year group that I have now there would be nothing structured in place, there are lots of English classes and that sort of thing. Generally, they slot in well you know, we'll say now in lunch area, in the social area and that you can kind of, like the girls in 2nd year now, that I don't have to teach but that I know them because they're in the 2nd year group, I would chat to them very often and they do seem to be very, you know well settled. (Teacher, Lowfield street second-level)

In some schools, newcomer students are engaged in sports and other activities that may help them to settle in:

*Well not specific, I prefer to integrate, but … the kids who are good at football and basketball would be the best at getting involved in other areas and singing. We have drama and singing at lunch times and they get involved. They love their singing and doing their best. They are involved in the choir, they are good singers. Because of their religion and the gospel that sort of thing they like that. (*Teacher, Brayton Square second-level school)

In the same vein, teachers in primary schools tended to see language support as a specific support for newcomer children:

A lot of the children, the newcomer children, go to language support classes, which is where they can learn kind of the basic language especially at first for getting along with each other and then they learn vocabulary to go with different themes so by doing that it helps them develop their social and personal skills I suppose as well … There's nothing else specific but we'd always be encouraging them and trying to get them to mix with other children. (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

Promoting parental involvement as well as linkages between the Gardai and the local community and English language classes for parents were listed as additional supports by a teacher in Adams Street primary school. In Jefferson Street (characterised as a school with a low proportion of newcomer students and a low level of formal structures), the social and personal support available would be provided by a pastoral carer who would be a class teacher; however, social and personal support was not particularly formalised in that school.

In general we would kind of have a pastoral carer, discipline for learning we call it, for all pupils, you know, there would be a kind of caring atmosphere or you know people looking out for them, it wouldn't be specifically structured as you know as separate programme, it is infiltrated throughout everything … it would be the class teachers but it would be from a whole school approach, all classes would be involved and we would discuss it at staff meetings and meet on a regular basis. (Teacher, Jefferson Street primary school)

Some schools organised a number of school activities to aid the settling-in process for newcomer students:

> *Well, we run after school clubs here and it doesn't matter what culture you are from, everybody is entitled to join and they are coaxed to join, they do music, there are two music clubs after school, there is a games club after school, there is a sports club after school and science club after school, things like that, everybody can do if you want to do an after school activity, you are given a choice.* (Teacher, Jefferson Street primary school)

While in Durango Street there were no specific supports in place for newcomer children, the school used an informal 'buddy' system with other newcomer children to help newcomer children settle in.

> *Not that I'm aware of now but … there was another Polish girl next door so we kind of made sure she was palled up with her at yard but trying to be careful that they weren't just speaking Polish together and I mean, you know, we were aware of her but that was more myself and another teacher were kind of trying to do that so, but I'm sure if I had gone and said I'm really worried that she's not fitting in that, you know, I'm not aware of anything in place but it could be.* (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

A teacher in the same school indicated that they did not get too involved with the younger newcomer children, preferring to allow children to integrate naturally.

> *Well, because a lot of mine started at the very beginning, in fact in Junior Infants last year they didn't even have language support, they just kind of came in and we let them integrate naturally because we find children learn so much language in the first year we just let them be for the first year.* (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

In sum, schools tend to address the needs of newcomer students through existing support structures as well as developing specific measures to assist them. The formalisation of student support varies between second-level and primary schools, as well as among schools in both sectors.

5.9 Conclusions

The need to support newcomer students' academic performance and social integration has been recognised widely (see Blair *et al.*, 1998). This chapter explored issues relating to settling-in among newcomer students in Irish primary and second-level schools and formal supports available to these students at school.

In general, students settle in well following an adjustment period (anything between a couple of weeks to a year). However, it was evident from the findings of this study that this area needs attention as several newcomer students experienced problems in the social sphere. Schools varied in the extent to which they provided specific support for newcomer students. In second-level schools, newcomers could avail of the support of the pastoral care team and other designated staff members, whereas in primary schools formal support was mainly provided by student mentors, home-school links and language support teachers.

The analysis presented in this chapter shows that a number of linguistic, personal/social, situational and institutional factors exist that may act as barriers for newcomer students' successful adjustment to Irish schools. According to principals in second-level schools, difficulties in the social/personal sphere were associated with low proficiency in English, negative school climate and school size, while in the primary sector proficiency in English and school climate were the main factors. Newcomer students seemed to settle in better in schools that were generally supportive and took a whole school approach in assisting newcomer students in getting used to the new learning environment. Newcomer students themselves found that the initial settling-in period was easier when they had somebody to talk to and other students (and teachers) were friendly towards them.

Newcomer students were often seen to socialise among themselves, with some of them having difficulties in making Irish friends. It is possible that the latter pattern is also associated with language difficulties, which makes communication and taking part in extra-curricular activities more difficult. In some cases, the difficulties were also associated with bullying and racial name-calling. A number of students reported such incidents and were generally reluctant to approach school staff about bullying. As a result, school principals may not be fully aware of the scale of potential difficulties. However, it should be noted that when asked about their experiences, newcomer students find most Irish students friendly. In addition to difficulties with English language and social sphere, some of the newcomer students also highlighted institutional differences between schools in Ireland and at home, again something to be considered when helping these students to settle in.

Previous research suggests that teachers have an important role in helping newcomers adjust to a new learning environment. In line with Devine (2005), this study found that both primary and second-level school teachers have generally positive views of newcomer students. Newcomer students were often described by primary and second-level teachers as 'diligent' and 'hard working'. However, it was evident from the staff interviews that the staff seemed to hold more favourable views of Eastern European students, in line with Devine's (2005) study. These students are also considered to be well-behaved with good school attendance.

Parental involvement in their child's school life is often also hindered by low proficiency in or lack of English. In order to encourage newcomer parents, home-school liaison coordinators in some schools have taken an active role in contacting newcomer families and encouraging parental involvement.

In line with other studies, we argue that it is important to engage with newcomer students, to try to see things from the students' point of view. It is also important for schools to have clear procedures in place for responding to racist bullying and racist name calling. As is the case with Irish students, newcomer students are generally reluctant to approach staff to report being bullied so teachers may be unaware of the extent of racist incidents. Anti-bullying policies need to be underpinned by the promotion of openness to diversity among the student population. In order to do this, it is important to talk to Irish students about the differences between cultures as a part of the whole school approach to interculturalism. Intercultural education should be seen as part of everyday life in the school

and not reduced to the celebration of festivals or information provided in a few lessons. Such an approach would benefit the social development of both newcomer and Irish students.

SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES

Table A5.1: Factors Associated with Social/Personal Difficulties Experienced by Newcomers, Scale (Second-level Schools)

	Coefficient
Constant	2.231
School Type:	
Girls' Secondary	0.051
Boys' Secondary	-0.058
Vocational	0.154
Community/Comprehensive	0.147
Ref: Coed Secondary	
Gaelcholaistí	-0.007
Fee-paying school	-0.154
Designated disadvantaged (DEIS) status	-0.210*
Urban	0.066
School Size:	
200-399 students	0.256*
400-599 students	0.281*
600 or more students	0.286*
Ref: Less than 200 students	
Proportion of newcomers in school:	
Less than 2%	-0.039
Less than 2-9%	-0.109
Less than 10-19%	-0.031
Ref: greater than 20%	
Spoken English difficulties among	
newcomers:	0.714***
Nearly all	0.258**
More than half	0.257**
Less than half	
Ref: almost no newcomers	-0.328***
Overall school climate	

Notes: From a linear regression model. Scale of difficulties in social interaction with peers, behavioural difficulties, difficulties with absenteeism and difficulties with extra-curricular activities. Scale varies from 0 to 4. *** p<=0.001; **p<=0.01; *p<=0.05.
Source: Survey of Principals, second-level schools.

Table A5.2: Factors Associated with Social/Personal Difficulties Experienced by Newcomers, Scale (Primary Schools))

	Coefficient
Constant	3.159
Catholic school	-0.081
Gaelscoil	-0.070
Designated disadvantaged (DEIS) status	-0.046
Urban	-0.056
School Size:	
100-199 students	0.088
200-399 students	0.016
400 or more students	-0.020
Ref: Less than 100 students	
Proportion of newcomers in school:	
Less than 2%	-0.109
Less than 2-9%	-0.078
Less than 10-19%	0.009
Ref: greater than 20%	
Spoken English difficulties among newcomers:	
Nearly all	0.547***
More than half	0.259**
Less than half	0.293**
Ref: almost no newcomers	
Overall school climate	-0.488***
Number of schools	383
Adjusted R^2	0.175

Notes: From a linear regression model. Scale of difficulties in social interaction with peers, behavioural difficulties, difficulties with absenteeism and difficulties with extracurricular activities. Scale varies from 0 to 4. *** p<=0.001; **p<=0.01.
Source: Survey of Principals, primary schools.

6. LANGUAGE SUPPORT PROVISION

6.1 Introduction

There has been considerable debate internationally about the appropriate way to provide English language instruction for newcomer students. Countries are found to vary in how they provide language support, the number of hours provided, the curriculum and pedagogy used, and the place accorded to the young person's mother tongue (heritage language) (OECD, 2006; McAndrew, 2009). Across a number of OECD countries, the main provision pattern in primary and second-level schools involves newcomer students attending mainstream classes while being given additional support in English language learning, although the number of hours and duration of support varies across countries (OECD, 2006). In some countries, such as Sweden and Finland, there is an initial phase of separate intensive host language tuition for newcomers before transfer to mainstream classes. In England, Scotland and Wales, there has been a trend towards combining withdrawal from class for supplementary tuition with the increased provision of within-class support for students (OFSTED, 2001). In Northern Ireland, support is mostly given in the form of withdrawal from regular class for additional tuition and this method was favoured by both language support and regular classroom teachers (Hansson *et al.*, 2002; PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2005). However, a recent inspection report indicated an increased use of within-class support (DENI, 2006). There has been little cross-national research on the effectiveness of different modes of provision in facilitating academic progress but analyses of PISA results are suggestive of a narrower gap in achievement between immigrants and natives in countries where there are long-standing language support programmes with clearly defined aims and goals (OECD, 2006). In some contexts, teacher education is not always seen as adequate in assisting teachers to promote the inclusion of different language groups within the classroom (Leung, 2001; Butcher *et al.*, 2007). PISA results also indicate a larger achievement gap for young people who immigrate at an older age (OECD, 2006).

The appropriate role of the heritage language in the integration process has been the subject of much debate. A number of commentators, most notably Cummins (1992), have argued that strengthening basic concepts and skills in a child's mother tongue contributes to their mastery of the host language because of the transfer of relevant meta-linguistic and meta-cognitive skills. In the United States, the dominant mode of provision until the late 1990s was 'transitory bilingual education', whereby immigrant children attended separate bilingual (English-Spanish) classes before transfer to mainstream classrooms. A number of US studies have indicated that bilingual education (English-Spanish) leads to a boost in academic performance (Rolstad *et al.*, 2005). Bilingual provision has not generally

been used in Western Europe, at least partly reflecting the diversity of mother tongues found among newcomer young people (see Butcher *et al.*, 2007; OECD 2006). However, the recognition of the role of heritage languages varies across European countries, with most Swedish primary and lower secondary schools providing supplementary native language classes for the most prevalent minority languages (OECD 2006). Some within-country studies indicate the value of drawing on newcomers' culture in day-to-day teaching and in using the first language for settling in and longer term learning (Blair *et al.*, 1998; Cline *et al.*, 2002).

This chapter explores language support provision in primary and post-primary schools in Ireland and, in so doing, documents for the first time the nature of such provision nationally. The first section explores variation between schools in their approach to providing language support while the second section examines their access to translation services and other supports. The third section examines satisfaction levels with the language support provision currently on offer.

6.2 Nature of Language Support Provision

6.2.1 EXTENT OF PROVISION

Chapter 1 has indicated that the majority of immigrants to Ireland come from non-English-speaking countries. Chapter 4 has shown that approximately three-quarters of primary and second-level students have a mother tongue other than English or Irish. School principals were asked how many of their newcomer students were receiving language support at the time of the survey.[61] Across primary schools, an average of 62 per cent of non-native speaker newcomers were receiving language support, with 36 per cent of schools reporting that all relevant students in their school were receiving such support. Across second-level schools, an average of 68 per cent of non-native speaker newcomers were receiving language support, with a third of schools reporting that all relevant students in their school were receiving such support.

Table 6.1 indicates the number of full-time and part-time designated language support (LS) teachers across primary and post-primary schools. The allocation of resources to employ language support teachers depends on the number of students with English as a second language, with additional teaching hours made available for students with 'significant English language deficits' (DES, 2007). It should be noted that the second-level survey took place prior to the issuing of this Circular and relates to a time when full-time posts were capped at two.

Among primary schools with newcomers, a third have at least one full-time language support teacher while a fifth have at least one part-time language support teacher. Since schools may have both full-time and part-time teachers depending upon how they choose to use their resource allocation, we combine the figures to give an overall picture of designated

[61] This figure will naturally be lower than the number of newcomers in the school who have ever received language support.

language teachers in the school. Primary schools, perhaps because of their smaller average size, do not tend to combine having full-time and part-time language support teachers. Almost half of primary schools have no designated language support teacher, which means that in these schools, language support is provided by learning support/resource teachers and/or addressed within mainstream classes.

Table 6.1: Number of Full-time and Part-time Designated Language Support Teachers

	Primary		Second-level	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
	%	%	%	%
None	68.3	78.2	28.5	54.3
One	14.4	19.9	30.6	19.3
Two or more	17.3	1.9	40.9	26.4
Mean	0.7	0.3	1.6	1.1

The pattern is quite different in the second-level sector. The majority (71 per cent) of second-level schools have at least one full-time designated language support teacher while four in ten have two or more full-time teachers (Table 6.1). Forty-five per cent of schools have at least one part-time language support teacher. Combining information on full-time and part-time teachers, we find that the vast majority (93 per cent) of second-level schools have a designated language support teacher. Just under a half (48 per cent) use full-time teachers, 22 per cent rely on part-time teachers while almost a quarter have a language support team which includes both full-time and part-time teachers.

Within the case-study schools, three groups of language support teachers were apparent: those with a background in teaching English as a second language, those with a background in learning support, and mainstream teachers (often with a background in teaching English). Only a small number of teachers involved in language support had had experience of or qualifications in teaching English as a second/foreign language. The second group had a background in learning support but only a small number had received additional training in language support or intercultural education. The third and largest group of teachers had moved from mainstream teaching to language support either because of their own interest or at the principal's request. A minority of this group had received formal training, though this varied in perceived quality and intensity:

> *It was over ten weeks, it was very, very good, but it was mostly addressing the learning of language, language acquisition, so the theory behind it and there were some practical ideas for us as well but the big value of it was other language support teachers getting together and sharing experiences and things that work, things that don't work, that was fantastic. I think there should be more of that.* (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

> *I know I went to … just a one day programme that the ASTI our union put on in Dublin for teaching students of other nationalities and you know it was beneficial and … they had a speaker in from a school in Dublin … a school that had like 70 per cent or 50 per cent of students with these needs and they had a full-time person who was working with them and I mean I felt so bad for our students, when I saw what they were doing, but this person had their own room,*

with cultural posters and pictures and wall hangings you know that these students could identify with and texts that they could do and audio texts and computer work and I mean loads of stuff. Whereas we didn't have. (Teacher, Huntington Road second-level school)

A lot of it was more based on cross-curricular rather than teaching English as a foreign language I found. … I think that approach would probably work more so if you had specific, you know, language support teachers all day working with kids coming in, like if you could timetable them all day. But the way it's all chopped and changed, it's very difficult to do that. (Teacher, Brayton Square second-level school)

Across the schools, many teachers involved in language support highlighted the need not just for specialised training but also for a whole-school approach to professional development:

It would be good to get a whole school together, … you know somebody to come in and just deal with the situation that they are in at the moment because all schools are different so and they take in different types. (Teacher, Jefferson Street primary school)

You know for me to go by myself ... for the school that's really of not much advantage because you know by the time you get back into school and you are doing your work, you don't have time to talk to the other teachers. I think it needs to be a whole school thing. You know, I've been saying that for a few years, all the teachers here. Like a lot of the teachers who have been here for 20 or 30 years this is all new to them. I know it's getting better now but you know you still don't really know how to teach kids in a classroom that are not from your country because you never would have had that before. So I think they all need training, everybody needs, if they could come in and just do a day here. (Teacher, Ashville Lane second-level schools)

The theme of professional development for teachers in general is developed in greater detail in Chapter 7.

6.2.2 IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS FOR LANGUAGE SUPPORT

Across the case-study schools, students were generally identified for language support on an informal basis. This would mainly occur when meeting the student and their parents regarding entry to the school:

The language support is really identification, interview with the parents and the student, it's quite obvious where their English is at so it's kind of, I suppose, self referral as such on the part of the student. … It's not a structured mechanism that we have. (Teacher, Lowfield Street second-level school)

Classroom teachers emerged as an important source of referral for language support:

In class if they are absolutely lost, the teachers will come very quickly and say we have to do something about this child, she doesn't understand. (Teacher, Huntington Road second-level school)

> *Basically we talk to the teachers and the junior infants and say is there anyone that you feel in your class who is foreign national who would need language support and you would go and take it from there.* (Teacher, Greenway Road primary school)

In two of the case-study schools, Ashville Lane and Durango Street, identification was based on a written assessment:

> *You'd interview them first and generally speaking from a verbal interview you can tell you know how their English is and then we give them a written assessment. So it's just the Cambridge test, we give them that. Now some of them just can't do it at all. Some of them can half do it and some of them do very well on it. And we just get them to write a little piece about their own country and that really is better than the Cambridge test, because you can see grammar, you can see how much English they've had … and then according to that we'll put them into a class.* (Teacher, Ashville Lane second-level school)

It should be noted that fieldwork for this study took place prior to the circulation of the *Primary Schools Assessment Kit* materials designed by Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT) for use in schools so we are unable to determine whether the use of formal assessment tools has increased more recently.

6.2.3 NATURE OF PROVISION

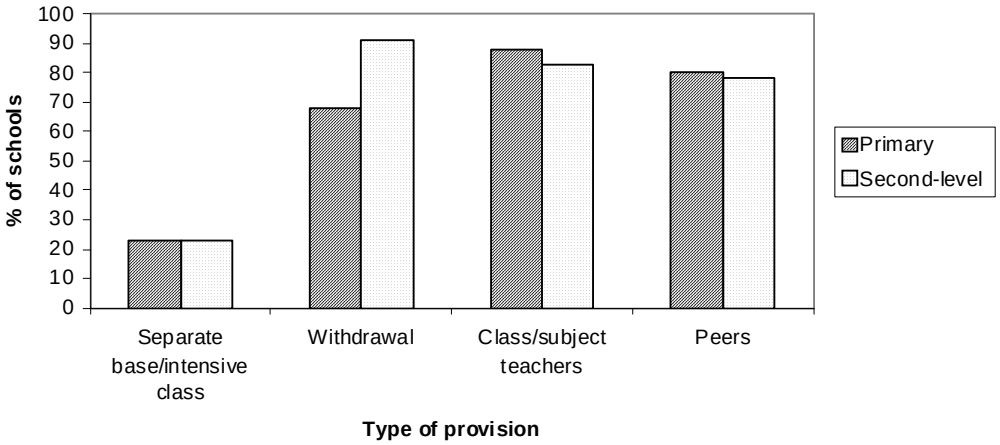
Principals of primary and second-level schools nationally reported a number of different methods of providing language support. Within the primary sector, informal support was most frequently cited with 88 per cent of schools reporting a key role for regular class teachers while four-fifths reported that students were helped by their peers (Figure 6.1). Over two-thirds of primary schools with newcomers used withdrawal for certain class periods while almost a quarter provided intensive courses in separate base classes for newcomers. Other methods mentioned included team teaching and learning support or resource teaching.

In contrast to the situation at primary level, almost all second-level schools withdrew students from class for extra support. As in the primary sector, almost a quarter of second-level schools with newcomers used an intensive approach provided in separate base classes. Such approaches are more prevalent where there are full-time learning support teachers. However, even in the second-level sector, subject teachers and peers played an important role in providing language support to newcomer students.

Because most schools used more than one form of language support, information on the nature of provision was further grouped to indicate the main approach used in the school – withdrawal, separate intensive provision or informal support.

Half of primary schools rely on withdrawal from regular class for language support. Almost a quarter of primary schools allocate pupils to a separate class for immersion provision. However, it should also be noted that a quarter of schools rely on informal support only, that is, students are helped by their class teachers, by resource/learning support teachers and by their peers but do not receive language support from designated teachers.

Figure 6.1: Use of Different Methods of Language Support Across Schools



Among second-level schools, withdrawal is again the main method used (in 71 per cent of cases). As in primary schools, almost a quarter of second-level schools allocate students to a separate class for immersion provision. A noteworthy difference between primary and second-level schools is the almost complete formalisation of provision within the second-level sector; only 6 per cent of second-level schools rely on informal support only.

