

Committee for Education

**Inquiry into Successful Post-Primary Schools
Serving Disadvantaged Communities**

Volume 2

Together with Written Submissions and Other Correspondence Relating to the Report

Ordered by The Committee for Education to be printed 14 March 2011
Report: NIA 57/10/11R The Committee for Education

Membership and Powers

Powers

The Committee for Education is a Statutory Departmental Committee established in accordance with paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Belfast Agreement, Section 29 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and under Assembly Standing Order 46. The Committee has a scrutiny, policy development and consultation role with respect to the Minister of Education and has a role in the initiation of legislation.

The Committee has power to:

- Consider and advise on Departmental budgets and Annual Plans in the context of the overall budget allocation;
- Approve relevant secondary legislation and take the Committee Stage of primary legislation;
- Call for persons and papers;
- Initiation inquiries and makes reports; and
- Consider and advise on any matters brought to the Committee by the Minister for Education.

Membership

The Committee has 11 members including a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson with a quorum of five. The membership of the Committee since the commencement of the Inquiry on 11 November 2010 is as follows:

Mr Mervyn Storey (Chairperson)
Mr David Hilditch (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Dominic Bradley
Mrs Mary Bradley
Mr Jonathan Craig
Lord Empey^[1]
Mr Trevor Lunn
Mr Basil McCrea
Miss Michelle McIlveen
Mr John O'Dowd
Mrs Michelle O'Neill

[1] With effect from 8th November 2010 Sir Reg Empey replaced Mr John McCallister.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms Used in the Report

BELB - Belfast Education and Library Board

BoG - Board of Governors

CASS - Curriculum Advisory and Support Service

CBI - Confederation of British Industry

CCEA - Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

CCMS - Council for Catholic Maintained Schools

CnaG - Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta

DE/the Department - Department of Education

DEL - Department of Employment and Learning

E&LBs - Education and Library Boards

ESaGS - Every School a Good School

ETI - Education and Training Inspectorate

FE - Further Education

FSME - Free School Meal Entitlement

GBA - Governing Bodies Association

GCSE - General Certificate of Secondary Education

GTC - General Teaching Council

ICT - Information and Communication Technology

IEP - Individual Education Plan

InCAS - Interactive Computerised Assessment System

LAC - Looked After Children

MidYIS - Middle Years Information System

NICIE - Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education

NEELB - North Eastern Education and Library Board

OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OFMDFM - Office of the First and deputy First Minister

PGCE - Postgraduate Certificate in Education

PISA - Programme for International Student Assessment

PQH - Professional Qualification for Headship

PwC - PricewaterhouseCoopers

RTU - Regional Training Unit

SEELB - South Eastern Education and Library Board

SELB - Southern Education and Library Board

SENCo - Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

SMT - Senior Management Team

STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

TRC - Transferors Representatives' Council

WELB - Western Education and Library Board

YELLIS - Year 11 Information System

Appendix 3

Written Submissions

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<u>Allen, J, OBE</u>	26 November 2010
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<u>CBI (NI)</u>	7 December 2010
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<u>Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS)</u>	25 February 2011
<u>Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment (CCEA)</u>	10 December 2010
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Education & Library Boards ;	
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<u>Belfast Education & Library Board (BELB)</u>	20 December 2010
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<u>South Eastern Education & Library Board (SEELB)</u>	24 December 2010
<u>Southern Education & Library Board (SELB)</u>	4 January 2011
<u>Western Education & Library Board (WELB)</u>	19 December 2010
<u>Education Training Inspectorate (ETI)</u>	17 June 2010
<u>General Teaching Council Northern Ireland (GTCNI)</u>	17 December 2010
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<u>West Belfast Partnership</u>	10 December 2010

Allen, J, OBE

"Successful Post – Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Areas"

Some thoughts which I hope you find helpful.

Professional Experience

[Principal]
 [St Colm's High School Twinbrook 1993 - 1999]
 [Our Lady & St. Patrick's College knock 1999 - 2008]

Under my leadership St Colm's was transformed and is now highly regarded both in the local community and in the wider educational world. In January 2000 I was awarded an OBE for my services to Secondary Education in Northern Ireland. From September 1999 until my retirement in September 2008 as Principal of OLSPCK I successfully restructured the college which at the time of my appointment was in the bottom 25% of Grammar schools in terms of examination performance. Although school league tables are no longer published, when I retired the college had moved into the top 15% of Northern Ireland Grammar schools. This was achieved during a

time when I was also heavily involved in the negotiations and planning for a new school under the PFI programme. I would like to make a few observations regarding your inquiry.

1. Effective School Leadership.

Successful school leaders interact and communicate effectively with people, act with integrity and remain visible at all times. Often head teachers see themselves as providing strategic leadership when they articulate the vision, set the targets and monitor performance – and of course in one sense they are correct. Real leadership though demands much more. Schools are "people" organisations and the leader must interact with all of his/her "people" on a daily basis because "you will only change the school when you change the people", and you cannot change people without developing a relationship with them. This social interaction is difficult, challenging and can lead to disputes and disagreements – but it must be done. It is the difference between managing and leading the school. A leader can have a vision for the school but unless the staff has an opportunity to shape that vision and make it theirs then success will be limited.

On being appointed to St Colm's the first thing I did was to meet each member of staff individually and ask two questions. What were the strengths of the school? What were the three major issues that we needed to tackle? Unsurprisingly the issues were Discipline, Special Needs and Attendance. I reported back to the whole staff and outlined what THEY regarded as priorities. This was step one in involving staff. Step two was to empower them by giving them the opportunity to have their say through membership of one of 3 committees set up to suggest a way forward. The committees were chaired by people who did not hold a position in Senior Management. This was done to ensure that staff would have a sense of shared ownership of the vision. I had explained my rationale to the SMT in advance and they were supportive. Much of our future success came from the ideas generated in these early months and the pilot projects we established. Throughout my time in Twinbrook I was a constant presence around the school. A Principal must get to know the pupils. It is vital that they feel valued and cared for. You cannot do this in an office. I also felt it was important that staff saw me interacting with the pupils, dealing with situations; offering support and help in what could be a very stressful environment. My paperwork could be done in the morning before anyone arrived or in the evening after the children had gone home.

The great thing about the committees was the collective desire to find ways to encourage and reward pupils – I really cannot emphasise this enough. We developed a stepwise approach to behaviour management and a Merit System which required children to take responsibility for their own behaviour. We introduced incentives for good attendance. We set up our own Literacy initiative and involved parents in paired reading with significant success. Eventually we wrote our policies – but only after we were satisfied with the processes we had in place. We generated our own targets for exam results, attendance and behaviour based on our knowledge of our children. "We do our best to be the best we can be" was how I summed it up.

In Summary effective leaders emphasise

1. People over Paper
2. Process over Product (if the processes are right the product will be delivered)
3. Positive Rewards over Punishment

They model the behaviour they wish to see in others. . Sensitivity, tact, negotiating skills, and principled leadership are the key factors to success.

2. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

I do not propose to comment on the traditional methods of contact with Parents and the Wider Community. There are standard processes put in place by all schools to develop links. Disadvantaged areas require all of these and more. The Principal as leader must actively engage with parents and the local community. This is vital to success. It can of course be done by school newsletters or in the local press but in reality the best way is once again personal contact and the development of a working relationship. The school belongs to the people not the Principal or the staff. In my experience local people want to be proud of their school and want to feel happy that it is providing a good service. The onus is on the Principal to find opportunities where he/she can meet people and explain the vision for the school and listen to their concerns. In Twinbrook e.g. in 1993 before taking up post I spoke after the local church services on consecutive weekends for no more than 5 minutes outlining who I was, where I had come from, and what my hopes were for St. Colm's. I met individual people after the services and listened to what they had to say. When in post I made a point of walking around the estate on a regular basis to give the local people an opportunity to stop and talk to me in an informal way. I would also on a weekly basis call out to the homes of children whose attendance or behaviour was giving cause for concern. Visiting parents in their own homes can often be educational as well as rewarding for the Principal. It is also less threatening for the parent. We sometimes complain about lack of parental support without fully appreciating the difficulties many parents have to cope with on a daily basis. I also found it a useful means of explaining, and gaining support for, some of the initiatives we were trying to introduce. When drawing up new policies on matters such as Discipline or attendance I would always take the opportunity to discuss these with a number of parents and ask for their thoughts. I would then report back to the relevant committee. Similarly when we decided that a new uniform would be a good idea, parents and pupils were consulted to ensure affordability and that children would be happy to wear it. Indeed, truth to tell the uniform was designed by the pupils under my guidance

Often the only time a school communicates with a parent is when there is a problem. The development of a Merit System for Attendance and another one for Behaviour enabled the school to communicate positive messages on a regular basis to parents. Children were bringing home Bronze, Silver and Gold certificates as evidence of an improving school and this "feel good" factor transmitted itself to parents. Reporting on the school in June 1999 the Inspectorate commented.

2.9" It is the view of the inspection team that the ethos in the school is excellent. This ethos is characterised by the high morale amongst the staff and the pupils, and a well-ordered environment throughout. There is a clear sense of community and it is evident that the staff and the pupils take pride in their school. At the meetings with parents and governors it was evident that the school is an important and valued focus for the community it serves".

3. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities.

We all know the difficulties which lead to underachievement. The "typical" underachiever is more likely to be male with low self esteem, and poor literacy and numeracy skills. Often there are behavioural problems and frequent unauthorised absences from school. The problem needs to be addressed at a structural level in a coordinated manner. The Education sector must be much more clearly focussed in tackling the problem. We have had all sorts of initiatives over the years but to me there has never been the degree of consistency or perseverance needed to effect long lasting change. I have seen too many good projects founder because the schools were told that after the two year pilot they needed to be able to find the resources to continue from the school budget. To change the culture of a school takes at least 5 years so resources need to be allocated for at least that period of time.

For a Secondary school the starting point has to be a real understanding of the fact that the causes of underachievement are interlinked and therefore tackling one at a time is not an option. An initiative on Literacy and Numeracy will not succeed if the child is absent – therefore there has to be an initiative on attendance. Similarly if poor behaviour prevents learning then this too must be included. These children are so used to seeing themselves as failures that unless there is a coherent philosophy underpinning school improvement which aims to recognise and reward children for what they can do rather than punish them for what they can't then we may as well content ourselves with the status quo.

The second point I would make is that there is no one right way to reduce levels of underachievement. Each school should be encouraged to adopt approaches/ strategies which reflect the characteristics of the school but the underlying principles should be common to all schools.

1. Rights. All members of the school community have rights and responsibilities. These must be clearly articulated and agreed by all. To protect these rights there must be agreed rules. Again I stress the word agreed – by staff, parents, and pupils. Only by involving all can we demonstrate the "fairness" of our procedures. Out of fairness of course comes our concept of Equity and Justice.

2. Integrity/Honesty. In our dealings with children and parents we must create a climate of trust by demonstrating our own honesty and Integrity. Trust is essential to cooperation and long term personal and interpersonal growth.

3. Human Dignity. We must treat children and parents with respect at all times.

4. Service. We must undertake to provide the best service we can in order to develop pupils talents and ensure excellence.

5. Potential/Growth. By developing more and more talents we ensure the child grows in a very real way.

The process of developing potential requires patience, nurturance and encouragement. This should underpin every initiative undertaken to tackle underachievement. Let me provide an example of what I mean by reference to Twinbrook. When I looked at the Reading Ages of my Year 8 pupils it was obvious that some were operating at the level of P2. Our approach was to devise a back to basics approach involving phonics. We invited a number of parents in with their children and were very open with them. The children knew they were struggling so did the parents. Over a cup of tea I simply said "we know your child has major problems reading and we would like to try to do something about it. I have spent over £30,000 to set up an initiative here in St Colm's which I think could make a big difference. Your role as parent is to guarantee that you will listen to your child read for 5 – 10 minutes every night and sign that you have done this. After six weeks we will meet again here and review progress". We kept our promise - the parents kept theirs and when we met again both the qualitative and quantitative data demonstrated success.

Tackling underachievement is not just about what you do but rather how you do it.

4. Department of Education School Improvement Policy. During my time as Principal the emphasis was on schools evaluating themselves with the Inspector as the "critical friend". For the approach to be successful it required a good working relationship between Principal and the District Inspector. I was very fortunate to have Dr Paddy Shevlin as my DI during my time in Twinbrook. By meeting frequently we grew to trust and respect one another with the result that I never felt threatened or worried when Dr Shevlin would ask probing questions. I knew he was

doing what any good professional should do. The fact that he felt comfortable doing so is further evidence of this shared respect. Earlier I commented in this submission that you cannot change people without developing relationships with them. With Dr Shevlin's support we tried new approaches to things like literacy, discipline, behaviour and then wrote up our policies. It was this professional relationship between the Inspector and the Principal which greatly assisted school improvement in the case of St Colm's. In the late 1980's the 11-16 Curriculum Development Programme was a vehicle which facilitated the growth of excellent interactions between the Inspectorate and schools and I often think that this model or something like it would greatly enhance the role of the Department in effecting School Improvement. The School Improvement Policy document says all the right things and could certainly be used by schools as a means of evaluating progress but if The Inspectorate want to be a catalyst for change then its members have to be closely and more regularly involved in individual schools. Otherwise I fear that the policy will remain the property of DE and the schools will not come to shape the vision and make it theirs. I am convinced that Inspectors would find frequent contact with a cohort of schools much more rewarding than the present system of inspecting.

Ashfield Boys' High School

Committee for Education Inquiry 'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'

Response Form

School Name: Ashfield Boys' High School
School Sector: Controlled
Location - Rural/Urban: Belfast
Boys/Girls/Mixed: Boys
Your Name and Contact details: Mr A McMorran

Please indicate briefly below the top three practical actions in your school which address each of the following areas of Committee focus:

A. Effective School Leadership - To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

1. Recognition of the importance of Teaching and Learning as VITAL to School Effectiveness. The role of the Principal in monitoring and evaluating what goes on in the classroom eg Consistency and Expectation Exercises, quality and quantity of Classwork and Homework, having in place an effective and efficient School Learning Policy. Regular, daily visits to classes and teachers.
2. Keeping teaching time at a premium . Many of the training courses for recent Educational Initiatives are out of touch with the reality of an all boys, non-selective school. On site solutions and training courses much more effective and efficient as they are relevant. An effective Pastoral Care System means that teachers teach!!
3. The personal and professional treatment of teaching staff so that a balance can be achieved (many teachers go the extra mile with time and energy etc) between the needs of the school

population and the needs of the teachers families. This reflects in staff attendance, extra classes (both in the morning and on certain nights) etc.

B. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

1. Communication to the parents is vital eg school newspapers eight times per year, letters re routines, events, pastoral information, school academic reports, proforma re discipline, information, examinations, counselling situations and telephone calls/e-mails re all aspects of a pupils education by the right people and in the right way.
2. Contact with the Primary Schools (and not just at Open Day Process). Encouraging the use of the school facilities during and after school eg Science labs, ICT suites, 3G soccer pitch. Help and assistance with primary Schools Events, Accelerated Reading, Discos, lending of Minibuses etc. The word spreads.
3. Principals role in Community Groups 1 eg PACT, Sydenham Partnership, Educational Underachievement in working class Protestant Areas, Literacy and Numeracy Taskforce East Belfast Youth Forum. This time the school spreads the message to such things as Church Groups through Carol Services, Distribution of pensioners Christmas Parcels and School Events (musical evenings etc). A wide participation Essential.

C. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008) and potential measures to address this.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32_statistics_and_research-research_pg/32_stats_and_research_researchreports_pg/32_statistics_and_research_branch_research_reports_2008.htm]

1. Mentoring and School Counsellor. A strong mentoring scheme which identifies early underachievement but more importantly puts in place remedial action. This scheme runs from year 8-12 with strong parental input. The full time School Counsellor has a massive role to play (funded through Neighbourhood Renewals). Early identification of problems which could affect academic performance.

2. Status of Examinations and Qualifications.

Pupils in disadvantages communities do not necessarily understand the qualification infrastructure. As academic achievement has considerably increased in the school the aspiration of parents and pupils has increased. Add good teaching and learning to this and the picture/solution is clearer (your use of "relatively" successful needs discussion).

3 Literacy and Numeracy Initiatives (on site). Special Needs Initiatives. Both of these initiatives are directed at underachievement. What is amazing yet simple is that as underachievement has decreased levels of indiscipline has also decreased. Teachers now get a chance to teach.

D. Department of Education's School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

Please indicate briefly below any comments you may have on this and other relevant Departmental policies.

1. The Policy of 'Every School a Good School' was my blueprint for school improvement when I was appointed 12 years ago yet the document has only recently surfaced. The whole area of collaboration will dull the line between grammar schools and high schools due to a comprehensive agenda. The role of CASS needs to be rationalised so that on site solutions with the current teachers, curriculum managers and learning managers, in place can take place.
2. There are no 'bad' schools in our system but there are schools in need of support and guidance and maybe a rationalisation of CASS may be a positive option. Dissemination of Good Practice is only being played with at present and many schools will need the necessary tools to deal with this eg an enhanced role of C2K and a more hands on role of RTU, which I think the recent RTU Partners Initiative may address.
3. Could a rationalisation of the Inspectorate not have a part to play? Do we need to inspect 'good' schools?

**Thank you – please email to
committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk**

Ballycastle High School

Committee for Education Inquiry
'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'

Response Form

School Name Ballycastle High School
School Sector Controlled
Location - Rural/Urban Officially Urban, but mainly rural pupils
Boys/Girls/Mixed Mixed
Your Name and Contact details Mr Ian Williamson
School: 02820762254

Please indicate briefly below the top three practical actions in your school which address each of the following areas of Committee focus:

A. Effective School Leadership - To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

1. Setting and communicating high standards of teaching, and achievement for both teachers and pupils. Promoting a culture of high expectations of success from all pupils of all abilities.

2. Fostering a work ethic in the school among the pupil body. Closely monitoring standards of work effort on a monthly basis for each pupil and sharing the results with pupils and their parents. Frequently communicated to provide immediate feedback to pupils on their progress and allowing parents to feel part of the achievement process. Hard working pupils are rewarded – 'there is no drug like success'.

3. Developing a collegiate approach by the staff to whole school issues such as discipline, extra-curricular enrichment activities, and raising standards means that the school works as a team for the good of its pupils.

4. Maintaining effective discipline in the school avoids many time-consuming problems of a pastoral/behavioural nature which dissipate teachers' energy; frustrate both pupils and their parents and which dilute the education process. These discipline standards come from the top and need to be implemented in a firm, fair, consistent and compassionate way.

B. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

1. Parents are encouraged to keep in regular contact with the school. There is a proactive pastoral system in the school, parents know who to contact for advice or to raise a concern. This approach is emphasised in Year 8 and maintained throughout the school. The quality and commitment of Year Tutors is paramount to a successful discharge of the pastoral relationship with parents.

2. The school benefits immeasurably from the Extended Schools funding. A wide range of extracurricular activities are available – not all of which are taken by teachers – which enriches pupil education and helps engage parents with the school.

3. Ballycastle High is a rural school (despite DE's insistence that it is an urban school when it comes to funding post-16 courses) I don't think there are the same opportunities to host for example, the local health centre, Probus Club, evening classes etc that exist in an urban setting. However, the school does engage with the local community in relation to sports teams making use of premises for training etc, local amateur dramatic groups hosting performances, youth club, summer camps and occasional one off events which occur from time to time.

4. Parent interviews in Year 12 after mocks are a very useful tool to involve parents in the examination success of their children and it is also a good opportunity to discuss career choices. This makes parents feel that the school has the best interests of their child at heart.

C. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008) and potential measures to address this.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32_statistics_and_research-research_pg/32_stats_and_research_researchreports_pg/32_statistics_and_research_branch_research_reports_2008.htm]

1. Monitoring of the statistics and bench marking data is necessary to reveal extent of any problem. Also, to promote and develop a culture of self-reflection and school improvement by making effective use of the data that is available.
2. We have in the past offered supportive literacy and numeracy classes to pupils showing underachievement in the first three years. Also, the work currently underway in developing the use of Cross Curricular Skills for Levels of Progression does have the potential to further support literacy and numeracy, within and across the curriculum.
3. MIDYIS and YELLIS - Standardised testing will help identify pupils who experience difficulties with basic skills and remedial action will become increasingly more effective as the years pass and current systems of support and identification become increasingly embedded in school life.
4. The curricular choice offered at KS 4 has been expanded and hopefully now includes subjects likely to be attractive to boys.

D. Department of Education's School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

Please indicate briefly below any comments you may have on this and other relevant Departmental policies.

1. The 'every school a good school' policy and 'together towards improvement' – especially the latter - are good publications since they spell out what good practice looks like on the ground.
2. It must be recognised that there are a large number of initiatives and policy documents which have to be read, understood and acted upon by principals. Those who are in post are 'burning out' at an alarming rate and many of those who are not in post are reluctant to take on the responsibility; hence the shortage of good candidates.
3. The booklets that accompany every initiative, each with many pages of information and on occasions not a great deal of real content are time consuming to read. Sometimes more significant and important aspects can prove difficult to find. Effective practical support is essential from external agencies eg CASS to support effective and co-ordinated implementation of these strategies. There is a real danger of overwhelming staff with information which can create confusion. Gaining and retaining staff ownership of initiative implementation is essential to sustaining a positive working culture in school.
4. The quality of support for schools from RTU is important. The Specialist Schools initiative is a case in point. The application process for S.S. was overly complex and convoluted. ETI inspection reports now admit that good practice is not being transferred across the school from lead departments. Although, recent workshops have been useful in disseminating good practice between schools. I think our idea of an 'All Round School' is a particularly useful strategy where we aim to move standards forward in all subjects across the curriculum. This has resulted in relatively consistent improvement. The assistance provide to schools is particularly important at a time of significant staffing changes within a school. Anything which eases succession planning and transition in relation to leadership/teaching changes within a school is important.

**Thank you – please email to
committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk**

Presentation by Ballycastle High School to Education Committee on 2nd February 2011 at St Pius X College, Magherafelt.

Summary notes:

- General introduction on school background.
- Importance of strong school vision relating to shaping the future and resources to support implementation.
- Significance and impact of relative geographic isolation.
- Impact of school ethos and being an all ability non-selective school.
- The role of the school is reflecting the social make-up of the local community and the role played in promoting social and cross-community cohesion.

Leading Learning and Teaching:

- Importance of a culture of high expectation and achievement.
- The need to communicate frequently and effectively with parents in relation to pupil performance.
- Role played by collegiality within the school.
- The centrality of a pro-active pastoral care regime within the school.

School engagement with parents and the community:

- Importance of building a sense of partnership with parents.
- The key role played by Year Tutors.
- Effective monitoring of pastoral issues and frequent engagement with support agencies.
- Benefits of Extended Schools funding in supporting community involvement and school improvement.
- Effective Parents' Association and the importance of developing social and cultural events for family and community involvement.
- Engagement with local primary schools.
- Relationship with other community stakeholders.

Addressing under achievement in a disadvantaged community:

- Securing accountability and the role of effective monitoring.
- Supporting Literacy and Numeracy.
- Building a culture of effective use of data to identify pupils at risk of underachievement and to support them.
- Increasing the provision of a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum.
- The importance of effective external support for the school.

- The need for adequate school buildings and refurbishment.

Department of Education School Improvement Policy

- Focus on literacy and numeracy in school.
- Issues relating to developing leadership.
- Importance of support for Special Educational Needs.
- Supporting governors and principal in their roles.

Ballymoney High School

Committee for Education Inquiry

'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'

Response Form

School Name Ballymoney High School

School Sector Controlled (Secondary)

Location - Rural/Urban Small Town/Rural

Boys/Girls/Mixed Co-educational

Your Name and Contact details Rodney Scott (Principal)

Ballymoney High School

17 Garryduff Road

Ballymoney BT53 7AN

Tel: 028 2766 2361

Fax: 028 2766 6792

E-mail: rscott@ballymoneyhigh.org.uk

Please indicate briefly below the top three practical actions in your school which address each of the following areas of Committee focus:

A. Effective School Leadership - To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

1. Open and participative management structures and practice in which staff are actively informed and involved in forming and delivering the key issues identified in the School Development Plan. Staff need and deserve to know the rationale behind and actions required in the implementation of development issues. They need to be enthused, engaged and enabled to deliver the vision/aims – to understand how their department based work contributes to achieving the wider school plan – also given opportunity to be involved in Middle Management Committees and Working Parties which spearhead specific developments. We organise the latter annually in school and they meet to plan and progress issues throughout the year. Also the Principal and VP organise a round of individual interviews with each teacher to allow discussion/conversation about any departmental or personal issues current in school.

2. Senior management play an active, practical role alongside staff in implementing initiatives and provide necessary resources and support. They should provide overview, structure and personal input in a Plan-Do-Review approach to development issues and this should operate at whole school and departmental level. There needs to be a real sense of shared/collegial

responsibility and endeavour. Good leaders "know, show and go the way". Our members of SMC lead and serve on all middle management committees and working parties.

3. Senior Management provide strategic thinking and thorough planning to identify, summarise and present key issues for improvement to the wider staff, who are then more ready to "pick up the issues" and take them forward with purpose and value ie to initiate the idea and prepare the ground on which others are then expected and ready to work. SMC attend relevant Inset and Conferences to keep themselves abreast of developments which they then disseminate to staff.

B. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

1. An annual Parents' Consultation for every year group of pupils which allows parents and pupils to meet with staff and discuss relevant issues of mutual concern. These occasions should address concerns and celebrate progress. They need to be honest and open exchanges. It is good to engender a sense of "family" within the school as a community of people.

2. Regular means of communication and contact between home and school must operate throughout the year. There needs to be a genuine sense of "approachability" from staff, twinned with mutual respect in working through issues. Telephone calls, letters, news-sheets, homework diary notes and website information are all of value in this. Also the direct personal contact of interviews on request.

3. Facilitate community use of the school campus and engage with the local community through curricular, extra-curricular and charitable activities and organisations – also to use the local media to maintain the profile of the school and its work/achievements across the local community. Support links with local PS also valuable. These help school not to appear isolated/closed to its own neighbourhood.

C. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008) and potential measures to address this.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32_statistics_and_research-research_pg/32_stats_and_research_researchreports_pg/32_statistics_and_research_branch_research_reports_2008.htm]

1. A relevant suite of courses and qualifications on offer at KS4 to cover the range of abilities and interests among pupils. We believe GCSE should be the main qualification of study with a good range of academic, practical and vocational subjects on offer at this level. To supplement GCSE we use qualifications such as Occupational Studies, COPE, Key Skills and BTec Nationals. Relevant CEAG is also important to facilitate choice and on-going commitment in studies. Suitability and interest encourage study in chosen subjects.

