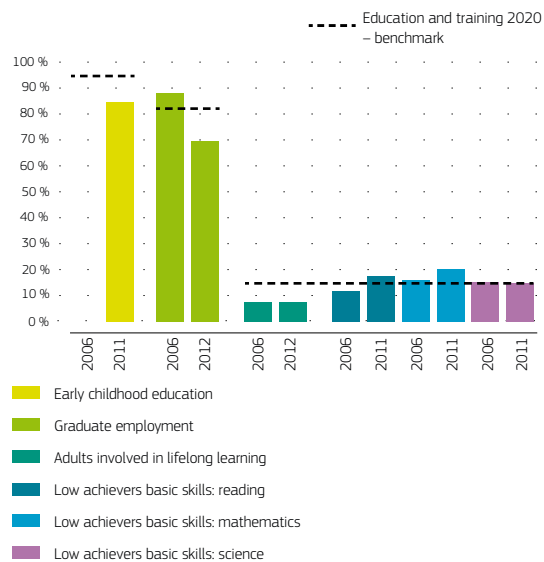


What is Ireland's progress towards the 2020 benchmarks?

The EU's Strategic Framework for Education and Training work programme includes the following benchmarks:

- > at least 82% of graduates are employed within three years;
- > at least 95% of children between the age of four and starting school participate in early childhood education;
- > the share of 15 years-olds with insufficient abilities in reading, mathematics and science is less than 15%;
- > at least 15% of adults between the ages of 25-64 participate in lifelong learning.

FIGURE 2 EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2020 – BENCHMARK



Young children's participation in early childhood education was below the EU average of 92.3% in 2011. In 2009 the proportion of 15 year-olds with inadequate skills in reading, mathematics and science remained lower than the EU averages (19.6%, 22.2% and 17.7% respectively). The economic crisis had a strong impact on the graduate employment rate which decreased by 19 percentage points between 2006 and 2012. The proportion of adults involved in lifelong learning remains lower than the EU 2012 average of 9% and has not changed significantly since 2006.



►► NEW WAYS OF WORKING

Influenced by the results from the PISA 2006 and 2009 surveys, the Irish government adopted a 'Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life Strategy' in 2011. This aims to ensure that every child acquires the necessary reading and mathematical skills. It also sets out to reform initial teacher education and professional development. This complements the national plan launched in 2005 to foster educational inclusion in all schools, especially those in disadvantaged communities.

Where can I get more information?

Information on Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes and the data used in this leaflet is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/rethinking_en.htm

Visit the following web pages for information on:

[Europe 2020 Targets](#)

<http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/targets/eu-targets/>

[Education and Training 2020 benchmarks](#)

http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/benchmarks_en.htm

[Country-Specific Recommendations](#)

<http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/>

[Erasmus+](#)

<http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus-for-all/>

[Education and Training Monitor 2012](#)

http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/monitor12_en.htm

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Rethinking Education and Ireland

What is 'Rethinking Education'?

In 2012 the European Commission published a new vision for education to help reinvigorate economic growth and competitiveness. It sets out how education and training systems can provide the right skills for the labour market; and support people to secure their economic future and social inclusion.

The Rethinking Education communication identifies how Member States can help adults improve their skills and engage in lifelong learning, and help equip young people with the skills they need to enter the labour market or establish their own business. It encourages stakeholders including employers, trade unions, and others to become more involved in the reform processes.

To promote economic growth and innovation, Europe needs to invest more in people and their skills. At a time of high youth unemployment alongside two million vacancies across Europe, Member States are asked not to reduce education budgets, but to improve efficiency whilst ensuring equity and inclusiveness.

Why is reform needed?

The proportion of jobs in the EU that require higher education qualifications is expected to increase to 34% by 2020 – alongside a fall in the number of jobs which require low levels of skill. Increasingly Europeans will have a changing and varied career in which they will be expected to think critically, take initiative, solve problems and collaborate within a team. Education and training systems need to address this new type of working life.

Educational reform should:

- > lead to a greater focus on learning outcomes, including those acquired through high quality work-based learning;
- > reduce the number of early school leavers and increase lifelong learning;
- > offer more support to the teaching professions;
- > improve partnerships between education and training institutions and employers.

How does Rethinking Education support Member States?

Rethinking Education sets out a clear vision to strengthen the importance of the skills which are needed in all jobs, particularly digital, entrepreneurial and language skills. It stresses the value of apprenticeships, a European Area of Skills and Qualifications, and the potential of ICT and Open Educational Resources for learning, as well as greater (including financial) support for partnerships.

Through the use of European targets and benchmarks, each Member State is able to judge its progress in some key areas, as well as assess where more effort might be needed.

» RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNTRY ANALYSIS [SWD (2012) 377 final]

Ireland is recommended to focus on preserving expenditure on education; to address the deteriorating school outcomes, particularly in reading and mathematics, the relatively modest level of participation in adult learning, and the level of unemployment of graduates; and to tackle future needs arising from strongly increasing demographic trends.

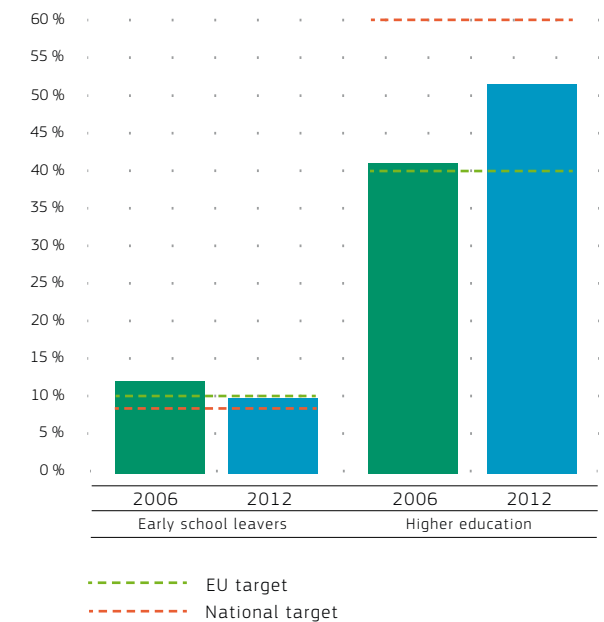
What is Ireland's progress towards the Europe 2020 targets?

There are two education targets for Europe up to 2020. These are to:

- > reduce early school leaving rates to below 10%;
- > ensure at least 40% of 30-34 year-olds complete higher education.

These European targets are linked to national targets which reflect different circumstances and traditions – Ireland's targets are 8% and 60%^[1].

FIGURE 1 EUROPE 2020 – TARGETS



Compared to the EU average of 12.6% in 2012, a lower proportion of young people left school early. In 2012 Ireland exceeded the Europe 2020 target with a rate of 9.7%. In 2012 the proportion of 30-34 year-olds in Ireland who completed tertiary education was the highest in the EU and significantly above the EU average of 35.8%.

[1] All data is from European Commission, Staff Working Document, Rethinking Education – country analysis, 2012.