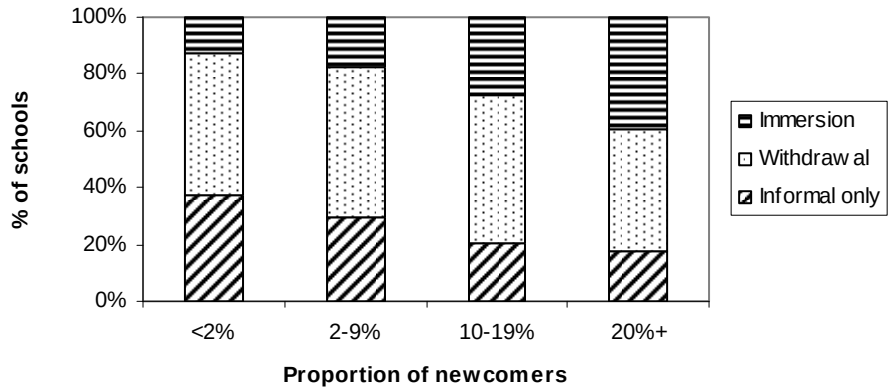
We have seen that withdrawal is the main method used in primary schools. However, the approach to language support varies by the concentration of newcomer students, reflecting the link between number of students with English as a second language and resource allocation. Schools with a relatively small proportion of newcomers are more likely to rely on informal support only. In contrast, schools with a higher proportion (with newcomers making up 20 per cent or more of the student body) are more likely to have separate intensive classes, most likely because of the critical mass needed for such an approach (Figure 6.2). The pattern in the second-level sector is broadly similar, with separate intensive classes more prevalent in high-minority schools; 43 per cent of schools with a high concentration (>20 per cent) of newcomers use such an approach compared with 17 per cent of those with a low concentration (<2 per cent).

The survey and interview data provided further insights into how withdrawal was handled on a day-to-day basis. Within primary schools using withdrawal, almost half of primary principals report that the class from which students are withdrawn varies depending on the timetable and/or the desire to avoid students missing out on particular subjects consistently.

> *Teachers work around the language support timetable as well and the learning support so they also, you know, decide what subject to do while the children are absent.* (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

In a fifth of cases, students are withdrawn from class for language support during Irish.

Figure 6.2: Approach to Language Support by Proportion of Newcomers in Primary schools



You wouldn't withdraw from the core subjects. Say in Fifth and Sixth where they wouldn't have to do Irish, we would find maybe that's the time you would withdraw them when the rest of the class are doing Irish, that would be one area for the Seniors. The others you just have to, you know, just play around with it, you know, you wouldn't take them out from PE or art but after that you kind of, you know, you just have to. (Teacher, Thomas Road primary school)

Other subjects from which students were withdrawn included Religious Education and other subjects (8 per cent), English (8 per cent), and English and Maths (5 per cent).

The picture is quite different within the second-level sector. Where withdrawal is used, four out of five schools withdraw students from Irish class for extra language support.

If it is possible, I try to organise it when Irish is on, because these students would not be studying Irish as a subject, so sometimes they are not studying Irish so you can do it at that time, now that is not always possible because of the timetable of the teacher involved, so sometimes it has to be a subject, we tried that it is a subject, that doesn't affect the child too much, you know we try. (Teacher, Huntington Road second-level school)

Well usually it is basically small classes of language teaching has been started for them and they would be taken maybe from subjects that, like Irish or some subject that they wouldn't be doing or where they wouldn't be able to partake maybe. (Teacher, Lowfield Street second-level school)

Other classes from which students are withdrawn include Religious Education (15 per cent), foreign languages (11 per cent), English (8 per cent) and no set classes (8 per cent).

Table 6.2: Nature of Language Support Provision in the Case-Study Schools

	Proportion of Newcomers	Nature of Provision
Primary		
Adams Street	Medium/high	Withdrawal for small group tuition
Durango Street	Medium/high	Withdrawal for small group tuition; some one-to-one work
Greenway Road	Low	Withdrawal for small group tuition; very occasional within-class work
Jefferson Street	Low	Support teacher for each class, half time within-class work and half time withdrawal
Thomas Road	Medium/high	Withdrawal for small group tuition; combined with some within-class work
Van Buren Street	Low	Withdrawal for small group tuition; combined with some within-class work, especially for younger children
Second-level		
Ashville Lane	High	Immersion for some students; withdrawal for small group tuition for other students
Bentham Street	Low/medium	Withdrawal for one-to-one and/or small group tuition; from Irish
Brayton Square	High	Withdrawal for one-to-one and/or small group tuition; from Irish or RE
Huntington Road	Low/medium	Withdrawal for one-to-one tuition; from Irish and Business
Lowfield Street	Low/medium	Withdrawal for one-to-one and/or small group tuition; from History or Geography
Wulford Park	High	Withdrawal; from English and Irish

In keeping with the national data, provision in the case-study schools largely centred on withdrawal from class for tuition on a one-to-one or small group basis (see Table 6.2). Withdrawal from subject classes for additional tuition in English was seen to provide students with a structured approach to improving their English language competency:

> *I suppose the main advantage is that you need structured teaching of a language really to improve, that you can't just pick it up, you know you can pick up so much orally but you do need a structured approach as well to master any language.* (Teacher, Lowfield Street second-level school)

> *The withdrawal I suppose is more concentrated when they are in it and they get time and they are in a small group in their own special room, … especially for the junior infants and their confidence levels really grow using the language because they have the time, they might be the only three here and you're just you know having a chat and it is informal and it is not as big a deal as putting up your hand to say something in a class of 30 which can be very, very intimidating for a child in junior infants who has just arrived and they only have a few words of English. Whereas here it develops at their own pace, they know you, they know why they are here, we have so many different resources, with games and things that they are more relaxed to use the language and then they have the tools to go back into the classroom and they have more confidence that they have learnt something here that they can use there.* (Teacher, Greenway Road primary school)

However, some teachers emphasised that withdrawal for short periods of time coupled with mainstream teaching for the remainder of the school day poses difficulties for both student and teacher alike:

> *I'm teaching [a senior class] … that [newcomer] boy is functioning at the level of a senior infant, you know, and so he is doing maths with counters and cubes … It is not a great service for him because sometimes he is finished something and I'm doing something with the rest of the group and just you can't be there instantly to move him on to the next thing. … It is also not good for his self-esteem when he is doing what he calls baby work and the others can see that. You know so it does emphasise the difference, you know, and makes life difficult for him because the others would tend to say oh look he is only doing adding.* (Teacher, Jefferson Street primary school)

Furthermore, the appropriate timing of withdrawal was seen as a potential challenge in integrating the student into other subjects:

> *If it's not done wisely it can … not necessarily be good, if for instance they're taken from a subject that they could be good at and then it would militate against their progress in that subject as well but if it is carefully monitored and you know is taken from subjects that they're not doing or they're at a disadvantage at, it [withdrawal] is the best.* (Teacher, Lowfield Street second-level school)

Thus, withdrawal may potentially hinder progress in other subjects because students are missing out on time spent on these subjects:

> *I suppose the difficulty of them being with me … and then losing out on the other classes, finding it even harder then when they went back to their own classes, they had missed probably you know, maybe there was four classes of that subject, maybe they were only attending two of them now because they were with me the rest of the time and then being completely lost in those subjects as well. And being kind of caught between you know the regular class group … while they needed extra English classes but they wanted to be part of the mainstream.* (Teacher, Huntington Road second-level school)

Withdrawing students from class may also highlight differences between Irish and newcomer students:

> *I suppose the main one would be that they are seen by the other children to be being taken out, they are seen to be different.*

…
Whereas when they are younger and they all want to come but when they are older they are saying why am I coming out still, I'm going to miss this in my class, so that is a disadvantage I would think. (Teacher, Greenway Road primary school).

I think sometimes … there can be more of a stigma to it if they are taken out of the classroom and children see them going out of the class room all the time and also they miss a lot. (Teacher, Jefferson Street primary school)

Withdrawal for language support across the case-study schools is provided in the form of one-to-one tuition as well as in small groups. While one-to-one tuition is seen as providing quite intensive support, it may have drawbacks in terms of longer term dependency on the language support teacher:

Some of the children I had I gave them … some intensive lessons like one-to-one, especially the children who were new to the school. But then you find after a while in the one-to-one situation, while it's brilliant at the beginning of the year and you really do build up a great bond with them and they become very reliant on you, as the year goes by you can see the need for social interaction with other children so I did consult with the vice principal during the year and tried to rearrange a group where the new children were beginning to mix with other language children because that's very important. (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

Being taught English in a group of students is also seen as having benefits with peer learning reinforcing the role of the teacher:

It wouldn't be recommended just to have a child on their own because sometimes when you get a child in Sixth Class that has nothing you can't very well compare her with a Junior Infant who has no language. It's recommended that you have more than one for the, you know, interaction and communication and practice of the language so we try to do that as best we can. It's not always possible, you know. (Teacher, Thomas Road primary school)

In three of the primary schools, withdrawal was supplemented by within-class work where the support teacher worked with students in the regular classroom setting. The use of such an approach varied across the three schools, being most extensive in Jefferson Street. In this school, language support is provided by a support teacher allocated to each class, with their role combining the functions of language support, learning support and resource teaching. The support teacher allocates approximately half of their time to working within class and half to withdrawing students for additional assistance outside class. Some within-class work was carried out in Thomas Road while this approach was used on only an occasional basis in Greenway Road.

Mostly withdrawn but sometimes in the class as well, particularly early in the year …, especially with the junior infants, when they are doing activity time in the morning, the language support teacher will go in and help the class teacher with activities and they can learn language informally at that time but mostly on a withdrawal basis. (Teacher, Greenway Road primary school)

This approach was seen by teachers as having advantages in terms of a more holistic approach to support provision as well as facilitating co-ordination between specialist and classroom teachers:

> *It makes far more sense for the teacher that is working with the class teacher to know all the children in the room, two teachers plan together for all of the children's needs, instead of the class teacher having to work with the language teacher, the resource teacher …. and the learning support, this way the one support teacher supports all the needs in the class, whether it is learning needs or language needs.* (Teacher, Jefferson Street primary school)

> *We feel that the way that we have divided out our resource teachers and language teachers we feel that we are meeting the needs of the children in a more holistic way. You are not different because you don't have English, or you are not different because you have a learning need, you are supported very much within the class group you know.* (Teacher, Jefferson Street primary school)

Within-class support was also mentioned by teachers in other schools as having potential benefits for students in their school:

> *I think that there's definitely a place for trying to get into the classroom with them, especially with the kids who have more English and, you know, there's no point in doing a separate curriculum with them in another classroom. You're better off to be in the classroom and to see what they're doing and come up with, you know, language difficulties as they're being presented to them, do you know.* (Teacher, Van Buren Street primary school)

> *Well, if you had a language assistant in the class or if you had a class of 30 kids and 9 or 10 of them were foreign nationals … if you qualified then for some sort of a teaching assistant to help those in the class, it could be a strategy yeah, team teaching.* (Teacher, Adams Street primary school)

Only one of the case-study schools placed newcomer students in separate base classes for intensive tuition. In Ashville Lane, a second-level school with a relatively high proportion of newcomers, withdrawal from class for some students was coupled with separate intensive provision for others. This involved some groups of students being allocated to separate classes for a period of time after which they moved into regular classes.

> *Well we have ... classes specifically set up for international students and they are at different levels. The level of the very beginner English, the kids that never have done English before or kids that haven't really been in school before. So generally there are two teachers in there at any one time so you can identify the kids that are really weak and need the extra help. Then the next level is for the 13 to 15 year olds who have been to school before and would hopefully go into mainstream either during the year or next year. And then the third class … are about 15 or 16 and they'll do either Junior [Cert] at the end of it and they would have a fairly high standard of English coming in anyway. Even though they are only just arrived, most of them would have a fairly high standard of English. And then kids in mainstream, that go straight in for Irish classes they can be withdrawn and so they are getting their extra English that way.* (Teacher, Ashville Lane second-level school)

This approach was seen by the staff in Ashville Lane as allowing them to tailor provision to the heterogeneous needs of the newcomer intake. Some teachers in other schools highlighted the potential advantages of such an approach:

> *I think when a child arrives and has absolutely …[no]… English I think it really is cruel to put them into a class situation that they have no experience of and you know to expect the teacher to be able to differentiate for them and keep them busy all day with absolutely no language.* (Teacher, Jefferson Street primary school)

However, others were critical of the potential impact of such an approach on social integration:

> *No it wouldn't be viable at all.*
> *There would be nowhere to have a separate class.*
> *But also I don't think it would.*
> …
> *I can't see, I think for the children it wouldn't be good, I don't think it would be beneficial for them.*
> *To segregate them.*
> *To segregate them like that.* (Teacher, Greenway Road primary school)

In sum, schools nationally vary in their approach to language support provision, though withdrawal from class for extra tuition is the most prevalent method, in keeping with the pattern in many OECD countries. Staff in the case-study schools highlight advantages and disadvantages associated with these different approaches. Our survey data allow us to examine whether a particular mode of provision is associated with a lower prevalence of academic and personal difficulties. Within the primary sector, principals in schools using informal supports only are somewhat more likely to report behavioural difficulties among newcomer students, although the differences are not marked. Primary schools using separate intensive provision are somewhat more likely to report absenteeism issues among newcomers, which may reflect the potentially negative impact of being in a separate classroom on student morale and engagement. At post-primary level, schools using separate provision are more likely to report difficulties in social interaction for newcomers; thus, allocating newcomers to a separate class group may delay the development of friendships between newcomer and Irish students. Satisfaction with language support provision is discussed in greater detail later in the chapter.

6.2.4 TEACHING RESOURCES AND MATERIALS USED IN LANGUAGE SUPPORT

The majority of language support teachers in the twelve case-study schools were not satisfied with available teaching resources and materials for language support. In one case, a teacher related their satisfaction to the support they had received from a proactive local education centre:

> *They actually came to that to present it to us, to show, this is what we have for language support and then another meeting we were talking to some teachers who had used it in their school and they were just saying that it was very good just to have something to direct us and to guide us.*

Yeah and the other kind of good thing about it is a lot of the, say, the picture cards that we would have, you know they are foreign children, do you know what I mean, that they are, you know there is a mixture and it just means that they are seeing children like themselves, do you know and I just kind of feel that, that is important too.
And the names in the stories would be … international type names. (Teacher, Greenway Road primary school)

One issue highlighted related to the lack of availability of materials or the lack of awareness of what was available.

I suppose even resources to work with them was difficult, I mean I was going off buying books and … you know there could have been better stuff that I could have been using. (Teacher, Huntington Road second-level school)

This meant that teachers were reliant on their own initiative to stockpile materials, often borrowing from a wide range of sources.

I find that you are just picking up bits and pieces and I'm actually using … some of the Irish books, the workbooks for little pictures and things like that, because I don't know of any exact books that I'm able to use, so it is kind of taking bits and pieces from different things. (Teacher, Jefferson Street primary school)

And at the beginning when I got the job they just said this is your class, do whatever you like. I didn't have even a text book. … I had to provide my own and even now sometimes I do my lessons at home. But I have loads of books, text books, because it will be much easier if we had, if were provided one handbook and always use this one but no, we have to pick up from that and that, and you have to consider, think of their levels so you are going to make your own exercises. (Teacher, Ashville Lane second-level school)

A second difficulty related to the fact that available teaching resources were seen as more suitable for younger than for older children:

The problems arise with children who come in higher up and have no English because obviously the stuff, the material that's out there, is aimed from an age point of view at younger children so somebody in Fifth Class is not going to be interested in the story of the cat or whatever so it's to find age appropriate resources for children higher up the ranks and to find a programme that suits children higher up the ranks as well, children who still have huge language needs but who have passed the functional language stage. There's very little out there for those children. (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

I think a story with the English that our kids have with that reading age are very childish. You know things like there's a loose tooth and a mouse in a hole, it's very basic, it's very childish. What we need are stories that are aimed at teenagers and might have a bit of fighting in it, or a bit of you know that kind of thing they are interested in. But with a kind of language, I don't think that's there. … I'd go home now every now and then and I'll type up a piece and you know it's kind of about inner city Dublin, or about life or about what to do after school, you know that kind of stuff. I go and do it myself. (Teacher, Ashville Lane second-level school)

Furthermore, some TEFL material was regarded as targeted towards more advantaged exchange students rather than newcomer students per se:

> *I find that they [TEFL books] … are not aimed for 15, 16 year olds students. The exercises, maybe they are designed for, I think, for maybe Italian students or Spanish students, you know where the tradition in this course for TEFL is with those areas. Students come over for the summer, they are from maybe wealthy backgrounds who are keen to learn. I'm not saying our kids aren't keen to learn but these kids are, you know, their parents would be pushing to learn.* (Teacher, Ashville Lane second-level school)

A small number of teachers had been using dual language books and resources with newcomer students in their school. This was seen as a potentially fruitful avenue by a number of teachers but many reported difficulty in accessing such books:

> *I do think it's very good for kids when they come in first to have something in their own language to look at, do you know what I mean. I couldn't get my hands on resources, there was some I could have bought over the internet, very little, not very much, not really for my age group, for younger kids maybe, you know, like there was some story books and nothing really for my age group. So what I actually did was I did a project where they wrote dual language books and we entered them into a competition for writing books, just a general writing book competition in the local area. … So we now have three different books in both Polish and English available in the school that … the other teachers can use with the younger children. I do think it would be great to have some stuff in the kids' own language but it's very hard to get stuff that would not only be in Polish or in like Latvian or whatever you need it in and be at a level for the older kids … You might be able to get stuff for younger kids but to get stuff for the older kids I find is very difficult, like I couldn't find anything, you know, and I searched the internet for it but I haven't come across any.* (Teacher, Van Buren Street primary school)

> *We don't have printed dual-language books in place yet in the school but I have come across them this year on a language support course here in the area and I thought they were fantastic, books that were written, well-known stories but written in both English and the child's own language. I thought they were fantastic but we don't have those in place yet.* (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

In addition, one of the case-study schools (Ashville Lane) provided classes in the mother tongue of some newcomer groups. This occurred for two of the dominant language groups and was made feasible by the high proportion of newcomers in this particular school.

6.2.5 LANGUAGE SUPPORT AND LEARNING SUPPORT

Across the case-study schools, school staff referred to the difficulties in identifying students who have learning rather than language difficulties and in putting supports in place for them. It was seen as very difficult to distinguish whether students have learning difficulties in situations where they have very limited (or no) English:

It is hard to tell because you don't know … is it the language that they don't understand or is it the learning difficulties that they have, so that is a big concern … it is very hard to you know separate the two. (Teacher, Jefferson Street primary school)

It's hard to know, we don't know is it a learning issue or is it a language issue, it's very hard to tell ... actually I've three, four children and I'd say all four have actual learning difficulties as opposed to language. (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

The intermeshing of language and learning difficulties mean that such students cannot be formally assessed for learning support:

There aren't enough tests to try and pin point the difference between language issues and learning issues. (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

A lot of the time it is on the professional judgement … of the language support teacher, if they feel that this child is very, very slowly picking up his stuff, then possibly they have a learning difficulty, whether it might be dyslexia, sometimes you've got someone with speech problems and that as well we would refer to the speech therapist. … But again the psychologists don't want to know you. …You mention foreign nationals, no. (Teacher, Adams Street primary school)

They have to be assessed in English and that's almost impossible to do. So it's very hard to get resources for them in that way. Now we would have kids, it's impossible to tell if they are dyslexic or not. You can tell looking at them but to get them tested for that is really hard. (Teacher, Ashville Lane second-level school)

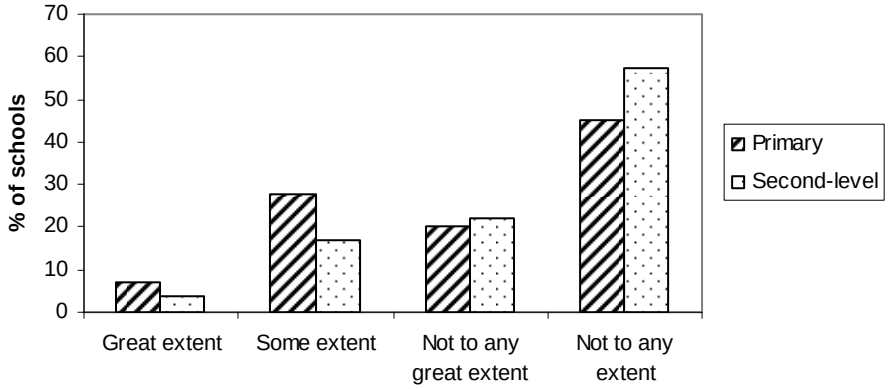
As a result, school staff consider that it is not possible to put extra learning support in place for these students.

6.3 Other Language-related Services

School principals were asked about a number of other language-related services, including their links with Integrate Ireland Language and Training along with their access to translation and interpretation services. Two-thirds of primary schools with newcomer students did not liaise with Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT)[62] to any great extent. Contact was even less evident in the second-level sector, with three-quarters of principals indicating contact was 'not to any great extent' or 'not to any extent' (Figure 6.3). As might be expected, contact was more frequent for schools with a higher proportion of newcomer students; 76 per cent of high minority primary schools had some or a great deal of contact while this was the case for only 11 per cent of those with a low concentration (<2 per cent). Similarly, 39 per cent of high minority second-level schools had some or a great deal of contact compared with 7 per cent of low minority schools.

[62] The closure of IILT took place subsequent to the survey and case-study fieldwork.

Figure 6.3: Extent of Contact with Integrate Ireland Language and Training



In terms of other language supports, less than a quarter of primary schools and only one in six second-level schools provided information on the school or on the educational system in general in languages other than English/Irish (Figure 6.4). The provision of such information varies by the proportion of newcomer students in the school; almost half of primary schools with a high concentration of minority students (>20 per cent) provide such information while only 13 per cent of those with a lower concentration (<10 per cent) do so (Figure 6.5). A similar pattern is evident within the second-level sector, with only a handful of low concentration schools providing such information (Figure 6.6). Furthermore, larger primary schools are more likely to provide such written information than smaller schools; 43 per cent of large (300+) primary schools do so compared with 2 per cent of very small schools (<50). Among second-level schools, designated disadvantaged schools are more likely to provide such information (28 per cent compared with 10 per cent of non-disadvantaged schools).