2. Target Setting & Getting and Mentoring approaches help staff and pupils use progress data and goals to raise interest, ambition and achievement. These bring focus and self-evaluation, realism and ambition, challenge and support to work and progress. There is a structure of setting, working towards and reviewing targets, which is used by pupils and subject departments

across the course of the two years' study at KS4. Computer databases, personal reflection sheets, monitoring progress forms, group tutorials and individual interviews are all employed. Mentoring brings a personal support element to this process where staff work with selected small groups of pupils. We have also introduced a whole school credit reward system with credits gained for positive work and behaviour leading to a range of "cash-in" tangible rewards which pupil representatives helped decide upon.

3. Good relationships in the classroom and a variety of learning methods help engage pupils with their lessons. Patience and persistence too are so necessary across a two year course – especially for the "less inclined", many of whom are often boys. You need to challenge and encourage in the right time and manner and also demonstrate that you want them to succeed. This is the personality of the teacher alongside the professionalism – it is too a matter of school ethos and a desire set down from senior management. We have recently organised a series of final revision sessions in the closing weeks of year 12 and on-going revision classes (voluntary) during study leave in advance of each final exam. This facilitates engagement and support between pupils and teachers in the vital closing weeks of study and exam preparation. Within the English department efforts are made to choose and use reading material and novels with appeal to boys. We also open the library every lunchtime for access to computers and books. The school lays strong emphasis on pastoral support and has a well developed taught programme of Learning for Life & Work at KS3 and KS4 which engages pupils of all ages and abilities with personal, inter-personal and life skills issues.

D. Department of Education's School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

Please indicate briefly below any comments you may have on this and other relevant Departmental policies.

1. ESaGS is a worthy document, including a rightful inclusion of pastoral and school ethos matters alongside curricular provision – the aims of the Entitlement Framework are equally worthy and as a school we meet currently the balance of courses envisaged. Our chief concern about DE policy is that it can appear remote and theoretical – as do Ministerial calls for ever higher performance figures based upon "bald statistics". The performance statistics tables are arranged in broad categories which mask significant differences among groups of schools in terms of socio-economic background or examination entry practices across the pupil cohort in any single school. Improvement does not magically arise from the issue of calls or documents or special conferences, by which schools may feel more criticised than encouraged. Practical resourcing is the key – this means time, materials and personnel. Literacy and Numeracy are rightly identified as key areas for improvement. Would not the deployment of centrally funded support teachers for these key skills into schools whose pupil cohort are evidenced as having social or learning disadvantage bring much more tangible and immediate reward than endless sums expended on research and strategy guides? DE might better "step down" from grand strategy and "build up" practical approaches at school based level.

2. As a school we recently had occasion to meet with the Minister on a school new build issue and in response to her raising the issue of standards and levels of achievement we submitted a simple response letter, a copy of which is attached as it may add further relevant ideas to your brief. We would suggest also that to develop your research enquiries further you might find it helpful to deepen discussion on points of interest through direct discussion with relevant schools.

3. Thank you for this opportunity to share ideas.

**Thank you – please email to
committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk**

Dear Minister

On behalf of our party from Ballymoney High School I wish to place on record our thanks and appreciation for the opportunity to meet with yourself and some officials in Parliament Buildings on Tuesday 30th November 2010. We found the discussions useful and are taking steps already in response.

Contact is being initiated with NEELB to progress the necessary update of the Economic Appraisal and discuss further design steps pertinent to advancing our planned new school build. Regarding potential post-16 provision, the parameters outlined will be shared at the next meeting of the Ballymoney Learning Partnership which will include representation from NEELB.

On the issue of raising standards, I repeat our shared commitment to improving the experience and achievement of our young people, which requires consistent and earnest practical measures at school based level to give meaningful effect to a broader and sometimes amorphous strategic policy and statistical context. Such efforts have been and continue to be made in Ballymoney High School and we are proud, though not complacent, about our raised standards of achievement in recent years.

As stated on the day, with further added for your information, these measures include:

- reviewing and keeping relevant the curriculum offer (we provide the full EF through our own resources as well as contributing to our Learning Partnership)
- extending the range of qualifications undertaken appropriate to the ability levels within the school (though GCSE will remain our primary qualification for study and we have purposely chosen not to engage in the mass entering of pupils for other equivalents simply to raise statistical outcomes)
- promoting Literacy and Numeracy by practical classroom approaches and timetabled teacher support time
- underpinning and raising individual performance through data tracking, target setting, pupil mentoring and pastoral support
- developing appropriate banding of class groups at KS3 & KS4
- commencing a programme of additional revision classes prior to and during the main examination schedule each summer
- facilitating good practice sharing within the school and establishing a practice of Plan-Do-Review

We believe we are well informed as senior management and across the teaching staff regarding current good practice, with a consistent record of attendance at INSET. Indeed we have presented at recent NEELB curriculum meetings as well as participating in pilot schemes with CCEA and engaging with PMB & RTU conferences on sharing good practice. Clearly we remain willing to attend future conferences and share with and learn from fellow and comparable schools as you intimated.

We appreciate your call for yet higher levels of achievement drawn from statistical analysis and comparisons and expressed in strategic policy direction. It is our goal too, but from a more immediate and practical school based perspective. Comparable schools do present different

levels of achievement and we can and should learn from one another. Performance figures and practical approaches are inter-dependent and school self-evaluation and collaboration contribute to school improvement. In this we concur and are active.

However, we feel it is fair to say that the broad use of statistics can mask school particulars. Within the non-grammar school category, there are significant differences across schools in terms of size and pupil numbers, levels of ability, personal and community factors, breadth of curriculum offered, policy and practice in relation to GCSE entry or the widespread use of equivalent qualifications, all of which justify a "tempering" of direct statistical comparisons. The non-grammar school category includes schools with grammar streams. Even within a school, each year's pupil cohort will differ in personality and performance. These points we offer as realities not excuses. Where schools demonstrate a trend of improvement we see encouragement and further practical support within and beyond the school as the means to recognise the efforts of staff and sustain and take further the improvements.

We share the vision and ambition of ESAGS and remain determined to give practical expression to it and other quality indicators as in Together Towards Improvement. We would concur also with your reference to the "over generous" funding of post-16, a reappraisal of which could benefit 11-16 schools like ourselves as well as the Primary sector. Some redirection of funding from certain research initiatives and consultancies might also be appropriate. Direct ideas and resourcing into schools will always yield more tangible benefit in the classroom, hence our suggestion regarding the deployment of Literacy support teachers into schools whose TSN or KS2 intake levels justify this resource.

In conclusion Minister, we thank you again for your time and the clarifications received regarding the two main issues we had opportunity to raise with you. The raising of standards by the effective combination of strategic direction and practical, well resourced school based measures, remains our shared goal.

Belfast Model School for Girls

Committee for Education Inquiry
'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'

Response Form

School Name Belfast Model School for Girls
School Sector Controlled
Location - Rural/Urban Urban
Boys/Girls/Mixed Girls
Your Name and Contact details Mr Johnny Graham

Please indicate briefly below the top three practical actions in your school which address each of the following areas of Committee focus:

A. Effective School Leadership - To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

1. Ensuring that the Senior Leadership Team is hands-on, visible, approachable and works closely with all school teams. Also that they have clear roles and responsibilities and receive induction into these roles. They need to be given time to carry out their whole-school roles and

are delegated responsibility with accountability. They are given the support required to try out new ideas without blame if things don't work out as long as they learn from the experience.

2. Distributed leadership throughout the school in all areas both teaching and non-teaching to ensure everyone has some leadership responsibilities to give ownership to the staff. Again they must be supported and given any professional development required to enable them to carry out their duties effectively

3. Strategic Leadership and planning is vital. Knowing what the vision of the school is and how the school is planning to achieve its goals. Roles, responsibilities etc need to be clear for everyone and success criteria must be transparent so that progress can be monitored and evaluated regularly as part of the School Development Planning process.

B. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

1. Providing opportunities for achieving qualifications for all staff, especially non-teaching, parents and community eg Shankill Womens Centre both during and after school. Having Community Facilities such as Electronic Village Hall, Early Years Unit etc. Also close links with local businesses in areas of careers, role models etc.

2. Positive Engagement with feeder Primary Schools eg Transition activities, Science activities, Dance Festival, ICT opportunities etc. Full Service School developments are extremely helpful as they allow resources to be shared with Primary Schools and allows them to access activities etc which they could not do so by themselves due to their size

3. Extra- curricular activities after school and provision of transport to take pupils home after these (big problem in North Belfast due to health and safety walking home through different areas) eg Homework Club, Film Club, Sports Clubs, Music, Drama and Computer Clubs.

C. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008) and potential measures to address this.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32_statistics_and_research-research_pg/32_stats_and_research_researchreports_pg/32_statistics_and_research_branch_research_reports_2008.htm]

1. The Vision of Achievement for All and creating a school environment which facilitates this so that it can become a reality. Additional Support Mechanisms eg Full-time School Counsellor, Nurse, Behaviour Mentor, Full Service School etc

2. Student Voice with a Student Voice Leadership team who are listened to in all areas of the school including Teaching and Learning, Curriculum and Pastoral – not just a cosmetic exercise! Literacy/ Numeracy Days. Self-Evaluation at all levels.

3. Whole-school pupil mentoring from Year 8 after baselining abilities and identifying underachievement. Use of value-added measures such as Midyis and Yellis to provide data which

can be used to inform progress throughout school. Use of ICT to support learning in all subject areas.

D. Department of Education's School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

Please indicate briefly below any comments you may have on this and other relevant Departmental policies.

1. Need to be data rich to make use of data effectively however benchmarking data must be contextualised far more to give meaningful comparisons and school data must be accurate eg include all equivalencies not just GCSE . Extended School funding vital for Homework Club, Easter Revision Classes, Coursework Clinic etc to give students in disadvantaged areas the same opportunities as those with normal parental support in more affluent and informed communities where this support is taken for granted. Education Maintenance Allowances must be a priority or else talented students will not return for Level 3 qualifications and will be lost to the system as they will drift out of education. This would be a catastrophic waste and do great harm to N.I. Classroom Assistant support for a growing number of pupils with special educational needs both learning and behaviour. Need for more resources for Educational/Pupil Support Units for 1 to 1 withdrawal sessions.

2. Better Staff Development to equip staff with the skills to push up standards. This needs to be taken by practising teachers for their colleagues using the expertise of classroom teachers to share good practice with their peers. The days of CASS are over as the CASS officers are not in the classroom day and daily and do not have the credibility to drive up standards in teaching and learning. It has to be by "schools for schools" with schools given the resources to free staff for sharing of good practice. Also need to create a different model of teacher training with more time spent actually in schools eg teaching schools as with teaching hospitals.

3. Need open and supportive relationship with ETI to continue with ETI being a critical friend to schools. Need to have a structured Middle Management Training system to fill the gap between EPD and PQH with PQH only for those very close to headship, Present PQH is creating problems with far too many graduates nowhere near headship and lots of trainers who have never been on Senior Management never mind being Principals!! Need far more vocational curriculum development in order to drive this area of curriculum.

**Thank you – please email to
committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk**

Committee for Education's Inquiry Into 'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'

From our response which has already been submitted prior to the Christmas holidays, I would like to highlight the main points we, as a school, felt were relevant to the focus of the Inquiry.

- A hands on, visible, approachable and effective School Leadership Team with clear roles and responsibilities and time given to them to carry out their whole-school responsibilities. They must be delegated responsibility with accountability and given the support to try out new ideas.

- Distributed leadership throughout all areas of school both teaching and non-teaching to give staff ownership of school development. Again, as stated, they must be supported and given appropriate professional development (competence and confidence to do the job).
- Strategic Leadership and Planning is vital. All stakeholders MUST be well acquainted with the School Vision (Achievement for All) and how the school plans to achieve its goals (School Development Plan). Clear roles, responsibilities, success criteria and well-defined monitoring and evaluation strategies need to be in place.
- Very close effective relationships between school and community, local Business, Feeder Primary Schools. Full Service Extended School developments are extremely helpful as they allow us to share resources with our partners for mutual benefit. (ensuring no duplication through close liaison)
- Extra-Curricular Activities and transport home after these (North Belfast problem). Holistic development of students.
- Additional Pupil Support Mechanisms to reduce barriers to learning and give all pupils the opportunity to achieve their potential eg full-time School Counsellor(PAID FOR OUT OF SCHOOL BUDGET ALLOCATION), Learning Mentor etc. Needs-led, child centred approach.
- Wide range of subject options at KS4 and Post-16 both academic and vocational eg Levels 2 & 3 Early Years Studies, Applied ICT, Travel & Tourism, Level 2 Hair & Beauty etc.
- Emphasis on Literacy and Numeracy to enable all pupils to access the curriculum. Small group coaching for those pupils who require extra support (numbers growing each year). Very expensive in time and staffing but vital intervention.
- Use of data both raw and value-added to baseline pupils, identify underachievement and calculate residuals. After identification of baseline measures then to use data for tracking pupil progress over and within Key Stages. Development of a Data-Rich school environment.
- Use of ICT to support learning in all subject areas and the use of the School Virtual Learning Environment to improve pupil achievement throughout the school eg on-line courses, on-line marking etc.
- Need to continue Education Maintenance Allowances, Extended School funding, SEN support for growing number of pupils with SEN.
- Need to make benchmarking data far more contextualised to give meaningful comparisons and include all Level 1, 2 & 3 equivalences in benchmarking information.
- Need to focus on better staff development to equip all staff with the skills to raise standards – change focus to use practising teachers (along Specialist Schools Sharing of Good Practice lines) 'for Schools, by Schools'. Times have moved on from the old CASS model which is no longer fit for purpose as the CASS officers, through no fault of their own, have lost credibility as they are not in the classroom day and daily and, although they have performed a very important role in the past, times have changed and the focus on Staff development needs to be on the schools themselves and not on a centralised body like CASS. Also teacher training needs to develop along the lines of 'teaching hospitals' with 'teaching schools' being established to develop student teachers.
- Need to continue developing an open and supportive relationship with ETI (critical friends to school).
- Structured Middle Management Training System required to fill the gap between EPD and PQH in order to improve succession management.

- Need to have a strong Student Voice working alongside School Leadership Teams in areas such as What makes a Good Lesson – (Student Leaders, Learning Partners, Student Researchers etc).
- Need to strengthen Parental involvement in order to enhance the value of education so that attendance improves, support for School improves, practical support for homework, revision etc improves.
- Need to positively resource schools who are working with pupils from disadvantaged communities as the biggest factor in achieving success is family and community support for and value of education. Long term problem, generational, very apparent in a school like ours. Very labour-intensive work – Wide-ranging, long-term negative problems of pupils who disengage from school – economic and social negative effects if we do not engage them and give them the opportunity to gain qualifications.
- Need for well-structured positive alternative education provision for those who are not suited to mainstream education. Better for them and also better for those in school whose progress can be disrupted by time spent dealing with pupils who would achieve far better in a non-mainstream environment.
- Schools work extremely hard for all students to achieve however external influences are very often unhelpful and create constraints on what could be achieved eg
- AWPU funding formula (competition not collaboration)
- Current Impasse on Transfer Primary ? Post-Primary with grammar schools taking pupils who normally would have gone to non-grammar sector.
- Amount of scarce resources wasted on non-essential bureaucracy, duplication of services and not going to front-line school services.
- Far too many schools (Sustainable Schools Policy)?
- Lack of strategic planning/implementation of strategic planning.(Schools cannot make long-term plans)
- Short-termism which can do more harm than good on many occasions.

Schools need to have a stable environment in which to develop and schools serving disadvantaged communities need long-term support to overcome the problems they face. This may mean extra resources but the benefits accruing to society as a whole if these schools are successful far outweigh the costs.

Brownlow Integrated College

Committee for Education Inquiry

'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'

Response Form

School Name Brownlow Integrated College

School Sector Controlled Integrated

Location - Rural/Urban Craigavon

Boys/Girls/Mixed Mixed

Your Name and Contact details Stephen Creber

Please indicate briefly below the top three practical actions in your school which address each of the following areas of Committee focus:

A. Effective School Leadership - To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

1. To ensure that the college has a vision for the future that all members of the school community feel that they are part of. A clear school development plan that enables the vision to be put into practice.
2. Ensuring robust systems of monitoring and evaluating are in place. In other words, developing a culture of self evaluation and sharing good practice throughout the school.
3. Working to develop a school culture and curriculum which takes into account the richness and diversity of the school's community. Playing an active part in the Area Learning Community and working in a positive way with all stake holders. (It is very difficult to pick three out as there are many other equally important factors).

B. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

1. Very strong links with feeder primary schools
 - Run STEM days for local primary schools
 - Through extended schools, run a number of transition afternoons for P7 pupils along with our neighbours Lismore.
2. Active engagement in:
 - Craigavon Area Learning Community
 - Brownlow Neighbourhood Renewal
 - Celebrating Learning Event
 - PSNI Schools Forum
 - Sharing Good Practice with others in the area
 - Using various agencies to support our pastoral work – PIPS, Love for Life, drugs, alcohol etc
 - Open door policy for parents to come into school
 - Regular parents evenings
 - Parent teacher association

C. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008) and potential measures to address this.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32_statistics_and_research-research_pg/32_stats_and_research_researchreports_pg/32_statistics_and_research_branch_research_reports_2008.htm]

1. In senior schools years 11 and 12 we have developed a pupil mentoring policy which keeps a very sharp focus on every pupil's progression and attainment against set targets. Parents, pupils and staff are all involved and on board

2. Making sure that the range of courses on offer meet the needs of pupils and the employers in the community. In particular engagement in collaborative courses with other schools is vitally important in enhancing the curriculum offer. Also engagement with Young Enterprise and Sentinus Programmes for pupils is very important.

3. Very strong pastoral system in the school which provides a level of support (T.L.C.) that is missing for many pupils – student council, peer mediators, prefects, PTA, extended schools all play a part.

D. Department of Education's School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

Please indicate briefly below any comments you may have on this and other relevant Departmental policies.

1. E.S.A.G.S is a good policy document and one I would find little fault with: literacy and numeracy to the fore. The problem however, is that schools have too many changes occurring at once, and very often the tail is wagging the dog rather than the other way round. Concern however on focus on GCSE grades rather than added value and greater recognition of other external awards is required!

2. Together Towards Improvement – very good document which enables schools to self evaluate practice.

3. The needs for decisions to be made with regard to:

- Education & Skills Authority
- Transfer

4. Other issues I feel need looked at are contracts that schools are forced into for maintenance and purchase of materials which often are not best value!

**Thank you – please email to
committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk**

Castlederg High School

Committee for Education Inquiry
'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'

Response Form

School Name Castlederg High School

School Sector Controlled

Location - Rural/Urban Rural

Boys/Girls/Mixed Mixed

Your Name and Contact details Simon Mowbray, Acting Vice Principal

Please indicate briefly below the top three practical actions in your school which address each of the following areas of Committee focus:

A. Effective School Leadership - To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

1. Vision and ethos – The Senior leaders and managers within the our school have a very clear understanding of their responsibilities to provide a high quality of teaching and learning as well as a clear and strategic direction for all members of our staff. This is led and directed by the Principal and Senior leaders and is supported by our Board of Governors. We are completely focused on carrying forward the process of improvement, especially in terms of teaching and learning and pupil outcomes. Our vision and ethos are based around tolerance, respect, the promotion of self esteem and high expectations. All members of the school community are given an active and positive role to play and the management and development of the curricular and pastoral provision within the school focus on this vision. We feel we have effective channels of communication between all our stakeholders and that we all work collectively to ensure the highest standards are achieved.

2. School Development Plan. The school has a very effective school development plan which provides a detailed progression pathway for the next three years. It specifically focuses on pupil attainment including the development of literacy and numeracy, learning support, the implementation of the new Northern Ireland Curriculum and the Entitlement Framework, Extended Schools provision and the development of a Health Promoting School. Clear and realistic targets for improvement have been set and professional development opportunities are available for staff to share and learn from other colleagues. Teachers are given the opportunity to share in the leadership of the school and our school leaders monitor and evaluate our outcomes, policies and procedures annually, including our school development plan. This has been verified recently by two survey inspections by ETI.

3. Staffing and Resourcing - Our school is just over 50 years old but we pride ourselves on the very positive and inviting learning environment in which we work. The available accommodation has been meticulously maintained and resourced and it fully meets the curricular and pastoral needs of the pupils. We have an excellent teaching and support staff that have the necessary expertise to fulfil our ambitions. They are given the opportunities to partake in and share their professional development with each other, especially through INSET and PRSD. All staff are kept up to date with curricular, pastoral and management developments and are deployed effectively, utilising their specialism and interests. Our staff have a regular opportunity to monitor and evaluate the impact of their development through PRSD, INSET evaluation and regular department and group meetings. We are very proud of the commitment and loyalty that all our staff show to the school and our pupils. This certainly contributes to our positive ethos.

B. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

Raising the profile. Castlederg High School is the largest employer within the area with over 70 employees. The school is viewed and held in very high regard by the local community. The only pupils who leave the catchment area to access their education elsewhere are those pupils who choose to attend Grammar schools. Annually we have six to eight pupils who attain the top grades in the transfer grade who still choose to attend our school. Since the year 2000 we have actively sought to raise the profile of the school. We changed the school uniform and crest and developed our public relations to highlight the positive achievements of our pupils. This has resulted in an increase in enrolment from 364 in 1999 to 476 in 2010. The school is used regularly by external agencies and community groups, we have developed excellent links with our local and feeder primary schools, with nearly 100 primary pupils a week attending after schools clubs in sport, music, arts, crafts, drama and ICT and over 500 people a week use our synthetic pitches. This has been facilitated through Extended Schools and PEACE III funding.

Involvement of parents. We particularly try to involve our parents in the running of the school. Approximately 70 per cent of our parents would attend parents/teacher meetings and parents are engaged in the major decision making in the school. This was most evident recently in the development of our behaviour management policies. As a result we find that our parents are very supportive of the pastoral system, with very few cases of parents opposing or challenging decisions. Parents receive a wealth of information about the school through newsletters and our reports meet the guidelines outlined by DENI so that parents gain progress reports not only on their child's subject or learning areas but also on cross curricular skills, thinking skills and capabilities and their interests and areas for development.

Community Links. We have excellent links with outside and statutory agencies especially those providing educational and pastoral support. Local businesses regularly support pupil work placements, careers events and curriculum development. The school is an active member of the Derg Mourne Learning Community. Our Principal was the inaugural Chairman and a member of our Senior Management team was released two days a week to act as Coordinator for two years. We have also acted as lead school in our Extended Schools Cluster for four years and have attained external funding to promote community involvement in the school. This included a £1m grant from the Big Lottery fund and £57,000 from PEACE III to promote shared spaces in the local community. All of the links have helped foster a very positive persona and active role of the school in the local community.

C. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008) and potential measures to address this.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32_statistics_and_research-research_pg/32_stats_and_research_researchreports_pg/32_statistics_and_research_branch_research_reports_2008.htm]

Our school has a very caring ethos that shows a very pliable commitment to the welfare of our pupils and staff. The pastoral care system undoubtedly supports day to day teaching and learning and ultimately, pupil outcomes. We strive to raise pupil esteem and have very high expectations of all our pupils, taking cognisance of their abilities. We are very familiar with the abilities of our pupils and use data effectively for each of our classes and especially for SEN, LAC and mentored pupils. We have developed an excellent personalised learning programme for Year

12 pupils who are identified as underachieving or at risk of not achieving 5 grade C's or above at A*-C. In particular we have focused on pupils who will not gain their 5 GCSEs including English and Maths and those who receive Free School Meals. Each department annually analyses and reviews its performance and suggest improvements that will increase pupil attainment the following year. Consequently, all our departments are attaining above or similar to the NI average for non selective schools. This is due to the endeavour and commitment of our staff, the work ethic of the children and the support provided from parents. We particularly feel, evidenced by lesson observations, that the learning experiences of the pupils are of a high quality, matched to the interests and abilities of our pupils.

Over the years our school has tailored and adapted our curriculum provision to meet the needs of our learners. At Key Stage Three we have embedded the key concepts of the thinking skills and personal capabilities, the cross curricular skills and assessment for learning techniques. This has provided a foundation for progression into Key Stage Four. Our GCSE options process operates on a policy of free choice. Our careers provision encourages pupils and parents to take into account pupil strengths, labour market information and to strike a healthy balance between academic and vocational courses. We have developed a very successful alternative education programme for our less able pupils and more recently have introduced BTEC qualifications in Agriculture, Engineering and Construction to meet the needs of male pupils who sometimes struggle in the more traditional GCSE courses. These courses were selected not only to meet the needs of our pupils, but also to take into account local need and the priority skills areas identified by local government in the Programme for Government NI. All of our courses ensure that our pupils can progress into employment, further study in Sixth Form or further and higher education at another educational establishment. Over the last number of years the percentage of pupils attaining 5 GCSEs A*-C and A*-G has been significantly above the NI average for similar schools

A whole school approach to pupil attainment is crucial. In the years 1999/2000 and 2000/2001 our main focus was on the underachievement of boys. This work extended into differentiated learning. Since then we have largely bucked the trend in the underachievement of boys. In 2009, 65% of our boys attained 5A*-C at GCSE in comparison to 68% of girls. Last year the boys actually attained 65% in comparison to 62% of girls. Our school development plan has a specific section focussing on pupil outcomes. This is modelled into classroom practice through departments and is assisted by our learning support department. More recently we have ensured that the main agenda item on all of our department and senior management meetings focuses on the quality of teaching and learning.

D. Department of Education's School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

Please indicate briefly below any comments you may have on this and other relevant Departmental policies.

The case for change outlined in Every School A Good School is compelling and it is absolutely crucial that it is embedded in every school across Northern Ireland. We particularly agree with the characteristics of a good school, many of which form the essence of our vision and ethos. We firmly believe that the interests of pupils rather than institutions must be at the centre of efforts to improve educational achievement and that improvement comes first and foremost through high quality teaching from committed and professional teachers. We are particularly pleased that the new Together Towards Improvement document matches the ideals of ESaGS and provide excellent quality indicators on which we can measure our success. The policy

document is clear and concise and provides a clear route map to allow schools to improve their performance.

We believe the Entitlement Framework is a crucial part of young people's education at Key Stage 4 and post-16 and acts as an effective counter balance to a prescribed curriculum. We look upon the requirement to offer greater breadth and balance in the courses and pathways available as a challenge and a real opportunity to raise standards and reduce levels of underachievement. The flexibility to offer courses specifically designed to meet the needs of our pupils and the local economy is much appreciated. We have managed to achieve the 'target' at GCSE level and will continue to work towards a broad and balanced curriculum at Post 16 level. We believe of equal importance to the range of courses is the coherence of the offer which should enable young people to choose from a package of courses that leads to progression to further education, higher education, training and employment.

