



**Oifig an Aire Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
Office of the Minister for Education and Skills

To the Principals, Teachers and Boards of Management of Primary Schools,

I am writing to congratulate you all on the progress which has been made on achieving the targets set out in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2011 - 2020.

As you may have seen in the media, the report of the 2014 National Assessments of English Reading and Mathematics in Primary Schools were published earlier this month. The findings have shown really heartening results.

These results, I believe, reflect your hard work for and dedication to your pupils, especially over the last three years. I also want to acknowledge the very serious contribution made by parents to the development of their children.

The assessments were prepared by the independent Educational Research Centre, in Dublin. The assessments involved a representative sample of over 8,000 pupils in 150 primary schools, using secure tests.

The study found that overall performance in reading and mathematics in second and sixth classes was significantly higher in these assessments than in the previous assessment carried out in 2009. These are the first significant improvements recorded by the national assessments since 1980.

In 2014, there was a reduction in the proportion of lower-achieving pupils and an increase in the proportion of higher achievement pupils in both English reading and mathematics, compared to 2009. Full copies of the report are available on the Educational Research Centre's website ([www.erc.ie](http://www.erc.ie)).

The excellent progress achieved is such that targets set for 2020 in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy have already been met in 2014. When these targets were set in 2011, they were thought to be very ambitious. The fact that they have already been met is a tribute to your commitment, professionalism and drive to improve outcomes for our young people.

In view of your achievements to date, I have asked my officials to look at reviewing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy this year instead of in 2016 when there was a mid-term review scheduled. We will be looking in particular at whether there should be new targets set for some of the particular cohorts who are continuing to perform behind the national averages.

The 2011 Literacy and Numeracy Strategy was the product of extensive consultation with the education stakeholders. Many school leaders and teachers either individually or as part of a whole school submission gave an input to the formal consultation on the Strategy. The final document reflected your input and your work is a vital part of the progress made to date.

I intend that the review process will equally draw on the benefit of a wide range of insights from the chalkface.

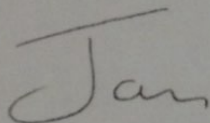


In conclusion, I want to congratulate you on your commitment to date to the Strategy in your schools. The progress you have made in bringing about measurably better outcomes for your pupils is an achievement to be celebrated.

All I can ask is that you to continue your focus on creating high expectations and aspirations for all our young people as you motivate them to believe in themselves and in their ability to achieve. Could you please let your pupils and their parents know that I am very proud of their achievements!

Congratulations to you all.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jan".

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Jan O'Sullivan, T.D.  
Minister for Education and Skills

22<sup>nd</sup> January 2015