Figure 6.4: Prevalence of Language-related Services Across Schools

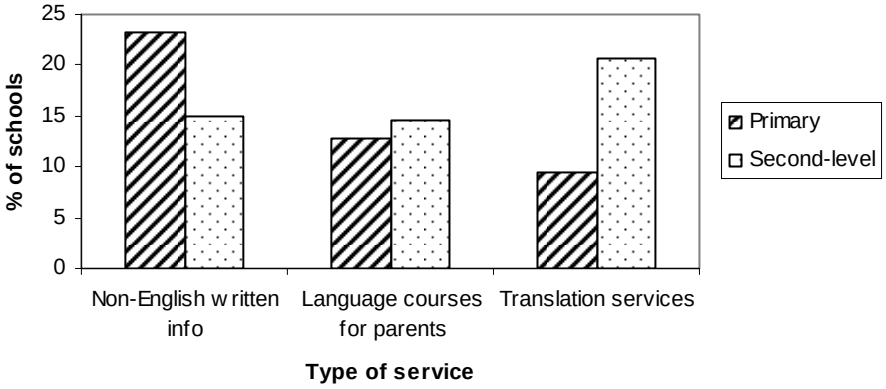


Figure 6.5: Language-related Supports in Primary Schools by Concentration of Newcomers

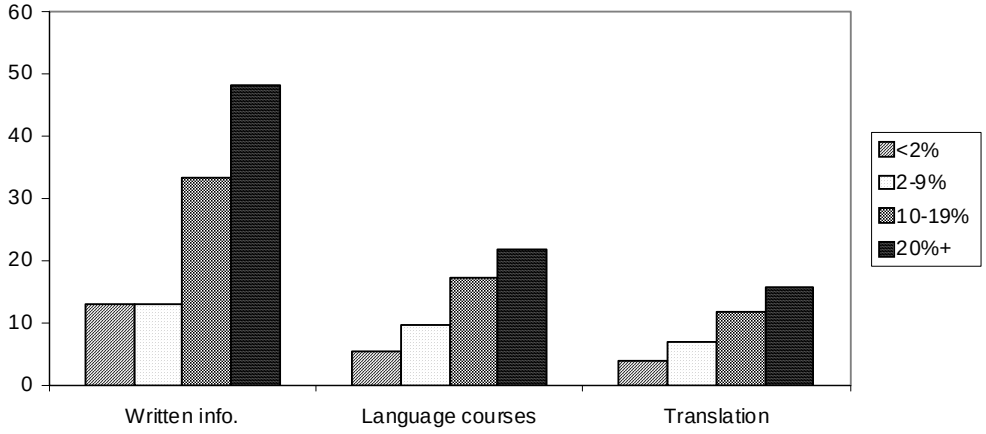
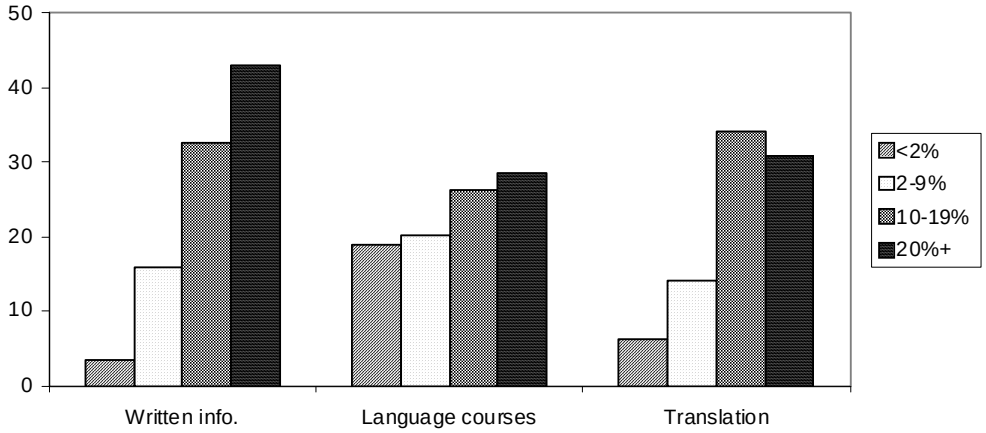


Figure 6.6: Language-related Supports in Second-level Schools by Concentration of Newcomers



As well as providing language support for their students, one in six primary schools, and one in five second-level schools provide language (or other) courses for the parents of newcomer students. Provision of language classes for newcomer parents is more common in schools with a high proportion of newcomers; among primary schools, for example, 5 per cent of low-minority (<2 per cent) schools offer such courses compared to over a fifth of high-minority (>20 per cent) schools. Furthermore, disadvantaged second-level schools are significantly more likely to provide such courses (31 per cent versus 17 per cent), perhaps reflecting the role of the Home-School-Community Liaison Officer in promoting links with the wider community. Provision of language courses is significantly less prevalent in secondary schools than in the vocational or community/comprehensive sector (10 per cent versus 33-34 per cent), reflecting the long-standing role of the VEC sector in adult education.

Second-level school principals were more than twice as likely as their primary counterparts to report having access to translation services (21 per cent versus 9 per cent). Access to translation services also varies by the

concentration of newcomers; however, even among high-minority schools, only a small group (16 per cent) of primary schools have such access. Designated disadvantaged schools are more likely to have access to translation services (24 per cent versus 11 per cent).

There is some interrelationship among these different dimensions of wider language supports, with schools who provide non-English language written information more likely to have access to translation services.

In keeping with the national patterns, there was variation across the case-study schools in the availability of, and access to, information in other languages and to translation/interpretation services. Schools with higher proportions of newcomers tended to have more information in other languages than other schools, in keeping with the pattern found in the national survey data. However, information could generally only be provided for the main language groups. In other schools, such material was limited to general information on the educational system rather than specific details about their own school:

> *We would have written information from the Integrate Language and Training but that would be general information on the Irish school system, as in applying to any school, not our school particularly but it would be information for newcomer people who maybe wouldn't know the type of system in Ireland, things like that corporal punishment isn't used in Ireland, things like that you know but I suppose specific things, no.* (Teacher, Jefferson Street primary school)

> *We've done it for Polish because purely that was the most popular in terms of people who were arriving on the doorstep, so that's what we have really. And then anything else is taken off of the Department website but that generally tends to be non specific, you know kind of generalities about the NEWB and attendance at school and all that, it's all a bit out there whereas what we have [in Polish] is very specific, it's our code of behaviour, our admissions form and so on and so forth. Now obviously we'd love to extend that to the other languages but cost-wise it's too prohibitive.* (Teacher, Lowfield Street second-level school)

Staff in the case-study schools reported limited access to translation or interpretation services. Where such services were available, they were either accessed through the local area partnership or were paid for out of school resources.

> *We have access to translators for the refugee families who were here but they were refugees and that was provided not by the Department of Education but by the group catering for the refugees, for the others it would be just a case of having to find somebody and find the monies to pay them.* (Teacher, Jefferson Street primary school)

The costs were seen as prohibitive and, as a result, many schools relied on students or parents bringing friends to interpret (see Chapter 5). However, this was not always feasible, especially for minority language groups:

> *There wouldn't be anybody else from their country here either so we would have a difficulty there because the language level of the parents there is quite low.* (Teacher, Bentham Street second-level school)

Further difficulties arise if the school is situated in a rural area with even more limited access to these services:

> *I suppose coupled with the fact then we are living in a fairly rural area that that causes even more problems. Perhaps if they were living in a city centre, you know a town centre, they would have a lot more access to services. But they are quite isolated you know by the fact they are living in a rural area.* (Teacher, Bentham Street second-level school)

The absence of such supports was seen as hindering communication between home and school, especially if students were experiencing any particular difficulties.

> *It can happen sometimes in a discipline situation, you don't want a student explaining to the parent why the parent is sitting there with you. … Because you don't know what the student is saying (laughter), do you know. Now and that is a very difficult one, it is hard on the parent and that could be a problem into the future.* (Teacher, Huntington Road second-level school)

In sum, schools with a greater concentration of newcomer students are more likely to have developed non-English language materials on the school and language classes for parents in response to the needs of newcomer students and their families. Furthermore, many designated disadvantaged schools have incorporated newcomer parents into the provision they make for involving the wider community. However, many other schools report that language difficulties and the costs involved in obtaining translation/interpretation services can hinder contact with newcomer parents.

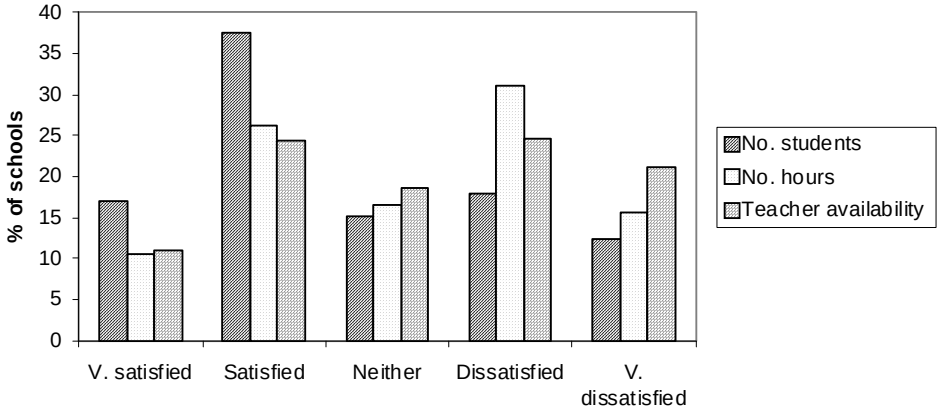
6.4 Satisfaction With Language Support Provision

This section explores satisfaction with language support provision drawing on both the national survey of school principals and staff interviews in the twelve case-study schools. It is important to note that the research spans a period of policy change. The survey of second-level principals took place before the Department of Education and Science increased the allocation of language support resources to schools in 2007. The survey of primary principals and the research in primary and second-level case-study schools took place after this change in allocation but before the changes in provision following from Budget 2009. The results should, therefore, be interpreted with this difference in mind.

6.4.1 PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Primary school principals were asked about the extent of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with three aspects of language support in their school: the number of students receiving help, the number of hours given to each student; and the availability of trained teachers. Over half of primary school principals are 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the number of students receiving help. However, satisfaction rates are somewhat lower at 36 per cent for the time allocated to each student and the availability of trained teachers (Figure 6.7).

Figure 6.7: Satisfaction with Language Support Provision (Primary Schools)



The three aspects of perceptions of language support provision can be summed into a scale, with high values indicating greater dissatisfaction with provision. A multivariate statistical model was used to identify the main factors associated with dissatisfaction with language provision. Table 6.3 indicates the factors which significantly influence dissatisfaction; the detailed coefficients for the model are presented in Table A6.1.

Three sets of factors were found to influence dissatisfaction: perceived language needs, the nature of teaching provision in the school, and the school climate. Objective characteristics of schools, such as size and gender mix, were not significantly related to dissatisfaction so are not included in the discussion which follows. The proportion of newcomers in the school is much less influential than perceived language needs so only perceived needs is included in the model.

Table 6.3: Factors Predicting Dissatisfaction with Language Support Provision (Primary Schools)

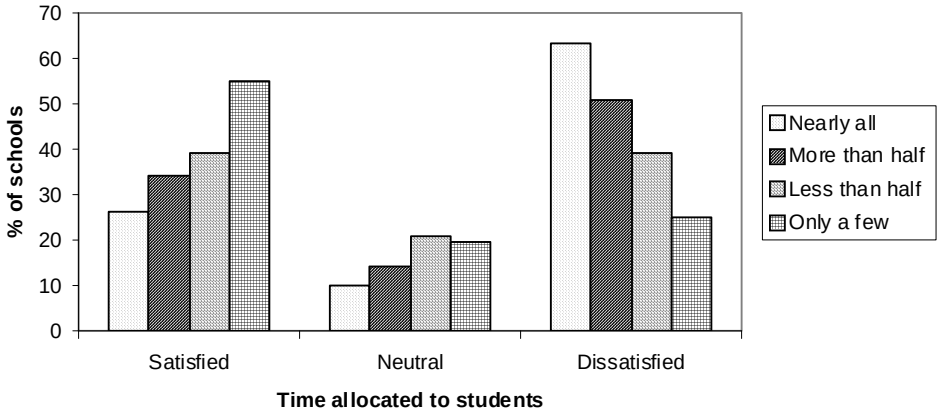
	Model 1
Constant	(+)***
Perceived language needs/difficulties:	
Almost all	(+)***
More than half	(+)***
(Ref.: Less than half/only a few)	
Nature of teaching provision:	
No language support teachers	(+)***
Part-time language support only	(+)***
(Ref.: Full-time language support)	
Positive school climate	(-)*

Note: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.

As might be expected, school principals who report more significant language difficulties among newcomers in their school are more likely to be dissatisfied with current provision. Thus, principals in schools where more than half of newcomers experience difficulties are significantly more

dissatisfied than those in schools where less than half of the group have language difficulties. This difference is particularly marked in relation to the time allocated to each student; 70 per cent of primary principals in schools where 'nearly all' newcomers have language difficulties express dissatisfaction (see Figure 6.8). It would appear, therefore, that principals feel that more prevalent language difficulties require more intensive intervention with each student.

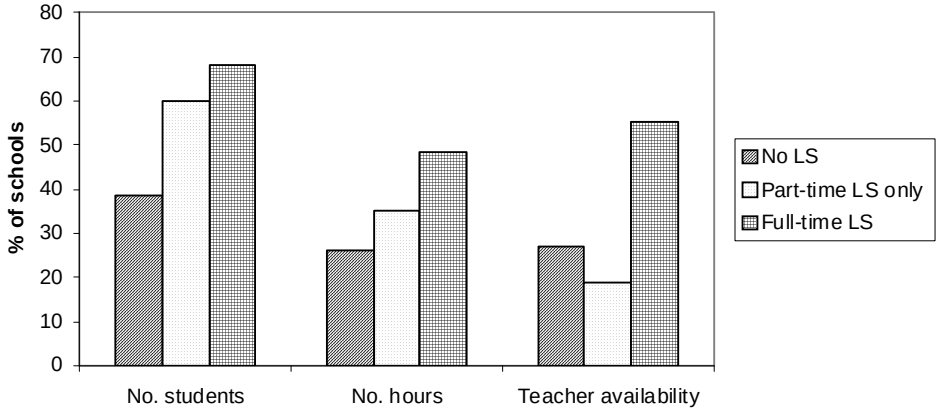
Figure 6.8: Satisfaction with Time Allocated to Newcomer Students by Perceived Language Difficulties (Primary Schools)



The second set of factors relates to the nature of teaching provision in the school. Table 6.1 indicated that a minority of primary schools have full-time language support (LS) teachers. It would appear that this has a marked effect on satisfaction with provision. Dissatisfaction is much higher among those without any specialist language support or those with part-time language support only compared with schools where there is a full-time LS teacher (see Table 6.2). This pattern is illustrated in Figure 6.9, where we find that 70 per cent of principals with full-time LS teachers are satisfied with the number of students receiving support while this is the case for only four in ten principals without designated language support teachers.

Chapter 5 indicated fewer social and personal difficulties among newcomers when they attend schools with a more positive climate. Interestingly, school climate is also found to significantly influence satisfaction with language support provision. Thus, principals in schools with more positive relations between teachers, students and parents are more likely to be satisfied with language support provision. This finding may appear surprising. However, it is likely to reflect the fact that language support (as with any other form of support) will be more effective in a context where students are more engaged in school, students are supported by their parents, and teachers are strongly committed to the school.

Figure 6.9: Satisfaction with Language Support Provision by Teaching Staff



The importance of language-related issues was reiterated when school principals were asked what supports they would like to see in place for newcomers. Increased language support provision was mentioned by forty-four per cent of primary principals while 32 per cent cited access to broader language support services, especially translation/interpretation.

6.4.2 SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOLS

It should be noted that the survey of second-level school principals took place before the expansion of language support provision so the patterns should be interpreted with caution and no direct comparisons should be made between the views of primary and post-primary principals. Half of second-level principals were found to be satisfied with the number of students receiving help. As in the primary sector, satisfaction levels were lower in relation to the amount of time allocated to students and to the availability of trained teachers (Figure 6.10).

There is little structured variation in satisfaction with language support provision among second-level principals. In particular, dissatisfaction with the number of hours allocated to students and with the availability of trained teachers is evident across very different kinds of schools. The only significant factor influencing principal views relates to perceived language needs: principals in schools where almost all newcomers have language difficulties are much less satisfied with provision than those where only a few newcomers have such difficulties (see Tables 6.4 and A6.2). As with primary schools, principals in schools with a positive school climate are more satisfied with language support provision, although the difference is not statistically significant.

Figure 6.10: Satisfaction with Language Support Provision Among Second-level Schools

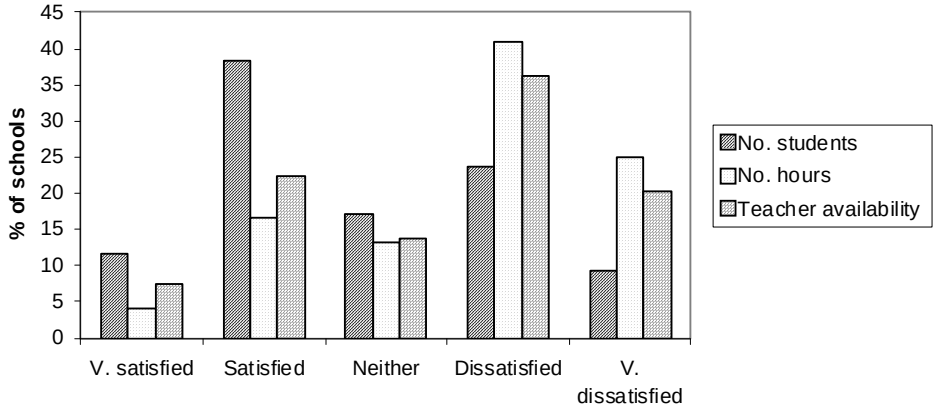


Table 6.4: Factors Predicting Dissatisfaction with Language Support Provision (Second-level Schools)

	Model 1
Constant	(+)***
Perceived language needs/difficulties:	
Almost all	(+)**
More than half	(+)*
Less than half	(+)*
(Ref.: Only a few)	
Positive school climate	(-) n.s.

Note: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.

When asked what supports they would like to see in place for newcomer students, three-quarters of second-level principals wanted more language support provision, with more hours given to students and provision for longer than two years (the cut-off at the time of the second-level survey).

6.4.3 SATISFACTION WITH LANGUAGE SUPPORT PROVISION IN THE CASE-STUDY SCHOOLS

Interviews with school staff in the twelve case-study schools allowed us to explore perceptions of the adequacy of language support provision in greater detail. It was notable that views on language support often differed within the same school. Only in two of the schools, one primary (Greenway Road) and one post-primary (Ashville Lane), could staff be consistently characterised as satisfied with language support. In the other schools, opinions were mixed in nature.