Promoting Positive Behaviour – Pastoral care in Schools. This document was invaluable in helping shape our behaviour management policy; the feedback from parents, staff and pupils was organised into "rights" and "responsibilities" as outlined in the guidelines.

**Thank you – please email to
committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk**

CASTLEDERG HIGH SCHOOL

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(Hons)

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23rd February 2011

Mr Mervyn Storey MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Education
Room 242, Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw, Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3XX

Dear Mervyn,

I have enclosed some of the power point presentations and resources used by Mrs Sandra Cashel (SENCo) and the School Development team in staff training for use of differentiated teaching in 2005. It was monitored and evaluated through the PRSD process.

To ensure the success of this approach, a teacher must get to know each individual pupil's ability by accessing CAT results (tested in YR 8 and YR 10) and reading ages provided by the Learning Support team. It is crucial to match the reading level of written material to the reading with understanding level of the pupil. We stream our classes, yet within these streamed groups there can be a wide range of reading ages. (e.g. in our present 8B1 reading ages range from 8 years to 11.6 years so resources have to be devised to match the reading age of the pupil.)

The training also involved the staff being made aware of what a pupil with a reading age of 8 could understand. Examples were given of appropriate and inappropriate language for a variety of age groups. Staff were shown how to organise their lesson so that attention is not drawn to pupils who are using these resources.

Finally, differentiated resources produced for the 2 PRSD observations were compiled into 2 booklets. All staff received copies of these booklets so good practice could be shared.

f I hope this gives you an idea of what "differentiated" teaching means. Once it was introduced in 2005, it was embedded in the school's teaching and learning delivery through departmental policy.

Please contact me if the school can be of any further help.

Yours sincerely

Anne Moore (Mrs)
Acting Principal

EDUCATION GMM

23 FEB 2011

RECEIVED

Western Education and Library Board

Learning Support

Meeting the Needs of Pupils with Learning Difficulties

Identification

Children with learning difficulties have usually been identified at their Primary School and this information is made available at the beginning of the school year. However, *it is important to be alert to the characteristics of learning difficulties and report any concerns that arise during the on going monitoring and evaluation of pupil progress* (Stage 1CoP).

An awareness of the characteristics exhibited by pupils with learning difficulties also helps us to understand a specific pupil's needs within the classroom and assists us in planning to meet them.

Characteristics of Pupils with Learning Difficulties

A number of the following will be evident:

- slowness in picking up new ideas/learning to read/number concepts
- an inability to remember new skills without constant reinforcement and repetition – to the point of over-learning
- difficulty in absorbing abstract ideas/problem solving
- a lack of imagination
- poor listening skills and difficulty in following instructions addressed to the class as a whole
- poor concentration and a short attention span
- immature speech/mumbling
- a limited vocabulary
- problems remembering what they have seen and heard
- poor co-ordination, affecting both gross and fine motor skills
- poorly formed handwriting

Planning to Teach Pupils with Learning Difficulties

The principles of Inclusion and Differentiation must underpin classroom practice:

1. include the pupil in the lesson ie. the focus/topic of the lesson must be the same for all pupils in the class and all pupils must be given the opportunity to feedback after an activity
2. match the task to the capabilities of the pupil – see the lesson through their eyes.

Strategies to Support Pupils with Learning Difficulties

- establish what the pupil knows and work from there
- allow the pupil to work at his/her own pace
- set tasks that can be completed realistically within the time available
- structure learning in small steps
- teach the same concept in a number of ways to reinforce learning
- use frequent repetition of routine learning eg. tables, spellings
- short daily repetition is more effective than long weekly sessions
- show the pupil what to do as well as telling them
- keep tasks short and work towards a gradual increase in concentration
- encourage a passive pupil to become more actively involved
- provide a starting point / key words / writing frame for extended writing activities as opposed to a blank page
- use praise in front of the whole class so that the pupil gains status within the group

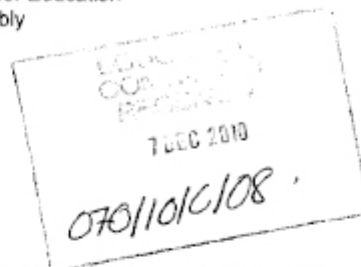
Differentiation

Methods of Differentiation	Preparing a Differentiated Resource
<p>Differentiation can occur by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outcome eg. extended writing, practical • teaching method eg. explanation, repetition, independence • additional support eg. teacher, LSA, mixed ability groups, a buddy, ICT • task eg. step-by-step or open-ended • modified resources fewer questions/tasks, easier vocab, additional prompts 	<p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • level of reading ability required (as far as possible use words with 3 or 4 letters for lowest ability pupils whose Reading Age is 6/7 yrs) • breaking activity down into a sequence of small stages • providing additional assistance eg. key words, writing frames, page numbers to refer to • no. of tasks to be completed – pupil should be able to finish the work in the time given • accessible print size and layout • use of images and colour

CBI (NI)

Mr John Simmons
Clerk to the Committee for Education
Northern Ireland Assembly
Room 242
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw Road
Stormont
Belfast BT4 3XX

3 December 2010



Our ref. NI 20 10

Committee for Education Inquiry – Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Areas

Thank you for the invitation to provide evidence to the Committee's Inquiry.

I am very conscious that you requested evidence to be structured to address the specific terms of reference of the Inquiry. However on this occasion the evidence most relevant to the inquiry is a recent national CBI report '*Fulfilling potential – the business role in education*'. The report focuses on the case for involving business and the third sector in addressing underperformance in schools and demonstrates that real improvement in outcomes can be achieved through innovative approaches and more effective leadership and management. In particular the case studies show:

- Private sector focus on system, scale and replicability will deliver improved value for money
- Outcome focused commissioning arrangements, rather than input-driven procurements stimulate innovation and improve return on investment – it is important to do things differently and not just the same things more efficiently
- Those commissioning the services have an important role to play in monitoring performance of service providers and need to focus on becoming outstanding commissioners

I hope this report provides a useful perspective on how some schools in England, in particular, are addressing underperformance in disadvantaged areas.

I would like to emphasise the importance which CBI Northern Ireland attaches to improving the educational outcomes of our young people. There is strong evidence to show that underperformance is often linked to disadvantage and deprivation. Employers look to the education system to develop confident, motivated young people, with the



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attitude, knowledge and skills to succeed in life and in the world of work. The report highlights the importance of an ambitious programme of reform to address these issues.

With regard to the terms of reference, let me make some specific points:

Effective school leadership

- This is vital – the report touches on some of the necessary attributes, as well as the systems and team working required to enhance performance
- Effective leadership combined with excellent teaching are critical success factors

School engagement with parents and the wider community

- The report, and other CBI research, indicated that engagement with the business community can bring wide benefits. In particular effective engagement with business, through quality work placements, can be an effective way of enhancing the transferable 'employability skills' (considered important by over 75% of employers in our latest Education and Skills Survey)
- High quality independent careers information, advice and guidance are critical but often lacking or inconsistent across schools in Northern Ireland. Involving employers is essential to supporting young people to make informed decisions about their future career options – work placements, ambassador schemes, workplace visits and mentoring schemes have enormous potential to raise students aspirations

Addressing underachievement in disadvantaged communities


- The report includes a variety of case studies highlighting how through the involvement of the private and third sectors improvements have been made
- I am confident that there will also be examples of local schools who have succeeded in raising their performance by their own endeavours through outstanding leadership and high quality of teaching

Department of education school improvement policy

- We are concerned that the strategy is not ambitious enough – too many young people are still failing to achieve 5 A-C grades at GCSE, including maths and English – a focus on improving these basic skills is critical and standards must be improved at Primary level
- It takes too long to address underperforming or 'coasting' schools – intervention is just not quick enough, at governors' level, leadership level and with teachers. It is extremely difficult to get rid of poor teachers (taking up to 3-4 years). Greater focus on management standards is also necessary.
- In other parts of the UK greater use of the private sector/third sector is being used successfully to increase performance – regrettably this approach does not appear to be an option in Northern Ireland yet could bring some fairly rapid results

I hope this information and the report are useful to the Committee's deliberations.

Regards


Nigel PE Smyth
Director, CBI Northern Ireland

Encl

The full text of this report can be read on CBI's website:
<http://www.cbi.org.uk/ndbs/press.nsf/0363c1f07c6ca12a8025671c00381cc7/1fa5f0400288dbcb8025779000563180?OpenDocument>



Fulfilling potential

The business role in education



Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI)



Evidence

Education Committee Inquiry

Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities

December 2010

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Summary

- The Inquiry should give some space to considering and defining the concept of a 'successful' post-primary school. Educational inequality and under-achievement cannot be addressed in isolation, it must be considered as part of the wider holistic development of the child.
- Children and young people, and particularly those attending post-primary schools serving disadvantaged areas, should be proactively engaged and involved in the Inquiry process. Ultimately a child-centred, whole-child approach to education recognises that the views of children on the success of their school/school experience must be the paramount concern.
- The issue of educational disadvantage must be recognised and understood as a denial of the right to education as provided for by Protocol 1 article 2 of the Human Rights Act 2000 and article 28 and 29 of the UNCRC.
- Successful post-primary schools are concerned with the holistic development of every child. Such schools have a vision for all children, valuing and nurturing each child's individual and unique talents and abilities, supporting and enabling each child to reach his or her full potential.
- The Inquiry must consider the link between child poverty and educational inequality and give its support to education as one of the best routes out of poverty.
- The Inquiry should recommend that the Department's contribution to meeting its obligation under the child poverty legislation must include action to reduce educational inequality.

- Parents must be recognised, valued and supported in their role as the primary caregivers and first educators of their children.
- More must be done to support home and community based pre-school programmes, in which parents (and other caregivers) empowerment and education are main features.
- The Terms of Reference must be amended to give specific and focused consideration to the issue of school engagement with children and young people.
- The Inquiry should highlight that more work is required to explore children and young people's experiences of school councils, with the aim of addressing the limitations, and creating effective school councils which are representative and inclusive of the diversity of their school communities.
- The Inquiry should recommend that education legislation, policy and practice incorporate the principle of respect for the views of the child as provided for by UNCRC Article 12 and UNCRPD Article 7.
- Efforts to tackle educational inequality must begin from the child's earliest years. A focus on the post-primary level alone will not be sufficient and will come too late in a child's educational journey.
- The Inquiry must recommend that the Department act urgently to take the lead on development of a cross government, holistic, integrated and co-ordinated approach to early childhood education and care services for children from 0-6 and their families.
- The curriculum and teaching methods require review with the aim of making the curriculum more accessible and relevant to children and young people so that they can enjoy their school experience and reach their full potential.
- The Inquiry should consider how good teacher-child relationships can be encouraged, supported and nurtured.
- The Inquiry should also consider the evidence relating to socially balanced intakes which makes the link to improved standards for all children.
- There is an urgent need to establish clear accountability arrangements for addressing under-achievement.

Introduction

Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI) is the regional umbrella body for the children's sector across Northern Ireland. CiNI provides information, policy, training, participation and advocacy services to support our 132 members in their direct work with and for children and young people. Our membership is drawn from across the voluntary, statutory and independent children's sector. We are increasingly working in partnership with the statutory children's sector, recognising that the best outcomes for children and young people are achieved through partnership working.

CiNI welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the Education Committee's Inquiry into Successful Post-primary schools serving disadvantaged communities.

General Comments

Before responding to the aims and terms of reference for the Inquiry we would like to provide some general comments with regard to the Inquiry.

CiNI does believe that the Inquiry should give some space to considering and defining the concept of a 'successful' post-primary school. Clearly we agree that a central element must focus on addressing educational inequality and under-achievement in education. However, in

determining the success or otherwise of post-primary schools serving disadvantaged communities, we would recommend that the Inquiry consider education in its widest sense of contributing to the 'holistic' development of the child. Furthermore, educational inequality and under-achievement cannot be addressed in isolation, it must be considered as part of the wider holistic development of the child. Clearly a child's health and well-being, social and emotional development, are all crucial determinants in enabling a child to reach his/her full potential.

We would highlight to the Committee that Government as a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) has signed up to ensuring that the education of the child is directed to the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential (Article 28 (1)).

In providing commentary on the aims of education the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has stated that "the goal of education is to develop the child's skills, learning and other capacities, human dignity, self-esteem and self-confidence ... education must also be aimed at ensuring essential life skills are learnt by every child and that no child leaves school without being equipped to face the challenges that he or she can expect to be faced with in life. Basic skills include not only literacy and numeracy but also life skills such as the ability to make well-balanced decisions; to resolve conflicts in a non-violent manner; and to develop a healthy lifestyle, good social relationships and responsibility, critical thinking, creative talents and other abilities which give children the tools to pursue their options in life^[1]".

CiNI would strongly advocate that children and young people, and particularly those attending post-primary schools serving disadvantaged areas, should be proactively engaged and involved in the Inquiry process. We believe that their contribution and input into defining the concept of successful schools and identifying ways in which to grow successful schools is critical and must be central to this Inquiry process. Ultimately a child-centred, whole-child approach to education recognises that the views of children on the success of their school/school experience must be the paramount concern.

CiNI would highlight that support is available to the Committee to help ensure effective engagement and involvement of children and young people. CiNI hosts the Participation Network^[2], which is an OFMDFM supported initiative, set up to provide training, signposting and consultancy support to public bodies to help in fulfilling section 75 obligations to consult with children and young people. The Network has a Directory of over 90 practitioners working with specific groups of children and young people who have skilled staff who can facilitate engagement. We would urge the Committee to avail of this guidance and support.

CiNI would highlight that the issue of educational disadvantage must be recognised and understood as a denial of the right to education as provided for by Protocol 1 article 2 of the Human Rights Act 2000 and article 28 and 29 of the UNCRC.

The Inquiry should note that the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, having considered implementation of the UNCRC by GB and NI in 2008^[3], expressed its concern that "significant inequalities persist with regard to the school achievement of children living with their parents in economic hardship". The Committee further expressed concern at the relationship between school exclusions and under-achievement, stating "the number of permanent and temporary school exclusions is still high and affects in particular children from groups which in general are low on school achievement".

The Committee has recommended that Government

- Continue and strengthen its efforts to reduce the effects of social background of children in their achievement in school;

- Invest considerable additional resources to ensure the right of all children to a truly inclusive education which ensures the fully enjoyment to children from all disadvantaged, marginalised and school-distant groups.

The Inquiry should recommend that the Department respond urgently to these recommendations and set out the pro-active steps it will take to act on these recommendations and ensure every child realises his/her right to education.

Key Factors/characteristics which contribute to the success of post-primary schools

CiNI believes that in determining the success or otherwise of post-primary schools there are certain key characteristics which must be present.

In our view successful post-primary schools are concerned with the holistic development of every child. Such schools have a vision for all children, valuing and nurturing each child's individual and unique talents and abilities, supporting and enabling each child to reach his or her full potential.

Successful schools are child-centred and committed to ensuring each individual child has equal opportunity to realise their right to an effective education (UNCRC Article 28 and 29) in an environment free from discrimination (UNCRC Article 2) and which places paramount consideration on the best interests of the child (UNCRC Article 3), ensuring respect for the child's views in all aspects of school life (UNCRC article 12).

CiNI would urge the Inquiry to consider UNICEF's Child Friendly Schools Framework^[4]. Child friendly schools are characterised as "inclusive, healthy and protective for all children, effective with children, and involved with families and communities - and children". Child friendly schools promote environments that are of high quality and effective for learning. The Inquiry should recommend that the Department look to introduce the Programme for schools across Northern Ireland, beginning with those schools serving disadvantaged communities.

Understanding the context of economically and socially deprived communities

Successful schools will have a deep understanding of the socio-economic circumstances of the communities they serve. We believe the Inquiry must consider the issue of educational inequality and under-achievement within the context and reality of child poverty in Northern Ireland. Recent Government figures show that we now have over 100,000 children, or 1 in 4 living in poverty in Northern Ireland. At over 20% our level of persistent child poverty is double that of GB.

The Inquiry must consider the link between child poverty and educational inequality and give its support to education as one of the best routes out of poverty. Bearing in mind that all Government Departments are under a statutory obligation to take steps to eradicate child poverty since the passing of the UK wide child poverty legislation, the Inquiry should urge the Executive to recognise that addressing educational disadvantage is a key lever to eradicating child poverty in Northern Ireland. The Inquiry should recommend that the Department's contribution to meeting its obligation under the child poverty legislation must include action to reduce educational inequality.

Effective school leadership

Effective school leadership is undoubtedly one of the most important factors in growing successful post-primary schools in all areas, and is particularly important for schools serving disadvantaged areas.

Leadership is key to establishing the culture and ethos of the school and creating a vision for an inclusive school environment for all children and young people.

Effective school leadership recognises, values, nurtures and encourages real and meaningful engagement with children, young people, parents and communities; giving them their place as the key stakeholders in defining and growing successful post-primary schools (see below re engagement).

School engagement with parents and the wider community

CiNI firmly believes that the active engagement and involvement of parents/carers and the wider community is integral to the success of post-primary schools. Parents must be recognised, valued and supported in their role as the primary caregivers and first educators of their children.

Recent research by Horgan^[5] has highlighted the family and community as key factors that shape children's educational experiences and aspirations and therefore ultimately the success of schools.

CiNI would ask the Inquiry to recognise and consider the contribution of home-based and community based parenting initiatives that support and enable vulnerable and disadvantaged parents to engage effectively with schools. The Executive must do more to support home and community based pre-school programmes, in which parents (and other caregivers) empowerment and education are main features.

We would urge the Inquiry to give particular consideration to the Extended Schools initiative. Extended schools can contain programmes aimed at encouraging parental, family and community engagement. A recent ETI^[6] evaluation report found that the programme improves educational outcomes and helps engage parents with learning. "In almost 90% of cases where ES are serving disadvantaged schools effectively (i.e. performance levels are good or better), significant improvements are evident in the educational outcomes and the personal and social well-being of pupils. Extended Schools activities are frequently improving the lives of parents and helping them to re-engage with education following their own, often poor, experiences, and expectations of schools".

Successful initiatives such as Extended Schools should be protected and maintained. We note and support the call for much greater certainty in relation to Extended Schools funding so that schools can plan confidently.

We would also highlight to the Inquiry the Families and Schools Together (FAST) Project supported by Save the Children^[7]. FAST is a parental engagement and community-strengthening project to support parents in improving their children's learning and development at home, so they can reach their full potential at school.

School engagement with children and young people

CiNI would also highlight the critical importance of school engagement with children and young people in growing successful schools. CiNI is disappointed and concerned that this crucial aspect has not been explicitly recognised in the Inquiry's Terms of Reference. We would like to see the Terms of Reference amended to give specific, and focused consideration to the issue of school

engagement with children and young people. The Inquiry should consider the extent and quality of existing school engagement with children and young people, highlighting where improvement could be made to enhance and ensure engagement of children and young people, particularly those under-achieving.

We would highlight to the Committee commentary from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on UNCRC Article 12 'The Right of the Child to be Heard'[\[8\]](#). The CRC highlights that "respect for right of the child to be heard within education is fundamental to the realization of the right to education ... Children's participation is indispensable for the creation of a social climate in the classroom, which stimulates cooperation and mutual support needed for child-centred interactive learning. Giving children's views weight is particularly important in the elimination of discrimination, prevention of bullying and disciplinary measures".

Furthermore the CRC has highlighted "steady participation of children in decision-making processes should be achieved through, inter alia, class councils, student councils and student representation on school boards and committees, where they can freely express their views on the development and implementation of school policies and codes of behaviour. These rights need to be enshrined in legislation, rather than relying on the goodwill of authorities, schools and head teachers to implement them."

We would also highlight that having recently ratified the UN Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities the UK Government is obliged to ensure that children with disabilities have their views respected in all matters affecting them including in their education (Article 7 UNCRPD).

We would reiterate that real and meaningful engagement of children and young people is central to growing successful post-primary schools. Therefore we would highlight to the Committee that the Inquiry should recommend the establishment of effective models of school councils in all post-primary schools. Central to an effective model is outreach and inclusion of marginalised children and young people. Research by McAlister et al[\[9\]](#) with children and young people in six communities heavily affected by the Conflict highlighted that for many young people, while supporting the principle of school councils, their experience was of "a range of limitations: minimal influence and impact; tokenism; poor feedback about decisions; some issues being defined as 'off-limits'; teachers having the 'final say'; selective representation of pupils".

The Inquiry should highlight that more work is required to explore children and young people's experiences of school councils, with the aim of addressing the limitations, and creating effective school councils which are representative and inclusive of the diversity of their school communities.

Furthermore, successful post-primary schools are those which ensure that children and young people are active participants in the development, implementation, monitoring and review of school policies and procedures including anti-bullying policies, exclusions and suspensions policies etc.

We would highlight that the CRC, having considered implementation of the UNCRC by GB and NI in 2008, expressed its concern that there has been little progress to implement UNCRC Article 12 on Respect for the Views of the Child in education law and policy. The Committee recommended that Government "promote, facilitate and implement, in legislation as well as in practice, within the family, schools and community, the principle of respect for the views of the child[\[10\]](#)" (para 32-33)

Therefore we would strongly advocate that the Inquiry recommend that education legislation, policy and practice incorporate the principle of respect for the views of the child as provided for by UNCRC Article 12 and UNCRPD Article 7.

Addressing underachievement in disadvantaged communities

While we understand that the Inquiry seeks to explore successful post-primary schools serving disadvantaged communities, CiNI believes that the Inquiry must acknowledge and recognise that to comprehensively and effectively target underachievement it must be understood as an issue of educational inequality.

To optimise the chances for long-term success and reduce inequality, efforts to tackle educational inequality must begin from the child's earliest years. A focus on the post-primary level alone will not be sufficient and will come too late in a child's educational journey.

We would direct the Inquiry to consider the findings of the Marmot Review of Health Inequalities in England post-2010^[11] and particularly its consideration of inequalities in educational outcomes. The Review observed that "to ensure equity from the start, investment in the early years is crucial". However, it is worth noting that while the Review recommended an increase in the proportion of expenditure on the early years, it also recommended that efforts are made to ensure expenditure on early years development is focused progressively across the social gradient.

It should also be noted that while highlighting the importance of early years and recommending increased investment, the Marmot Review did also highlight that to maintain a reduction in inequalities requires a 'sustained' commitment to children and young people throughout the years of education.

Given the significance of the early years experience in determining educational outcomes, and noting the phenomenal brain development that occurs from 0-3, the Inquiry must recommend that the Department act urgently to take the lead on development of a cross government, holistic, integrated and co-ordinated approach to early childhood education and care services for children from 0-6 and their families. Such an approach must be enabled and supported by increased investment to address the historic under-investment in early years education and care services in Northern Ireland identified in recent research by Save the Children.

The Marmot Review also points out that reducing educational inequalities involves understanding the interaction between the social determinants of educational outcomes, including family background, neighbourhoods and relationships with peers, as well as what goes on in schools. The Review highlights that evidence on the most important factors in influencing educational attainment suggests that it is families, rather than schools, that have the most influence. The Review recommends that closer links are required between schools, the family and the local community.

As highlighted earlier local research by Horgan^[12] has highlighted the family and community as key factors that shape children's educational experiences and aspirations.

Therefore this suggests that to address educational inequality as part of creating a successful school that meets the holistic needs of all children and young people, the school must focus its efforts on developing, strengthening and sustaining links with parents and communities. In this regard initiatives such as Extended Schools take on a particular significance and should be prioritised. However, the Extended Schools initiative must be capable of demonstrating robust linkages with existing voluntary and community sector infrastructure, support and services, to avoid displacement and duplication, and to maximise scarce resources.

CiNI does agree that the issue of the higher level of under-achievement of boys requires particular attention. We would highlight that Horgan's research found that boys as young as nine

in disadvantaged schools were disenchanted with school and starting to disengage. This research suggests that boys are being particularly failed by the education system due to the interaction of:

- educational disadvantage faced by children growing up in poverty;
- the difficulties faced by teachers in disadvantaged schools; and
- differences in the ways that boys and girls are socialised.

CiNI would highlight that to seek to address underachievement in disadvantaged communities in a holistic way it is imperative that the value placed on education and the educational aspirations of children and young people are considered through direct engagement with children and young people.

McAlister et al's research provides a unique insight into the experiences of children and young people. The research was conducted with children and young people from six communities heavily affected by the conflict, approximately half of the children and young people interviewed 'hated' school, did not attend regularly and/or considered school irrelevant. Their rejection focused primarily on school culture, teaching methods and the perceived lack of significance of their studies.

The research found that "within the context of many young people's lives, formal education was stifling and irrelevant ... interactive classes, taught through exercises and discussion, were considered more relevant". The view from these children would suggest that the curriculum and teaching methods require review with the aim of making the curriculum more accessible and relevant to children and young people so that they can enjoy their school experience and reach their full potential.

The success of a school and therein its ability to address educational inequality will also be fundamentally dependent on the teacher-child relationship. In McAlister et al's research children and young people identified good teachers as "those who listened to and cared for their pupils. 'Trust' and 'understanding' were particularly significant, and 'respect' was central to pupil-teacher relations".

We recommend that the Inquiry should consider how good teacher-child relationships can be encouraged, supported and nurtured.

The Inquiry should also consider the evidence relating to socially balanced intakes which makes the link to improved standards for all children. CiNI supports Save the Children's "Better Odds at School" campaign which highlights the need for schools admission reform to tackle social segregation in schools. We note the suggestion to pursue 'indices of selectivity, mixed ability banding and a schools admission code that allow principals to guarantee a minimum number of places for poor children'.

Department of Education School Improvement Policy

CiNI believes that there must be a clear legislative obligation to address educational disadvantage. There is an urgent need to establish clear accountability arrangements for addressing underachievement. A general duty to provide an effective education is not sufficient.

Conclusion

CiNI trusts this submission can usefully inform the Committee's Inquiry and we look forward to continuing to engage and support the Inquiry process as required. Finally, we would urge the Inquiry to consider how the process can engage and involve children, young people and their parents as the key stakeholders in growing successful schools.