The main reason for satisfaction with language support provision centred on the quality of the teaching staff and their commitment:

And I think … there's a strong core of excellent teachers there … who over the years have … developed it themselves. (Teacher, Ashville Lane second-level school)

Well I am absolutely thrilled because … the three teachers who provide it are three experienced teachers who are interested in doing it. … I wasn't depending on an inexperienced teacher just out of college with limited teaching skills, curricular skills, organisational skills, all those that you build up over time, and the three teachers who took it on have been very enthusiastic … and they've done their own language programme, they've worked together. … So I just think the three are, you know, a delight to work with. (Teacher, Thomas Road primary school)

However, it was pointed out that this had required considerable effort on the part of the teachers involved:

Our children who are in language support are getting good quality language support but that's because the people who are working with them are committed people who have undertaken courses. (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

A number of staff highlighted the change in resource allocation by the DES as benefiting their school; this was especially evident in schools with larger numbers of newcomer students. The flexibility to request additional help for students with longer term language needs was also seen positively:

Last year there was a letter to say that if a child after two years has significant language difficulties and you have up to fourteen students, you can actually apply for more, so I thought that was good, so at least there is an extra facility too. … It has made a difference that I now know that I can ask for it, if the child hasn't got enough English at the end of the two years, that is the biggest thing. (Teacher, Huntington Road second-level school)

A final reason for satisfaction centred on seeing the progress made by individual students:

It's very easy for me to measure I think children who came with nothing at the beginning of this year and where they are now, you know, to me that has been so rewarding because I see them happy, I see them obviously accessing the curriculum in the class because I think if they weren't accessing the curriculum I think they would have feelings, they would have self-esteem feelings and, you know, they wouldn't be happy really if they weren't able to keep up with their classmates. So from that point of view I can see it's been very rewarding … for me seeing those children coming on so much. (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

I've seen huge progression in a couple of students with their English from the time they come here. Some students have been with us now two or three years and I can see rapid progress and I find that it's great to see that. (Teacher, Lowfield Street second-level school)

A number of reasons were proffered for being dissatisfied with language support provision. First, the lack of trained language support teachers and the temporary nature of contracts was emphasised as hindering provision:

> *I'm not afraid of saying that there's a lot of inexperienced and sometimes non-qualified people who would end up teaching in some of those positions, absolutely. If it's a situation where there's continuity and they're in it maybe for a few years and if they're in a system where they can build up expertise of course you'll have the quality but … if you're every year wondering are you going to have that position next year, will you have two or will you have three, there's no consistency and I suppose you're not allowing the expertise to build up.* (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

> *Like where in [this small town] am I going to get a teacher for three or four hours just to specifically teach five or six international students without English. They are not there.* (Teacher, Bentham Street second-level school)

> *The biggest difficulty is that it's only given on a temporary basis for one year and you have to apply each year. … I think if a school has had a number of non-nationals for a number of years there should be some provision there that the position becomes permanent provided the numbers stay up.* (Teacher, Van Buren Street primary school)

> *Basically I suppose you know it is just we are there untrained, unqualified to help these students and I think we are doing a good job but I find you know it is very, very difficult when you are just thrown in the deep end, you know.* (Teacher, Brayton Square second-level school)

Second, the nature of the allocation system was still seen as somewhat restricted, with no tapering of resources for schools just below the specified cut-offs:

> *Because of that circular we got an extra teacher this year. But we're going to lose her now I think. Well it seems kind of ridiculous that you know you get a teacher for a year and then because you fall one or two pupils below the number they are gone then, you know … it is hypocritical to be honest with you, you know that 28 children deserve two teachers, while 26 only get one.* (Teacher, Adams Street primary school)

Third, the lack of training for classroom or subjects teachers and the difficulty in teaching students with language difficulties in a mainstream classroom emerged as an issue:

> *I'd say it depends on the level of language for each child and like when they present with very little language it would be very difficult to get them where they need to be, you know what I mean.* (Teacher, Van Buren Street primary school)

Finally, a number of other issues were highlighted, including the lack of teaching materials and resources (see above), the difficulty in differentiating between language and learning difficulties, the lack of co-ordination, and the delay in providing assessment tools for schools:

That assessment has only been issued or has only been launched in the past month or two so we found that very unhelpful, that we had no standardised tests, if you like, to assess whether the programme was working or not and we still haven't received it. … So we literally are working in the dark, even though they increased the number of teachers they gave us no guidelines to work on or no targets to meet. (Teacher, Van Buren Street primary school)

6.5 Conclusions

Language difficulties among newcomer students are seen by school principals and teachers as having profound consequences for their academic progress and social integration, if not addressed (see Chapter 5). In order to facilitate English language acquisition among newcomers, the vast majority of primary and second-level schools provide formal language support for their students. Provision at school is especially important given the lack of English proficiency among newcomer parents reported in this study. Language support provision generally centres on students being withdrawn from regular class for supplementary tuition, in keeping with the pattern in many other OECD countries (such as England and Denmark). The withdrawal approach is seen as having advantages in allowing students to participate in mainstream classes while at the same time receiving additional support. However, teachers indicate some difficulties in successfully managing this process in such a way as to avoid disrupting student progress in certain subjects and labelling newcomers as 'different'. The case-study analysis indicated a potential solution to this dilemma; in some primary schools, withdrawal from class is coupled with within-class support by a specialist teacher in order to address student needs as they arise in day-to-day learning. This practice appears to provide a more holistic approach to addressing the learning needs of newcomers and it is recommended that it could usefully be extended to other schools.

A small number of schools, almost wholly those with a greater concentration of newcomer students, organise separate base classes where newcomer students receive intensive tuition before transfer to mainstream classrooms. Teachers in these schools are very positive about this approach. However, the research findings sound a note of caution regarding the potential negative effects on social integration in the longer term.

Although withdrawal for supplementary English language classes is the most prevalent mode of provision, regular classroom or subject teachers are found to play an important role in supporting the language needs of newcomers. The bulk of a student's day is spent in regular class so mainstream teachers are their main point of contact in day-to-day learning. However, the majority of teachers trained at a time when Ireland was less culturally diverse and only a minority of mainstream teachers have subsequently received relevant training in intercultural education and even fewer in modes of language acquisition. It is, therefore, recommended that professional development should be provided for mainstream teachers in order to facilitate the needs of newcomer students. Such provision should focus on intercultural education, approaches to language acquisition and the use of differentiated teaching methodologies.

There is considerable variation across schools in teacher satisfaction with existing language support provision. The DES Circular of May 2007 is seen as having enhanced provision across a number of schools, especially

those with greater numbers of newcomers. In addition, a number of teachers emphasised the dedication and commitment of the language support team in their school. However, principals and teachers are less satisfied with the (lack of) availability of trained specialist language support teachers, and the dearth of professional development for mainstream class and subject teachers. Again, this highlights the importance of providing development opportunities for both specialist and mainstream teachers in order to facilitate a whole-school approach to the academic development of newcomer students.

There is considerable dissatisfaction with the teaching resources and guidelines available for language support teaching, especially the lack of books and materials suitable for older students. This issue could be addressed in a number of ways. First, appropriate teaching resources should be made available from a centralised source (for example, the DES or NCCA websites) and information distributed to schools on the existence of such resources. Second, a designated person, having received appropriate intercultural training, could act as a resource person and source of information within the school for other teachers. Useful back-up services could be provided by local libraries, in particular through the Demonstration Library project being developed as part of the DEIS programme.

Only a minority of schools are found to have access to broader language support services, such as translation and interpretation, and this situation is seen as hindering contact with parents, many of whom themselves have language needs. This highlights the importance of school-based provision being part of joined-up policy regarding adult education and training.

SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES

Table A6.1: Factors Predicting Dissatisfaction with Language Support Provision (Primary Schools)

	Model 1
Constant	3.640***
Perceived language needs/difficulties:	
Almost all	0.805***
More than half	0.744***
(Ref.: Less than half/only a few)	
Nature of teaching provision:	
No language support teachers	0.931***
Part-time language support only	0.585***
(Ref.: Full-time language support)	
Positive school climate	-0.433*
Adjusted R^2	0.184

Note: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05. Dissatisfaction is measured on a scale ranging from 1 to 5.

Table A6.2: Factors Predicting Dissatisfaction with Language Support Provision (Second-level Schools)

	Model 1
Constant	3.775***
Perceived language needs/difficulties:	
Almost all	0.429**
More than half	0.328*
Less than half	0.353*
(Ref.: Only a few)	
Positive school climate	-0.214
Adjusted R^2	0.025

Note: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.

7. ACADEMIC ORIENTATION, CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the perceived academic performance of newcomer children relative to Irish children is ascertained, and some attempt is made to consider the perceived academic performance *across* newcomer children from different national backgrounds. In doing so, this chapter also considers the motivation and educational aspirations of newcomer students. As well as the academic performance and orientation of newcomer students, this chapter also considers matters relating to the curriculum and teaching in primary and second-level schools with a newcomer student intake. These two sections seek to consider the views of teachers in relation to the curriculum on offer to a diverse student population, but also the challenges that teachers face in a changing society. It considers the impact of the transformation of Irish schools from a largely homogenous to a heterogeneous student intake in a relatively short period of time on the experiences of teachers in relation to professional development. It has been argued in the past that there is no curriculum development without teacher development (Stenhouse, 1975) and that there is little significant school development without teacher development (Hargreaves, 1994).

The remainder of the chapter is outlined as follows. Section 7.2 considers the academic performance of newcomer students while Section 7.3 considers perceptions of the curriculum. Section 7.4 considers the supports in place for teachers of newcomer students and 7.5 concludes.

7.2 Academic Performance of Newcomer Students

This section now considers the academic performance of newcomer students relative to native Irish students. In doing so, it considers the perceptions of school principals of how newcomer students fare compared to Irish students in relation to academic achievement, schoolwork motivation and educational aspirations according to the composition of the student body and other school level characteristics. Descriptive associations are outlined and later in this section, using multivariate analyses, we then consider the factors associated with academic performance and engagement, and the factors associated with difficulties in academic progress for newcomer students within both primary and second-level

schools. Because of a lack of data availability on newcomer students, Irish studies have not yet considered the academic performance or orientation of newcomer students relative to Irish students. This chapter addresses this deficit.

To date, little is known about the academic orientation of newcomer students in the Irish context. However, Devine reports that newcomer students are generally motivated learners who display positive attitudes towards school (Devine, 2005) and these findings have been replicated in other contexts (see Brinbaum and Cebolla-Boado, 2007 for the French context). The positive academic orientation of newcomer students has generally been explained in terms of newcomer parents having higher educational expectations than native parents from similar social class backgrounds. It is likely that many immigrant parents possess a strong work ethic and a value system that can translate into academic success among their children despite their initial difficulties in a new country (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). On this point, it is important to consider that the social background of a newcomer parent in the host country may be understated. That is, Irish research to date finds that immigrants often earn lower wages and work in less skilled jobs when arriving in their host countries relative to what might be expected, given their skills (Barrett and Duffy, 2007; Barrett and McCarthy, 2007). Because immigrants are more likely to be overeducated (Kucel and Byrne, 2008) for the positions they hold in the host country, their social class background may be lower in the host country than the social class background in the country of origin. On this note, Bodovski and Banavot (2006) find that a family's previous socio-economic background status is more important than its current socio-economic status in determining the educational outcomes of immigrant youth.

The measurement of the academic performance of immigrant children relative to native children is a relatively recent area of study, but has now become a key area in the sociology of education. To date, several international studies have focused on the school experiences and educational outcomes of newcomer students relative to native students. Studies often show that there are significant differences in educational attainment and academic achievement between immigrant and non immigrant students in most immigrant-receiving countries (Buchmann and Parrado, 2006; Gronqvist, 2006; OECD, 2006). A number of explanations have been offered for the gap in achievement between immigrant and native students.

First, arguments relating to traditional status attainment models argue that differences in academic performance are largely due to differences in family background such as parental education, socio-economic status and family structure. A difficulty with this theoretical proposition, however, is that immigrant children are often assumed to be from disadvantaged backgrounds. If immigrant students were from backgrounds and were substantially more disadvantaged than native students, then the expectation would be that immigrant children would lag in attainment and achievement. Given the higher education levels of immigrants in Ireland relative to the native population, we would expect newcomer students to be perceived as higher attaining relative to native students.

Second, individual language ability of the student has be found to be a significant factor in predicting achievement differences (Tesser and

Ledema, 2001). Given that the perceived extent of language difficulties in a school is likely to be a factor in predicting achievement differences, this measure will be considered in the analyses below. Furthermore, we expect that the extent of language difficulties among newcomers in a school is related to perceived achievement differences between newcomer and native students.

Third, schools have of course a substantial role to play in the academic outcomes of newcomer students, and it has been documented that as well as the background characteristics of immigrant student populations and individual language ability of newcomer students, school characteristics can explain differences in educational outcomes between newcomer and native students (OECD, 2006; Fekjaer and Birkelund, 2007; Ma, 2003 in a study of Canadian immigrant children). Since the seminal work of Coleman (1966), many studies have considered whether the concentration of immigrant children in a school constrains educational attainment. Coleman (1966) suggested that individual attainment was influenced by the average achievement of the student body in the school and reported that a high concentration of immigrant children in a school constrains educational attainment. While a high proportion of immigrant students in a school may be related to individual performance levels, the findings regarding the concentration of ethnic minorities or the share of immigrant students in a school is mixed across institutional contexts (Felouzis, 2003;[63] Fekjaer and Birkelund, 2006;[64] Szulkin and Jonsson 2006[65]). In this study we consider the concentration of newcomer students in a school on perceived academic performance. Given the diverse national backgrounds of immigrant families to Ireland, we expect that the extent of language difficulties rather than the concentration of newcomer students in a school will have a stronger influence on perceived academic performance.

In the literature, a number of other school characteristics have been considered in relation to academic performance. Chapter 4 has outlined the types of schools that newcomer students attend in the Irish context; these findings generally support those in the 2006 OECD report which indicates that immigrant students often attend schools with relatively disadvantaged student intakes in terms of economic, social and cultural backgrounds. The school level factors considered in relation to academic performance in this chapter include the composition of the student body in terms of the proportion of immigrant students in the school, the degree of language difficulties of newcomer children in a school, and other school-level characteristics, such as school type, school size, designated disadvantaged status, school resources and school climate.

[63] Felouzis (2003) measured the concentration of foreigners in secondary schools in the region of Bordeaux and found a small gap in grades between students in high-minority and low-minority schools. The study concludes that it is plausible that the perceived educational attainment of newcomer students relative to native students is influenced by the ethnic composition of the school.

[64] Fekjaer and Birkelund (2006) found only a neutral effect of ethnic composition on grades and school careers in Norwegian secondary education.

[65] Szulkin and Jonsson (2006), using Swedish data and similar dependent variables, found a small negative effect of a school's ethnic composition on individual attainment.

Finally, ethnicity has also been used to explain some of the achievement gap between immigrant and native students and studies consider differences in school achievement across minority ethnic groups (see Smith and Tomlinson, 1989 in the UK; Duran and Weffer, 1992 on Mexican-American students in US schools; Luciak, 2006 on immigrant students in EU member states; Rothon 2007 on minority ethnic educational performance in England and Wales; Levels and Dronkers, 2007 on differences across countries). In this chapter, we also consider the national composition of schools in relation to perceived academic achievement. We expect that the perceived academic performance of the newcomer student intake is less influenced by nationality and more influenced by the degree of language difficulties among newcomer students in a school.

7.2.1 ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

To consider how principals[66] view the academic achievement of newcomer students relative to Irish students, principals of primary and second-level schools were asked the following question: *Compared with other students in your school, how would you rate newcomer students on academic achievement: above average, average, below average.*

Figure 7.1: Principal Perceptions of the Relative Rating of Academic Achievement of Newcomers

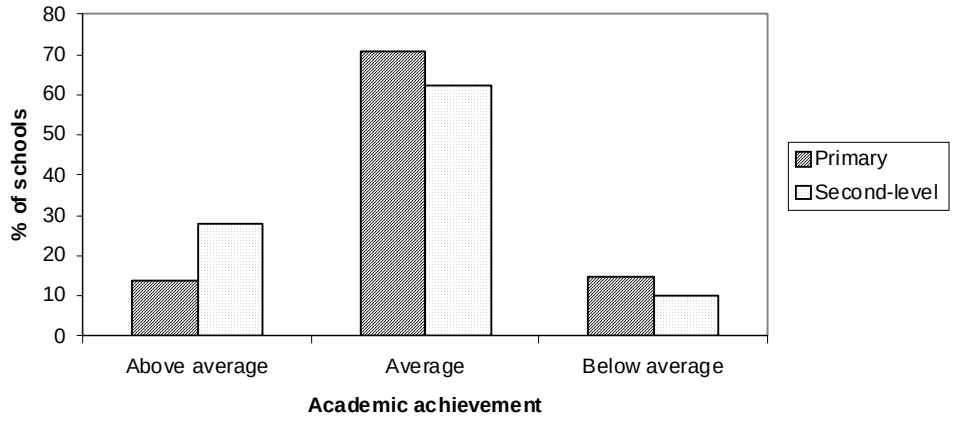


Figure 7.1 illustrates that the majority of both primary and second-level principals indicate that newcomer students had 'average' or similar academic achievement to Irish students. However, differences were evident in relation to the sector of education: a higher proportion of second-level principals rate newcomer students as 'above average' relative to primary principals (28 per cent relative to 14 per cent respectively).

[66] Principals' perceptions of the academic achievement of newcomer students relative to native students were used as the study did not collect data on the individual attainment of students. While this approach offers an insight into how principals view the educational progress of newcomer students relative to native students across schools, it treats all newcomer pupils as a homogenous group and cannot point to differences across nationality groups in their academic performance.

Based on the perceptions of primary principals, there is no clear-cut relationship between the rating of newcomers' achievement and the concentration of newcomers in the school or the prevalence of language difficulties among newcomer students in a school. Ratings are somewhat higher in DEIS schools (particularly rural DEIS) than in other schools. These patterns are also broadly evident in the case-study schools. A number of school staff outline the difficulty in making statements about newcomer children as a group relative to Irish children in terms of academic performance. Typical comments from school staff were as follows:

> *It varies. I wouldn't say better or worse than the Irish, there are some very weak Irish and there's some very good, you know, you certainly couldn't say that the Irish are doing better than the international. For example, one of my best at Irish is from Liberia, you know, one of my best at maths is Chinese, you know, and his English wouldn't be great but he has super maths skills, you know, some of my weaker children, some of them are newcomers, some of them are Irish.* (Teacher, Thomas Road primary school)

> *Oh it's very varied, like there's two of the boys would be like top of the class, no doubts, and then like one of the newcomers is probably one of the lowest, so I mean it's all the scale. We have the whole range.* (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

As with responses from the questionnaire, perceptions of the academic achievement of newcomer students are somewhat more positive in rural DEIS schools. However, it should be noted that school staff were generally more positive than negative about newcomer students.

> *I know that there was one or two Lithuanians in our class that fared well in the reading test, came up in the top three or four, but that is for the exceptionally gifted that pick up the language straight away you know. I think they are sharper, yeah, Irish pupils tend to take things for granted I think, you know. I think there is a methodical approach to learning, taking things in and taking things step by step, for example in mathematics would be the main area where you would see that.* (Teacher, Adams Street primary school)

School staff often spoke about higher academic achievement when parental involvement was evident, supporting the findings from the principal questionnaire. At primary level, it was evident that some newcomer parents had much higher educational aspirations for their children than native parents, particularly in disadvantaged schools.

> *A lot of them are very, very able children and this is a DEIS band one school, which would have a high number of educationally disadvantaged children. It can also mean that the number of high achievers may not be huge, not that one doesn't have high achievers, but the numbers may not be huge. I would have said the advent of the newcomer children would have lifted the base because as I'm sure the teachers told you some of their parents are very, very ambitious for them and they would be the children of the up and at it, you know.* (Teacher, Thomas Road primary school)

Some of them, their parents are pushing them really, really hard to work, they've got a really strong work ethic, they come to school to learn, they work very hard at everything they do, they present their work nicely, any homework that goes home is done properly … sometimes the home background can make a big difference, like I'm sure that studies have proven it in Irish terms as well, that the amount of support and encouragement you're getting at home make a big difference and also they come here to make a better life so they want their children to do the same. Some of them might even be pushed a bit harder than you might like. (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

In second-level schools, principals were also asked to rate the academic achievement of newcomer students relative to native students, and, as before, the proportion of newcomer students in the school or the incidence of language difficulties among newcomer students in the school was not significantly associated with the rating of newcomer students. In schools where 'nearly all' students show respect for their teachers, a quarter of principals see newcomers as above average in achievement compared with 36 per cent in other schools. School climate is most positive in schools where newcomers are perceived as having average achievement and less positive where they are seen as above or below average. Principals of designated disadvantaged schools are more likely than principals of non-DEIS schools to report newcomers as 'above average'. Vocational school principals are most likely to report newcomers as above average (32 per cent) than all other school types, while those in boys' secondary schools are least likely to do so (14 per cent) compared to those in other sectors.

In the interviews with second-level staff, teachers were asked to reflect on the academic performance of newcomer students in their school. While proficiency of English emerged as a difficulty for these students with regard to their academic performance and achievement, the majority of staff noted that, given these difficulties, most newcomer students get on well:

They seem to get on fine here and if they are not they seem to find their own level and at the end of the day the language you know doesn't seem to make a huge difference. Okay they have difficulties but if they are academic hard working pupils they seem to prosper. (Teacher, Bentham Street second-level school)

While newcomer students were seen as highly motivated and competitive, some of the case study staff did outline that their academic progress and ambition was sometimes hindered by their English language competence:

Interviewer: *How do you find newcomer students get on academically?*

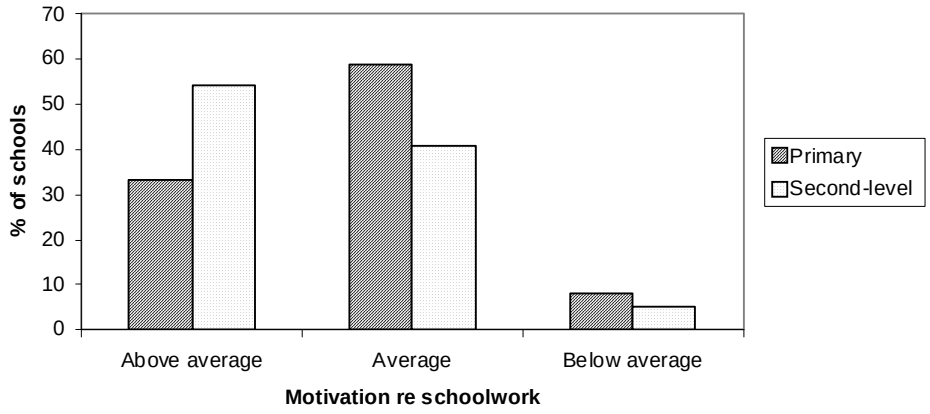
It varies, I tend to think though that from the disadvantaged start that they have in relation to having the language, or maybe having no English to begin with, they tend to do very well. Students that I've had to teach over the last number of years are from we'll say Brazil or from the Czech Republic or from Latvia or Poland they tend to be very competitive. I know now [student G] is there from Brazil and he was really, really into it. Wanted to learn as much as possible, didn't want to do ordinary level if he could, but to be realistic he had to in some cases. They

really work hard. They do very well. (Teacher, Bentham Street second-level school)

7.2.2 SCHOOLWORK MOTIVATION

To consider how principals view the motivation of newcomer students in relation to schoolwork relative to Irish students, principals of primary and second-level schools were asked the following question: *Compared with other students in your school, how would you rate newcomer students on motivation in relation to schoolwork: above average, average, below average*. Figure 7.2 illustrates clear differences in principal's perceptions of newcomer students relative to Irish students in relation to motivation regarding schoolwork. The majority (over half) of second-level principals perceive newcomers as having 'above average' motivation in relation to their schoolwork compared to Irish students and only a very small proportion (5 per cent) perceive newcomer students as below average in this respect.

Figure 7.2: Rating of Newcomer Students on Motivation in Relation to Schoolwork



Furthermore, the majority of primary school principals perceive newcomer students as having 'above average' or 'average' motivation in relation to their schoolwork compared to Irish students and, again, only a very small proportion (3 per cent) perceive newcomer students as below average in this respect. As with academic achievement, primary school principals are less likely to rate newcomers as above average than their second-level counterparts and much more likely to rate them as average.

In primary schools, there is no clear-cut relationship between the rating of newcomers' motivation regarding schoolwork and the concentration of newcomers in the school; however, principals in schools with a higher proportion of non-English speaking newcomers are somewhat more likely to rate newcomer students as above average than those in schools with a lower proportion of non-English speaking newcomers. Perhaps surprisingly, motivation is not associated with perceived difficulties in spoken English but is significantly associated with perceived difficulties in written English. Principals in urban schools are somewhat more positive about newcomers' motivation than those in rural schools (37 per cent versus 32 per cent). Furthermore, principals in urban DEIS schools are more likely to rate their motivation as above average than principals of rural DEIS or non-disadvantaged schools. Perceptions are somewhat more positive in medium-sized schools rather than very small or very large

primary schools. Schools using separate intensive base classes rate newcomers more highly than those in other schools. In contrast, ratings are lower where there are no formal language support teachers.[67] Climate is most positive in schools where newcomers are seen as having average motivation and least positive where they are seen as below average.

It would seem that factors relating to the cohort of newcomers (such as percentage non-English speaking or the percentage experiencing written English difficulties) were associated with motivation as well as a number of school characteristics. Interviews in the case-study schools reflected the fact that the majority of principals saw newcomer students as either average or above average in motivation.

> *Most of them I would say are very bright. Then there's one or two that would be weaker but are very hard workers and very eager to please kind of thing, you know, and they keep going and going until they get it right. And then there might be one or two that are a bit spaced out, you know, but I mean you'll have those everywhere but, you know, very, very polite and very well-mannered and, you know, will work too, most of the time anyway.* (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

> *The newcomer students are totally focused and committed by and large and the better Irish students are focused and committed, not all the Irish students are focused and committed. As a grouping the Irish students wouldn't be as focused and committed.* (Teacher, Van Buren Street primary school)

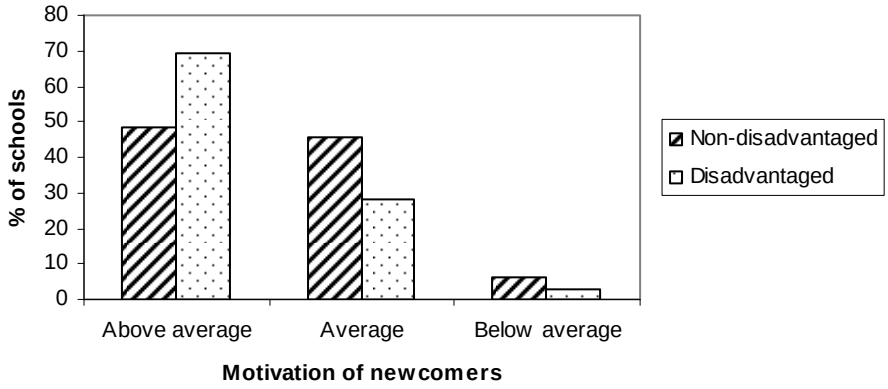
> *They are all very good achievers, … they seem to be the high achievers, you know they've got a great work ethic, the Polish, the Russian children that we have, they are great achievers, the Pakistani children are such, they have got such a work ethic, yeah they are all doing very well.* (Teacher, Jefferson Street primary school)

The majority (over half) of second-level principals perceive newcomers as having 'above average' motivation in relation to their schoolwork compared to non-newcomer students. Motivation is significantly associated to the extent of perceived language difficulties among newcomer children in the school; the higher the proportion of newcomer students with language difficulties, the less likely newcomer students are perceived to be above average in motivation by their principal. To illustrate, 41 per cent of principals in second-level schools where nearly all newcomers have language difficulties (especially in spoken English) see newcomer students as above average in motivation compared with 62 per cent in schools where only a few newcomers have language difficulties. At the school level, the region of the school, the disadvantaged status of the school and school

[67] A school may have no specific language support teachers for the following reasons. First, a school may be under the cut-off to get a full-time language support teacher so is allocated hours which may be assigned to another teacher. Second, a school may be allocated language support time but use other personnel (e.g. resource teachers) for language support.

climate were significantly associated with perceived motivation among newcomer students. Newcomer students in urban schools are seen as more motivated than those in rural schools (66 per cent versus 49 per cent seen as above average). Principals of designated disadvantaged schools are also significantly more likely than those in other schools to see newcomers as above average in motivation (Figure 7.3). School climate is most positive in schools where newcomers are viewed as having average motivation levels and less positive where they are perceived as above or below average motivation.

Figure 7.3: Perceptions of Motivation Among Newcomers by Disadvantaged Status (Second-level Schools)



Several teachers in schools characterised newcomer students as focused and hard workers, endeavouring to achieve despite lower proficiency in English:

> *I have one little girl in my … history class and she is doing honours history and she's very good. … She just sometimes might be a bit slower maybe to understand something because obviously the English in the Leaving Cert in history is quite technical and it is quite difficult English, but she, because of her focus and because of her interest, is well able to overcome anything like that.* (Teacher, Lowfield Street second-level school)

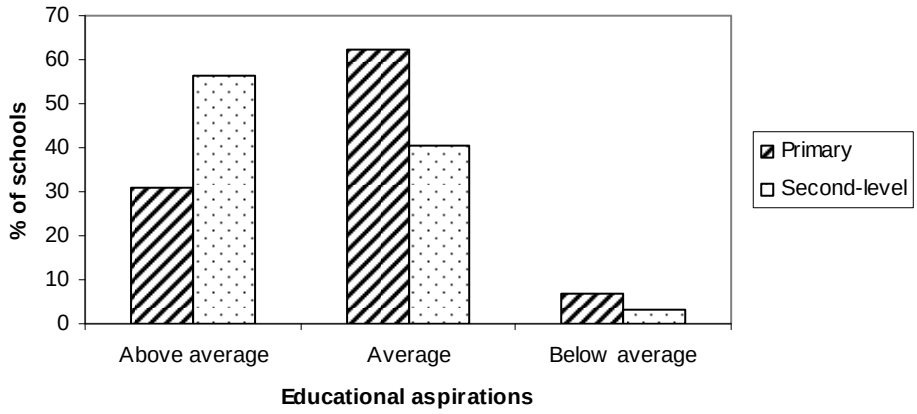
While newcomer students were seen as highly motivated and competitive, their academic progress and ambition was sometimes hindered by their English language competence. In Brayton Square School, a teacher discussed the difference in academic progress resulting from language needs:

> *But like I said if they've no English it's a problem, the kids with English will get on well, the Nigerian students will. We've got 3 or 4 now, our top student in the whole school is a girl in 6th year, she got 9 honours in her Junior Cert, 9 A's in her Junior Cert. … Her brother is in Junior Cert this year, he's going to get 9 A's. They are both Russian. We've got other girls and boys throughout the year, in our top 3rd year class, the top performers are foreign nationals. … Yeah, putting a bit of pressure on our own kids now. Because you can see them, they are so diligent. And they really want to get on. They remind me, and the Polish and Romanians remind me, the Polish in particular and the Lithuanians, they remind me of Irish kids in the 50s.* (Teacher, Brayton Square second-level school).

7.2.3 EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

Figure 7.4 illustrates that the majority of second-level principals perceive newcomers as being above average in terms of their educational aspirations while only 3 per cent perceive newcomer students as having below average aspirations. These findings replicate findings in the international literature which indicate that immigrant students are motivated learners and have positive attitudes towards school (OECD, 2006).

Figure 7.4: Rating of Educational Aspirations Among Newcomers



Primary school principals are much more likely to rate newcomers as 'average' or similar to Irish students in their aspirations and much less likely to rate newcomer students as below average. Aspirations are rated more highly by principals in high minority primary schools, though the overall difference is not statistically significant. Ratings are also higher where a higher proportion of the newcomer cohort does not have English/Irish as their mother tongue. Interestingly, there is no significant relationship with perceived language difficulties. Ratings are higher in urban DEIS schools and lowest in very small schools (<50 students). Ratings are much more positive in schools using intensive language provision in separate base classes and somewhat less positive where there are no designated language support teachers. School climate is most positive in schools where newcomers are seen as having average educational aspirations and less positive where they are seen as above or (especially) below average aspirations.

There is a significant association between perceived educational aspirations and the percentage of newcomers in a school. Perceived educational aspirations of newcomer students relative to Irish students are seen as somewhat higher in schools with a high proportion of newcomer students; 79 per cent of principals rate newcomer students as above average in schools where newcomers make up 20 per cent of the cohort compared with 58 per cent of principals in schools where newcomers represent less than 2 per cent of the cohort. As with motivation, educational aspirations among newcomers relative to Irish students are related to the degree of perceived language difficulties among newcomers in the school – 49 per cent of principals in second-level schools where nearly all newcomers have language difficulties (especially in spoken English) see them as above average in educational aspirations relative to Irish students compared with 61 per cent of principals of schools where

only a few newcomers have language difficulties. That is, the lower the proportion of language difficulties of newcomers in a school, the more likely principals are to view newcomers as above average relative to Irish students.

Principals of urban schools also view newcomer students as having higher relative aspirations compared to principals of rural schools (70 per cent versus 50 per cent) as do those in designated disadvantaged schools relative to non-DEIS schools (67 per cent versus 52 per cent). Principals of gaelscoileanna and gaelcholaistí are less likely to perceived newcomer students as having above average aspirations relative to Irish students compared to principals of English medium schools (15 per cent versus 58 per cent). Aspirations are seen as highest in girls' schools (74 per cent) and lowest in boys' schools (47 per cent). School climate is most positive in schools where newcomers are viewed as having average educational aspirations and less positive where they are seen as having above or below average aspirations.

7.2.4 OVERALL RATING OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

The three dimensions of perceived academic outcomes (academic achievement, schoolwork motivation and educational aspirations) among newcomers relative to native students can be combined into an overall scale (with a reliability of 0.806 for second-level and 0.796 for primary). Regression analyses indicate the simultaneous effect of a number of school factors at primary and second-level (Tables 7.1 and 7.2 respectively).

Table 7.1: Factors Predicting Positive Evaluations of Newcomers' Academic Outcomes (Primary Schools)

	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	n.s.	n.s.
Designated disadvantaged status	(+)*	(+)*
School size:		
50-99	(+)*	(+)*
100-199	(+)***	(+)***
200+	(+)**	(+)**
(Ref.: <50)		
Perceived language difficulties:		
Nearly all		n.s.
Over half		n.s.
Less than half		n.s.
(Ref.: Only a few)		
Approach to language support:		
Informal only		n.s.
Separate intensive base classes		(+)***
(Ref.: Withdrawal)		
Adjusted R^2	0.055	0.114

Note: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.

At primary level, principals rate newcomers more highly academically in designated disadvantaged schools than in other school types (Table 7.1). Newcomer students are rated more positively by principals in larger

schools than those in very small schools, perhaps reflecting the more heterogeneous mix of newcomer students in larger schools. Contrary to our expectation, there is no significant relationship between a principal's perceptions of the perceived language difficulties of newcomer students in their school and academic rating. However, principals in schools with separate intensive base classes for newcomers are much more positive about newcomers' academic outcomes than those in other schools.

Table 7.2 considers school factors associated with second-level principals' perceptions of newcomers' academic performance and engagement. There is some variation by second-level school characteristics in principals' perceptions of newcomers relative to Irish students. Principals of girls' secondary schools have a more positive rating of newcomers than those in other schools, controlling for other factors. Those in fee-paying schools have a more positive rating while those in gaelcholaistí have a less positive view of newcomers' academic outcomes. As in primary schools, principals in designated disadvantaged schools are significantly more likely to have a high rating of newcomer students. Model 2 of Table 7.2 adds some characteristics relating to the composition of students. Language difficulties are found to have an influence; principals in schools where nearly all newcomers have language difficulties are less likely to give them a positive rating academically. Furthermore, newcomers are not rated as high in relation to Irish students in schools where 'nearly all' students show respect to their teachers. Thus, in schools with a disadvantaged student population and/or with behavioural difficulties among the student body, principals are more positive about the academic outcomes of newcomer students than in other schools.

Table 7.2: Factors Associated with Positive Evaluations of Newcomers' Academic Outcomes (Second-level Schools)

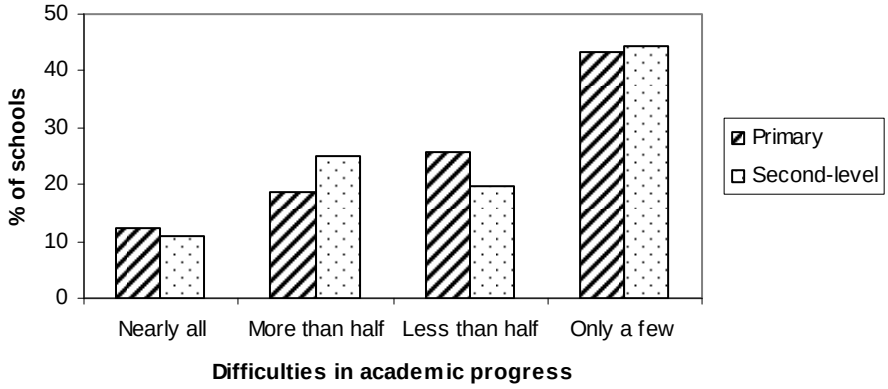
	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	n.s.	n.s.
School type:		
Girls' secondary	(+)**	(+)**
Boys' secondary	n.s.	n.s.
Vocational	n.s.	n.s.
Community/comprehensive	n.s.	n.s.
(Ref. Coed secondary)		
Gaelscoil	n.s.	n.s.
Fee-paying school	n.s.	n.s.
Designated disadvantaged status	(+)***	(+)**
Perceived language difficulties:		
Nearly all		(-)*
Over half		n.s.
Less than half		n.s.
(Ref.: Only a few)		
Students show respect		(-)*
Adjusted R^2	0.077	0.087

Note: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.

7.2.5 DIFFICULTIES IN ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Another measure which can be used relates to principal reports concerning the proportion of newcomers who experience sustained difficulties in relation to academic progress. As might be expected, this measure is significantly related to the relative rating of newcomers by principals. However, it should be noted that a certain proportion (22 per cent) of second-level schools who rate newcomers as 'above average' in relation to academic achievement still report sustained difficulties in academic progress among more than half of the newcomer cohort.

Figure 7.5: Perceived Prevalence of Sustained Academic Difficulties Among Newcomers



Two-thirds of principals indicated that only a minority of newcomer students had sustained difficulties, while one-third of principals felt that such difficulties were evident among more than half or almost all of their newcomer students (Figure 7.5). The largest group – four in ten - felt that this was the case for only a few newcomers. Broadly, the pattern is similar for both primary and post-primary schools.

Interestingly and contrary to a body of American literature, primary schools with a low proportion of newcomer students are more polarised than other schools – being more likely to report sustained difficulties among 'nearly all' or 'only a few' newcomers than other schools. In line with expectations, academic difficulties are more prevalent in schools with more language difficulties among newcomer students.

Academic difficulties among newcomers are seen as more prevalent in second-level schools with a high proportion of newcomer students (29 per cent reporting 'nearly all' versus 11 per cent in low newcomer schools). Figure 7.6 illustrates that the relationship with perceived language difficulties is more marked where nearly all newcomers have language difficulties; these schools are much more likely to report academic difficulties than other schools (see Figure 7.6). In line with these findings, the relationship with perceived language difficulties is less marked where only a few newcomer students have language difficulties. While there is no significant variation in sustained academic difficulties according to a range of school characteristics; urban/rural location, disadvantaged status, school type or school size, the vast majority (81 per cent) of those in fee-paying schools report academic difficulties among 'only a few' newcomers (compared with 42 per cent of those in other schools).

Figure 7.6: Proportion of Schools Where More than Half of Newcomers Have Academic Difficulties by Perceived Language Difficulties

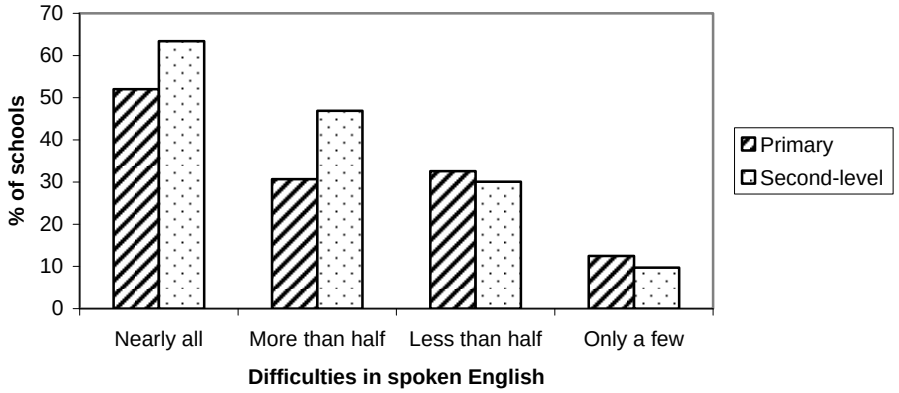


Table 7.3 presents a logistic regression model indicating the factors predicting a high prevalence (more than half or nearly all) of academic difficulties among newcomer students in primary and second-level schools.

At primary level, there is some variation by school type with perceived difficulties more prevalent within gaelscoileanna (Table 7.3). Such difficulties are more common where a larger proportion of newcomers have language difficulties, and difficulties are less common where there is a positive school climate. Very small schools have greater difficulties than other schools with a similar intake. A further model (not shown here) included the school's approach to language support; this indicated that perceived problems are somewhat less in schools using separate intensive base classes for newcomers.

Table 7.3: Factors Predicting Difficulties in Academic Progress Among More Than Half of Newcomers

	Primary		Second-level	
	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 1**	**Model 2**
Constant	(-)***	n.s.	(-)**	n.s.
School type:				
Girls' secondary			n.s.	n.s.
Boys' secondary			n.s.	n.s.
Vocational			n.s.	n.s.
Community/comprehensive			n.s.	n.s.
(Ref. Coed secondary)				
Gaelscoil	(+)*	(+)*	(+)*	n.s.
Designated disadvantaged status	n.s.	n.s.	(+)*	n.s.
School size:				
Very small (<50)	n.s.	(+)*		
Small (51-100)	n.s.	n.s.		
(Ref.: >100)				
Perceived language difficulties:				
Nearly all		(+)***		(+)***
Over half		(+)**		(+)***
Less than half		n.s.		(+)*
(Ref.: Only a few)				
Positive school climate		(-)**		(-)**
Nagelkerke R^2	0.024	0.243	0.082	0.087

Note: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.

At second-level, Model 1 of Table 7.3 indicates that perceived difficulties are more prevalent among gaelscholáistí, designated disadvantaged schools and schools in the community/comprehensive sector. Model 2 then considers the 'needs' of newcomers and the overall school climate. Language difficulties are strongly predictive of academic difficulties, as might be expected. Furthermore, schools with a positive school climate (in terms of the perceived attitudes of students, parents and teachers) report less academic difficulties among newcomers. The greater difficulties found among community/comprehensive schools in Model 1 are due to the greater prevalence of language difficulties in this sector. The greater difficulties found in disadvantaged schools are due to a more negative school climate. However, principals of Irish-medium schools are found to report more academic difficulties even controlling for these factors, most likely because newcomer students are trying to adapt to using both English and Irish in the school setting.

Table 7.4 then considers the national group composition of primary schools in relation to academic difficulties. We find that principals perceive that students from any EU12 or any other European country are more likely to face academic difficulties; however, when the perceived needs of students in relation to language are considered, the region of origin is no longer significant. Model 2 indicates that language difficulties are a significant predictor of academic difficulties, but that variations by national group are not solely attributable to differential prevalence of language difficulties.

Table 7.4: Regression Model of Factors Associated with Academic Difficulties (Primary Schools)

	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	(-)***	(-)***
Any African	n.s.	n.s.
Any Asian	n.s.	n.s.
Any EU12	(+)*	n.s.
Any Latvian	n.s.	n.s.
Any other European	(+)*	n.s.
Any UK	n.s.	n.s.
Any EU13	n.s.	n.s.
Ref: Any USA/Canada/NZ		
Perceived language difficulties:		
Nearly all		(+)***
Over half		(+)**
Less than half		n.s.
(Ref.: Only a few)		

Note: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.

Similar findings are evident in second-level schools. Table 7.5 considers the composition of second-level schools in relation to academic difficulties. As before, language difficulties are a significant predictor of academic difficulties. However, in second-level schools, variations by national group are evident with principals perceiving that students from any other European country are more likely to face academic difficulty. Other models (not shown here) were considered in relation to the dominant national group in schools. However, the differences due to which national group is

dominant are found to reflect the differential prevalence of language difficulties.

Table 7.5: Regression Model of Factors Associated with Academic Difficulties (Second-level Schools)

	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	(-)*	(-)***
Any African	n.s.	n.s.
Any Asian	n.s.	n.s.
Any EU12	n.s.	(-)^
Any EU13	(-)^	n.s.
Any Latvian	n.s.	n.s.
Any other European	(+)*	(+)*
Any UK	n.s.	n.s.
Ref: Any USA/Canada/NZ		
Perceived language difficulties:		
Nearly all		(+)***
Over half		(+)***
Less than half		(+)*
(Ref.: Only a few)		

Note: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05, p<.10.

In order to consider the student voice, newcomer students at both primary and second-level were asked how they felt they were getting on academically.