[1] CRC (2001) General Comment No 1 (2001) Article 29.1 The Aims of Education. CRC/GC/2001/1

[2] <http://www.participationnetwork.org/>

[3] CRC (2008) Concluding Observations GB and NI CRC/C/GBR/CO/4 paras 66-67

[4] http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_7260.html

[5] Horgan, G. (2007) The impact of poverty on young people's experience of school York: JRF

[6] Education and Training Inspectorate (2010) An Evaluation of Extended Schools

[7] <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/blogs/2010/05/fast-a-new-coalition-of-our-own/>

[8] CRC (2009) General Comment No 12 (2009) The Right of the Child to be Heard

[9] McAlister, S., Scraton, P., and Haydon, D. (2009) Childhood in Transition Experiencing Marginalisation and Conflict in Northern Ireland. QUB, Prince's Trust NI and Save the Children

[10] CRC (2008) Concluding Observations GB and NI CRC/C/GBR/CO/4

[11] The Marmot Review Fair Society Healthy Lives Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England post-2010

[12] Horgan, G. (2007) The impact of poverty on young people's experience of school York: JRF

Coláiste Feirste

School Name	Coláiste Feirste
School Sector	IM Post-Primary
Location - Rural/Urban	Independent Maintained
Boys/Girls/Mixed	Mixed
Your Name and Contact details	Micheál Mac Giolla Ghunna

Please indicate briefly below the top three practical actions in your school which address each of the following areas of Committee focus:

A. Effective School Leadership - To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

1. We have agreed and articulated a clear ethos (Irish language) and vision (the needs of the individual pupil) in order to motivate, energise and direct school improvement work. We regularly review this ethos and vision against school improvement plans.

2. We have developed a culture of school self-evaluation as the basis for planning school improvement. This has helped to build leadership and organisational capacity in the school, particularly middle leadership who lead much of our self-evaluation activities.

3. We restructured and expanded our senior leadership team to include Key Stage Coordinators, an Information Systems Manager and a non-teaching SENCo. We have distributed leadership to various teams focusing on particular school improvement projects.

B. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

1. We developed high quality communication with parents and opportunities for involvement in their child's education, particularly in exam classes. We see parents as playing a key role as motivators, organisers and mentors for their children.

2. We appointed a fulltime Extended Schools Corodinator with a community development approach: (i) to develop relationships with community groups in order to give pupils alternative learning opportunities and also to facilitate pupil engagement in community initiatives; and (ii) to attract funding for particular projects such as parental support, learning support, healthy living and creative arts – which build pupils confidence and sense of belonging.

3. We developed opportunities for pupils to engage in community work: for example through NOCN Level 1-2 in Youth Work; NOCN Certificate in Community Development; Certificate in Personal Effectiveness; Gaisce –The President's Award. Pupils also run an Irish language group "An Cumann Gaelach" and assist other community Irish language groups. Pupils gain confidence, positive attitudes, leadership and organisational skills. The community develops a valuable human resource for community regeneration.

C. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008) and potential measures to address this.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32_statistics_and_research-research_pg/32_stats_and_research_researchreports_pg/32_statistics_and_research_branch_research_reports_2008.htm]

1. Clear school ethos: the Irish language ethos in the school helps to develop high aspiration, self-belief and a positive identity for pupils. This encourages them to relate better to the school and to engage more positively in the learning process.

2. Pastoral system: we have created a family-type climate which is nurturing and gives pupils a sense of belonging. For example we work hard at maintaining positive and informal relationships; all teachers and pupils use first names; many teachers live in the area or are former pupils.

3. We focus on the needs of the individual pupil. We have a broad range of curriculum choices which meet individual needs, abilities and aspirations; we have invested heavily in learning

support resources tailored to individual and additional needs, for example through our Learning Support Centre.

D. Department of Education's School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

Please indicate briefly below any comments you may have on this and other relevant Departmental policies.

1. We agree that the four main threads of ESaGS are central to school improvement and therefore pupil attainment.
2. In terms of the Entitlement Framework, the Department's policy mentions the post-primary Irish-medium sector in passing. It does not consider the specific circumstances of the sector and the lack of partners for curriculum collaboration. Coláiste Feirste offers 25 subjects at GCSE and 17 'Level 3' courses post16. We have to carry the financial and other resource costs by ourselves. In addition the 24/27 requirement is irrelevant to the curriculum choices and opportunities of our pupils. What is relevant is that we plan for and deliver a broad range of courses which meet the needs and aspirations of every current pupil.
3. The Department's policy of not funding 'Level 2' courses post16 contradicts the spirit of the Entitlement Framework. Coláiste Feirste offers 5 'Level 2' courses post16 based on the needs, ability and aspirations of particular pupils and aimed at facilitating them to progress to 'Level 3' courses post 18. In addition some courses cannot be studied at 'Level 3'.

Thank you – please email to committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk

Coláiste Feirste – a child-centred approach in practice

1. Background

- Founded 1991: Irish-medium, co-educational, all-ability, 11-19 post-primary
- Situated off Falls Road, Belfast with 551 pupils in accommodation designed for 350 pupils (a mix of one new purpose-built block, a former hospital building and 10 mobile classrooms)
- 83% pupils from Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRA); 33% pupils entitled to free school meals
- Difficult development process over 20 years with lack of facilities, lack of teaching resources, lack of staff development support
- Year on year improvement in standards and attainment – 2010: 78.1% attained benchmark of 5+ GCSEs at grades A*-C

2. Importance of Ethos

- Strong Irish language ethos > pupils have positive identity, good self-esteem and a sense of belonging
- Therefore pupils have a better commitment to the school and the learning process
- Ethos motivates staff to work as a team and to make extra efforts for pupils and to set high expectations
- Ethos creates basis for good relationships throughout school community: between pupils, pupils and teachers, teachers and parents

3. Pastoral environment

- Work to create a family atmosphere with positive warm relationships
- For example informal climate - first name terms, mutual respect, positive behaviour strategies, teachers from same area and former pupils as teachers
- For example specific projects: Upper Springfield Intervention Project on boys at risk; peer mentoring; opportunities for pupil voice
- For example, parents feel ownership of Irish-medium schools – extension of community

4. Effective Leadership

- Restructuring and expansion of Senior Leadership Team 2007
- Re-commitment to vision of child-centred provision
- Development of culture of self-evaluation and cycle of strategic planning
- Emphasis on building middle leadership capacity and staff development

5. Raising Achievement at Key Stage 4

Pupils

- Raising profile of KS4 during Year 10 eg informing pupils and parents about choices
- Matching students to appropriate courses and broadening curriculum offer accordingly
- Induction programme at start of Year 11
- Calender supplied with dates for coursework, exams, parent meetings, interviews etc
- Regular Progress Reports for parents
- Emphasis on study skills
- Individual pupil support- role of SENCO
- Celebrating achievement- publicity, prizegiving events and notice boards

Parents

- Role of parents highlighted at meetings- "in this together" teacher, pupil and parent
- Communication lines very strong and clear
- Individual meetings held twice during Key Stage 4 – at the beginning of Year 11 to illustrate task ahead and after mock exams to target set

- Study skills support for parents

Teachers

- Led by KS4 team support- to galvanise students and ensure that departmental activities are a success
- Evaluation of exam performance and Departmental targets set
- Practice exams in English and Maths as a priority
- Study, revision and subject support days – the extra effort from teachers

6. Raising Standards at Key Stage 5

- Top marks 2010 in A-level Irish, BTEC Sport and BTEC Performing Arts
- Expansion of curriculum choices to cater for wider range of needs, abilities and aspirations
- Introduction of vocational pathway to complement academic provision
- Increased learning support and personal development provision
- Increased opportunities for pupils to engage with the community – NOCN courses in Community Development and in Youth Work
- Increased opportunities for pupil voice and for mentoring activities

As a result 80% of pupils stay on at school after Year 12 and are supported in developing the skills, attitudes and self-belief to pursue successful careers after Year 14.

7. Learning Support Centre (LSC)

- Established in 2008, staffed by 2.5 teachers, with a full-time manager/SENCO
- Funded totally from school budget – no additional funding agreed as yet

Three pronged approach to support system:

Academic

1. Core learning. The high support class in Year 08 and Year 09 is sub-divided and pupils are taught all of their core subjects in the centre. This reduced ration allows for a greater absorption of learning.

2. Small groups are taken from Year 08-Year 10 classes for group work on English literacy, on Irish literacy and on numeracy work.

3. All Year 08 and Year 09 pupils attend a Literacy Support lesson with a LSC teacher.

Additional Needs

Pupils with a statement of special educational need or a diagnosis of ASD (Asperger's to ADHD) are supported. SENCo co-ordinates the support given by appointed classroom assistant to a child. We have a team of 13 classroom assistants who provide support not only for their appointed children, but to individual children who may have been referred by teachers. We

support students who have difficulty in completing homeworks or organising themselves for school. Classroom assistants are assigned to pupils for help in class, also.

Nurture

A number of our pupils may have SEB (Social, Emotional, Behavioural) difficulties at times and the nurturing environment within the centre is key to their emotional adjustment. The centre acts a haven to pupils who cannot cope with their school/home environment.

8. Conclusion:

- Child-centred approach:
- A clear ethos which motivates and gives sense of belonging
- A pastoral environment based on good relationships in which the child feels valued
- A broad and varied curriculum to meet needs, abilities and aspirations of each pupil
- Teaching and learning support targetted at the needs of each pupil
- High quality communication with parents and opportunities for parental involvement
- Opportunities for pupils to develop self-esteem, leadership skills, engagement with community

Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS)

Committee for Education Inquiry

'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'

Response Form

A Effective School Leadership - To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

1. Distributed and Inclusive and Autonomous Leadership based on an agreed and shared vision for the school which fully recognises the characteristics of the school including the social profile of the intake, the place of the school within its community and the disposition of the pupils and parents towards achievement. The span of leadership should extend to Governors and community based organisations, particularly those linked to 'Extended Schools'. Leadership should be strategic, should reflect on the quality of governance, learning and teaching, pastoral care, extra-curricular/enrichment activities and work with other schools and external agencies.

2. Evidentially Supported School Development Plan based on a thorough analysis of relevant data and contextual information matched to a realistic, shared vision for the school. Clear challenging but achievable targets should be set and agreed with effective interrogation of outcomes. Whole school and sectional priorities will always be shared and understood by all relevant stakeholders and progress on these will be monitored. The focus will be on the learning and development of each young person including those with special needs, from other

communities and cultures and those with unique gifts. The stable but evolving staff will fully embrace a culture of collaborative professional development and partnership with parents and other relevant agencies.

3. Leading a school is leading a community, particularly in areas of high social deprivation which are mainly in urban settings. In those schools with the best outcomes leadership is motivated to make a difference through engagement, openness and commitment to high standards. The professionalism of all leaders will influence its culture, ethos and strategic direction of the school challenge impediments to success and provide creative solutions to complex issues. The school is characterised by its commitment to learning in all its forms embracing pupils, staff, governors, parents and the wider school community. The school will have a clear focus in preparing young people to make a full contribution to an emerging economy and society.

B School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

1. A purpose of the school is to support families to help children achieve improved learning outcomes. Schools in areas of social disadvantage which have achieved better outcomes have tended to have in range of parent/family/community focussed activities in place, usually established over a period of time. These schools would be recognised as being part of the community and of adding value to that community. Parents will feel welcomed, will respect but not fear or resent teachers and teachers will know the child and the parent and provide support and guidance to them as parents but also as fellow educators. Some of these aspects are harder to achieve in post-primary settings.

2. Communication and Collaboration with the school community and with other schools, organisations, businesses and individuals. This will include exploiting the links established through the cluster of 'Extended Schools' to raise standards. Effective relationships and curricular links with feeder primary schools can enhance this transition and ensure continuous learning. Full implementation of the Entitlement Framework is difficult for schools serving disadvantaged communities, particularly if they are small. It is therefore essential that in addition to relevant, motivating and viable courses, effective arrangements are established with other schools, FE College and training organisations to ensure the provision of appropriate courses.

3. The school can be a focal point for the re-engagement of the community in education through an understanding of the shared role of the parent and the teacher in the education of the child. While predicted around learning the activities can extend to healthy eating, behaviour management, remedial therapies, sporting or cultural activities. A particular feature of successful initiatives has been the use of ICT and sports to get fathers/male partners involved with the school, particularly to encourage boys. The Full Service and Extended Schools have a specific role in some of these approaches.

C. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008) and potential measures to address this.

1. CCMS subscribes to the principle of 'proportionate universalism' which underpins the entitlements of all children but modifies the extent and nature of support provided to the level of

need and the resources available. Children living in disadvantaged communities need greater levels of support than others from more supportive environments. When a school has a critical mass of its enrolment from disadvantaged backgrounds the extent of support and intervention needed multiplies. Unless there have been successful interventions with the family through Sure Start and Nursery some children arrive at school when they are not 'school ready' and the school has a significant role in integrating them to a learning environment. It is likely that the issue of parental confidence will need to be addressed in recognition of the powerful influence of family and community where the child spends 85% of her/his time. Successful schools use every option to address this. If those difficulties are not address in primary school the capacity of the young learner to benefit from intervention in post primary deminishes but some schools have 'broken the cycle' in some ways.

2. Underachievement is best challenged through high quality teaching supported by learners who have a clear understanding of need and a vision and strategy to address it. Success is inspired by enjoyment of learning which is a response by the child to learning that is motivating, generally reflective of knowledge by the teacher of the child's preferred learning style and the availability of appropriate stimuli and resources. This differentiated learning reinforces positive behaviours and attitudes through teachers who are skilled at managing negative behaviours and are empathetic to needs. In successful situation teachers have a desire to work in that environment rather than simply being there by the circumstance of the 'first job to come along'.

3. All children learn at their own pace but boys tend to follow in the wake of girls, particularly during the primary years. Good teachers take the child from where he or she is rather than forcing situations. This means reinforcing positive dispositions to learning and using these to extend learning, particularly in literacy. Expectations need to be managed and parents engaged in understanding reactions and choosing the appropriate response. Successful schools actively involve parents and a range of external resources, including counsellors to explore the trigger points which motivate learning and manage the barriers to learning. This becomes more challenging as children grow older, particularly where key learning thresholds have not been achieved reinforcing again the critical importance of early intervention and prevention.

D. Department of Education's School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

1. CCMS broadly supports ESAGS, however, it would make a number of points to contextualise its position and propose what ought to be done.

Impediments: There are structural/legislative barriers to learning and which contributes to the perpetuation of underachievement including;

- Lack of investment in early years and resources to address learning difficulties of the point of identification need;
- Unbalanced funding formula aligned to the double impacts of open enrolment and 'selection';
- Admission policies which 'dump' young people excluded from 'popular' schools to those with space;
- Competition between schools based on 'value free' measures leading to a reluctance to change 'traditional' courses and approaches and collaborate with other schools etc;
- Common Curriculum (1989) now repealed, but impact still within system.

2. Lack of Policy Coherence: CCMS believes that ESAGS should be DE core policy with all other policies aligned to it. This is not currently the case. Key support policies are LMS formula, 0-6/Literacy and Numeracy/Special Needs, some aspects of School Development Planning, Sustainable Schools Policy, 'unsatisfactory' procedures, governance and inspection regimes. The Council believes that a policy on 'Earned/Accountable' autonomy should be introduced to promote self-evaluation and self-improvement. There is also a need to look at teacher terms and conditions of service and a greater alignment in the working of the ETI, Employing Authorities and CASS with respect to targeting support to under performing schools.

3. Broader Policy Alignment: Education needs to sit at the centre of Executive thinking particularly on the economy and this needs to be reflected in the next Programme for Government. There needs to be a long term strategy to re-balance the economy through education from early years (0-3) to the range of economically focused, applied courses as part of the Entitlement Framework. Cultural change is needed in society to embrace the mindset of the private sector over the perceived security of (mainly) public sector focussed public sector employment aspirations including the traditional 'professions'. There needs to be a greater cohesion between the formal school system and the economy and a recognition of the positive potential of a range of agencies and communities working together to improve society.

Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment (CCEA)

CCEA's Response : Request for Written Evidence : Successful Post Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities

CCEA's responsibility is to provide advice to the Department of Education on matters related to curriculum, assessment and qualifications and to support schools in these areas. Although CCEA is a key stakeholder and part of the education support service it is not directly involved in managing school performance, target setting or performance intervention.

A relevant curriculum, with literacy and numeracy at its core, fit for purpose assessment arrangements and meaningful qualifications can help support strategies for raising standards and closing the achievement gap that we know exists in Northern Ireland. However, addressing poor or underperformance of individuals and schools is dependent on key factors of;

- appropriate education policies and
- effective strategies and structures to ensure effective implementation of policies.

Effective school leadership

In their study of 'How the world's best performing school systems come out on top' (McKinsey & Company 2007) McKinsey recognise that although education systems around the world have striking differences, there are a number of fundamental similarities between the highest performing systems;

- They ensure that the right people are selected to become teachers 'the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers'
- They develop these people to be effective teachers; 'the only way to improve outcomes is to improve instruction'

- They put in place systems and targeted support to ensure every child benefits from excellent instruction; 'the only way for the system to reach the highest performance is to raise the standard of every student'.

These principles apply to school leadership, ensuring that the right people are selected to become leaders and that they are developed and supported. In doing so, these individuals can take ownership of policy, make it relevant in their schools, develop their staff and manage performance to ensure every pupil can reach their full potential.

Policies alone cannot improve standards and opportunities for children and young people. It is the way in which policy is implemented that makes a difference. We know that some schools serving disadvantaged communities perform very well, adding considerable value to the life chances of their pupils. Others in similar circumstances do less well.

The factors relating to improving standards of literacy and numeracy identified by ETI all relate to effective school leadership having a focus on school improvement and the ability of leaders to put in place strategies to improve learning and manage performance.

Schools and their communities

Societal influences have a major impact on pupil achievement; therefore attention should be given to parental involvement and community engagement. This is not without its challenges. For example, many parents do not engage with education because of their own poor literacy and numeracy skills, so this deficit should be considered. Consideration should also be given to communication with parents. However, 'one size does not fit all' and while the system may be able to define the vision, aims and objectives that should be incorporated, principals and teachers may be best placed to decide on the appropriate communication strategy with the parents of their school.

If communities are to value the contribution of education in improving life chances, then schools need to be perceived as being at the heart of their communities and meeting the needs of those communities. The promotion of initiatives such as Extended Schools may be beneficial in this regard. The Extended Schools policy is intended to support those schools that draw pupils from some of the most disadvantaged communities to provide a range of services and programmes outside the traditional school day to help meet the needs of pupils, their families and wider communities. 0-3 are critical years and much could be gained by supporting parents, providing motivation and building self confidence working in communities.

Addressing underachievement

Consideration should be given to the findings and recommendations of the PWC Report on Literacy and Numeracy in Northern Ireland (2008). In particular, that the factors impacting on attainment are complex and interactive (including management type, socio-economic context and gender) and that generalisation is therefore difficult.' It is evident therefore that no one initiative or intervention is a 'cure-all' and that there are no instant solutions. Indeed, the education sector by itself cannot effect major changes without taking socio-economic factors into account.

However, it is evident that there is variety of provision in schools and, based on its international literature review and fieldwork, the PWC report identifies a number of factors at a school level which may help improve pupil attainment, such as:

- Strong strategic leadership (both at all levels in the school and the system-level);

- A culture of high expectations (both inside and outside schools);
- A focus on the quality of teaching;
- The effective use of data; and
- Early intervention.

These factors also underpin the school improvement agenda of Every School a Good School and its associated Literacy and Numeracy Strategy. It is therefore vital that this is seen as a policy priority and that there is a coherent and unified strategic approach to supporting schools in this key area. This will enable schools to focus on ensuring that their pupils have the best provision possible according to their needs.

Research in Germany (EURYDICE at NFER, 2007) shows that deficits not compensated for before school entry may lead to school failure; therefore, it is crucial that children receive the best start possible and that early intervention is provided which may prevent the need for later remediation. These interventions need to be developed locally to meet the specific needs of parents and children. Provision of pre-school places staffed by qualified teachers with SEN expertise could be considered.

Appropriate screening tools need to be used before children enter pre-school.

There are Early Intervention Strategies running throughout Scotland which are developed by each Local Authority to meet the specific needs of the children in their area. In Glasgow nurture classes/rooms have been developed from pre-school to Year 1 for the most deprived children.

'On average across the OECD area, public spending on children under the age of five represents just 24% of all spending on children up to the age of 18. Increasing spending on our youngest citizens, particularly in the areas of health and education, and especially for disadvantaged children, will help to improve social equity as those children grow up.' (Doing Better for Children: OECD, 2009).

Department of Education School Improvement Policy

Individual measures if taken in isolation may result in disappointing outcomes. A co-ordinated consistent approach to under achievement is required which focuses on a range of issues including school leadership, school performance, effective teaching and learning intervention, early pre-school investment and parental involvement.

Department of Education School Improvement Policy Every School A Good School seeks to address these issues in a coherent way. It is important that school improvement policy is implemented in a consistent way, taking account of lessons learned from past experiences/other jurisdictions. Greatest consistency can be achieved by a single organisation being responsible and accountable for implementing policy.

The Curriculum

The Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum permits the flexibility for schools to adapt approaches to learning and teaching which suit the individual needs of their pupils. At the same time, there are elements of the NIC which may contribute to meeting the specific needs of pupils as identified in the EDPWC paper. These include:

- A quality first, developmentally appropriate Foundation Stage which aims to ensure that children in the first years of primary school receive an appropriate learning programme to develop their dispositions to learn and to provide them with the skills and competencies they will need to succeed in school and future life.
- Active Learning approaches which encourage a variety of pedagogical methodologies, including practical, experiential learning.
- An increased focus on Personal Development and Mutual Understanding and on personal and interpersonal skills, fostering these explicitly so that children are helped to develop self management skills and the ability to interact effectively with others.
- A maintained focus on the core skills required for later success, such as literacy and numeracy.

Entitlement Framework

The requirement to offer greater breadth and balance in the courses and pathways available to young people provides an opportunity for post primary pupils to have a greater choice and flexibility by providing them with access to a wide range of learning opportunities suited to their needs, aptitudes and interests, irrespective of where they live or the school they attend.

Connections

The Chief Inspector's Report 2008-2010 identifies three crucial areas for

- Connections: Transferable skills and innovation
- Inclusion: Valuing all learners equally
- Transitions: Working together to support the learner

It is therefore important that there is effective communication and collaboration between those responsible to share information, practice and resources, whether between schools (for example through Area Learning Communities or cross-phase primary and post-primary) or between government departments and support organisations (DE, DEL, DHSSPS etc).

10 December 2010

Dean Maguirc College

"Successful Post – Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities"

"We commit ourselves to the growth and development of people"

(Mission statement of the Dean Maguirc College.)

- Dean Maguirc College is a co-educational maintained secondary school which has 472 pupils ranging from 11 to 18 years of age. It opened in 1966 and is proud of its academic success and achievements in extra-curricular activities.
- We are a school with a vision and our basic aim is to enable every pupil to achieve his or her full potential in relation to the gifts he or she has been given. We endeavour to meet

the curriculum and pastoral needs of every pupil across the whole ability range. This is underpinned by a school development plan which sets at its core self-evaluation, the setting of realistic targets and the use of resources that will meet the needs and aspirations of our pupils.

- Our school is built around child-centred provision as reflected in our mission statement. We promote equality of opportunity and are committed to developing the child as an individual and as a contributor to society and the economy.
- Being a leader in our school means being empowered to be a team player at whole school level or as a member of an established team, with a clear vision for school and professional development.
- We promote a culture of high expectation and aspiration and in providing a broad and relevant curriculum the college at Key Stages 4 and 5 engages in collaboration. The college is a member of Omagh Learning Community and the Mid-Tyrone Central Partnership and members of staff are presently involved in the OLTE initiative to promote e-learning.
- Our effective use of data analysis promotes improvement; the tracking and monitoring of pupils and the early identification of underachievement results in appropriate intervention which informs action planning, setting of targets and where required, mentoring.
- The use of data identifies pupils underachieving in literacy and the school has three interventions for KS3 pupils. The lunchtime spelling club, the 'Reading Partnership' programme and the 'Paired Reading' programme aim to bring about improvement to not only low achievers, but underachievers too.
- Within numeracy, a culture of high expectation exists and creative approaches to the teaching of a relevant and interesting curriculum are used to motivate pupils. Effective use of data is used in a diagnostic capacity to inform planning. In both English and Mathematics, tutorials and after school revision classes are provided to ensure maximum success at G.C.S.E.
- There is on-going development of STEM and great emphasis on CEIAG especially at key stage transition phases where pupils and parents attend information evenings with regard to subject choices and for guidance on educational and career pathways.
- We strive to monitor and evaluate school policies and practices and procedures leading to further school improvement. We promote a culture that encourages the sharing of good practice and expertise which undoubtedly will provide better quality learning for the pupil.
- We pride ourselves in the strong links that exist between the college and our feeder schools which results in the establishment of a profile for every pupil transferring to us. This enables the most appropriate setting for the child, as well as staff being aware of any pastoral or medical problems.
- In working closely with parents we operate an 'Open Door' policy and see ourselves as a 'Listening School'. Our partnership between home and school extends to parental involvement in school events and initiatives, and in the celebrating of success of pupils.
- Our involvement in the 'Extended Schools' Programme has enabled us to provide valuable programmes and workshops for parents and the wider community. The work of the Extended Schools Cluster has built further on our relationship with our feeder schools, resulting in even a smoother transition from primary to post primary level.
- In working to meet the needs of every pupil in our school, we are proud of the very good communication that exists between ourselves and external agencies which enable us to work together in supporting the child, be it in achieving his or her potential or addressing behavioural difficulties.

- At Dean Maguire College we work closely with local voluntary organisations and the school is used for many evenings and weekend activities throughout the year by these groups. This clearly reflects a school at the heart of the community, a community we might add which empathises with us in our frustration over the setbacks in getting our much needed, and deserved, new school building.

Department of Education: The Characteristics of Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities

Introduction

1. The Department is putting in place a range of policies aimed at promoting the raising of standards across the system and enabling every young person to achieve to her or his full potential.

Every School a Good School – a policy for school improvement

2. 'Every School a Good School – a policy for school improvement' was introduced from April 2009 and is our overarching policy for raising standards. It sets out our very clear commitment to support schools to improve outcomes for pupils and recognises the centrality of classroom teachers, supported by effective school leaders, in helping pupils to reach their full potential. The key underpinning argument behind the policy is that raising achievement is, above all, the responsibility of the school. Self-evaluation, informed by the effective use of data, leading to sustained self-improvement, and with appropriate support, is therefore at the heart of the policy.

3. The policy starts from the basis that there is much good practice within our schools to build on and learn from – the challenge is to ensure that this is spread across all schools. It is recognised that the challenge may be greater for schools who are struggling with the effects of socio-economic deprivation or serving communities where the value placed on education is not as high as it might be. However, the policy stresses the importance of having high expectations for every young person and providing pupils, and schools, with the support they need to overcome any barriers to learning and fulfil their potential.