And how do you feel you're doing in school?
I think I'm doing good.
Good. (Newcomer primary students, Adams Street)

I think my grades are good. (Newcomer primary students, Thomas Road)

All the girls keep laughing at me because I get all the best scores for my French.
…
Like in Irish I got 100 per cent last time.
…
Then they'd be asking me can they take it [the exam paper] home to show their mams. (laughter) (Newcomer second-level students, Lowfield Street)

Any difficulties experienced were generally attributed to language issues, particularly to the need to use more 'academic' terminology:

It's kind of hard because like the geography test, you didn't understand all the English words and all that so you can't get the answer right. (Newcomer second-level students, Lowfield Street)

Furthermore, encountering new subject material causes some difficulties for newcomer students:

We didn't do good in like history or something because it was all about Ireland and stuff.
…
But I still passed. (Newcomer primary students, Adams Street)

As discussed in Chapter 5, some students reported that schoolwork was easier in Ireland than in their home country:

> *[My grades are] Better here because in my old country kind of the teacher was asking really hard questions, much harder than here and she was always asking me and I couldn't get any questions, I couldn't get anything because … I couldn't answer and she was always putting five and here I always get nine.* (Newcomer primary students, Greenway Road)

One student, who was initially allocated to a lower level Maths class, found the work insufficiently challenging:

> *The school I came from, the school was like first priority, I mean if you get a B it would be like god what did I do. But when I came here they put me in this class and in maths I was just getting everything right, just sitting there, what is this class? And now I'm in the highest class and it's better, there's more challenge.* (Newcomer second-level students, Brayton Square)

Another group of students in the same school felt that their grades had disimproved somewhat due to the absence of academic pressure and competition between students:

> *There is no competition.*
> *If you just get like 70 per cent [in my home country], you'd be the last in the class. And then when I came here I just get A, A, A, but now it's B, B, B (laughing).*
> *There's no competition.* (Newcomer second-level students, Brayton Square)

Irish students generally felt that newcomers did well in class, in many instances better than their Irish classmates:

> *She was the best in our class at English, even though she was only learning English.* (Irish second-level students, Huntington Road)

> *They are very smart.*
> *Yeah, [they do] very well actually, better than some Irish students.*
> *Yeah.*
> *They pay more attention, some of them.*
> *In general it seems that way.* (Irish second-level students, Brayton Square)

Some Irish students reported a stronger work ethic among newcomer students:

> *They have a different opinion, totally different work ethic to the students here already ...*
> *They're focused.*
> *Yeah, they're focused and they appreciate it more as well … they kind of appreciate it more and pay attention and do the work.*
> *Yeah, we just kind of take it for granted.*
> …
> *We just want to get out of it [school] but I think they appreciate it.* (Irish second-level students, Huntington Road)

They kind of just like study more and kind of don't mess or anything.
…
They have everything like neat and tidy in their copy, not messed up, if there was it would be rubbed out straight away, they wouldn't leave it. (Irish primary students, Van Buren Street)

However, in some instances, Irish students reported that their newcomer peers were less willing to speak up in class, which could potentially hinder their learning:

They just do the work and keep their head down, that's they way they are like. They are quiet. (Irish second-level students, Brayton Square)

Some of the foreign students don't put up their hand if they don't understand. (Irish second-level students, Lowfield Street).

Like the newcomers themselves, Irish students attributed any academic difficulties among newcomers to language issues:

If they do have language problems sometimes they can fall behind.
I think they're trying to concentrate on say English being spoken as well as the subject that's being taught like, whereas for us we're just concentrating on the subject, so for them it's kind of two work things.
And you get the other end, some of them are really good.
Yeah.
Like you'd be in class and they'd be the best of the class. (Irish second-level students, Huntington Road)

I'd say they're finding it harder because they don't really understand our language. (Irish primary students, Jefferson Street)

As a result, some Irish students reported newcomers as being particularly good at mathematical or non-language based subjects:

A lot of them are really good at like … with numbers, with maths and all like, they are excellent at it. It's just more English or something that they are not really good at because it's not their first language. (Irish second-level students, Ashville Lane)

Polish people are really good at maths.
Yeah.
Brilliant. (Irish primary students, Van Buren Street)

A lot of the foreigners, they're really good at maths, like they're one of the best in the class. (Irish primary students, Adams Street)

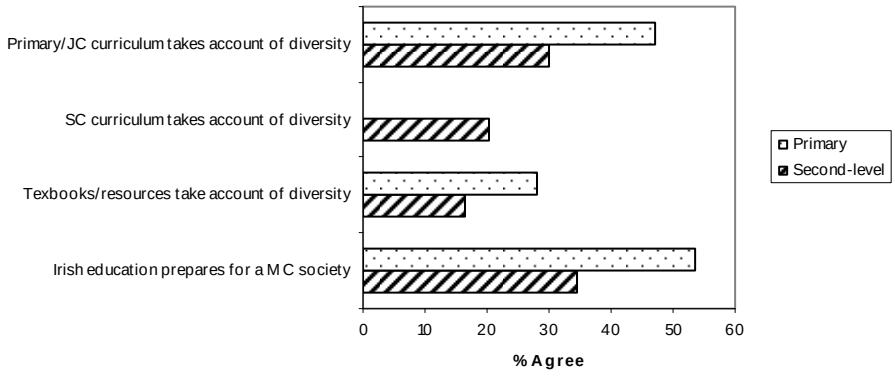
7.3 Perceptions of the Curriculum

Principals of primary and second-level schools were asked about their perceptions of the curriculum in relation to diversity. Figure 7.7 illustrates the proportion of principals of primary and second-level schools who agreed with the following statements;

- 'the primary/junior cycle/senior cycle curriculum takes adequate account of diversity issues';
- **'**textbooks and teaching resources take adequate account of diversity issues' and
- 'the Irish educational system prepares students for living in a multicultural society'.

Figure 7.7 illustrates that over half of primary school principals consider that the education system prepares young people for living in a multicultural society compared to just one-third of second-level principals. Evidently the composition of the student body influences responses to this question. Principals in primary schools with a high concentration of newcomer students are much less likely to consider the Irish education system as good preparation for living in a multicultural society than those in other schools as are principals of schools that have enrolled refugee students. It is likely that staff working with a diverse student body may be more aware of inadequacies in the education system. This is also evident in terms of school level characteristics, as principals in DEIS rural schools are most satisfied and those in urban DEIS least satisfied; again, it is likely because of the differential concentration of newcomer students in these schools. While the views of second-level principals did not vary according to student composition, the language medium of the school was the only significant school level characteristic; principals of gaelscoileanna and gaelcholaistí are somewhat less likely to consider that the educational system prepares young people for living in a multicultural society.

Figure 7.7: Perceptions of the Curriculum Among Principals



The interviews with principals of primary schools offer some insights into why the education system is seen as inadequate preparation for diversity. We saw earlier in Chapter 4 that a teacher in Durango Street (which had a high proportion of newcomer students) argued that traditional admissions policies for primary schools do not reflect the fact that we now live in a multicultural society:

> *Traditional enrolment policies could not serve this country in the long-term in a setting whereby you now have a multicultural setting.* (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

This teacher also felt that more action needs to be taken when considering intercultural integration not only in schools but in the whole community.

> *A home school liaison service that would tackle something like this situation, multicultural proper integration with not a year plan or a two year plan but a forty year plan and that would be coming together, that would nearly be somewhat independent to the school.* (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

Other principals commented on the inadequacy of the materials being used in schools to teach students in a multicultural context, which will be discussed in more depth in the following section.

> *Well I would champion the revised curriculum, it is very suitable, but in particular since we got the multicultural guidelines because you know when the curriculum was put together in '97, '98, '99, Ireland was not such a multi-cultural place and it was very timely that the department and the NCCA provided multicultural guidelines some two years ago now I think. So they helped us to deliver the curriculum in a multicultural way.* (Teacher, Greenway Road primary school)

7.3.1 THE PRIMARY CURRICULUM

Principals of primary schools were asked about the adequacy of the curriculum in relation to newcomer students and approximately half agree that the primary curriculum takes adequate account of diversity. Again it was clear that the presence of a diverse student body highlights current inadequacies in the curriculum as attitudes to the primary curriculum tend to be less positive in schools that have a higher share of newcomer students, and more positive in schools with a lower concentration of newcomer students. Schools with a concentration of non-English-speaking newcomer students and those with language difficulties also tended to be less positive about the curriculum. Furthermore, attitudes to the curriculum are less positive among principals in schools with refugees or asylum-seekers,[68] implying that a greater cultural or social distance between the focus of the curriculum and certain groups of students raises issues for teachers.

As in the survey of principals, perceptions among school staff regarding the appropriateness of the primary school curriculum were mixed. Many primary school teachers supported the primary curriculum as meeting the needs of a diverse student population. Some outlined specific aspects of the curriculum as positive in teaching newcomer students, especially the focus on oral language, understanding, and the move away from working through a workbook and repeating sentences.

[68] While the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers may be small in any school, it is important to consider the challenges facing all newcomer students.

In general I would have thought it's very, very suitable. A lot of action, a lot of hands-on stuff and communication between children when they're working together and all of that facilitates the language development. (Teacher, Thomas Road primary school)

Well I think it is very suitable with the whole literacy, the subject of literacy and I mean I suppose on the lower end of the school it is all based around their own experiences and oral language and they can all take part. … They will all talk about their own cultures as well, I mean we were talking about different homes in our history and the Kurdish girl stood up and said about her home and the camp that they lived at and very proud of her heritage which is right and they all can take part in it, it is not excluding them because they are not from Ireland or I think they are integrated very well into it. (Teacher, Jefferson Street primary school)

Others felt that, because of the choice and breadth of the curriculum, it is particularly suited to newcomer students.

It is appropriate because it's actually written to cater for people coming from diverse backgrounds even within the country and outside of the country. Because of the menu system some schools, you don't do everything in it every year because you would end up with curriculum overload … and it is strongly recommended in the selection of modules that you cater for the various strands of newcomers as well as the various strands within Irish society and ethnic groupings within Irish society as well. (Teacher, Van Buren Street primary school)

However, this view was contested by others claiming that the arrival of newcomer students on a large scale had not even been considered when the curriculum was being drawn up.

There is nothing in it really, the curriculum was written in '99 so I don't think they were ready for what happened, there is no provision really. (Teacher, Adams Street primary school)

I still think there are more improvements that could be made to make it even better again, as I say I don't think we have really realised yet, this is the way we are going to be like in the future, they say that like lots of foreign nationals are going back home but for the ones that are going back home, there is nearly more coming in. So I still think, there is just going to have to be a big overhaul really and truly, if they want it to work well in schools like this, like they are going to have to really look at it again and think. (Teacher, Adams Street primary school)

Other school staff outlined the lack of suitability of the English part of the curriculum for non-native speakers.

Well I suppose when you are talking about the language thing for a start, the English language like you know the whole thing is geared towards an English speaking class with no problems, you know with no difficulties. … Say like you are doing poetry or whatever, you know if I want to do poetry in the class there and I've got four kids … that can't speak English, there is nothing in the curriculum to guide me on that. (Teacher, Adams Street primary school)

I just think English really, you know, and truly, there has to be, you know, another curriculum. I mean we have the special needs curriculum, maybe there should be something introduced for English as a second language, definitely. (Teacher, Van Buren Street primary school)

Other teachers questioned the extent to which newcomers have access to the whole curriculum.

I think there's lots of work needed in lots of different areas, like in SPHE and in our religious programme and in different programmes like that but, going back to the same point, unless that is driven centrally by someone or a body it's not going to work, it'll be touching again at the surface and touching at the surface satisfies the general public, satisfies the media, satisfies the voters, you're doing something but it doesn't necessarily solve the issues. (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

Others had concerns that the curriculum may be overloaded, particularly in relation to any child that has basic literacy needs, but also in relation to students newly arrived in Ireland:

When they arrive at first of course it's not very appropriate, it has to be tailored for them. Well when they're here, I mean after they're here two years it's usually fine. (Teacher, Thomas Road primary school)

I think the curriculum is great or whatever but … a lot of it is not suitable for newcomers no, especially not in the younger classes, it is fine … once they have learnt English, once they have been in Ireland for … few years, they are fine but for the first few years no, it is not. (Teacher, Adams Street primary school)

7.3.2 THE JUNIOR AND SENIOR CYCLE CURRICULUM

As illustrated by Figure 7.7 above, second-level principals were less positive about the curriculum in relation to diversity than their primary counterparts. The pattern of responses to these questions was quite similar for junior and senior cycle. In general, the presence of a diverse student body highlights current inadequacies in the curriculum, with greater dissatisfaction with the curriculum in schools with higher proportions of newcomer students.

We now draw on interviews conducted with school staff to explore these issues further. Teachers in the second-level case-study schools were asked whether the curriculum used is suitable for catering for students from diverse backgrounds. School staff offered overviews of 'good' and 'bad' elements of the curriculum for newcomer students. On the positive side, one teacher was particularly pleased with the junior cycle curriculum which he considered to be broad and geared towards success for everyone:

For my students overall, it's very good, it's a very good curriculum overall. And it's very good for both learning support students and foreign national students without question. It's very, very inclusive, it's very, very straight forward and … it's different to my day when … there was an emphasis on writing reams, now it's interpretation and understanding and focusing on particular points, which I do like. … Yeah, very good overall. … We can tweak it and it's modifiable and its

good, … you know its very, very broad. … [The JCSP] it's success orientated. They do feel success, they don't get grades, they get statements. So if they get 8 out of 12 statements, it's successful. So there's a feeling of you know well-being and success. (Teacher, Brayton Square second-level school)

Several teachers noted that it is the language barrier rather than the curriculum that seems to cause difficulties for newcomer students. These teachers seemed to be generally satisfied with the curriculum, subjects and structure of education on offer in second-level schools for newcomer students.

[The curriculum is] as suitable as it is for any of our kids if they speak English really well. But you know, I think to get to Leaving Certificate level you need at least 5 years of English and not 2. (Teacher, Ashville Lane second-level school)

One teacher felt that the availability of three different Leaving Certificate programmes should cater for the needs of most students in second-level schools:

Well I think with the set-up as its come in now, where you've got, you know, your three different versions of your Leaving Cert, as a rule I think it does open itself up to probably the vast majority of the students, you know. (Teacher, Ashville Lane second-level school)

On the negative side, some teachers commented on the workload of junior cycle students, indicating that the broad number of subjects students take at Junior Certificate level can pose problems for newcomer students:

They have so many more subjects, they might have 13 subjects at junior level, they have only seven at senior level. (Teacher, Huntington Road second-level school)

We can we have a look at what they've [newcomer students[you know got reports from schools and whatever and compare subjects, Ireland you know in junior cycle it's up to 14 subjects, it's a big load. In senior cycle it goes to 7 subjects, even compare that to our neighbours in England where they do maybe 2, 3 or 4 subjects for A level, there are differences there you know. (Teacher, Bentham Street second-level school)

On this note, some teachers commented on discontinuity between curriculum in Ireland and in other countries which can raise problems for newcomer students.

Generally, I would think the mathematical/science element and I suppose particularly now if you take our majority are eastern European, I think the experience would be that in those areas, those students seem to be ahead of our students, seem to be able to equip themselves very well. I think the humanities side of it, the arts side of it not, there's a disconnect there between where they're at and where we are at. (Teacher, Lowfield Street second-level school)

Other teachers did indicate that the curriculum could be improved. One teacher felt that the curriculum can be improved by introducing more

material on new communities that would be more relevant to the newcomer students across different subject areas:

> *I'm sure there's always room for change, you know, that we need to look at, incorporate, I mean even in terms of informing our own students about what it's like to come from a different country and live. You know gear the curriculum that way … that they are open to the newer communities. I think there's a lot needed in terms of that, the racial aspect of it. But you can't just stick it into an odd CSPE class or something, that's now how it should be approached. Well that's not how I believe it should be approached.* (Teacher, Grange Park second-level school)

School staff also offered insights into the adequacy of different subjects on offer. Several teachers discussed the suitability of specific subject areas for newcomer students. Some teachers felt that subjects such as history are too centred on the European experience:

> *Confined to the Irish, European situation, I think if it is from Europe you have some hope, I think if you're not European I think it you know, I think every course can improve.* (Teacher, Huntington Road second-level school)

> *Well overall I suppose if you look at certain subjects it's still very centred around Ireland … they find it very difficult to relate to that. History also, it's very hard.* (Teacher, Brayton Square second-level school)

The English curriculum was considered to be less suitable at Leaving Certificate level compared to the content at Junior Certificate level:

> *Students who arrived to the school perform okay in other subjects and then when it comes to the actual English language you know they fail sometimes or perform very badly … when it comes to English as a subject they often fall down on that … I think it's all because they really don't get a lot of the terms in the English poetry and that stuff, you know, they really struggle with it. And they struggle hugely with Shakespeare and things like that.* (Teacher, Brayton Square second-level school)

Subjects that deal less with cultural aspects, such as Physics, Chemistry, languages and Accounting, were seen as more suitable for a diverse student body, whereas Geography and History touch less on diversity:

> *Yeah, senior cycle curriculum depending on their subjects, I think if you take physics, chemistry, accounting, those kind of subjects, … you don't meet too much cultural stuff. If you go to geography, history, I think they might be less suitable maybe, history particularly.* (Teacher, Huntington Road second-level school)

7.3.3 TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS

In the previous section, we report that primary school principals are generally more positive about the curriculum than second-level school principals. We now find that principals of both primary and second-level schools are more critical of the textbooks and teaching materials on offer than of the curriculum, with few agreeing that textbooks and teaching

materials are adequate in taking account of diversity issues. As before, levels of satisfaction are associated with the composition of the student body. Principals of schools with a low newcomer student intake are somewhat more satisfied with textbooks than those from high newcomer schools,[69] while principals in schools where there are refugees or asylum-seekers tend to be less satisfied with textbooks and teaching resources than those in other schools. Attitudes towards the textbooks and materials used tend to be more negative when language difficulties are present among the student body, thus highlighting the need to take account of diversity issues. It was evident from the case-study schools that primary school teachers are not as reliant on textbooks as teaching materials.

> *I suppose first of all we don't really emphasis textbooks really very much in this school, the textbooks that would be available … I suppose primarily for English, for Irish and for Mathematics would be the main ones that we use and indeed we are not using as many of them as we used to. … Those schemes were put together in the late '90s when the new curriculum was being introduced and they probably don't reflect the changes in Irish society in the pictures and in the material, as well as maybe they could. But since we don't emphasise them so much, we compensate by purchasing a lot of other print materials and even mathematics materials that are common to everybody and they can be used by everybody.* (Teacher, Greenway Road primary school)

Many school staff were unhappy with the textbooks and learning materials on offer in terms of the content reflecting diversity. Teachers often outlined that they searched for suitable material to reflect diversity:

> *I suppose you kind of have to have a good look for the different text books …, if there is a lot of children from like other cultures and things like that then yeah you would have to get different books, you know different books and show pictures of different people like, that they are not just all just Irish people yeah and I think a lot of the books in today's society are very, do you know they are very inclusive that way, even the Irish there is like different coloured children in it, Lily and Andy like they are all different, from different backgrounds and the same with many of like English stories and things like that, you know you can find an awful lot to cater like. You know obviously if you realise that there is a lot of children, you'll go and look for ones that are suitable.* (Teacher, Greenway Road primary school)

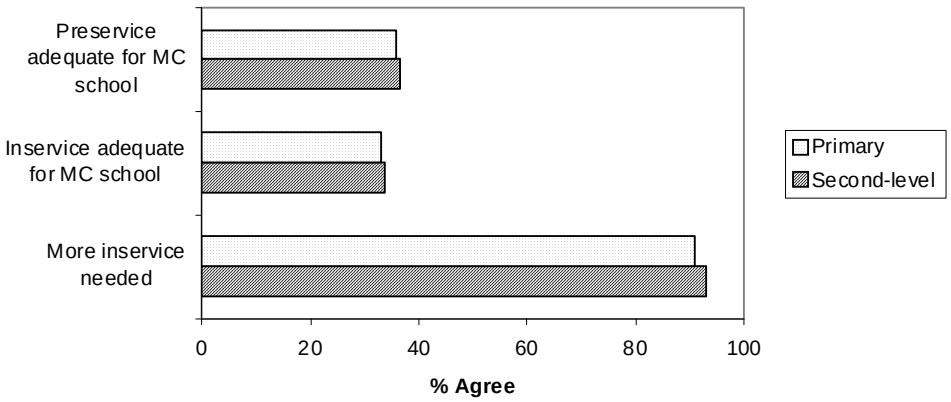
[69] High newcomer schools are those where >20 per cent of student population are newcomer students.

7.4 Support for Teachers

The supports for teachers considered in this section relate particularly to intercultural education and coping with a diverse student intake. Perceptions of the degree to which teacher education prepares teachers for working in a multicultural setting are broadly similar in the primary and post-primary sectors (Figure 7.8). Only a third of principals feel that pre-service and in-service education prepares teachers for working in a multicultural setting. Furthermore, over nine out of ten principals feel that more in-service is needed to promote inclusion within schools. Again, it was particularly evident that schools with a more diverse student intake (in terms of the concentration of newcomer students or the presence of refugee and asylum seeker students) are less likely to be positive about pre-service education. Furthermore, the vast majority of principals across all types of school favoured more in-service education.