4. The policy sets out four characteristics of a successful school as:

- i) Child-centred provision;
- ii) High-quality teaching and learning;
- iii) Effective leadership; and
- iv) A school connected to its local community.

5. The characteristics are based on inspection evidence and were informed and developed through consultation and wider research evidence. These characteristics are not specific to any particular type of school; rather they apply to all schools. When these characteristics are all present, there is every likelihood of success. Variation among schools in the extent to which these characteristics are present will lead to variation in performance between schools. There may be cases where:

- All characteristics are absent, resulting in inadequate or unsatisfactory provision and the need for formal intervention;
- Some or all of the characteristics are in, or are beginning to, decline, resulting in the need for early intervention and support; or
- All characteristics are present and well developed, resulting in high quality practice that should be disseminated more widely.

6. The policy sets out ambitious, long term targets for improving educational outcomes, against which we will measure progress in implementation. It also includes an implementation plan, setting out the actions in six key policy areas:

i) effective leadership and an ethos of aspiration and high achievement;

ii) high quality teaching and learning;

iii) tackling the barriers to learning that many young people face;

iv) embedding a culture of self-evaluation and self-assessment and of using performance and other information to effect improvement;

v) focusing clearly on support to help schools improve – with clarity too about the place of more formal interventions where there is a risk that the quality of education offered in a school is not as high as it should be; and

vi) increasing engagement between schools, parents and families, recognising the powerful influence they and local communities exercise on educational outcomes.

Formal Intervention Process

7. The school improvement policy includes a requirement to provide focused support for schools which, as a result of inspection, are found to be offering less than satisfactory provision for their pupils. This support is provided through the Formal Intervention Process, introduced from September 2009.

8. Through the Formal Intervention Process, the school receives tailored support from the relevant Education & Library Board, supported where appropriate by the relevant sectoral body. The school commits to working to deliver an agreed action plan, quality-assured by ETI, designed to address the areas for improvement identified through inspection. The focus throughout is on ensuring that pupils receive the highest possible quality of teaching and learning so that they can achieve to their full potential.

Other Key Policies

9. The school improvement policy will be supported and complemented by other key DE policies, including the removal of academic selection and introduction of Transfer 2010, the revised literacy and numeracy strategy, the revised curriculum and assessment arrangements, the Entitlement Framework, the Review of Special Educational Needs & Inclusion, the Supporting Newcomer Pupils policy and Extended and Full Service Schools.

Targeted Programmes

10. The Achieving Belfast and Achieving Derry – Bright Futures programmes were introduced from the 2008/09 school year to specifically address the link between underachievement and social deprivation in Belfast and Derry.

11. The Achieving Belfast programme is targeted at 17 (13 primary and 4 post-primary) of the lowest performing schools in the BELB area. The Board is providing the schools with intensive support for literacy, numeracy and school improvement (including the deployment of 10 peripatetic teachers) and intends to develop this approach to work with other agencies to provide wrap-around support to take account of socio-economic issues.

12. Achieving Derry – Bright Futures encompasses all schools (pre-school, primary and post-primary) in the Derry City Council area, along with youth provision. The WELB is working with partners in health and social services, neighbourhood renewal, and the local business, voluntary and community sectors. The focus is on a whole school approach to meeting the needs of children most at risk of underachievement.

13. Interestingly, the Boards have adopted different approaches and the respective learning will inform discussions and decisions on the most effective interventions in tackling educational underachievement. Both programmes are long-term interventions, therefore it is recognised that there may not be immediate major improvements in educational outcomes achieved by pupils. However, the Department commissioned the Education & Training Inspectorate to carry out a formative evaluation of the programmes to make sure that they are established on sound, evidence-based foundations and that early implementation is planned in a way that will deliver the expected longer term improvements. The ETI report was published in May 2010. The Boards have accepted the findings and are preparing action plans in response to the areas for improvement identified in the report.

Education Committee Inquiry into Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities

Department of Education Evidence

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Annexes:

A ETI's St Colm's High School, Belfast – Report of an Inspection in November 2010

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B Examples of good practice from Extended Schools Programmes.

C ETI's Evaluation of Extended Schools July 2010.

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E ETI's Evaluation of Literacy and Numeracy in Primary and Post-Primary Schools: Characteristics that Determine Effective Provision 2007-08.

F Full Service Schools Evaluation Reports 2009-10.

G ETI's Evaluation of the Early Progress of the Achieving Belfast and Achieving Derry – Bright Futures Programmes May 2010.

1. Introduction

1.1 This paper provides the Department of Education's evidence submission to the Committee and follows the Inquiry Aims and Terms of Reference.

2. The Characteristics of Effective Schooling

2.1 Every School a Good School – a policy for school improvement (ESaGS) is the Department of Education's overarching policy for raising standards across all schools and is based on the premise that raising standards is first and foremost the responsibility of the school; it recognises the centrality of classroom teachers, supported by effective school leaders, in helping pupils to reach their full potential and gives the Department's very clear commitment to support schools to improve outcomes for pupils.

2.2 ESaGS identifies the four characteristics of a successful school, with associated indicators, which are based on research and inspection evidence and developed through consultation. These characteristics apply to all schools and are identified as:

- i) Child-centred provision;
- ii) High-quality teaching and learning;
- iii) Effective leadership and an ethos of aspiration; and
- iv) A school connected to its local community.

2.3 ESaGS starts from the basis that there is much good practice within our schools to build on and learn from – but this needs to be embedded across all schools. It is recognised that the challenge may be greater for schools dealing with the effects of socio-economic deprivation or serving communities where education is not as highly valued as it might be. However, we know there are schools in such circumstances achieving very good outcomes for their pupils (there are also schools in much more favourable circumstances where pupils perhaps are not doing as well as might be expected). ESaGS therefore stresses the importance of having high expectations for

every young person and providing schools with the support they need to help pupils overcome any barriers to learning and fulfil their potential.

3. Addressing Barriers to Learning

3.1 International research consistently shows that early identification, and the implementation of early, appropriate support interventions, enables children to catch up with their classmates, reducing the risk of long term underachievement and disaffection.

3.2 This whole child approach recognises that the education system has a part to play in:

- building resilience so that the young person is better equipped if and when they do encounter difficulties;
- facilitating early recognition of when support is needed;
- putting in place early intervention to address the barrier to learning, whether it be a special educational need, a disability, a learning environment, societal or family impact, or another temporary or long term difficulty;
- building the capacity of the education workforce to put in place strategies to provide support as appropriate; and
- working with other agencies to ensure the right kind and level of support is available.

3.3 Successful schools, working on the underlying principle of inclusion, develop the capacity of the school workforce to understand the learner's needs and adjust the learning environment and teaching strategies to effectively meet those needs.

3.4 The Department has developed or is developing a number of inter-related policies or programmes to support schools in providing the support children and young people need to learn effectively. However, it is important to note that the role of schools in supporting young people is complementary to the role of other sectors, such as health and social services. It is vital that the sectors work together in a multi-disciplinary approach for the benefit of the young people. In education, the ultimate goal is to raise educational standards achieved by the learners so as to prepare them better for life and work. Therefore, policies or programmes are an integral part of the overarching raising standards agenda articulated in "Every School a Good School". The policies are:

- Personal Development content in the curriculum;
- Support for those with special educational needs (SEN), including a review of special educational needs and inclusion;
- Support for Newcomer Pupils;
- Additional support for Traveller pupils, looked after children, children of service personnel and young carers;
- School Aged Mothers' programme;
- Pastoral care system in schools;
- Safeguarding policies;
- Counselling services in post-primary schools;
- Behaviour support;
- Anti-bullying policies;

- Pupils' Emotional Health and Well-being Programme;
- healthy Schools;
- Alternative Education Provision; and
- Building the capacity of the school workforce.

4. Promoting Sharing of Best Practice

4.1 Through inspection, we can identify schools that successfully put the characteristics set out in ESaGS into practice. One example of 'outstanding' and one of 'very good' practice is attached as Annex A.

4.2 The Department is committed to promoting more effective identification and sharing of good practice to embed the four characteristics of ESaGS across all our schools. We have required this to be central to the support provided to schools by the Education & Library Boards and CCEA (and CCMS where appropriate). For example, principals and teachers identified as demonstrating good practice are leading the delivery of professional development events; they are also providing support to schools where areas for improvement have been identified through the inspection process, including schools in the Formal Intervention Process. Personnel from schools which have been particularly successful in supporting pupils with special educational needs will be delivering capacity building programmes for school leaders and teachers in the coming months. The Boards are also developing ESaGS.tv, a web-based platform that will facilitate sharing of best practice and host video case-studies featuring schools identified through inspection as 'outstanding'/'very good' or as having made substantial improvement.

5. Effective School Leadership

5.1 Effective school leadership has been shown by inspection and research evidence to be central to school improvement. It involves getting the right people to be school leaders, providing them with the right skills, and ensuring their focus is on teaching and learning.

5.2 Successful school leaders will:

- have a strong sense of personal responsibility and zero tolerance of underachievement;
- believe every pupil deserves the same opportunity to succeed;
- respect and value all people in, and connected with, the school;
- have a passion for learning and achievement; and,
- have a commitment to pupils and staff.

5.3 The McKinsey (2007)^[1] report commented that: 'essentially all successful school leaders draw on the same repertoire of basic leadership practices.' Research by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) shows that the core practices of successful schools leaders are:

- i) setting direction – from a sense of moral purpose by motivating their colleagues and building a shared vision with high expectations for the school's future;
- ii) developing the capacity of people – supporting individuals, giving intellectual stimulation and setting an appropriate example;

iii) (where necessary) redesigning the organisation – building a culture of collaboration, restructuring the way the school works, building productive relationships with families and communities and connecting the school to its wider environment; and

iv) managing the programme for learning and teaching – staffing it appropriately, providing necessary support and resources for staff and pupils.

5.4 The qualities required of school leaders are reflected in the following indicators of effective practice:

- assertive and positive leadership;
- interaction with pupils directly and as frequently as possible;
- shaping practices around an ethos of care;
- focusing on teaching and learning, including fostering an academic climate;
- purposeful use of data (especially in relation to within school variation);
- leading professional development, including the creation of positive collaborative- and achievement- oriented cultures;
- building productive relationships with families and communities;
- building a shared vision, including the co-operation and alignment of others to (the leader's) values and vision; and
- modelling behaviour desirable to achieve the school's goals.

5.5 Successful leaders see pupil achievement as having behavioural, academic, personal, social and emotional dimensions, reflecting the four characteristics of ESaGS; their strategies to combat underachievement will reflect this and their selection and combination of leadership practices will depend on the context in which they are working. Successful leaders working in disadvantaged communities may make greater efforts to effect improvements across these inter-connected areas, especially through the leadership they provide and the culture and aspirations they foster (reflected in the school's ethos, pupil behaviour, motivation and engagement).

6. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

6.1 Research shows the powerful influence that effective engagement with parents, and the community served by the school, can have on the outcomes achieved by its pupils.

6.2 This underpins DE's Extended Schools (ES) programme, which has a clear focus on improving educational outcomes, reducing barriers to learning, and providing additional support to help improve the life chances of disadvantaged children and young people. Over 70 post-primary schools received Extended Schools funding in 2010/11. Successful extended schools act as hubs of their local community; they:

- offer a range of activities before, during and beyond the school day;
- engage positively with parents and the wider community;
- connect local people with local services; and
- provide community access to school facilities.

Examples of good practice are attached as Annex B.

6.3 The Education & Training Inspectorate (ETI) published An Evaluation of Extended Schools July 2010, (see Annex C), which found that:

"in almost 90% of cases where Extended Schools are serving disadvantaged communities effectively, significant improvements are evident in the educational outcomes and the personal and social well-being of pupils. Extended Schools activities are frequently improving the lives of parents and helping them re-engage with education following their own, often poor experiences and perceptions of schools".

6.4 The Report identifies the key characteristics of effective practice, based on inspection evidence from visits to 20 Extended Schools (including 10 post-primaries). It also includes case studies illustrating how schools are successfully delivering on the aims of the ES programme. The Report informed DE's Circular 2010/21, which provides updated guidance for schools on the Extended Schools programme (Annex D).

7. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

7.1 There are complex and interacting factors contributing to pupil achievement. However, ESaGS sets out the key, and interdependent, factors for raising standards and tackling underachievement in all our schools, including those serving disadvantaged communities (child-centred provision, high quality teaching and learning, effective leadership and an ethos of aspiration, and strong links between schools and their communities).

7.2 The ETI has published An Evaluation of Literacy and Numeracy in Primary and Post-Primary Schools: Characteristics that Determine Effective Provision 2007-08 (Annex E). The report was based on inspection visits to a sample of schools with a high proportion of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, some with strong performance and others with poor performance. It explains how schools serving disadvantaged communities provide high quality teaching and support for pupils to enable them to achieve good outcomes in literacy and numeracy.

7.3 Inspection and research evidence clearly shows the central role of the class or subject teacher in supporting each child to fulfil their potential. The class teacher should have high expectations for each child and provide high quality teaching and learning experiences. Teachers should employ a range of strategies that are engaging and appropriately tailored to meet the differing needs and learning styles of pupils. Teachers also need to monitor the progress of individual pupils and intervene early to provide appropriate support to overcome any difficulties pupils may be having.

7.4 We are still dealing with the legacy of the transfer test. We know how important it is for young people to master the basics from an early age. Yet for too long, the primary curriculum was distorted by preparation for the tests. Those not entered for the tests were often given 'filler' exercises, while efforts focused on preparing those entering for the tests. Non-selective post-primary schools had to invest significant efforts in boosting the self-esteem of those pupils branded as 'failures' by the test before they could even begin the important work of further developing their literacy and numeracy skills.

7.5 In addition to high quality teaching and learning, successful schools put in place effective arrangements to support pupils to overcome any barriers to learning they may face and achieve good outcomes in literacy and numeracy (e.g. arrangements to support those with special or other additional educational needs or with needs for additional pastoral care). This often involves working in partnership with other organisations, such as health agencies or community and voluntary groups. Extended Schools (see section 5 above) work in partnership with families and the community to provide this support for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

7.6 The Department is working through the Belfast Education & Library Board to pilot Full Service provision in two areas which suffer from high levels of socio-economic deprivation, in one with support from the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools. The two pilots are:

- a) Full Service Schools at the Boys' and Girls' Model Schools in North Belfast; and
- b) Full Service Community Network (FSCN) in Ballymurphy.

7.7 Full Service provision goes beyond extended school programmes by offering substantial additional programmes and activities to help tackle barriers to learning and support children to achieve their full potential. It enables key statutory and voluntary agencies and community groups to come together and deliver comprehensive and cohesive services to meet the educational, health and well-being, and employability needs of pupils, parents and the whole community. Further information on the Full Service programmes are included in their 2009/10 annual report, attached as Annex F.

7.8 The Department has also commissioned programmes to address the link between underachievement and social deprivation in Belfast and Derry, namely Achieving Belfast and Achieving Derry – Bright Futures, introduced from the 2008/09 school year. Achieving Belfast is targeted at 17 (13 primary and 4 post-primary) of the lowest performing schools in the BELB area. The BELB is providing the schools with intensive support for literacy, numeracy and school improvement (including the deployment of 10 peripatetic teachers). Achieving Derry – Bright Futures encompasses all schools (pre-school, primary and post-primary) in the Derry City Council area, along with youth provision. The WELB is working with partners in health and social services, neighbourhood renewal, and the local business, voluntary and community sectors. The focus is on a whole school approach to meeting the needs of children most at risk of underachievement. The ETI published An Evaluation of the Early Progress of the Achieving Belfast and Achieving Derry – Bright Futures Programmes in May 2010 (see Annex G).

7.10 Decisions on future funding for programmes such as Extended and Full Service Schools, Achieving Belfast and Achieving Derry – Bright Futures cannot be taken until after the final Budget has been agreed by the Executive. The Executive launched a draft Budget, providing draft Departmental spending plans over the next four years, for consultation from 15 December 2010 to 9 February 2011. Following the consultation, the Executive will meet to consider and agree a final Budget. In the interim, the Minister will be considering the implications of the draft Budget for education and will publish details of her spending proposals on the Department of Education's website. In drawing up these proposals the Minister has made it clear that she will seek to drive out inefficiencies, cut bureaucracy and protect frontline services as far as possible. All decisions will also be based on the key principles of identified need and equality.

8. Department of Education School Improvement Policy

8.1 DE has put in place its own arrangements to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the school improvement policy. These include monitoring progress against targets for improving educational outcomes and evidence from ETI inspections on the overall quality of provision in schools. The Department holds the Boards to account for the outcomes achieved by schools in their areas and the support provided by the Board. The Department has also published an implementation plan, detailing actions being taken to give effect to the policy. The Department has published its first annual report on progress made against the action plan (for the 2009/10 year) on its website and a copy of the report was sent to the Committee on 28 September 2010.

8.2 The Department will consider any recommendations made by the Committee as a result of its Inquiry in relation to the school improvement policy.

[1] Barner, M. & Mourshed, M. (2007). 'How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top.' McKinsey & Company

ETI Documents

Several of the documents submitted by the Department for Education can be found at the following websites:

Post primary inspection St. Colm's, Twinbrook, Belfast

<http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/inspection-reports/inspection-reports-post-primary/inspection-reports-post-primary-2010/standard-inspection-st-colms-high-school-twinbrook-belfast.htm>

Post primary inspection Edmund Rice College, Glengormley

<http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/inspection-reports/inspection-reports-post-primary/inspection-reports-post-primary-2011/standard-inspection-edmund-rice-college-glengormley.htm>

An Evaluation of Extended Schools July 2010

<http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/surveys-evaluations/surveys-evaluations-post-primary/surveys-evaluations-post-primary-2010/an-evaluation-of-extended-schools-july-2010-post-primary.htm>

DE Circular: Extended Schools – Building on Good Practice

http://www.deni.gov.uk/extended_schools_circular_2010.pdf

An Evaluation of Literacy and Numeracy in Primary and Post-Primary Schools: Characteristics that Determine Effective Provision

<http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/surveys-evaluations/surveys-evaluations-post-primary/surveys-evaluations-post-primary-2008/an-evaluation-of-literacy-and-numeracy-in-primary-and-post-primary-schools-characteristics-that-determine-effective-provision-post-primary.htm>

An Evaluation of the Early Progress of the Achieving Belfast and Achieving Derry Bright Futures Programmes

<http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/surveys-evaluations/surveys-evaluations-post-primary/surveys-evaluations-post-primary-2010/an-evaluation-of-the-early-progress-of-the-achieving-belfast-and-achieving-derry-bright-futures-programmes-post-primary.htm>

POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Colm's High School,
Twinbrook, Belfast

Report of an Inspection
In November 2010



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



CATHOLIC EDUCATION

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Annex []

Examples of Good Practice in Extended Schools (Post-Primaries)

Introduction

Extended Schools demonstrating good or best practice:

- design their ES programmes in response to identified needs of pupils, parents and the community;
- run activities which link clearly to improving levels of attainment and appropriately targets individual children most in need;
- deliver a range of measures aimed at tackling the barriers to learning which can lead to underachievement;
- provide access to specialist support services working collaboratively and in partnership with neighbouring schools and other statutory agencies including Health, Neighbourhood Renewal, the Youth sector and local voluntary and community based organisations.

The examples of good practice provided below, while not attributable, illustrate some of the benefits and positive impacts of extended schools programmes. These are based around the two themes of Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community and Addressing Underachievement and have been evidenced from each school's Extended Schools Annual Reports for the 2009/10 year.

Further good practice examples can also be accessed via the Northern Ireland Extended Schools Information System www.niesis.org

Example 1: Maintained Girls' Non-selective School, BELB

School Demography

5 Year Average FSME: 37%

Pupils enrolled from an NRA/30% most disadvantaged wards 2010/11: 88%

Extended Schools activities

In 2007-08, the school created a new Pastoral Support Centre including the appointment of a dedicated Parent Support Officer to work in that centre alongside key members of the existing Pastoral Support Team. The school also participates in the Greater Falls Extended Schools Cluster and the Full Service Community Network.

Extended Schools funding was used towards a variety of activities during 2009/10 including:

- a Team Building programme focused on children with social or emotional needs aimed at raising esteem and aiding the transition between KS3 and 4;
- development of the Student/Peer Mentor Group;
- provision of individual support sessions for students;
- additional literacy and numeracy support sessions for targeted pupils;
- provision of student/family/home support visits.

Impact of activities funded through Extended Schools (source: the school's 2009/10 Extended School report)

- "The Pastoral Support Centre (PSC) and the staff employed there; in particular the Parent Support Officer (PSO); do much to meet the varied needs of our pupils; their families and the wider community. The PSC and the services provided within it by our staff are delivered in partnership with a wide variety of external agencies and community

groups. It is a key part of the Pastoral Support system which is at the very heart of (the school)";

- "As we work with more and more girls, we find ourselves working with more and more of our parents. Parents are coming in to school to work on site with their daughters. These sessions are being facilitated by our PSO in partnership with other external agencies. The PSO is also working with pupils; parents and the wider family in their homes as well. Parents are receiving support from our staff; but they are also being signposted to additional support within the community; thus strengthening and developing further links between the school and the community";
- "The PSC does much to meet the needs of some of our most vulnerable pupils. Pupils are being offered support to allow them to deal effectively with social; emotional and behavioural issues. Allowing pupils to deal with these issues creates less behavioural issues throughout the school and makes for a school community with positive relationships between pupils and staff. The PSO also works with priority pupils and their families in terms of raising individual and whole school attendance levels. The majority of priority pupils who receive this support do improve their attendance which has a positive impact on their academic performance and levels of attainment";
- "The PSC is open to all in the school community and we are keen to develop it further as a community resource. We embrace every opportunity to work with community groups and currently have partnerships with PIPS; Falls Road Suicide Group; FASA; Young Peoples Centre; Lenadoon Community Counselling. We are committed to expanding our links with community groups and are actively seeking out new partnerships";
- "Individual pupils receive targeted Literacy and Numeracy support. This has resulted in improved performance across the curriculum and increased attainment for the pupils receiving the additional support. Progress updates; and school reports; exam results demonstrate the impact the support has had on pupil performance. Improved examination results (80% achieved 5+ GCSEs A*-C in 2009/10) are also testimony to the positive impact of literacy and numeracy support on whole school attainment".

Example 2: Irish Medium Non-selective School, BELB

School Demography

5 Year Average FSME: 36%

Pupils enrolled from an NRA/30% most disadvantaged wards 2010/11: 91%

Extended Schools activities

This school is part of the Greater Falls (GF) Cluster and participates in the Full Service Community Network. The school's ES co-ordinator is the Irish Medium representative on the GF Cluster Steering Group and West Belfast Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Board Education Sub-group.

Extended Schools funding in 2009/10 was used towards:

- Development of school facilities, specifically refurbishment of the Beechfield Leisure Centre site to accommodate use by pupils, families and wider community with the aim of promoting healthy living through sport and to strengthen community links.
- Healthy Living programme incorporating a number of sports clubs.
- A Breakfast Club.

- Homework and Study Clubs.
- GCSE Revision Classes.
- A Summer Scheme.

Impact of activities funded through Extended Schools (source: the school's 2009/10 Extended School report)

- "Eight 6th year pupils are training to deliver drama workshops to groups of Year 8 pupils as part of the new Mentors and Transition programme. Pupils requiring additional help were identified by primary schools resulting in a targeted transition programme involving 15 pupils. The Coordinator of Learning Support Centre reports pupils doing better in school with the support of a mentoring programme."
- GCSE results in 2009 showed a 20 point rise. By providing a wide choice of GCSE, Study and Homework Clubs, pupils' academic achievement is supported through the Extended Schools programme".
- "Opportunities for smaller homework and study groups are provided and the learning and development that take place through drama, art, music and personal development classes in the after school context contribute to addressing barriers to learning. The Heartmaths and Transcendental Meditation programmes are examples of child centred strategies which help overcome barriers to learning."
- "30 parents attended Study Skills with 10 parents attending parenting programmes".

Example 3: Controlled Non-Selective School, NEELB

School Demography

5 Year Average FSME: 23%

Pupils enrolled from an NRA/30% most disadvantaged wards 2010/11: 70%

Extended Schools activities

This school participates in a cluster with 2 other schools including a maintained post-primary with whom they collaborate on cross community projects. Extended Schools funding in 2009/10 was used towards the running of various activities including:

- Dance and Drama Workshops.
- Fitness Suite.
- Homework Club primarily to provide access to ICT facilities to aid homework completion for children who may not have computers at home.
- GCSE Booster Classes providing additional help for pupils in preparing for exams including advice on revision techniques and coping with stress.
- A Charity Club aimed at raising pupils' awareness of local and worldwide issues and stimulating charity fundraising efforts.
- Raising Aspirations programme providing targeted support on selected pupils making the transition to year 12.
- Language support programme for children from foreign backgrounds to improve English skills to aid social integration and engagement.

Impact of activities funded through Extended Schools (source: the school's 2009/10 Extended School report)

- "Over 40% of pupils that attended additional classes achieved a grade better than predicted, thus improving their chances of going into higher education or better prospects of gaining employment."
- "Pupils that attend the club which operates 2 days a week have shown a better homework completion rate".
- "We have found that pupils that participated on the project became inspired to do better, better self-motivation and had higher expectations of themselves...98% of pupils that participated either continued into 6th year both in (the school) or other grammar schools and others attended local colleges to continue their studies".
- "Year 12 pupils attending additional classes and 1-to-1 mentoring delivered by our teaching staff have shown a significant rise in achieving GCSE results. This was measured by predicted and actual grades. The school had its most successful year in 2009 with students gaining 5 A-C grades GCSE up from 25% to 44%".

Example 4: Controlled Non-Selective School, SEELB

School Demography

5 Year Average FSME – 37%

Pupils enrolled from an NRA/30% most disadvantaged wards 2010/11 - 62%

Extended Schools activities

This school is a member of an ES Cluster working in partnership with 2 other local post-primaries. The school has its own multi-function fitness suite, which is used by members of the community on a daily basis. Extended Schools funding is being used towards the running of various activities including:

- a Breakfast Club.
- provision of Fresh Drinking Water.
- Counselling and Prevention of Bullying programme.
- Community Evenings and Weekend Opening – in response to lack of facilities in the area, the school facilities are open from 6-9pm on weekdays for use by pupils, parents and various community groups. Also used by football teams on Saturdays.
- Fitness Suite –open for public use each weeknight.
- Supported Reading Programme providing 1 to 1 support to encourage learners to enjoy reading.
- Supported Study and Homework Club providing additional classes and support to students including advice on exam techniques etc.

Impact of activities funded through Extended Schools (source: the school's 2009/10 Extended School report)

- "Pupils with emotional issues are benefiting from counselling sessions on a regular basis. This has improved not only their mental health but also impacted positively upon their ability to concentrate in class and to progress academically";
- "More parents and adults from the wider community making use of the school facilities, especially the Fitness Suite. Increased parental engagement and attendance at parental consultation meetings";
- "Profile of school has been raised and this is reflected in Year 8 intake which has risen from 49 in 2008 to 90 in 2009 and now 99 in 2010. Literacy strategies such as Reading Partners Programme together with Homework and Study/Revision sessions have led to increase in pupil achievement throughout the school";
- "Less disaffection and disruptive behaviour from less able pupils since the introduction of the Prince's Trust programme and more vocational courses such as Horticulture... the Prince's Trust programme targets those pupils most at risk of underachievement";
- "Parental involvement in the school has increased. Some parents attended evening classes in Word Processing whilst others became members of the Fitness Club. The profile of the PTA has improved and more parents are assisting with the organisation of school events such as the annual fete and Christmas Concert. Parents seem more at ease when within the school and it is no longer seen as a place to go only when there is a problem with their child";
- "The provision of an on-site trained counsellor has enhanced the lives of many of our pupils and their families. He is the first point of contact for many of the parents and pupils who are experiencing difficulties. He often refers them on to other more specialised agencies or professionals. A partnership also exists between the school and the YMCA. This agency liaises with parents and pupils to provide support";
- "The Pupil Support Programme takes place within (the school) and is funded through the Cluster, Lisburn Partnership and the Youth Justice Agency... It aims to support identified at-risk pupils in years 8; 9 and 10; ...to keep young people engaged in traditional education and prevent them from either opting out of or being excluded from school. It provides short; sharp tailor-made programmes to pupils in Years 8; 9 and 10 and offers both individual and small group sessions. The programme works by creating a co-operative partnership between schools; parents and pupils and hinges on the quality of relationships developed".

Example 5: Controlled Boys' Non-Selective School, BELB

School Demography

5 Year Average FSME: 22%

Pupils enrolled from an NRA/30% most disadvantaged wards 2010/11: 58%

Extended Schools activities

The school is a member of the Inner East Belfast Cluster with 2 other post-primaries and 5 local primary schools. Extended Schools funding is being used towards a wide range of activities including:

- Army Cadet Force.
- British Red Cross community First Aid Course.

- COPE programme –qualification offered as an alternative to GCSE's and to raise self esteem less academically minded pupils.
- Counsellor Drop In service providing advice and support to parents and pupils.
- Duke of Edinburgh.
- IFA Level 1 Grass Roots Coaching Course- due to demand, pupils and community are provided the opportunity to gain this qualification.
- Key Stage 4 & 5 Study Club providing access to relevant resources and expertise required for comprehensive revision and coursework completion.
- Literacy Scheme –intensive course for targeted pupils.
- Numeracy Camp provides additional tuition during Halloween.
- Post 16 Club.
- Halloween Club- enjoyable activities offered during half term to pupils.
- Reversing Underachievement – major school initiative providing support via learning aimed at pupils at risk of underachieving.
- Scripture Club.
- Soccer School.
- Suicide Awareness Course -workshops offered for pupils parents and community to spot warning signs for potential suicide cases.
- Young Enterprise Club.

Impact of activities funded through Extended Schools (source: the school's 2009/10 Extended School report)

- "It (Extended School programme) allows the community to see the school as a focal learning point and point of support for the community as a whole. This in turn promotes the school in a positive way".
- "Study and revision clubs reduce the fear factor for many parents who feel that assisting their child in revision/ exam prep or coursework is often daunting to them. Pupils now have access to specialist help; support and equipment in order that they receive the greatest opportunity to fulfil their potential".
- "Literacy and Numeracy camps were held for KS3 pupils who were experiencing difficulties. This resulted in approx 80% increasing their school examination grades by at least one from their Summer 09 and winter 09 exam grades. In terms of external exams the schools grades and averages continue to be higher than the Department's expected averages for a boys' high school".
- "Many of the clubs and strategies within the programme directly overcome barriers. The facilities made available; the specialist support and teaching and the times the clubs run allow the pupils access to services and facilities that otherwise would be out of reach to them. All clubs are free of charge and all facilities are open to everyone therefore breaking down the barrier for those who live in socially deprived areas as many of our pupils do".
- "The (Extended Schools) programme is designed to offer something for every pupil in (the school). The programme is designed to help pupils socially; mentally and physically. From the pupils' feedback and progress it evident that they are enjoying and gaining huge benefits from extended schools".

- "Parents & pupils are fully engaging in the (counselling) sessions receiving help & guidance through individual and family work, links to outside agencies and access to them through counsellor advice and support".

Example 6: Maintained Girls' Non-selective School, WELB

School Demography

5 Year Average FSME: 53%

Pupils enrolled from an NRA/30% most disadvantaged wards 2010/11: 88%

Extended Schools activities

The school works alongside 4 other post-primaries and the Brandywell and Bogside Health Forum as part of their Extended Schools Cluster and provides a wide range of Extended Schools activities to address underachievement and overcome barriers to learning for their pupils. The main elements to this programme include the Saturday school which operates throughout the year every Saturday morning. Over 110 pupils regularly attend and this programme is linked to a local controlled co-educational no-selective school. An Easter Study camp takes place over the Easter break every year and gives exam students additional support with study during this critical preparation period. The school also provides Microsoft Academy training courses for parents and the community in the evenings.

Other Extended Schools activities on offer include:

- Breakfast Club.
- Summer School which encourages children making the transition from Primary school to take part in a diverse menu of activities in order to make them and their parents feel more comfortable with their new school.

Impact of activities funded through Extended Schools (source: the school's 2009/10 Extended School report)

- "The Summer School was extremely successful. The pupils attending mixed very well with each other and became familiarised with the building. We also provided training mentors or "Big Sisters" who were 6th form students. The prospective year 8 pupils bonded very well with the older pupils and felt secure in that they knew that they would be there looking after them in September".
- "The numbers attending Saturday School has been increased by the introduction of revision classes for senior pupils doing GCSE, AS and A Level examinations and by inviting primary 7 pupils from local primary schools. The primary school children are able to take part in all of the activities on offer. Not only do these children enjoy a creative and fun learning experience their transition to secondary school is made easier".
- "Parents are given the opportunity to attend Saturday School to participate in Literacy and Numeracy support classes. Parents are also given the opportunity to achieve the Microsoft ICT certificate in Microsoft Office and Microsoft Digital Literacy through attending evening classes".
- "The Extended Schools Programme has also supported initiatives in the school such as healthy eating; self esteem; drug and alcohol awareness; and the importance of being a responsible citizen. The funding has enabled better resources and facilities for pupils

such as specialised tutors; homework club; breakfast club; Saturday school; Summer school and specialised courses. None of which could happen without Extended Schools funding. These subsequently lead to an improvement in pupil's performance; self-esteem and motivation; which in turn improves the school as a whole".

- "Overall exam results 70%. 100% entry for GCSE. 99% External qualifications. All targeted pupils completed coursework. High success in local and national competitions from choir and science club who practice at and attend Saturday School".
- "We have successfully encouraged the majority of our pupils from ethnic minorities to attend Saturday school. These include pupils from Poland; Iran; Panama and Malaysia (7 in total). These children have integrated extremely well and have made more friends by attending Saturday school".
- "Every week at least 30 pupils from (the local controlled co-educational secondary) come to Saturday school. They join with our pupils in all activities. Great friendships between pupils from each school have been developed. Pupils definitely developed a much better understanding and tolerance of cultures. Many of these pupils would never get the opportunity to meet teenagers from other backgrounds".

Example 7: Maintained Girls' Non-selective School, SELB

School Demography

5 Year Average FSME: 34%

Pupils enrolled from an NRA/30% most disadvantaged wards 2010/11: 66%

Extended Schools activities

The school is a member of the Newry and Mourne Extended Schools Cluster and collaborates with 1 other post-primary, 7 primaries and 1 Special School in the local area. Extended Schools funding is being used towards the running of various activities including:

- A range of After School Clubs.
- Breakfast Club.
- Community Course –school open on Wednesday evenings to offer range of classes to community including Fitness, Dance and ICT.
- Counselling for Students offering access to a support teacher who provides advice and guidance on range of pupil concerns including bullying, family breakdown etc.
- President's Award.

Impact of activities funded through Extended Schools (source: the school's 2009/10 Extended School report)

- "A target from our SDP was to strengthen links with parents and the wider community. We have achieved great success at this through our Friends of (the school) group and attendance at our community classes (fitness; dance; ICT and cookery). The feedback was very positive with an improvement in numbers in the second session at activities".
- "Through the Mentoring Programme we have targeted students who would be capable of gaining C grades and above but for one reason or another were failing to do so. The Mentoring Programme offered advice and guidance on a one to one basis to those students targeted. The pupils involved have reacted positively to the scheme and their

class teachers feel that it has had a marked improvement in attitude to classwork, homework and coursework".

- "During the Year 2009 and 2010 a Pastoral Care audit took place which was to highlight gaps in provision. Our independent school counsellor was on hand when advice regarding some issues arose. The counselling service provides a one to one service for any pupil requiring help or advice".
- "The Friends of (the school) group has been influential on impacting on our attendance at classes. (The school) has benefited greatly from the Extended Schools Programme e.g. from the sound equipment purchased through the initiative this has enhanced school drama productions; open evenings and school assemblies".
- "Working with an SELB Youth worker gives us access to agencies she is involved with. Also; through having an independent counsellor working with our pupils this allows open access to facilitate other agencies which can benefit our pupils. In addition; having an experienced teacher leading our mentoring programme; has added a wealth of knowledge on how best to support children who are underachieving".
- "Through the ES programme we have been able to offer booster classes for some GCSE modular courses and this has helped to improve literacy and numeracy through these subjects; particularly Maths and Science. We have been able to offer newcomer pupils one to one support for English".
- "The IT classes in school for parents and the community on Wednesday evenings has been very successful in allowing older people to re-engage with learning and boost their self-esteem".

Example 8: Grant Maintained Integrated Secondary School, BELB

School Demography

5 Year Average FSME: 34%

Pupils enrolled from an NRA/30% most disadvantaged wards 2010/11: 77%

Extended Schools activities

In 2009/10, the school worked in partnership as part of a cluster with 2 local Primary Schools. Extended Schools funding in 2009/10 was used towards the running of various activities including:-

- Dance and Fitness Classes.
- City Wide Community Relations Project – a cross community project involving children from (the school) and from a number of schools from different backgrounds aimed at exploring other traditions and cultures.
- Community Relations Group – targeted at children at risk of anti-social behaviour in order to promote good relations with members of other communities.
- Counselling Service for children experiencing social problems.
- Junior School Drop In Service aimed at promoting team work, building friendships and to prevent bullying.
- Life Coaching for Parents.
- Promoting Health programme incorporating a number of after schools sports activities.

- Relaxation therapy – alternative therapies targeted on pupils with behavioural problems.
- Stop Smoking Initiative.
- Young Women's Project aimed at Year 10 students to promote healthy mind, positive self image and body image, healthy relationships and personal development.
- Young Women's Support Group – in response to teen pregnancies in the school this programme is tailored at raising awareness of women's health issues.

Impact of activities funded through Extended Schools (source: the school's 2009/10 Extended School report)

- "The extended Schools programme at (the school) has impacted on a number of the key action points highlighted in the (School) Development Plan; e.g. To promote the (school) as an integrated inclusive co-educational specialist college, embed the KS3 revised curriculum to raise levels of achievement; to develop extended school provision to provide an enriched curriculum that motivates students to achieve their potential and to develop community links";
- "The school has had huge benefits from all the extended schools programmes. It has been able to look at issues beyond the classroom and in a different setting and environment. It has been able to offer programmes that would not be on offer without extended schools support and finance";
- "The impact has been very positive on the pupils and community and because some of the projects/programmes have been on offer after-school and in the evenings this has helped the community which may not have these services or projects on offer for the young people";
- "We have worked with many different agencies to meet the needs of the young people and provide all the programmes".

Education and Training Inspectorate

An Evaluation of Extended Schools

July 2010

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Subject:

EXTENDED SCHOOLS – BUILDING ON GOOD PRACTICE

Circular Number:
2010/21

Date of Issue:
12 November 2010

Target Audience

- Principals and Boards of Governors of schools funded through the Extended Schools Programme
- Education and Library Boards
- The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
- Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education
- Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta
- Governing Bodies Association

Summary of Contents:

This Circular provides updated guidance for Principals and Boards of Governors on the Extended Schools programme. It also provides good practice guidance on the provision of extended services for nursery, special, primary and post primary schools eligible for Extended Schools funding.

Annex A - Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) Indicators of Effective Practice with Extended Schools which summarises the characteristics of Extended Schools and which reflect the improvements evident since earlier ETI reports.

Annex B – ELB Extended Schools contact details.

Governor Awareness:
For information

Status of Contents:
Information and guidance for schools

Related Documents:
Extended Schools – schools, families, communities working together

Superseded Documents:
N/A

Expiry Date:
N/A

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Education and Training Inspectorate



An Evaluation of

**Literacy and Numeracy in Primary and Post-Primary Schools:
Characteristics that Determine Effective Provision**

Inspected: November 2007 & January 2008

eti

*The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

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Education and Training Inspectorate

**An Evaluation of the
Early Progress of the Achieving
Belfast and Achieving Derry/Bright
Futures Programmes**

May 2010



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

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Full Service Community Network

Annual Report 2009/10



Gerard Mc Mahon
Project Manager

June 2010

Chairman's foreword

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the Annual Report for the Full Service Community Network (FSCN). The report highlights the activities, outcomes and priorities as represented in the action plan agreed by the project board.

The FSCN seeks to enhance life chances for all our young people by ensuring educational attainment through addressing the needs of the children, their families and the local community in the area served by the West Belfast Partnership Board and specifically those areas bounded by the Neighbourhood Renewal Areas of Upper Springfield and Greater Falls.

The overall strategic model utilised by the network serves to consolidate existing government strategies and improve education policy coherence by working with and through other statutory, voluntary and community organisations.

Full Service Community Network is focused around six key themes:

- Support for learning – ensure literacy and numeracy targets are attained
- Support for links between primary and post-primary schools
- Personal Support
- Family Support
- Health and Well-being
- Employment and Enterprise

It delivers these themes through a series of objectives. Comprehensive family support services address education, health and well-being and employability needs which are being delivered through integrated and improved connected working across a range of statutory and voluntary agencies and community groups. Using this pilot approach, the project is developing the network as a model of good practice for 'Full Service' provision. FSCN seeks to fundamentally challenge and change (for the better) the way that services are delivered by providers and used by our clients.

In the year 2009/10 the FSCN has demonstrated that it has acted as a catalyst to bring the resources of other organisations to the point of need rather than acting as a fund holder.

In this year the project has been successful in continuing to promote and build a 'Team of Teams' approach, working through a range of agencies based on agreed shared outcomes and aspirations. The aim is to create a pathway of care and to support educational development and aspiration for children, their families and the community.

I hope you find the report interesting, informative and most of all challenging in both the objectives of the FSCN and its methodologies.

Jim Clarke

Chairman

1. Introduction

In this, the first Annual Report of the Full Service Community Network (FSCN), the project board presents the background to the FSCN, a summary of the FSCN's spend for the year to 31 March 2010, and some key metrics, indicating the FSCN's progress towards its objectives, again in the year to 31 March 2010.

2. Background to the FSCN

As this is the first Annual Report, it is important to establish the context leading into 2009/10. While 2009/10 was a significant period in the life of the FSCN, the focus in the preceding year was on the appointment of staff, induction and initiating the operational and strategic processes that would take the project forward.

During that time relationships and trust with partners were nurtured and cultivated in advance of the official launch in April 2009. The tender for primary school counselling was progressed through the auspices of the Belfast Education and Library Board, with Barnardo's NI the successful applicant. This service would eventually prove to be the cornerstone of the need-based provision that is delivered through the FSCN.

Also at this time, the final members of the team were recruited, namely the two educational development workers and the two 'transition workers', and a process of team management was being devised. The intention was to create a structure that would bring together existing strategies (such as Extended Schools and Achieving Belfast) with policies and initiatives from other organisations in the statutory, voluntary and community sectors. While it was important to have a particular project identity it was equally important that the members of the FSCN team worked with and through other teams from other organisations. The specific aim was to create a culture of a "team of teams" with the common purpose of supporting children and families to raise academic achievement through specific activities in the action plan.

From the beginning of 2009/10 programmes of work for the educational development workers and the transition workers were being delivered through schools and community groups. The role of the Extended Schools' cluster co-ordinators was important as they eased the way for the workers into the various schools associated with each cluster. While specific services were being delivered at the point of need by the workers it was equally vital that they drew in other services to support families. These new contacts and connections are a crucial part of the FSCN: particularly as many of them are resourced by other organisations and are not a draw on the FSCN budget. There are many examples of how the team has identified a need, sourced the

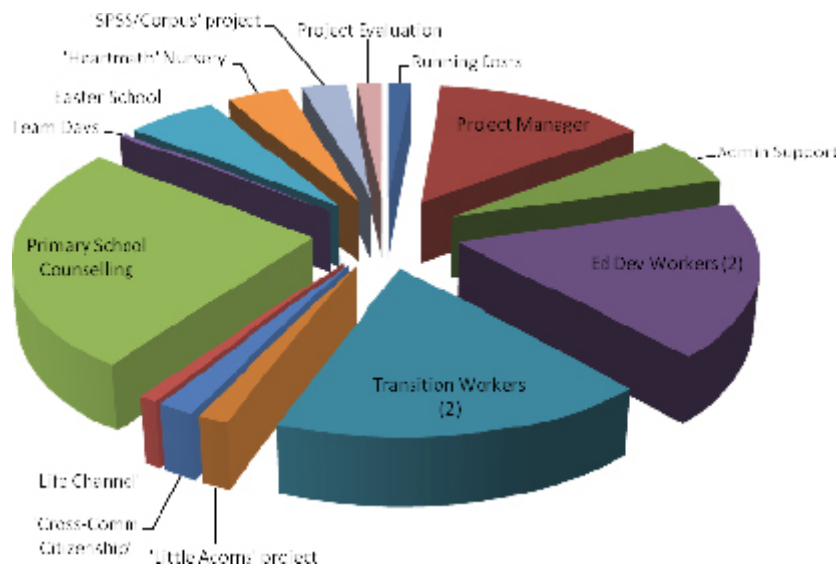
service and brought the service to the point of need. It is hoped that this will be positively reflected in the on-going evaluation process.

It is important for the purpose of this report to focus on some activities and outcomes of the workers, to this end a series of key metrics are presented in sections 4-12. All of the activities and outcomes listed are referenced to the project's themes and objectives.

3. Distribution of Actual Project Costs 01 April 2009 - 31 March 2010

The diagram below summarises the distribution of actual project costs for the financial year. Further detail on this spend, including actual costs, is available at Appendix 1, however a number of key points can be highlighted here. Firstly, the total budget allocated to the FSCN was £350,000 for the year to 31 March 2010, and the project board has reported a small overspend of just under 1%. Secondly, it is clear from the diagram that our key areas of spend were in primary school counselling and in the provision of educational development and transition workers, the need for which had been previously identified through the Extended Schools clusters and other action plans in the local area. Thirdly, in addition to these key areas of spend the board was able to respond to identified needs and fund additional projects, including 'Heartmath' and 'SPSS/Corpus'. It should be noted that all salary costs are inclusive of all contributions.

Diagram 1: Distribution of Actual Costs 01 April 2009 – 31 March 2010



4. Activities and Outcomes: FSCN Transition Workers

Project Themes 1,2,4,5 Objectives 4,5,7

The aims of the transition workers are to engage young people, families and statutory, voluntary and community organisations in a co-operative and collaborative way to support the successful social and emotional transition from pre-nursery to nursery school, nursery school to primary school, and primary school to post-primary school.

Sub-Project	Activities and Outcomes to 31 March 2010
Transition Work in Greater Falls	
Early Years Programme in Greater Falls Extended Schools Cluster	208 children received 4 sessions (in 2 nurseries and 1 primary school) 208 families received the resource pack 10 families were involved in group work
Using Home as a Learning Environment	Contact with 208 families, presentation and follow-up
Moving to Big School: Drama/Music Workshops	208 children participated
Individual 1:1 support for pupils	6 children involved
P7 Transition Drama Workshops	6 primary schools, 255 children participated
P7 Transition Targeted Group Work	35 children took part
Post-Primary Transition Group Work	50 young people participated
Transition Mentor Group	Contact time with 25 young people
Training: Learning and Teaching Styles, Self-motivation, Motivating Children & Working Creatively with Children	26 classroom assistants and other school support staff took part
Transition Work in Upper Springfield and Whiterock	
P7 Transition Work	207 children participated
P7 Transition Group Work	Contact time with 7 children
Nursery Work with Parents	16 parents received 4 x 2 hr sessions
Primary Parents: Motivating Children, Homework Routines and Reducing Stress	16 parents participated
Individual Parents' Support in Transition Issues	8 parents took part, across 4 schools

5. Activities and Outcomes: FSCN Educational Development Workers

Project Themes 1,2,3,4 Objectives 4,7

The educational development workers support the educational development of children, young people and their families within the Greater Falls and Upper Springfield areas of West Belfast. Their work is often varied due to the nature of the differing needs identified in the process of this work.

Sub-Project	Activities and Outcomes to 31 March 2010
Greater Falls Extended Schools Cluster	
Work with individual children and families with specific learning difficulties	Contact with 7 children
Group work with children, language and literacy support, speech development and behaviour support	92 children participated, across 7 groups
Work with families in the home on specific needs	13 families took part

Sub-Project	Activities and Outcomes to 31 March 2010
Parent Groups	36 families, in 5 groups, took part
Workshops in reading, talking and listening	75 children in 3 groups x 4 sessions
'Achieving Beechmount'multi-disciplinary group	Monthly meetings and follow-up activities
Upper Springfield and Whiterock Extended Schools Cluster	
Group work with children on a range of needs as agreed with the school	7 primary schools involved, 23 groups and 160 children
Work with families including home visits	5 families, in addition to 3 parent groups involving 17 parents
Work with individual children on specific learning difficulties	3 children
P3 Talking and Listening	20 children, 1 school over 4 sessions
Nursery storytelling workshops	20 parents participated
Linguistic phonics	21 attendees including parents and community

All of the above contacts are documented and recorded and are available from the team manager on request.

6. Activities and Outcomes: Cross Community Parents Leadership Programme

Project Themes 1,2,3,4,5 Objectives 2,3,5,6,7

The parents' groups of Harmony Primary School, Glencairn, and St. Paul's Primary School, Beechmount set out to undertake a cross-community leadership programme. The aims include developing cross-community and interdenominational links; promoting tolerance and acceptance of diversity and promoting political reconciliation between the parents' groups. Local politicians from Belfast City Council, the Northern Ireland Executive and Dail Eireann took part in the programme. Five parents from St. Paul's Primary School and three parents from Harmony Primary School have been involved in this project.

7. Activities and Outcomes: West Belfast Partnership Board Easter School

Project Themes 1,3,6 Objectives 4,6,8

The FSCN has become a partner in the delivery of the long-established Easter School, an organised revision course for approximately two hundred young people across West Belfast, with the aim of improving on the predicted grades of students not expected to attain higher grades at GCSE.

8. Activities and Outcomes: Life Channel - Corpus Christi College Pilot

Project Themes 1,3,5 Objectives 5,6

Three large television screens have been placed in public areas of Corpus Christi College providing information on the promotion of health and well-being and other school events. It is expected that students will see at least one of the screens each day, with the aim of improving pupils' knowledge and understanding of health-related issues.

9. Activities and Outcomes: Upper Springfield Area Services Co-ordination Team Day

Project Themes 2,3,4,5,6 Objectives 2,3,5,6,7,8

An invitation was extended to the project managers of various services coming into the area to meet and share information. Outcomes of the day included:

- Improved knowledge and understanding of services provided in the local area.
- Mapping of services to avoid duplication.
- Improved working relationships across the community.
- Twenty project managers and other representatives attended.

10. Activities and Outcomes: Primary School Counselling: 'Time 4 Me'

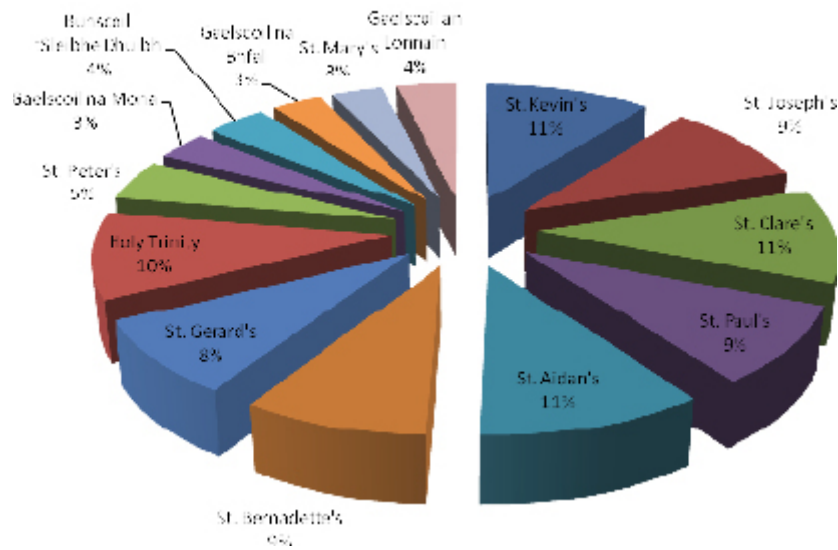
Project Themes 1,3,4,5 Objectives 4,5,6,7,8

Primary school counselling provides individual and group counselling to children in their own school. The counsellors also work with parents, carers and teachers to help everyone understand the child's feelings and behaviour and to support the child in developing effective ways of coping. Together, these different aspects of work help provide a counselling service that is child-centred, context-focussed and based on the strengths of the child and their caring family/school contexts. This service was commissioned through tender, and is delivered by Barnardo's NI.

The diagram below represents the total number of hours of in-school counselling and family support in percentage values by school. Details of these percentage and absolute values for the year 2009/10 are available at Appendix 2.

Diagram 2: Activity Summary: Time 4 Me

Total In-school Counselling/Family Support Hours



In the second quarter of the year a predicted underspend was identified. The project board approved a proposal to use the money to promote the following initiatives.

11. Activities and Outcomes: SPSS Link Project with Corpus Christi College

Project Themes 1,3,4,5 Objectives 2,3,4,5,6,7

The personal development programme for pupils of the college was aimed at augmenting the service provided by the BELB Secondary Pupil Support Service (SPSS) available to the post-primary schools. Concern was raised at the 'Achieving Beechmount' cluster that a growing number of pupils would not receive the support they required which would, as a consequence, create more serious problems for the children and their families.