It was clear from the primary and second-level case-study schools that teachers had generally not received training on intercultural education. This sentiment was illustrated by a teacher in Ardwick Street (a second-level school with no newcomers) who was critical of the availability of formal training on how to deal with issues relating to newcomer students, and felt that it is often down to schools themselves to organise it:

Figure 7.8: Attitudes to Teacher Professional Development



> *At the moment, unless you organise something yourself, there isn't that much available on it you know. From the point of view of Department of Education provided ones, as far as I can see at the moment it is quite hit and miss do you know. It is kind of very much what the school will organise as well you know and what supports and so on they will avail of.* (Teacher, Ardwick Street second-level school)

It was also evident that participation in intercultural education was often an experience undertaken on the basis of individual interest rather than being motivated by a whole school approach.

> *I'm doing it off my own bat, at my own expense, but no, not DES funded or DES approved or anything.* (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

Despite the lack of training on intercultural education, many felt that it would be useful to receive such training:

It would be useful yeah, it would probably give us a greater understanding of the difficulties they [newcomer students] face and their own backgrounds as well, where they are coming from. (Teacher, Adams Street primary school)

The difficulties of not having such training were clearly outlined by one teacher:

I think you cope because you have to cope and you probably learn as you go on and I think teachers are very adaptable and very flexible and they want the best for the children in their class so they cope in that way that they have to. And I think we've kind of been keeping our heads above water, especially in this area because it's growing rapidly and the profile of classes have changed so quickly that we really haven't had time to reflect on it as such, we just deal with what's in front of us everyday as best we can but we haven't necessarily gotten any support from above or particular guidelines we've kind of have been developing best practice ourselves. (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

Primary and second-level school staff were also asked to what extent topics relating to intercultural education were covered during their teacher training and whether current pre-service education provides adequate preparation for teachers in this area. Some of the more recent graduates had taken courses on intercultural education as part of their studies, but again this seemed to stem from an individual's particular interest in this area, rather than being seen as a core part of teacher preparation:

Not specifically, I was never given any training but I did a Masters in teaching French in the primary school and I did a segment on intercultural education a few years ago so nothing was ever offered to me but I did do some work on it. (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

My elective in college was multiculturalism. I think, when I started teaching first, you know, it was good but when I started first I didn't have many different nationalities so it's only really this year now. I suppose it has kind of helped a bit but I think a lot of it is just kind of an interest, you know, in other countries and where the children are from and making sure that they don't feel like they have to be the same as everyone else or anything. (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

Furthermore, relatively few teachers had received in-service training on intercultural education. In-service was considered to be limited and targeted towards teachers with direct involvement with newcomer students rather than being made available to both specialist and mainstream teachers in order to foster a whole school approach.

Interviewer: *Have you ever received any on intercultural education, or dealing with international students?*

No, no, the amount of in-service that is available is fairly limited, so it tends to be given directly to the teachers who are dealing with these sort of [separate newcomer] classes, as the priority. (Teacher, Ashville Lane second-level school)

Now if there are any in-services, now there aren't a huge amount of in-services to be honest with you, because it all comes through my desk, and the minute I see something like that, anybody who has anything to do with the foreign nationals, [the language support teacher] particularly, she'd be our first choice, because she needs as much information as possible. One or two things that came in this year, but that's basically it. (Teacher, Brayton Square second-level school)

In-service courses had been run by Integrate Ireland Language and Training (language portfolios); the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD) had organised some courses, as had a Jesuit College. Diversity-related issues were also touched upon during in-service courses for home-school liaison coordinators. It was also clear that in-service courses were run during the summer months by some organisations. When staff members had received in-service training, several were critical about the content of the course with regard to preparing teachers for teaching newcomer students.

It wasn't really anything practical like that, it was more theoretical so no it wasn't particularly helpful in coming back to the classroom. Certainly, it would be useful to have some more ideas and to integrate it, even to know more about other cultures really. (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

Other teachers were critical of the provision of in-service courses dealing with diversity and intercultural education:

It's patchy, it's patchy, it's mix and match type of stuff, there's nothing, nothing coordinated about it or any kind of a central level. (Teacher, Brayton Square second-level school)

Not that I'm aware of, no, … any of the in-service I have been on has at best just touched on it but I mean there's never been a coherent strategy put forward or case studies or anything like that that I could hang my hat on, it has been touched on is all. (Teacher, Lowfield Street second-level school)

Another teacher noted that to get full benefit from in-service, it is necessary to develop a whole school approach to inter-cultural education and training for all the teachers in the school:

Yeah it was good … you know for me to go by myself ... for the school that's really of not much advantage because you know by the time you get back into school and you are doing your work you don't have time to talk to the other teachers. I think it needs to be a whole school thing. You know, I've been saying that for a few years, all the teachers' here. Like a lot of the teachers who have been here for 20 or 30 years this is all new to them. I know it's getting better now but you know you still don't really know how to teach kids in a classroom that are not from your country because you never would have had that before. So I think they all need training, everybody needs, if they could come in and just do a day here. (Teacher, Ashville Lane second-level school)

Others were more concerned about the content and delivery of intercultural education training.

I think it's a specialist area, I think it's very easy to say oh! we're going to put on a day or we're going to put on two days in-service for teachers and it's going to solve the world, it'll only touch the surface, it's a specialist area … Also we're sick to our teeth of packs coming out from various organisations, like there's a very good intercultural guidelines book and like I've read because I'm interested in it and because it's kind of my area. I can't go round to [all of the] staff in this school who are already in curriculum overload and expect them to read that and contribute in terms of policy development. It's the very same now with the assessment tool pack, we're waiting for it for a year and a half. It arrived a week ago today maybe or yesterday and it's another CD, booklet, away you go now, now you know how to assess them, you know, and now you know how to integrate them because we sent you a pack and now you know how to do this, that, it's pathetic. (Teacher, Durango Street primary school)

Other in-service needs included support for mainstream teachers in addressing the language needs of newcomers in their class:

I would like in-service especially for the children with, the children who are starting in junior infants with no English, they are at an advantage because they are starting from the bottom but if they are starting from first or second class with no English they are at a complete disadvantage they don't know what is going on at any time during the day. And it is very hard because they are disrupting the class completely, the teacher doesn't have time to give them one to one, five or ten minutes every hour is all you can give that child, because it is only one child. (Senior infants teacher, Adams St primary school)

In sum, principals and teachers at both primary and post-primary levels were critical of the extent to which current teacher education prepares staff for teaching in a diverse setting. The vast majority would like to see additional training focusing on the language needs of students and on intercultural education from a whole-school perspective.

7.5 Conclusions

This chapter set out to consider issues relating to the academic orientation of newcomer students relative to Irish students, and issues relating to curriculum and teaching. Based on the international literature, the chapter began with the following hypotheses:

- We expect newcomer students to be perceived as more motivated and to have higher educational aspirations relative to native students, given the higher educational levels of immigrants in Ireland relative to the native population.
- We expect newcomer students to be perceived as higher attaining relative to native students but that language difficulties may inhibit attainment.
- We expect that the extent of language difficulties among newcomers in a school is related to the perceived achievement differences between newcomer and native students.
- We expect that the extent of language difficulties will have a stronger influence on perceived academic performance than the concentration of newcomer students in a school.

- We expect that the perceived academic performance of the newcomer student intake is less influenced by national group and more influenced by the degree of language difficulties among newcomer students in a school.

The findings indicate that the majority of primary and second-level principals perceive the academic achievement of newcomer students to be similar to that of Irish students. Newcomer students are generally viewed as more highly motivated, hard-working and to have higher educational aspirations than Irish students by school principals and teachers, and this was particularly evident among second-level principals. Primary principals tended not to differentiate between Irish and newcomer students in relation to motivation and educational aspirations.

Chapter 4 indicated that large primary schools, schools in urban areas and with disadvantaged (DEIS) status tend to have a higher proportion of newcomer students. Principal perceptions of the academic performance of newcomer students tends to be higher in DEIS (particularly rural DEIS) schools and small schools, but also schools with a positive school climate and high levels of parental interaction. In line with our expectations, there was no effect of the composition of newcomer students in the primary school on perceptions of academic achievement. Contrary to our expectations, the degree of perceived language difficulties of newcomer students was not associated with perceived academic achievement of newcomer students relative to Irish students, but it was key in predicting difficulties in academic progress among newcomer students. Academic difficulties among newcomer students in primary schools tend be limited as few principals view newcomers as experiencing sustained difficulties in academic progress, and these difficulties generally tend to relate to language competency, attending very small schools and gaelscoileanna/gaelcholaistí (which tend to have small numbers of newcomer students). It is interesting to find that newcomer students that are attending disadvantaged schools are perceived in a positive light academically relative to their Irish counterparts. There are a number of possible explanations for this. First, given that immigrant parents have higher levels of education to begin with, their children may have the potential to perform better academically than the traditional intake of Irish students into disadvantaged schools. Alternatively, it may be a 'reference group' effect whereby teachers in disadvantaged schools are making comparisons between immigrant students whose parents have higher education levels and commitment to education and Irish students from families without these resources. Irrespective of the emphasis placed on these processes, it is of key importance to note the constructive influence of a positive school climate and home-school linkages maintained by parents on academic performance as examples of best practice.

Chapter 4 also indicated that second-level schools that are large, located in urban areas and have DEIS status tend to have a higher proportion of newcomer students. Positive principal perceptions of the academic performance of newcomer students tends to be evident in contrasting types of schools – schools that have a positive school climate but also schools where the student body as a whole are viewed to be less engaged in school life – as well as in urban and designated disadvantaged schools. Within second-level schools, language is seen as accounting for much of the variation in difficulties in academic progress indicated by principals. It was also the view of school staff that newcomer students generally tend to be

constrained by language difficulties. It is likely that similar processes are at play in relation to academic performance in primary and second-level schools.

The survey and interviews pointed to some interesting findings in relation to the role of the school in preparing young people for living in a diverse society. Half of primary school principals feel that the education system prepares young people for living in a multicultural society compared to one-third of second-level principals. Challenges in this respect are more evident in schools that have a larger number of newcomer students and a more diverse student body.

In relation to perceptions of the curriculum and the textbooks and materials being used, principals and teachers do not generally consider that the existing curriculum or textbooks take adequate account of issues relating to diversity. The Irish or even broader European focus of some subjects is seen as being a particular issue for non-European students. The primary curriculum is seen to be more successful in encompassing diversity than the junior or senior cycle curriculum due to its child-centred nature. Similarly, principals and teachers do not perceive initial teacher education or on-going professional development as providing adequate preparation for teaching in a multicultural society. The vast majority of principals would like to see additional in-service training provided in order to support those teaching newcomer students.

SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES

Table A7.1: Factors Predicting Positive Evaluations of Newcomers' Academic Outcomes (Primary Schools)

	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	1.896	1.805
Designated disadvantaged status	0.141*	0.151*
School size:		0.270*
50-99	0.208*	0.404***
100-199	0.336***	0.300**
200+	0.260**	
(Ref.: <50)		
Perceived language difficulties:		
Nearly all		0.029
Over half		-0.096
Less than half		-0.113
(Ref.: Only a few)		
Approach to language support:		
Informal only		0.070
Immersion		0.250***
(Ref.: Withdrawal)		
Adjusted R^2	0.055	0.114

Note: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05, ‡ p<.10.

Table A7.2: Factors Associated with Positive Evaluations of Newcomers' Academic Outcomes (Second-level Schools)

	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	2.316	2.791
School type:		
Girls' secondary	0.208**	0.239**
Boys' secondary	-0.062	-0.017
Vocational	-0.038	-0.005
Community/comprehensive	-0.063	-0.037
(Ref. Coed secondary)		
Gaelcholaistí	-0.267‡	-0.228
Fee-paying school	0.185‡	0.183
Designated disadvantaged status	0.236***	0.228**
Perceived language difficulties:		
Nearly all		-0.177*
Over half		-0.090
Less than half		-0.028
(Ref.: Only a few)		
Students show respect		-0.114*
Adjusted R^2	0.077	0.087

Note: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05, ‡ p<.10.

Table A7.3: Factors Predicting Difficulties in Academic Progress Among More than Half of Newcomers

	Primary		Second-level	
	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 1**	**Model 2**
Constant	-1.032***	3.143	-0.787**	1.192
School type:				
Girls' secondary			-0.543	-0.452
Boys' secondary			0.010	0.036
Vocational			-0.204	-0.220
Community/comprehensive			0.760‡	0.748
(Ref. Coed secondary)				
Gaelscoileanna/ gaelcholaistí	1.249*	1.562*	1.453*	1.467‡
Designated disadvantaged status	0.258	0.060	0.675*	0.187
School size:				
Very small (<50)	0.050	1.060*		
Small (51-100)	0.126	0.536		
(Ref.: >100)				
Perceived language difficulties:				
Nearly all		2.212***		3.067***
Over half		1.465**		1.982***
Less than half		0.250		1.205*
(Ref.: Only a few)				
Positive school climate		-1.591**		-1.024**
Nagelkerke R^2	0.024	0.243	0.082	0.087

Note: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05, ‡ p<.10.

Table A7.4: Regression Model of Factors Associated with Academic Difficulties (Primary Schools)

	Model 1	**Model 2**
Constant	-1.495***	-2.131***
Any African	-0.417	-0.305
Any Asian	0.060	-0.341
Any EU12	0.780*	0.204
Any Latvian	-0.091	-0.180
Any other European	0.670*	0.538‡
Any UK	0.284	0.375
Any EU12	-0.287	-0.321
Ref: Any USA/Canada/NZ		
Perceived language difficulties:		
Nearly all		2.213***
Over half		1.429**
Less than half		0.132
(Ref.: Only a few)		

Note: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05, ‡ p<.10.

Table A7.5: Regression Model of Factors Associated with Academic Difficulties (Second-level Schools)

	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	-0.925*	-1.743***
Any African	-0.258	-0.223
Any Asian	0.124	0.084
Any EU12	0.283	-0.831
Any EU13	-0.425^	-0.242
Any Latvian	0.049	-0.130
Any other European	0.660*	0.672*
Any UK	0.232	0.186
Ref: Any USA/Canada/NZ		
Perceived language difficulties:		
Nearly all		3.063***
Over half		2.027***
Less than half		1.063*
(Ref.: Only a few)		

Note: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05, ‡ p<.10.

8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Introduction

Up until the mid-1990s, there was relatively little inward migration to Ireland, in contrast to the situation in many other European countries, and the small number of immigrants generally came from the UK or Western Europe. As a result, schools historically catered for a relatively homogeneous group of students, and teachers had little experience of dealing with linguistic and ethnic diversity. The period since the mid-1990s has been quite different, involving rapid net immigration of non-Irish nationals into Ireland, with foreign nationals now making up 10 per cent of the total population and 8 per cent of those aged 5 to 14 years of age (Census, 2006). Among the school-aged population, children from the UK, 'new' EU states and Africa make up the largest groupings. Increasing immigration over a short time period has had implications for policy provision, including educational provision. Previous research studies in the Irish context have been largely small-scale in nature but have highlighted important issues around the social integration of newcomer children (see, for example, Devine *et al*., 2002). However, to date little has been known at the national level about school provision for newcomer students.

This study addresses this gap in knowledge by documenting the nature of provision for newcomers within the primary and second-level sectors. It draws on a nationally representative survey of 1,200 primary and post-primary school principals as well as detailed case-studies of twelve schools with varying proportions of newcomers and levels of supports. Both strands of our research provide a generally consistent view of the issues for schools and the use of such an approach thus enables us to provide a more comprehensive overview of the challenges arising at the school level. While the study draws mainly on the accounts of school principals and teachers, interviews with groups of Irish and immigrant students yield complementary insights into the experiences of young people themselves.

8.2 Profile of Schools with Newcomers

The distribution of newcomers across schools is quite different in the primary and second-level sectors. The vast majority of second-level schools have at least one newcomer student and in the largest category of schools, newcomers make up between 2 and 9 per cent of the student body. In contrast, a significant minority – four in ten – of primary schools have no newcomers at all while there is a noticeable group of primary schools with relatively high concentrations of newcomers (10 per cent or more). This pattern has implications for targeting supports towards schools catering for newcomer students and means that policies should be tailored not only to schools with a high proportion of newcomers but to those with only one or two newcomer children. Unlike in many other European countries, Irish schools with newcomers tend to have a number of different national groups rather than a single dominant group. This pattern poses its own challenges to schools in catering to different linguistic and cultural groups.

The concentration of newcomer students varies across different types of schools, reflecting the interplay between the geographical location of migrant groups, the availability of school places, school admissions policies, and school choice practices. As a result, schools catering to more disadvantaged populations are more likely to have newcomers and in these schools newcomers make up a higher proportion of the student body. Furthermore, the schools with a higher proportion of newcomers also have a higher concentration of students from a Traveller background and, within second-level schools, a higher proportion of students with learning disabilities. This means that certain schools are catering for a number of diverse needs within the student cohort and, therefore, face considerable challenges.

Certain aspects of school admission policies impact indirectly on newcomer students. Newcomers are much less likely to fulfil the criteria of having an older sibling in the school, having applied for a school place at a very early stage, or having a parent who attended the school. Thus, they are less likely to attend schools where enrolment is based on these criteria. In addition, the religious profile of the newcomer group is more diverse than that of the Irish population but primary schools are overwhelmingly Catholic in nature. The recent nature of immigration means that many schools have been faced with newcomer children arriving after the start of the school year. This means that newcomer students can only obtain places in undersubscribed schools and has resource implications for schools if they have new arrivals after the specified cut-off point for the allocation of language support provision.

8.3 Language Needs

International research (Cummins, 1981) indicates that newcomer children can take between five and seven years to acquire full language proficiency. The majority of newcomer students in Irish schools do not have English or Irish as a first language. However, it is important to indicate that newcomers are a heterogeneous group in terms of English proficiency. Six in ten schools report difficulties in written or spoken English among more than half of their newcomer students. These language difficulties, if not addressed, have significant consequences for academic progress since newcomers are faced with a range of subject areas which require the appropriate language skills. They also impact on social integration among newcomer students since lack of proficiency in English can hinder the development of friendships with English speakers. In particular, subject-specific terminology is seen by teachers as taking much longer to acquire than day-to-day conversational fluency. Younger children are seen as acquiring language proficiency more quickly than their older counterparts, who are also exposed to a wider range of specialist subject material.

Schools have put in place formal support for the language needs of newcomers. However, it is worth noting that informal support from classroom or subject teachers and from peers represents an important dimension of newcomer learning experiences. The importance of such informal support has implications for the professional development needs of mainstream teachers, few of whom have received training on intercultural education or teaching English as an additional language. It is worth noting that informal support assumes a more prominent role in the primary sector where, because of the small average size of schools, there is a greater proportion of schools without specialist language support staff.

Formal support within schools is usually provided by one or more designated language support teachers, although some schools involve a wider group of staff in providing such support. Language support teachers are generally found to have a background in mainstream subject or classroom teaching and few of those in the study had received specialist training in teaching English as a second language. The temporary nature of teaching contracts is also perceived as an impediment to building up capacity and skills within the school setting.

Withdrawal from class for intensive work in a one-to-one or small group setting is the dominant mode of language support provision across primary and second-level schools. Withdrawal is seen as facilitating a structured approach to enhancing English language skills, with small group work reinforcing peer learning. However, withdrawal also entails a number of challenges. It must be timed such that it does not impact on a student's progress in other school subjects and handled so that students are not labelled in a negative way. Furthermore, the student remains in the mainstream classroom for the majority of the school day, with consequent challenges for the classroom or subject teacher in developing differentiated teaching methods to cater for the variety of student needs within the classroom.

In three of the case-study primary schools, withdrawal from class was combined with within-class support from specialist teachers for part of the school day. This approach was seen by principals and teachers as having a number of benefits, principally in providing a more holistic and co-ordinated approach and in allowing teachers to address needs as they arise in day-to-day learning. However, this approach is likely to be resource-intensive, especially if there are only one or two newcomer students per class.

Around a fifth of schools use separate base classes whereby newcomer students are given more intensive language support before making the transition into the mainstream classroom. This approach requires a certain critical mass of newcomers and is thus largely confined to schools with a relatively high proportion of newcomers. Furthermore, the approach has a potentially negative effect on social integration since newcomer and Irish students are based in separate classes and less likely to socialise with each other.

Views on the adequacy of language support provision vary between and within schools. The increased allocation of support personnel resulting from the DES Circular of May 2007 was seen as enhancing schools' capacity to cater for language needs. Furthermore, a number of schools have successfully established a team of committed and enthusiastic teachers who work in a co-ordinated way. However, principals and teachers were less satisfied with other aspects of provision, chiefly the lack of availability of trained teachers, the inability to offer permanent contracts to these teachers, and the amount of time allocated to each student. In particular, teachers highlighted the absence of guidance on best practice in language support, feeling that they had had to adopt a 'trial and error' approach in their own school setting. It is likely that the changes in the allocation of English language support provision to schools as a result of budget cuts in October 2008 will have a significant impact on schools, especially those

with a greater concentration of newcomers, and may constrain their ability to meet the needs of their newcomer students.

Another area of concern relates to teaching materials and resources for language support. In most cases, teachers felt they were reliant on their own initiative to source and obtain materials, and many felt they lacked sufficient awareness of available resources. In particular, much of the existing material was seen as unsuitable for older students. A small number of teachers reported utilising dual language resources with many others expressing positive views about the potential of using such resources to support student learning.

Across all of the case-study schools, principals and teachers highlighted the difficulty in disentangling language needs from broader learning difficulties. Thus, many emphasised the difficulty of obtaining psychological assessment for newcomer students suspected of having specific learning difficulties and of putting in place appropriate provision for these students.

The majority of schools report language difficulties among newcomer parents, a pattern that is seen as impacting on communication between home and school and parental involvement in their child's education. Only a minority of schools have access to broader language services, such as translation and interpretation, to facilitate contact with parents and this is seen as a priority by teachers for future development, especially in the primary sector.

8.4 Curriculum and Teaching

Newcomer students are generally viewed as highly motivated and hard-working by school principals and teachers. Newcomer students and their parents are also viewed as placing a strong value on education and holding high aspirations for the future, reflecting the highly educated profile of recent immigrants to Ireland. Only a few newcomers are seen as experiencing sustained difficulties in academic progress and such difficulties tend to relate to language competency. Interestingly, newcomer students are perceived as making better academic progress in schools with a positive climate, that is, schools characterised by good relations between teachers, students and their parents.

In general, however, principals and teachers do not consider that the existing curriculum or textbooks take adequate account of issues relating to diversity. The primary curriculum is seen as somewhat better in encompassing diversity than the junior or senior cycle curriculum due to its child-centred nature. Teacher criticisms reflect two main factors. First, school subjects are strongly founded on English competency and this poses particular challenges for newcomer students with limited (or no) English. This is especially evident for second-level students who are required to take a significant number of subjects. Second, the Irish or even broader European focus of some subjects is seen as being a particular issue for non-European students.

Similarly, principals and teachers do not see initial teacher education or on-going professional development as providing adequate preparation for teaching in a diverse society. The vast majority of principals would like to see additional in-service training provided in order to support those

teaching newcomer students. The main requirements include training in supporting language acquisition for both mainstream and specialist teachers (including principals themselves), and practically based courses in intercultural education. The need for a whole-school approach to professional development emerged as a significant issue since currently any training is seen as mainly targeted on specialist teachers.

8.5 Social Integration

Another important issue is the social integration of newcomer students since attending an Irish school involves mixing with a new peer group and adjusting to a new school setting. Around half of primary schools and two-thirds of second-level schools have put in place specific initiatives to support newcomers, including student mentors, designated staff and measures to specifically involve newcomer parents. Newcomers also avail of more general supports within the school, including extracurricular activities, provision of books, and financial assistance for trips. A number of different personnel tend to be involved in supporting newcomers. In second-level schools, class tutors play an important role as do other specialist staff such as guidance counsellors. At primary level, there are fewer specialist staff so classroom teachers assume a more important role in providing support. In general, formal supports are more extensive in second-level schools than in primary schools. Furthermore, designated disadvantaged (DEIS) and larger schools tend to have more formal supports. Interestingly, satisfaction with personal and social support for all students tends to be greater in schools with more formal supports for newcomers.

School principals report few sustained integration difficulties among newcomer students. Any such difficulties are seen as greater where language needs are greater but a positive school climate (with good relations between all teachers, students and parents) reduces the incidence of problems. It is worth noting, however, that the picture becomes more complex when teacher and student views are taken into account. While Irish-newcomer relations are broadly positive, some segregation in friendship patterns is evident (e.g. socialising at break times) and a number of students reported incidents of bullying on the basis of nationality. There was a somewhat greater tendency for such bullying to be reported by African than Eastern European students. Bullying of this nature may not always be visible to school staff, since many students, both newcomer and Irish, report that they would not go to their teachers about being bullied. This is particularly evident within second-level schools while primary students are more likely to say they would report bullying.

Irish students express empathy towards their newcomer peers, feeling it would be 'scary' to be in a new country. However, they indicate a lack of awareness of other cultures. Furthermore, schools cannot be seen in isolation from the broader society and in two of the case-study schools in more disadvantaged areas, bullying and harassment of young people was reported in the local neighbourhood. This highlights the need to see schools within their broader context in fostering positive Irish-newcomer relations.

Newcomers are a heterogeneous group not just in language and nationality but in legal status. A significant minority of schools have refugee or asylum-seeker students and one in six second-level schools has

unaccompanied minor students (separated children). Schools appear to adopt a very strong pastoral role in relation to unaccompanied minors, in terms of financial assistance and mediation with other statutory agencies. However, much of this support is based on the investment of staff's own time and resources and this group of young people, while small in number, is seen as requiring very extensive supports.

8.6 Implications for Policy Development

The recent nature of immigration to Ireland provides a golden opportunity to put in place supports to foster the long-term development of newcomer children and young people, and thus avoid some of the problems experienced in other countries. Promoting intercultural awareness is likely to be particularly effective at the school stage since young people are in the process of forming their values and their attitudes to the world around them. On the basis of the study findings, we focus on three sets of recommendations for policy development related to: language support, home-school contact, and social integration.

Language competency is fundamental to the academic and social development of newcomer students, and to the labour market integration of their parents. Schools have adopted various approaches tailored to the specific school setting and the needs of their student population so no 'one size fits all' approach should be advanced. However, many principals and teachers report considerable language needs among their newcomer students. The study, therefore, highlights a number of issues which would further enhance language support for newcomer students:

- More scope for combining withdrawal with within-class support;
- More flexibility in resource allocation (in particular, a tapering of cut-offs for teacher allocation, and provision for resource allocation for students starting during the school year);
- The need for training and support for both specialist and mainstream teachers (including school principals) regarding language acquisition and differentiated teaching;
- Guidelines regarding best practice in teaching English as an additional language;
- A whole-school approach to professional development involving all teachers, both specialist and mainstream, and focusing on both language acquisition and intercultural education;
- Teaching resources and materials for English as a second language, especially those suitable for older students;
- Greater use of dual language resources to support student learning;
- Psychological assessment for students with limited English who are suspected of having learning difficulties.

Language competency also impacts on home-school contact and parental involvement in their child's education. School staff report difficulties in discussing academic progress or discipline issues with parents who have limited English proficiency. Supports in this sphere would entail:

- A facility for obtaining translations of specific information on the school (e.g. on the school ethos, discipline policy etc.) into different languages;
- Access to translation or interpretation services for meeting with parents, perhaps in co-operation with other local schools;
- Language support provision within schools to be linked to joined-up policy regarding language services for the adult population.

Language is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for social integration. There is some evidence from teachers, and especially from students themselves, of segregation in friendship patterns and some bullying on the basis of nationality or ethnicity. It should be recognised that teachers perform a key role in the socialisation of children and young people so can play an important part in fostering respect for difference. At the school level, a number of supports would be of benefit:

- Consistent policy and practice regarding bullying, specifically addressing and challenging harassment on the basis of nationality or ethnicity;
- The use of student mentors since previous research (Smyth *et al.*, 2004) indicates that young people are more likely to approach their peers rather than school personnel if they have been bullied;
- The potential for a designated support person within the school as a point of contact for newcomer students;
- The promotion of intercultural awareness within the school and its community.

Schools do not exist in a vacuum so efforts within schools should be supported by a broader emphasis on intercultural awareness, challenging racism and broader policies which support integration across the general population.

8.7 Recent Changes in Policy and Provision

Over the time period within which this research has been conducted, a number of significant changes have occurred in the general economic climate and in provision regarding newcomer students. The roll-out of a number of policy interventions over the past year is likely to have increased the supports available to schools with a diverse student population. These measures include the distribution of assessment kits to primary schools, current in-service provision for language support teachers, and bilingual resources being developed for a number of DEIS schools through the Demonstration Library Project. The Inspectorate evaluation of language support provision, the Value for Money Review of expenditure on provision for English as a second language, consultation with education stakeholders and Ireland's participation in the OECD Thematic Review of Migrant Education, will provide an important evidence base to inform the development of an Intercultural Education Strategy by the Department of Education and Science.

However, these changes are occurring alongside recent budget cuts in education which are likely to have negative consequences for newcomers and other vulnerable young people in the education system. In particular, a change in the criteria for allocating language support teachers (Circular

0015/2009) is likely to disproportionately impact on those schools with a high concentration of newcomers. Reductions in the general budget for teacher professional development are also likely to constrain the possibility of providing the necessary in-service training for mainstream teachers on intercultural education and differentiated teaching. Provision for newcomers is also likely to be affected by more general measures, such as the reduced teacher-student ratio, the reduction of staffing levels and additional grants for schools formerly designated as disadvantaged, the abolition of equipment grants for resource teachers and curricular programmes, and the reduction of subsidies for school books. The capacity to underpin school provision with the promotion of intercultural awareness in the society as a whole is also likely to have been impeded by the closure of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) and the significant reduction in funding to the Equality Authority.

In conclusion, it is important to note that diversity is not just a challenge but a positive resource. Economic forecasts predict a fall in immigration and some tendency towards net emigration in the near future. However, families with children may be more likely to remain in Ireland than single workers because of the roots they have established, and the extent of recent inward migration means that some degree of diversity will be part of Irish society for the foreseeable future. In the changing economic climate, it will be particularly important that there is no perceived trade-off between providing for newcomer students and for Irish students. Our study clearly indicates that supporting teachers towards more differentiated classroom methods as well as promoting a more positive school climate would enhance the academic and social development of newcomer and Irish students alike.

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APPENDIX: QUESTIONNAIRE TO SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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SIR JOHN ROGERSON'S QUAY,
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SURVEY OF DIVERSITY IN SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOLS

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Many Irish schools have become more diverse in recent years. The Department of Education and Science has asked the ESRI to carry out a review of provision for newcomer students in Irish schools. We would be very grateful if you would complete the enclosed questionnaire. Your response will be combined with those of other schools to form an overall picture, and used to guide government policy in relation to future provision for newcomer students. It is important for us to know which schools have newcomer students and which schools do not, so please respond WHETHER OR NOT there are newcomer students in your school.

PART I: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

[Q1, Q2, Q3 : If none, please write 'NONE']

1. How many students in total are there in your school? Boys _____ Girls _____

2. **How many teachers are there in your school?** Full-time _____ Part-time _____

3. Approximately how many staff does your school currently have in the following capacities?

	Full-time	Part-time
Guidance counsellor(s) or teachers with guidance hours		
Other school-based counsellor/psychologist		
Home-School-Community Liaison Co-ordinator		
Learning support/ resource teachers		
Language support teachers		
Special needs assistants (SNAs)		

4. Over the past five years, has the total number of first year students coming to the school:

Increased .....☐$_1$ Decreased .....☐$_2$ Remained relatively stable.....☐$_3$

5. Are there any other local second-level schools to which your first year students might go?

Yes.....☐$_1$ No .....☐$_2$

6. Are all of the students who apply to your school usually accepted?

Yes.....☐$_1$ → **Q7** | No .....☐$_2$

If No, what criteria are used to admit students? [Please tick all that apply.]

Lives in local area	Siblings in school	Primary school attended	Date of application	Religion	Other (specify) _____
☐$_1$	☐$_2$	☐$_3$	☐$_4$	☐$_5$	☐$_6$

7. In your assessment, approximately what proportion of students in the school would have such literacy, numeracy, emotional-behavioural or absenteeism difficulties as to adversely impact on their educational development? Please tick one box on each line.

Approximate percentage of students with each problem

	None	<5%	6-10%	11-25%	26-40%	>40%
a) Literacy Problems	☐$_1$	☐$_2$	☐$_3$	☐$_4$	☐$_5$	☐$_6$
b) Numeracy Problems	☐$_1$	☐$_2$	☐$_3$	☐$_4$	☐$_5$	☐$_6$

c) Emotional/Behavioural problems ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6
d) Absenteeism ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6

8. (a) What is the religious ethos of your school?

Catholic ☐1 Church of Ireland ☐2
Multidenominational ☐3 Interdenominational ☐4 Other (specify) _____ ☐5

(b) Are there students from families with minority (or no) religious beliefs in your school?

Several ☐1 A few ☐2 None ☐3 → **Q9**

(c) What arrangements are in place for these students during religious education (RE) classes?

Students are withdrawn from RE classes ☐1
Students stay in the RE class but do not participate ☐2
Students stay in the RE class and participate ☐3
RE is not taught in this school ☐4
Other (please specify) ☐5 _____

9. Please indicate the extent to which you believe each of the following to be true of students, their parents and teachers in your school.

	True of nearly all	True for more than half	True for less than half	True of only a few
Students are well-behaved in class	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Students are motivated about their schoolwork	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Students show respect for their teachers	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Parents attend parent-teacher meetings in the school	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Parents give their children help and support with schoolwork	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Parents have contact with the school only if there is a problem	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Teachers are positive about the school	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Teachers in the school are open to contact with parents	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Teachers are open to new developments and challenges	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

10. On what basis are students in the school allocated to their <u>base</u> classes?

Randomly/alphabetically ☐1 Performance on tests ☐3
Other [please specify_____] ☐2 Only 1 class per year-group ☐4

11. To what extent do you think your school is (or would be) in a position to cater adequately for the needs of newcomer students (that is, students from families where both parents come from outside Ireland)? Please answer this question WHETHER OR NOT you have newcomer students currently enrolled.

To a great extent ☐1 To some extent ☐2 Not to any great extent ☐3 Not to any extent ☐4

12. Does your school have a written policy on interculturalism or anti-racism?

Yes, included in School Development Plan ☐1 Yes, other document ☐2 No ☐3

13. To what extent does the school liaise with the following services?

	To a great extent	**To some extent**	**Not to any great extent**	**Not to any extent**
National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB)	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
School Development Planning Initiative (SDPI)	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Integrate Ireland Language and Training	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Second Level Support Service	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

Social Workers	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Local youth/community workers	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Special Needs Organisers (SENOs)	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Voluntary groups (such as Barnardos, V de Paul)	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

14. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Pre-service education prepares teachers for teaching in a multicultural setting.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Textbooks and teaching resources take adequate account of diversity issues.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
In-service education prepares teachers for teaching in a multicultural setting.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
The junior cycle curriculum takes adequate account of diversity issues.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
The senior cycle curriculum takes adequate account of diversity issues.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
More in-service education is needed for teachers in order to promote inclusion within schools.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
The Irish educational system prepares young people to live in a multicultural society.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

15. Do you have any written information for parents available in languages other than English/Irish?

No ☐1 Yes, general information on Irish educational system ☐2 Yes, information on your school ☐3 → **If Yes, which languages?** _____

16. Schools use different ways of providing social and personal support for their students. In column (a) please indicate whether or not your school adopts each of the approaches listed. In column (b), please tick one box to indicate the approach you think is most important in your school.

	(a) Used in your school? Yes	(a) No	(b) Single most important approach
a) Class tutor	☐1	☐2	☐1
b) Year head	☐1	☐2	☐2
c) Guidance Counsellor	☐1	☐2	☐3
d) Student mentors	☐1	☐2	☐4
e) School-based counsellor	☐1	☐2	☐5
f) SPHE classes	☐1	☐2	☐6
g) Other (please specify) _____	☐1	☐2	☐7

17. In general, how satisfied are you with the following provision in your school?

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Social/personal support for students	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Learning support (excluding language support)	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Support for students with special educational needs	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5

18. Approximately how many of each of the following groups of students do you have in your school? If none, please write 'NONE'. The same student can be recorded more than once.

Students with physical/sensory disabilities *(Number)* _____

Students with learning/intellectual disabilities *(Number)* _____

Students of families from the Travelling Community *(Number)* _____

Newcomer students, that is, students from families where both parents are from outside Ireland, of whom:

Mother tongue is English/Irish *(Number)* _____

Mother tongue is not English/Irish *(Number)* _____

IF YOU HAVE NO NEWCOMER STUDENTS IN YOUR SCHOOL, PLEASE RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE PREPAID ENVELOPE.

IF YOU HAVE ANY NEWCOMER STUDENTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN YOUR SCHOOL, PLEASE COMPLETE THE REST OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

PART II: PROFILE OF NEWCOMER STUDENTS

We would like to ask you some questions about newcomer students in your school. By newcomer students, we mean students from families where both parents are from outside Ireland, *whether or not* the student's first language is English/Irish.

19. To your knowledge, do you have any newcomer students in your school whose families have the following status? (Please tick yes or no on each line.)

	Yes	No
Nationals from EU (27) member States	☐1	☐2
Nationals from non-EU countries	☐1	☐2
Unaccompanied minors	☐1	☐2
Granted refugee status or leave to remain	☐1	☐2
Asylum-seekers (awaiting or refused decision)	☐1	☐2

20. Please provide the approximate number of newcomer students in your school by country of origin.

EUROPE	***No.***	***AMERICA/AUSTRALIA***	***No.***	***ASIA***	***No.***	***AFRICA***	***No.***
Britain (excl. NI)		USA/Canada		China		Nigeria	
Other Western Europe		Australia/New Zealand		India		DR Congo	
Poland		Brazil		Pakistan		South Africa	
Romania		Other South/Central America		Philippines		Other Africa	
Other EU Eastern Europe				Other Asia			
Non-EU Eastern Europe							

PART III: HOW NEWCOMER STUDENTS SETTLE INTO SCHOOL

21. On arrival to your school, what criteria are used for deciding which year and class group a newcomer student is allocated to? [Please tick all that apply.]

Report from previous school ☐1 | Student's age ☐2 | Interview with student/parents ☐3 | Individual assessment ☐4 | Other (specify) ☐5 _____

(b) IF INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT, who is involved in assessing students?

- Language support teacher(s) ☐1
- Resource teacher(s) ☐2
- Learning support teacher(s) ☐3
- Guidance Counsellor(s) ☐4
- Principal ☐5
- Other, please specify _____ ☐6

22. Compared with other students in your school, how would you rate newcomer students on the following dimensions on average?

	Above average	Average	Below average
Academic achievement	☐1	☐2	☐3
Motivation in relation to schoolwork	☐1	☐2	☐3
Educational aspirations	☐1	☐2	☐3
Behaviour in class	☐1	☐2	☐3
Attendance	☐1	☐2	☐3

23. In your assessment, what proportion of newcomer students experience sustained difficulties in the following areas?

	Nearly all	More than half	Less than half	Only a few
Academic progress	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Social interaction with peers	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Behaviour in class	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Absenteeism	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Involvement in extracurricular activities	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

24. If any newcomer students experience sustained difficulties in any of these areas, how much would you say each of the following factors contribute to these difficulties? [Please tick one box on each line]

	A great deal	Quite a lot	A little	Not a factor
Language difficulties among students	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Language difficulties among parents	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Literacy difficulties among students	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Cultural differences	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
New peer group	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Bullying	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Lack of parental involvement	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Starting in the middle of the school year	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Homework	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Financial issues	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Racism	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Mobility between schools	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
In foster care/living alone	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Schoolwork too challenging	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Lack of knowledge of Irish educational system	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Assessed special educational needs	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Little or no previous schooling experience	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Psychological difficulties/trauma	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

25. Do newcomer students from any particular countries experience greater difficulties in settling in?

No ☐1 Yes ☐2 **IF YES, which countries?** _____

26. Do newcomer boys or girls tend to experience greater difficulties?

Newcomer boys ☐1 Newcomer girls ☐2 No gender difference ☐3

27. (a) Does your school have a particular approach to helping newcomer students settle into the school?

Yes ☐1 No ☐2

(b) If Yes, please describe as fully as possible the approach taken.

(c) Are any of the following used to support newcomer students: (please tick all that apply)

Breakfast club ☐1
Provision of books/learning materials ☐2
Homework club ☐3
Financial assistance for trips/outings ☐4
Extra tuition outside school hours ☐5
Extracurricular activities (incl. Sports) ☐6
Summer camp/project ☐7

(d) Who is mainly involved in providing general support to newcomer students? [Please tick all that apply].

Language support teacher(s) ☐1
Resource teacher(s) ☐2

Learning support teacher(s) ..... ☐3
Guidance Counsellor(s) ..... ☐4
Principal..... ☐4
Year head/class tutor ..... ☐6
Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinator..... ☐7
Student mentors..... ☐8
Chaplain ..... ☐9
Subject teachers..... ☐10
Other, please specify _____ ..... ☐11

28. What (other) supports, if any, would you like to see in place for newcomer students?

29. (a) Compared to other students in your school, do you think newcomer students are:

More likely to experience bullying ☐1 As likely to experience bullying ☐2 Less likely to experience bullying ☐3

(b) Does your school have a written policy on bullying? Yes ☐1 No ☐2

Does this policy explicitly deal with racial harassment (including use of racist language)? Yes ☐1 No ☐2

PART IV: LANGUAGE SUPPORT FOR NEWCOMER STUDENTS

For many newcomer students, English or Irish is not their first language. We are going to ask you some questions about language support provision for these students.

30. Do you have access to translation services for communicating with parents and/or students?

Yes ..... ☐1 No..... ☐2

31. Does your school provide language (or other) courses for parents of newcomer students?

Yes ..... ☐1 No..... ☐2

32. In your assessment, what proportion of newcomer students in your school have English language difficulties to the extent that they significantly impact on their participation in school? What proportion of their parents have English language difficulties? Please tick one box on each line.

Difficulties with:	Nearly all	More than half	Less than half	Only a few
Spoken English among students	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Written English among students	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Spoken English among parents of newcomers	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

33. (a) Please indicate whether or not the following approaches are used in providing language support for newcomer students? [Tick Yes or No in respect of each]

		Yes	**No**
1.	Intensive immersion course	☐1	☐2
2.	Withdrawal for certain class periods	☐1	☐2
	If yes, which ones? _____		
3.	Newcomer students are assigned to a separate base class.....	☐1	☐2
4.	Students' needs are addressed by regular subject teachers.....	☐1	☐2
5.	Students are helped by other students in their class	☐1	☐2
6.	Other (please specify) _____	☐1	☐2

(b) At the moment, how many newcomer students in your school receive formal language support? _____

(c) How satisfied are you with the English language support which the school is able to provide to newcomer students? [Please tick one box on each line]

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
No. of students receiving help	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
No. of hours given to each student	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Availability of trained teachers	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5

34. Is there any other issue related to newcomer students on which you would like to comment? Please feel free to continue on a separate sheet.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.
PLEASE RETURN TO THE ESRI IN THE ENCLOSED PRE-PAID ENVELOPE.

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