It was proposed to the SPSS and the school that the FSCN would support the training of a teacher and a classroom assistant to support the SPSS service presently in the school. Before the programme began, SPSS were working with 12 pupils and had a waiting list of 19 pupils. Since the introduction of the programme, which included a Youth Intervention Worker at no cost to the FSCN, a total of 60 pupils have received a minimum of 6 sessions each. The role of the FSCN was to initiate the project, provide 'pump-priming' funds and step back from the process. A key outcome is that the school has decided to continue the service in the next academic year at its own expense.

12. Activities and Outcomes: 'Heartmath' in Nursery Schools

Project Themes 1,2,3,4 Objectives 2,4,5,7

Following the successful introduction of this initiative into local primary schools in the Extended Schools clusters of Upper Springfield and Greater Falls, it was decided to extend the programme into local nurseries and community groups. The programme uses the innovative 'journey to my safe place' to help reduce stress; raise academic performance and improve classroom behaviour.

In total 27 schools and 6 community organisations have participated in the programme, while 144 members of staff have received training in its delivery. By the end of March 2010, 1800

children and young people in both clusters were practising the 'journey to their safe place' on a regular basis. An evaluation report for 2008-09 of the work in the Greater Falls is available on request.

The role of the FSCN was again to identify the gap and bring service to the point of need. There is no recurrent expenditure in the 2010-11 budget.

13. Project Evaluation

The programme of evaluation commenced during 2009/10 following a tendering process managed by the project board and the procurement section of the BELB. FGS McClure Watters were successful in bidding and the process began in November 2009. The team of evaluators provided the project board with a Project Initiation Document in December 2009 and followed this up with an update on the 8th June 2010. An interim report is due at the end of June with a final draft report scheduled for the end of December 2010. Consultation with partners and stakeholders is on-going.

14. FSCN Conference: 'One Year On', 13 May 2010

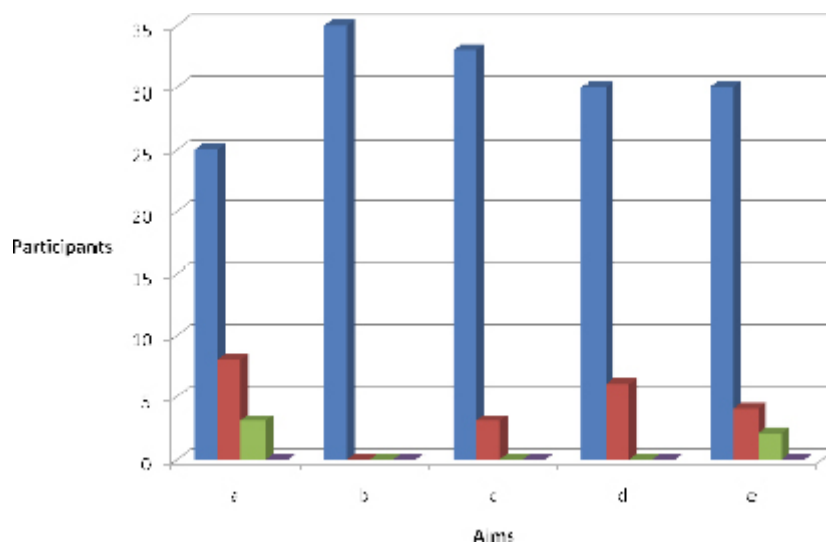
In January 2010 the project board approved planning for a conference in association with Barnardo's NI. The aims of the conference were:

- a) To demonstrate the importance and impact of DE policy coherence.
- b) To showcase the work of the FSCN workers and the role of Barnardo's NI and other partners in this work.
- c) To demonstrate the impact of early intervention on children, young people and families in the area around Corpus Christi College.
- d) To provide information on the full range of on-going collaborative activities and signpost other projects being planned.
- e) To provide those present with an opportunity to consider and comment on the evidence presented.

The conference was subsequently held on 13th May 2010 at the Beechlawn Hotel Belfast. The project board was delighted to welcome Minister Caitriona Ruane and thanked her for her very supportive comments when opening the conference. Other speakers at the conference included Linda McClure, Director of Operations, Barnardo's NI, who addressed delegates on the 'Power of Partnership'. Although officially 110 delegates attended, informal headcounts on the day put the number at approximately 140. Each delegate was provided with a pack of information (available on the website www.fscn.co.uk) and greeted by a 'village' of information stalls manned by 16 service providers.

Participants at the conference were asked to consider the extent to which the conference met the above stated aims. Participants could score the aims from 1 to 4, with 1 indicating high achievement and 4 indicating low achievement. In all 36 evaluation forms were returned, and the results are summarised below:

Diagram 3: Participant Evaluation of 'One Year On' conference, 13 May 2010



As can be seen in the above diagram, conference participants were in strong agreement that the aims of the conference had been met. Moreover, delegates were also generous in their praise in additional comments on their returned forms, and these comments are available at Appendix 3.

Appendix 1

Summarised Financial Information

The table below shows actual spend for the period 01 April 2009 – 31 March 2010, summed and compared to budget. These values correspond to the distribution of spend, summarised in Diagram 1.

Actual Spend to 31 March 2010	Cost £
Running Costs	5,000
Primary School Counselling	90,014
Educational Development Workers (2)	62,343
Transition Workers (2)	62,343
'Little Acorns' project	5,000
'Cross-Community Citizenship'	6,000
'Life Channel'	3,000
Team Days	1,500
Easter School	20,000
Project Manager	47,500
Administrative Support	19,992
'Heartmath' Nursery	14,000

Actual Spend to 31 March 2010	Cost £
'SPSS/Corpus' project	10,000
Project Evaluation	6,000
Total Spend 2009/10	352,692
Budget as approved by DE	350,000
Overspend 2009/10	2,692

Appendix 2

Activity Summary: Time 4 Me, April 2009 - March 2010

The table below represents the total number of hours of in-school counselling and family support in absolute and percentage values, as summarised in Diagram 2.

Name of School	Total In-school Counselling/ Family Support Hours	As a Percentage
St. Kevin's	131.5	10.66%
St. Joseph's	116.5	9.44%
St. Clare's	132	10.70%
St. Paul's	112.5	9.12%
St. Aidan's	131	10.62%
St. Bernadette's	107	8.67%
St. Gerard's	106	8.59%
Holy Trinity	121	9.81%
St. Peter's	59.5	4.82%
Gaelscoil na Mona	41	3.32%
Bunscoil tSleibhe Dhuibh	48	3.89%
Gaelscoil na Bhfal	40	3.24%
St. Mary's	40	3.24%
Gaelscoil an Lonnain	48	3.89%
	1234	100.00%

Appendix 3

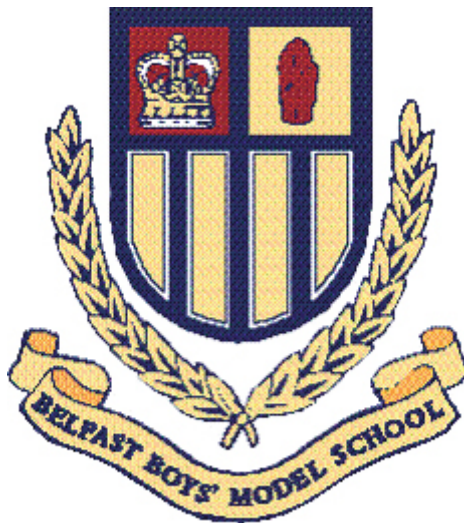
All Comments Provided on Conference Evaluation Forms

- This today confirmed all that has been achieved through input from FSCN – a true Godsend to our schools and enhancement of our work in the community, a wonderful presentation day and a celebration of what has been achieved and what is yet to come.
- An excellent morning – thanks.
- Great format for a conference. Lots of information given painlessly. Keep up the good work.
- Very valuable services in the Upper Springfield Area, which showed that the young people, children and families obviously get so much out of. Provisions of such services need further development, however I do have concerns regarding those children within the area, 'disappearing' / schools closing in the area due to the post-primary review. Very worthwhile, hard hitting videos.
- An excellent presentation of much valued services for all of us whose responsibility is to make a better future for our children. Keep up the continued good work.
- A great conference – Thanks.
- Fabulous – the film clips really brought FSCN to life. Well done!
- Wonderful conference. Thank you so much I feel very humble to be a small part of this collaborative partnership.
- This was truly wonderful, congratulations to you all.
- Very informative – well done.
- Excellent, well worthwhile. Many thanks.
- Very good conference overall – very informative and motivational.
- This is the best conference I have ever attended, you have set a very high standard for future conferences, well done.
- Excellent format, really enjoyable and worthwhile. The information and services provided were invaluable.
- Extended Schools fund the co-ordinators of both clusters, but this programme was not mentioned. Not impressed with the closing remarks, the comments on extended schools was not put into context – poorly guided comments.
- An excellent conference which clearly demonstrates how effective the FSCN is and the impact on the community. Would have liked input from Extended Schools in relation to the impact the finding has in schools and opportunities it affords children in disadvantaged areas. Also Surestart.
- It is only when the programmes are together on show you realise the impact.
- Really pleased with the turnout today – hopefully included lots of reps from the community not just the educational sector. It may have been useful for the Minister to be present for the plenary – especially in regards to the real need for connectivity among Government Departments.
- Lots of useful contacts made and a wealth of information for myself as a teacher training provider and early years' lecturer. Many thanks for an excellent conference.
- Excellent showcase of some very important and necessary programmes. A lot to take back to my teaching in Early Childhood Studies.
- Slightly disappointed in finish in that whilst there was difficulties with the initial extended schools roll out with the hard work of DE and ELB Co-ordinators in engaging with schools we have come a long way since 2006.
- Extremely informative and enjoyable.

- Inspirational. Thank you.
- Very successful conference – lots of achievement but still many challenges ahead – joined up approach to assist pupils and their families is best way to progress. Best wishes for the future.
- Very valuable in showcasing work and demonstrating partnership.
- Very professional and informative.

Belfast Boys' Model School

Full Service Extended School Report



2009-2010

Foreword

The Belfast Boys' Model and the Belfast Model School for Girls serve communities in North and West Belfast which have suffered more than most during the last 30 years. There exists within the area, some of the most disadvantaged wards in Northern Ireland and such high levels of social deprivation and disadvantage present a challenging environment in which to deliver "achievement for all".

Those involved in leading, delivering and supporting education in the city agree that high quality educational achievement for all pupils is dependent upon high quality teaching and learning within the classroom, coupled with high quality support beyond the classroom.

The Full Service Schools' Project provides such holistic support to young people in the pursuit of raising levels of achievement for all. This report outlines the range of services and activities provided during and beyond the school day which:

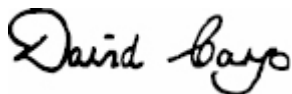
- attempt to address the needs of the 'whole' child;
- create an environment where community expectations, aspirations and support are high and success for young people is the norm;
- help identify and eradicate barriers to successful learning;

- create an environment where learners take responsibility for their learning outcomes.

The emphasis of the project is on outcomes; challenging targets are set together with established benchmarks for measuring success. An evidence based approach has been adopted where programmes and activities are developed in the light of identified need.

Much of the success highlighted in this report is due to the leadership of the principals of both schools, allied to the hard work and dedication of staff and co-ordinators in both schools.

The report presents clear evidence that the Full Service Schools' Project is achieving its objectives and disadvantage and underachievement are being tackled in a pro-active way. It is vital that policy makers continue to support and sustain this approach.



David Cargo

Chief Executive

Belfast Boys' Model School

Full Service Extended School Programme

Rationale

The Full Service Extended School project was initiated in the Belfast Boys' Model and Belfast Model School For Girls in September/October 2006. The purpose was to provide a programme which would integrate services by bringing together professionals for the provision of education, family support, health and other community services. The over-arching target was to raise performance in these Full Service Schools and in feeder primary schools.

The development of the FSES auditing process and the project action plans were informed by the following policies:

- Children and Young People funding package
- Neighbourhood Renewal
- A Healthier Future
- The Programme for Government and Public Sector Agreement Targets
- Every School a Good School
- Extended Schools programme
- Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People

Context

A Full Service school focuses on the needs of the whole child – physical, emotional, social and academic – to create the conditions necessary for all children to learn. It is open to young people, families and community members before, during and after school, all year-round. Full

Service Schools strive to strengthen families and communities so they are better equipped to support young people.

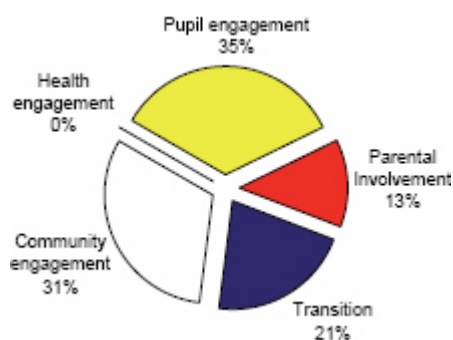
A comprehensive audit was conducted by the coordinators to ensure that partnerships and initiatives were established to meet the needs of all stakeholders and these were fully integrated into the School Development Plan. With support from the coordinator, families, students, teachers, principals, community residents and partner organisations, decisions are made together to foster a culture of learning and personal development. School and community work together to help young people address barriers to success and reach their potential.

Each Full Service programme will have discrete differences determined by the needs of the community. Some of the responses to these needs include:-

- Before and after-school programmes which build on classroom experiences to help students improve their aspirations, contribute to their communities and enjoy themselves. These programmes also promote a whole school approach to improving punctuality, attendance and positive behaviour and are fully integrated into the School Development Plan.
- Health and well-being initiatives facilitated by statutory and voluntary providers, are incorporated with the curriculum. The purpose being that all pupils will have increased capacity to access the curriculum if their mental and physical wellbeing is addressed.
- Parents and all members of the community are encouraged to participate in adult education and job training programs. The aim of this is to encourage a culture of learning within each family and the community. The intention being that the aspirations of the young people will be enhanced and their attainment will improve.
- Links with early years provision, primary schools and with the community is essential in order to promote this holistic approach.

Full Service Extended School

Allocation of 2009/2010 Action Plan Costs



The total Full Service budget allocation for Belfast Boys' Model School for the year ending 31st March 2010, was £175k. The chart above indicates that the majority of resources were allocated to strategies promoting Pupil and Community Engagement.

Pupil Engagement

A number of strategies to address issues which act as barriers to young people accessing the curriculum continue to be supported through the FSES programmes. These include:-

- An Attendance Officer – work with pupils with attendance between 90-80%. Their work complements the work of the Education Welfare Service with early interventions and promoting of regular attendance.
- Student Support Unit – Pupils who would otherwise have been suspended from school are referred to this unit for a short period. They still have access to the curriculum and receive support or guidance from community organisations to address the issues related to their placement.
- Voluntary / Statutory Organisations – these support individuals on issues related to their physical and mental health.
- Easter Revision Programme – all pupils in exam classes have the opportunity to revise supported by teaching staff.

Community Engagement

Full Service Extended School Coordinator – This coordinator role involves the development of links with voluntary and statutory organisations along with sharing the vision of the Full Service School programme to all stakeholders.

Adult Evening Classes – Classes are offered to parents, adults in the community and recent school leavers. A wide range of accredited and leisure activities are available, these are delivered by Belfast Metropolitan College and Belfast Boys' Model School staff.

Transition

Student Integration Teacher – This teacher provides transition activities for pupils in feeder primary schools. They support pupils on their arrival in Boys' Model and those requiring support at Key Stage 3 and 4.

Transition programme – A programme of music, art, sport and ICT is offered to all the feeder primary schools. The intention is to share expertise and examples of good practice with our cluster primary schools, to aid transition and provide an opportunity for early identification of pupils requiring an intervention, either educational support or pastoral care.

Parental Involvement

Barnardo's Parenting Project Worker – The worker supports parents by offering advice in behaviour support, anger management, self-referral to statutory / voluntary organisations and personal development programmes. Families are identified through the school's pastoral care system and by self-referral.

Parents' Voice – Parents are given the opportunity to share their views and provide guidance to the school on parental involvement in pupil learning. This group provides an avenue for parents to become involved in school development.

Health

Statutory and Voluntary community organisations support teaching staff in the delivery of the curriculum, for example, Learning for Life and Work. They also provide guidance and advice to individual pupils or to their families on a range of issues including; substance misuse, mental health, sexual health and lifestyle choices.

There was no financial allocation to this target area other than the time of the FSES Coordinator. This role in forging partnerships and maintaining relationships with a wide range of providers, is vital to the success of the strategy.

Full Service School Targets

April 2009 – March 2010

Pupil engagement

1. The percentage attendance of pupils in the target cohort, will improve by at least 5% by the end of March 2010.
2. Pupils attending enrichment activities will show greater engagement with classroom learning using a before and after questionnaire.
3. The total number of suspension days will reduce by at least 5%.

Parental engagement

4. Parents who engage with support programmes will indicate by the end of March 2010, that their skills have been enhanced through involvement in the Parenting Programme.
5. Pupils of parents who are involved in programmes, show an increased engagement with classroom learning by the end of March 2010, as indicated by progress reviews.
6. The number of parents engaging with the Parents' Voice programme will increase to at least 15.

Transition

7. Pupils involved in transition activities will indicate that their transfer to BBMS was eased by involvement in a support programme.
8. At least 15% of pupils planning to attend BBMS will become involved in the summer scheme during August 2009.

Community engagement

9. Appropriate opportunities to share the vision of the FSES provision are employed to ensure sustainability. 3 community forum meetings will be facilitated by the end of March 2010
10. The number of adults engaging in learning opportunities will increase to at least 115.
11. 5% of adults who attend evening classes will achieve an accredited qualification in the academic year September 2009 – June 2010.
12. 10% of those attending will be parents/guardians of pupils attending the school.

Health Improvement

13. Pupils will indicate, in a questionnaire that they are more aware of health issues affecting them after a programme of advice/intervention.

14. Year 9 pupils in the pilot cohort will indicate in evaluation questionnaires that they are aware of the elements of a healthy lifestyle.

15. Parents/Guardians of pupils who benefit from a referral to a partner organisation will state that the intervention has improved their quality of life.

Overview of Full Service and Extended School Interventions. 2009-2010

Pupil engagement (£60,500)	Parental engagement (£30,000)	Community Engagement (£47,000)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance Officer Support Organisations – individual/group work. Student Support Unit Peer mentors/mediators Easter Revision Classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parenting project worker Parent support group ADHD support Group Adult Counselling Citizens' advice Parents' voice Evening programme for parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FSES Coordinator – Coordination and delivery of all programmes. Partnerships with community organisations Evening Classes – 7 courses, 92 adults.
Transition (£36,700)	Health and Wellbeing (£0)	Extended school (£35,290)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizenship Music PE Sentinus Science Summer scheme Residential Transition Group Work Transition visits (summer) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Nursing Community Agency support for the curriculum. Playboard health pilot HeartStart Training Life Channel Health Promoting School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homework Club Breakfast Club Extra-curricular activities Music Community volunteers

Progress against targets 2009 - 2010

Pupil engagement

Target 1

The percentage attendance of pupils in the target cohort, will improve by at least 5% by the end of March 2010

Actions

Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer typically works with a range of boys from various year groups, generally referred by Year Heads although some are referred by primary school principals at transition and in some cases, by parents. Their role is to promote regular attendance across the school, but mostly in Key Stages 3 and 4. The main cohort targeted for intervention were those boys having attendance between 80-90%, although pupils with lower attendance are also supported in partnership with the Education Welfare Service.

The Attendance Co-ordinator worked with 64 boys across Years 8 to 14. Support included individual mentoring, group work, home visits and regular communication with parents.

Outcomes

The overall percentage attendance of the 80 – 90% cohort improved by 0.16%.

Of the 64 pupils in the cohort; 33 pupils improved and 11 maintained their percentage attendance.

The average annual attendance percentage of the 20 pupils whose attendance decreased was 80.7%. This remained within the cohort threshold of 80%.

Overall school attendance has increased year on year from 86.8% (2006-07) to 89.3% (May 2010) since the appointment of the Attendance Officer.

The collaboration between this FSES strategy and the Education Welfare Service has ensured that regular attendance is promoted at all Key Stages.

Target 2

Pupils attending enrichment activities will show greater engagement with classroom learning using a before and after questionnaire.

2.1 The Student Support Unit

The Student Support Unit (SSU) established in 2007, offers an alternative to suspension. Pupils are referred by the Head of Year and are placed in the Unit on their return from a shortened suspension or as an intervention to avoid suspension.

Community organisations support pupils during a placement in the unit by facilitating personal development and mentoring programmes. The intention is that pupils return to normal classes with an improved ability to avoid negative behaviours.

Outcomes

Since the establishment of the unit, the percentage of the school population being suspended, has reduced.

The percentage of pupils suspended each year since the introduction of the SSU

Year	% of pupils suspended
2007-2008	17.2%
2008-2009	10.7%
2009-2010	11.0%

A group of 11 young people were suspended more than their peers, and as a result, additional support strategies are allocated to address their complex needs. We are working in partnership with the Integrated Services for Children and Young People (ISCYP) programme and the Secondary Pupil Support Service (SPSS) to effect a positive change with these young people.

2.2 Pupil support strategies

Currently there are 21 agencies working with pupils and their families.

The range of programmes and the number of young people benefiting is summarised below.

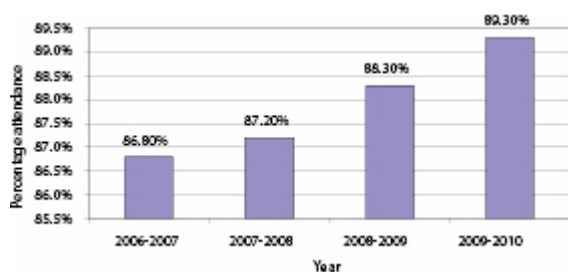
Issue	Target group	Number of pupils
Easter Revision Programme	Year 12,13,14	136
Drugs awareness	Year 13	110
Personal development (GCSE LFLW) – Non accredited (Anti-social behaviour)	Year 11	98
Sexual Health	Years 10, 11 and 13	345
Suicide awareness / self help	Year 11	161
Behaviour Management	Year 8 – 12	16
Counselling	All Years	22
Drugs / substance misuse	Year 10, 11	11

Issue	Target group	Number of pupils
Mentoring	P7, Year 9, 10, 11	21
Suicide / self-harm intervention	All Years	7
Personal development– Accredited OCN Level 2 (Community awareness)	Year 13	82
Anger management	Years 8, 9 10	11

Since the deployment of these strategies, an improving trend has been observed in the academic attainment of pupils in Year 12 and 14.

	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009 - 2010
% Pupils Achieving 5+ GCSE at Grades A* - C	16%	20%	25%	28%	54%
% Pupils Achieving 5+ GCSE at Grades A* - C include. English and Maths	8%	10%	16%	16%	23%
% Pupils Achieving 2+ A-levels (or equivalent)	83%	88%	88%	100%	97%

Overall School Attendance



Outcomes

Pupil reviews were completed by staff for those young people received counselling or engaged in small group work. The Class teachers were asked to reflect on the performance of this cohort upon referral and at the end of the school term. The following results were reported:-

- 63% young people maintained or improved the ability to work and communicate with their peers
- 68% maintained or improved the quality of work completed in class
- 58% improved or maintained their relationship with staff
- 54% maintained or improved the quality of homework

Parental Involvement

Target 4

Parents who engage with support programmes will indicate by the end of March 2010, that their skills have been enhanced through involvement in the Parenting Programme.

More parents are engaging in the evening classes.(see Community Engagement) Four additional parents have joined the Parents' Voice and numbers in the Parents' Support programme are steady at 16.

Target 5

Pupils of parents who are involved in programmes, show an increased engagement with classroom learning by the end of March 2010, as indicated by progress reviews.

Parent Support Worker

Currently 32 families, many of which are or have experienced crisis situations, are supported by the Parent Support Worker. Parents expressed the view, through evaluation questionnaires, that their ability to support their son and provide a consistent environment at home, improved after engaging with support strategies.

Actions

Parents and families benefited from the following strategies this year:-

- Individual support
- Family support
- Sign-posting to relevant statutory and voluntary bodies; DHSS, BHSC
- Liaison between pastoral care team in school and the family
- Communication with Social Services; Child Protection referrals and Parental Self-referrals
- Facilitation of personal development seminars for parents
- Involvement in the Barnardo's Parenting Matters programme
- Supporting parents at case conferences and reviews
- Coordination of awareness events and social activities for the whole parent body.

Outcomes

Issues disclosed to Parent Support Worker.

Issues	Number of Parents
Bullying	6
Drug use; either the adult themselves or their child.	6
Child's physical health	4

Issues	Number of Parents
Parent's physical health	4
Poor attendance of pupil	10
Family bereavement	10
Concerns about a parent's mental health	4
Parent's thoughts of suicide	3
Children who were caring for adults (young carers)	2
Previously identified child protection concerns	2
Problems with diet/healthy eating	2
Young people exhibiting aggressive or violent behaviour	8

Summary of One-To-One Work with Parents

Actions	Number of interventions
Home visits	98
Phone calls with parents	177
Referrals to other agencies/services	85
Child protection concerns reported	6

As well as successfully engaging an increasing number of families, the programme also had a range of other successes, including:

- 7 parents from the Parent Support Programme have completed Essential Skills courses facilitated by the school
- 4 parents achieved "C" grades in GCSE English (August 2009).
- 3 parents are currently studying GCSE Maths (results due August 2010)
- One-off events have been held, and have been popular with the parents, for example, 112 people attended the Men We Value event, and 24 attended a Parents' Survival Guide which dealt with issues such as substance misuse, sexual health and managing anger.
- 4 parenting programmes have been completed with 8 parents engaging. These were on Coping with Behavioural Issues and Information for Parents of Teenagers.
- An ongoing parents self-support group has been established, with 16 parents attending. This group is supported by the Parent Support Worker to develop their own programme.

They invite guest speakers to discuss a range of issues which are agreed as priorities by members of the group.

Target 6

The number of parents engaging with the Parents' Voice programme will increase to at least 15.

5 parents from the Parent Support Programme are now involved in The Parents' Voice, a group of parents and teachers that meets regularly in the school. There are 14 members

Review of service delivery

Parental reviews completed by a group of 16 families with young people exhibiting challenging behaviour indicated the following:-

- 14 parents stated that the behaviour of the young person had improved
- 12 parents stated that their ability to cope with the young person's behaviour had improved.
- 9 parents indicated that their ability to communicate with the young person had improved

The approach taken by the Parent Support Programme has been highly effective to date and there is a clear need for the service. There is an obvious need to expand and further develop the strategy, as the Support Worker has had to establish a waiting list. This will be addressed in the interim by signposting families to agencies such as the Child and Parent Support Service and Action for Children Young Carers.

Proposals for next year

- The evaluation findings have emphasised the vitally important role of partner agencies and organisations that work with local families. The inter-agency dimension of the work will continue to be developed.
- We will explore possibilities for further developing its services, such as involving some of the more motivated parents in a peer-support or volunteering capacity and looking at ways of further engaging fathers.
- An FSES protocol will be devised for dealing with families where a clear problem has been identified, but the parent is unwilling to engage.
- The home visits made over the summer holidays in 2009 to families where primary school attendance and behavioural issues had been identified, were very effective in picking up a number of difficulties at an early stage. This process will be repeated during the summer of 2010.

Transition

Target 7

Pupils involved in transition activities will indicate that their transfer to BBMS was eased by involvement in a support programme.

Target 8

At least 15% of pupils planning to attend BBMS will become involved in the summer scheme during August 2009.

Primary School Transition Programme

This year, 15 of the 19 feeder primary school engaged in transition activities.

Actions

- A programme of activities was offered to P6 and P7 pupils.
- Boys' Model staff delivered a programme including; music, sport, art and citizenship courses
- Senior School pupils received mentoring and Safe-Talk mental health training. They were deployed to support young people in local primary schools.
- Home visits were offered to all incoming P7 pupils. The range of Full Service support strategies were explained and parents were given the opportunity to engage at that point

Outcomes

Programme	ASDAN Citizenship Programmes	P6 and P7 Sport Competitions	Music	Art	Peer Mentoring	Transition summer scheme
Number of primary school pupils	136	122	125	42	71	17

Outcomes

The benefits of the Transition Programme are as follows:-

- Improved relationships with feeder primary schools.
- An enriched curriculum is provided for many primary school pupils
- Pupils arrive in Year 8 better prepared for life in secondary school.
- The opportunity to establish intervention and support measures prior to pupils taking their place in Year 8
- Skill development in preparation for the Key Stage 3 curriculum.

The Transition programme will be developed during 2010 -2011, with all 19 feeder schools benefiting from the sharing of skills and expertise.

Community Engagement

Target 9

Appropriate opportunities to share the vision of the FSES provision are employed to ensure sustainability. 3 community forum meetings will be facilitated by the end of March 2010.

Deployment of the FSES Coordinator

The FSES Coordinator continued to promote the vision of the Full Service programme with local stakeholder groups and with statutory bodies. The school currently engages with 32 community organisations and all have expressed a commitment to the Community Forum. This Forum meets every quarter to discuss issues relating to the deployment of the Full Service School programme and to share examples of good practice.

The establishment of the North Belfast City Learning Centre (NBCLC) will provide opportunities for members of the community to fully utilise the facilities available in the new Model Schools. The range of facilities including sport, performing arts and youth provision will enable strong partnerships to be forged, further embedding the ethos of the FSES programme in local area planning.

Outcomes

The FSES Coordinator engages with statutory and voluntary community organisations through the following activities:-

- Being a member of the Integrated Services for Children and Young People Executive committee (2 staff deployed in each school – Behaviour Mentor and Key Stage 3 Careers Advisor)
- Joined up approach with other initiatives essential to ensure that duplication of resources is avoided and finance is used effectively, for example, Neighbourhood Renewal
- The FSES Community Forum gives all community stakeholders an opportunity to have input into the FSES programme. 2 meetings were held and a third will occur in June 2010.
- Sitting on community working parties and reference groups to ensure that stakeholder priorities are reflected in the School Development Plan and FSES Action Plans

The coordinator facilitates engagement with community partners at all levels:-

- Community use of facilities
- Curriculum support by community providers- classroom input
- Focused group work
- Individual support of pupils and family members

Target 10

The number of adults engaging in learning opportunities will increase to at least 115.

Target 11

5% of adults who attend evening classes will achieve an accredited qualification in the academic year September 2009 – June 2010.

Target 12

10% of those attending will be parents/guardians of pupils attending the school.

Actions

Adult Learning Provision

This year the programme was extended further. Courses available included; GCSE Maths, Essential Skills English, Maths and ICT and an increasing range of leisure courses.

Summary of enrolment for 2009-2010

Total of adults enrolled	Number undertaking accredited courses	Number of parents
134	71	12

Outcomes

The target this year was that the number of adults engaged in learning will rise from 93 to 115. The figure achieved was 134.

At least 5% of adults engaged in the evening classes were to achieve an accredited qualification. Of the 134 adults, 71 achieved accreditation at Level 2 or above (equiv. GCSE C or above). This is 53.0% of the cohort.

8.9% of participants were parents.

Health and Well being

Target 13

Pupils will indicate, that they are more aware of health issues affecting them after a programme of advice/intervention.

Pupils at all Key Stages benefited from physical and mental health improvement sessions. These were either as whole year group sessions, class work, small group work or individual support. A summary of the activity is included in the Pupil Engagement section of this report.

Target 14

Year 9 pupils in the pilot cohort will indicate in evaluation questionnaires that they are aware of the elements of a healthy lifestyle.

Target 15

Parents/Guardians of pupils who benefit from a referral to a partner organisation will state that the intervention has improved their quality of life.

Parents engaged with the Parent Support programme benefited from being encouraged and in many instances accompanied on visits to professionals dealing with mental health issues. The Parent Support Worker engaged these parents in follow up work and liaised with the provider to ensure appointments were kept. This year, 11 parents required intensive support of this nature.

The Health and Wellbeing exhibition in June 2009 provided an opportunity for all pupils in Years 8 and 9 (302 pupils) to improve their knowledge on health related issues. Their parents were also invited to attend.

Actions

The Health provision for young people and families was enhanced through the intervention of community organisation this year:-

- Mental health awareness seminars for all pupils in Year 11
- Relationship and Sexuality education for pupils in Key Stages 3, 4 and post 16
- Information on Substance misuse
- Individual support for pupils by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust School's Nursing Team
- Parents signposted for mental health support and counselling
- Opportunities for staff development in the areas of mental health, suicide prevention, substance misuse awareness and managing the behaviour of vulnerable young people.

Future Development

A Health Suite has been included in the new school site. Pupils and their families will have improved access to health care and advice in this purpose built facility. The provision of physical and mental health improvement will remain a priority of the FSES programme. The enhanced facilities available through the NBCLC will improve the service for children, young people and their families in North and West Belfast.

Conclusion

During the last four years, the development of the culture of the Full Service School Programme has been only possible with the collaboration of statutory and voluntary organisations. A shared vision has been created, as has a holistic approach to supporting young people, their families and other stakeholders in the community.

Through the North Belfast City Learning Centre we will have the opportunity to further secure the Model Schools at the heart of the community, to create a hub of resources for community renewal and improve the life-chances for children and young people in North and West Belfast.

Case studies

1. Support strategy – Attendance Officer

Actions

- Pupil A was referred by his Head of Year for regular absences.
- The EWO had previously been working with this young person. It was agreed that the Welfare Service and the Attendance Officer would collaborate with this case.
- On referral the percentage attendance of this individual was 44%.
- Contact was made with his mother and concerns were shared
- Pupil B was approached and a copy of his attendance record for the year was shared with him
- He was placed on Attendance report card. This is completed daily and monitored by the Attendance Officer
- Pupil B has low self-esteem at times and finds it difficult to communicate with his peers. His mother disclosed that he was attending hospital regularly and that he was concerned about his own health. The Attendance Officer discussed these concerns with the pupil and encouraged him to join a social group of his peers which met during lunchtime
- Arrangements were made with his mother to call the Attendance Officer directly if he was ill and would not be in school and informed the school if he had hospital appointments

Outcome

- Pupil B's attendance has improved to 78%, this is an increase of 34% in one academic year.
- He presents as being much more confident and settled in school

2. Support strategy – Personal Development Worker

Pupil B Age: 15

Referred by Head of Year

Number of sessions to date: 16

Main reasons for referral:-

- Pupil B is diagnosed as having ADHD and presents as being unhappy with elements of his school life
- He has a history of extreme physical outbursts during which he caused damage to property, threatened to assault teachers and became a risk to himself and his peers.

Targets

- To develop self-management skills to avoid extreme outbursts of explosive anger
- To increase self esteem
- Increase motivation to achieve potential and improve attendance

Actions

Support for Pupil B

- Weekly one-to-one appointments
- Support in the event of an emergency or crisis.
- Medication monitored with the support of his mother.
- Identifying stress points in school and community life
- Looking at his behaviours in particular situations and discussing alternative reactions

Outcomes

After major outbursts of anger, Pupil B would present as being very emotional, and somewhat remorseful. He was supported to identify triggers and physical symptoms so he could control his emotional response

Pupil B was committed to implement strategies so he could check his own behaviour, such as;

- Positive self-talk
- Breathing exercises
- Completing a Good Things Diary
- Keeping an Anger Log

The Personal Development Mentor met with his Head of Year and Year Counsellor. It was decided that he would be moved to another class and the positive impact monitored.

Pupil B is currently managing his behaviour very well.

He continues to meet all targets such as attending the Easter Revision scheme and has avoided detention and suspension for 13 weeks.

3. Support strategy - Parent Support Worker

Family profile Contact

Mother parenting alone 12 home visits

Daughter age 15 2 social service meetings

Daughter age 13 9 support phone calls

Pupil C age 11

Son age 22 months.

Main reason for referral

- Mother was identified as requiring support during P7 Transition Visits during the summer 2009
- Mother presented as having mental health issues related to historical sexual abuse
- The behaviour of her son was becoming more erratic

Actions

- Referred for a Benefit Review September 2009

- Referred to Action for Children to support mother with the youngest child
- Counselling set up for mother.
- Counselling set up for Pupil C.
- SENCO involved to address Pupil C's dyslexia.

October 09

- Concerns were raised about the mental health of Pupil C's Mother. Social services were contacted, and emergency respite was arranged for the youngest child. Mother cannot attend meetings in school due to suffering from agoraphobia.
- Parent Support Worker liaised with the Girls' Model regarding this family
- Social services agreed to fund counselling for the mother.

November 2009

- Free daycare was organised for the youngest child
- Mother and youngest child attending Quakers support group
- Mother seeing psychiatrist and CPN (Community Psychiatric Nurse)

November 09

- Extra literacy and reading put in place for Pupil C
- Educational physiologist assessment completed with Pupil C
- Lifeline contacted the Parent Support Worker as mother had accessed the service during a crisis episode
- Complementary therapy was offered to mother
- Parent Support Worker contacted the father of Pupil C. He indicated that he would stay in contact more regularly

March 2010

- Mother disclosed thoughts of suicide to the Parent Support Worker.
- She was taken to PIPS by the Parent Support Worker. Social Services were informed
- Pupil C disclosed to his father that he wanted to die
- FSES Counsellor met with Pupil C in school the next day
- Pupil C started to attend a lunchtime support group for pupils.

Outcomes

- Pupil C's attendance has been maintained at 86.9%
- Teaching staff indicate that his engagement has improved.
- The situation in the family home is more stable. The relationship between Pupil C and his parents has improved
- The family continues to require considerable support.

Appendices

Action Plans for 2009 -2010

Sections

- Pupil engagement
- Parental engagement
- Transition
- Community engagement
- Health and Wellbeing

Belfast Boys' Model School Full Service School Action Plan
 Area for Development: Pupil engagement For the period: April 09 - March 2010

Baseline position	Targets and Success Criteria	Action to be Taken	Staff responsible	Time scale	Monitoring	Resourcing	Source of funding
<p>ATTENDANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance office employed The target cohort are those pupils between 80-90% attendance Overall school attendance for 07/09 is 81.2% Currently 2 attendance groups established: Year 01/9 	<p>The percentage attendance of pupils in the target cohort will improve by at least 5%</p>	<p>Identification of pupils with attendance issues between 80 - 90%.</p> <p>Development of strategies to promote regular attendance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance groups Home visits Individual support Parentation Referral to voluntary and statutory services Liaison with HWO Incentives Monitoring of statistics. 	<p>PSE Coordinator</p> <p>Attendance office (AO)</p> <p>AO</p> <p>AO</p> <p>AO</p> <p>AO</p> <p>PSE Coordinator</p> <p>PSE Coordinator</p> <p>PSE Coordinator</p> <p>AO</p>	<p>April 2009 - March 2010</p>	<p>Feedback from pastoral team and Attendance Officer to chair of IOP</p> <p>Attendance Statistics made available to IOP.</p> <p>Program review presented to IOP by PSE Coordinator on a termly basis.</p> <p>Attendance Statistics monitored on a daily basis by Pastoral Team and AO.</p>	<p>Financial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salary Transportation Costs Materials and equipment Administration Research and Incentives. <p>Training - Staff development (Pastoral team) (pupils)</p> <p>Accommodation</p> <p>Time - Team strategy meeting, home visits</p>	<p>PSE</p> <p>Staffing £15,000</p> <p>Programme costs £1000</p> <p>Marketing programme</p> <p>Extended School</p>
<p>SUPPORT</p> <p>Parent care system is fully integrated with PSE support strategies.</p> <p>Currently there are 18 community based organisations supporting pupils, either informally or through curriculum enrichment.</p> <p>There were a total of 630 days suspension in 07/08</p>	<p>Pupils attending leisure enrichment activities will show greater engagement with classroom learning using a before and after questionnaire.</p> <p>The total number of suspension days will reduce by at least 7%</p>	<p>Student Support Unit (SSU) support workers to be employed by June 2009. Responsibilities will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting pupils on their return to school from suspension Act as positive behaviour marker to guide the pupil. <p>Building partnerships with voluntary and statutory agencies will be secured with Senior Level Agreements (SLA)</p> <p>Appropriate facilities will be set and reviewed using subject teacher comment.</p> <p>Development of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homework Club Home Revision classes Family Learning programme. 	<p>PSE Coordinator</p> <p>Alternative Education Panel</p> <p>PSE Coordinator</p> <p>PSE Coordinator</p> <p>PSE Coordinator</p> <p>PSE Coordinator</p> <p>PSE Coordinator</p> <p>HSWO</p> <p>PSE Coordinator</p> <p>HSWO</p>	<p>April 2009 - March 2010</p>	<p>The following will be made available at the end of each term to IOP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal reflections of the pupils in the cohort. Programs reviewed on termly basis or on completion of intervention Suspension statistics Attendance statistics for pupils attending enrichment activities Improved classroom engagement of those receiving support. Qualitative feedback from parents collected by the Parenting Worker. 	<p>Financial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials and equipment Transport Administration Catering <p>Resources for SSU:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher salary Resource Recruitment and salary of SSU Support Worker. Intervention from community organisations. <p>Time - Setting facilities and monitoring</p> <p>Financial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing Transportation Costs Materials and equipment Administration Research and Incentives. 	<p>PSE £30000</p> <p>PSE £2500</p> <p>ICP / SCYP</p> <p>ICP / SCYP</p> <p>HW Club - Extended School</p> <p>Banker ICP / SCYP</p> <p>Family Learning</p> <p>Extended School</p> <p>TOTAL £30500</p>

Belfast Boys' Model School Full Service School Action Plan
 Area for Development: Parental engagement For the period: April 09 -

Baseline position	Targets and Success Criteria	Action to be Taken	Staff responsible	Time scale	Monitoring	Resourcing	Source of funding
<p>Parenting project worker is currently working with families providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home visits and individual support Group work during the day. Facilitation of an ADHD support group. Signposting to support agencies. Referrals to statutory organisations. <p>Of respondents to the PSE Parent Audit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 79% believed that advice and support on child development was important. 82% stated that family support strategies were a priority. <p>There are currently 15 members of the Parents' Voice.</p> <p>42 respondents to the Parental Audit (Jan 09) indicated that they would be interested in becoming involved with the Parents' Voice.</p>	<p>Parents who engage with support programmes will not end by the end of March 2010 that their skills have been enhanced through involvement in the Parenting Programmes.</p> <p>Pupils of parents who are involved in programmes show an increased engagement with classroom learning by the end of March 2010, as indicated by progress reviews.</p> <p>The number of parents engaging with the Parents' Voice programme will increase to at least 15.</p>	<p>The development of Parenting programmes, which reflect the needs of parents, will continue.</p> <p>The ADHD Support Group and Parenting Matters programmes will be developed.</p> <p>The ADHD support strategy will be offered to feeder primary schools.</p> <p>Parents will be referred to partnership agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Life C counselling Psychotherapy Barnardo's Bereavement Counselling <p>Parents expressing interest in the Parents' Voice programme will be invited to attend meetings.</p>	<p>Parenting Project worker</p> <p>Parenting Project worker</p> <p>Parenting Project worker</p> <p>PSESC</p> <p>Parenting Project worker</p> <p>Parenting Project worker/ PSESC</p>	<p>April 2009- March 2010</p> <p>April 2009- March 2010</p>	<p>Personal reflections of parents engaging in the programme will be made available to the PSE Coordinator and shared with IOP.</p> <p>The following will be presented to IOP at the end of each term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal reflections of pupils whose parents are involved Progress reviews of pupils at the end of term or on completion of an intervention Event Attendance Statistics Membership/attendance statistics of Parents' Voice Group. 	<p>Finance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salaries Resources Travel Administration Materials and equipment <p>Time - Team Strategy meetings, home visits</p> <p>Finance- Materials and resources</p> <p>Time - Parents' Voice Meetings</p>	<p>Salary</p> <p>£22000</p> <p>Programme costs £9000</p> <p>£2000</p> <p>Total £30000</p>

Belfast Boys' Model School		Full Service School Action Plan			For the period: April 09 - March 2010		
Area for Development: Transition							
Baseline position	Targets and Success Criteria	Action to be Taken	Staff responsible	Time scale	Monitoring	Resourcing	Source of funding
<p>19 primary schools send pupils to the BBMS School</p> <p>9 schools benefited from transition activities during 15 in 2009-10</p> <p>Existing transition support activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizenship classes • Music • PE • Serious Science Workshops • Peer mentoring <p>A summer scheme has been offered to Key Stage 2 pupils in all the feeder primary schools.</p> <p>14% of pupils transferring to Boys' Model attended the summer scheme in July/August 2009.</p>	<p>Pupils involved in transition activities will indicate that their transfer to BBMS was eased by involvement in a support programme.</p> <p>At least 10% of pupils planning to attend BBMS will become involved in the summer scheme during August 2009.</p>	<p>Development of the present activities/programmes and increasing the range available to the feeder primary schools. Programmes will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stepping Stones Citizenship programme • Music • Mentoring Support • Literacy Support • First Aid (HeartStart) • Serious Workshops • PE Activities • Peer mentors <p>From 01/05 of summer scheme from May 2010</p> <p>Delivery of the summer scheme Programme to include sport and leisure activities.</p> <p>Community partners will be included to provide personal development and health/wellbeing programmes.</p>	<p>Student Integration Teacher (SIT)</p> <p>Head of PE</p> <p>Peer Mentoring Coordinator</p> <p>PSB Coordinator/ Student Integration Teachers</p>	<p>April 10 - March 11</p> <p>May - July 2010</p> <p>2nd - 3rd August 2010</p>	<p>Personal reflection of pupils involved in Transition Activities will be collated by SIT Teachers. PSBS Coordinator will present these to IGP at the end of Term 1.</p> <p>Evaluations from primary school staff on the effectiveness of programmes. These will be administered and collated by SIT teachers. PSBS Coordinator will present these to IGP at the end of Term 1.</p> <p>A report for IGP and PSBS Steering group will be produced including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections of pupils attending summer scheme. • An evaluation summary from staff/community providers involved in delivery of programmes during the summer scheme. • Pupil attendance statistics for the summer scheme. 	<p>Financial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salaries • Transport • Materials • Course fees <p>Time - Planning meetings with PSBS Coordinator.</p> <p>Financial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salaries • Transport • Materials • Rewards and incentives. 	<p>FSES</p> <p>£34000</p> <p>£1500</p> <p>£1200</p> <p>IDF /ISCYP</p> <p>Total</p> <p>£36700</p>

Belfast Boys' Model School		Full Service School Action Plan			For the period: April 09 - March 2010		
Area for Development: Community Engagement							
Baseline position	Targets and Success Criteria	Action to be Taken	Staff responsible	Time scale	Monitoring	Resourcing	Source of funding
<p>The PSBS Coordinator has established functional links with voluntary community partners, statutory bodies and feeder primary schools.</p> <p>A programme of support and additional opportunities has been provided for pupils, their families and the community.</p> <p>PSBS Coordinator manages the delivery of the PSBS provision.</p> <p>The external evaluation of the Pilot programme posed 6 recommendations with the themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs based and jobs • Strategic development • Engagement with partners. • Evaluation • Good practice • Vision 	<p>Strategies are agreed with Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and PSBS Steering Group.</p> <p>An S.A. is established with each partner organisation.</p> <p>Thorough evaluations are conducted to assess the impact of interventions.</p> <p>Appropriate opportunities to share the vision of the PSBS provision are employed to ensure sustainability. 3 community focus meetings will be facilitated by the end of March 2010</p>	<p>An audit will be performed to inform the development of action plans.</p> <p>The audit will include responses from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils • Parents • Staff • Feeder primary schools • Community partners <p>Action plans will be presented to SLT and PSBS Steering Group.</p> <p>Working agreements with each provider will be agreed in an S.A.</p> <p>Baseline and monitoring procedures will be standardized across all programmes.</p> <p>Relevant materials will be produced to share the vision of the PSBS provision.</p> <p>Presentations will be delivered to relevant bodies in order to share good practice.</p> <p>Membership of bodies/committees will be sustained.</p> <p>Associations with additional groups, which would benefit stakeholders, will be explored.</p>	<p>PSBS Coordinator</p>	<p>April 2009</p> <p>April 2009</p> <p>April 2009 - March 2010</p> <p>May 2009</p> <p>May 2009</p> <p>April 2009 - March 2010</p>	<p>Audit findings will be presented to PSBS Steering Group and SLT.</p> <p>Action Plans progress will be monitored by SLT and PSBS Steering Group.</p> <p>To be monitored by IGP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active SLTs. • Personal reflections of individuals benefiting from programmes/ interventions will be presented. • Relevant school statistics. • Materials to be used to promote the programme. <p>SLT will be aware of the feeder partnerships benefiting from sharing of good practice.</p> <p>Minutes/agendas from meetings with partners will be made available to SLT.</p> <p>SLT will endorse the PSBS Coordinator representing the school on additional groups.</p>	<p>Financial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary • Administration • Accommodation and resources 	<p>FSES</p> <p>£47000</p> <p>Total</p> <p>£47000</p>

Belfast Boys' Model School		Full Service School Action Plan			Area for Development: Community Engagement			For the period: April 09 - March 2010	
Baseline position	Targets and Success Criteria	Action to be Taken	Staff responsible	Time scale	Monitoring	Resourcing	Source of funding		
<p>94 adults attended the evening classes.</p> <p>Both leisure and accredited classes were offered.</p> <p>41% of respondents to the Parental audit believed that Learning opportunities for adults were important.</p>	<p>The number of adults engaging in learning opportunities will increase to at least 115.</p> <p>5% of adults who attend evening classes will achieve an accredited qualification in the academic year September 2009 – June 2010.</p> <p>10% of those attending will be parents/guardians of pupils attending the school.</p>	<p>Classes will be advertised through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Community partners, •Parents' Newsletter •Local press. <p>Success stories will be shared through the local media.</p> <p>Classes will be offered that have OCN Level 1 or 2 and GCSE accreditation.</p> <p>Adults requiring additional advice/support on career options will be referred to the Local Learning Sign-Poster (LLSP)</p> <p>Parents' will be made aware of opportunities through the Parents' Newsletter and regular correspondence.</p>	<p>FSES Coordinator</p> <p>BMMS Publicity Officer, FSES Coordinator</p> <p>FSES Coordinator</p> <p>FSES Coordinator</p> <p>Parenting Project worker FSES Coordinator</p>	<p>April 2009</p> <p>April 2009- March 2010</p> <p>June 2009 – March 2010</p>	<p>At the end of each term the following will be presented to SLT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Class attendance statistics. •Personal reflections of the adults attending. •Record % of parents attending classes. •Proportion of adults attaining qualifications at Level 1, 2 or GCSE accreditation. •Number of adults referred to/receiving information from the LLSP. <p>SLT will be kept informed of Media coverage of successes by the FSES Coordinator</p>	<p>Financial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Course fees •Caretaking/admin •Catering •Materials and resources. <p>Time- Leasing with media representatives</p> <p>Time of FSES COORDINATOR</p> <p>Time of: •FSES Coordinator •LLSP</p> <p>Time of Parenting Worker.</p>	<p>Extended Schools</p> <p>LMS</p> <p>FSES</p> <p>FSES IDF / ISCYP</p> <p>FSES</p>		

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Belfast Boys' Model School		Full Service School Action Plan			Area for Development: Health and Wellbeing			For the period: April 09 - March 2010	
Baseline position	Targets and Success Criteria	Action to be Taken	Staff responsible	Time scale	Monitoring	Resourcing	Source of funding		
<p>The Sides of Nursing Team is available to offer guidance on health issues.</p> <p>13% of pupils who responded to the audit requested advice/support on mental health issues.</p> <p>A range of community providers is available to support the curriculum through the PSHE/Citizenship programmes.</p> <p>Physiotherapy health profile training was received by the PSHE/C Coordinator.</p> <p>Boys' Model coordinates the Health Promoting Training programme in the HSLB area.</p> <p>Strong links with voluntary organisation support the health of pupils and their family.</p> <p>The school is linked to the Life Channel network, which provides health advice and opportunities to share good practice.</p> <p>Boys' Model is a Health Promoting School.</p>	<p>Pupils will indicate in a questionnaire that they are more aware of health issues affecting them after a programme of advice/intervention.</p> <p>Year 9 pupils in the pilot cohort will indicate in evaluation questionnaire that they are aware of the elements of a healthy lifestyle.</p> <p>Parents/Guardians of pupils who benefit from a referral to a partner organisation will state that this intervention has improved their quality of life.</p>	<p>Partner organisations will be deployed to support teaching staff in the delivery of Personal, Social and Health Education.</p> <p>The <i>Playboots</i> Health Profiling pilot will be implemented with 50 Year 9 pupils. The School Nursing team will support this programme.</p> <p>Pupils or their families will be referred for health advice/support to School Nursing and partner organisations.</p>	<p>PSHE Coordinator, Health Education Coordinator.</p> <p>PSHE Coordinator, PE Department.</p> <p>PSHE Coordinator, Parenting project worker.</p>	<p>April 2009- March 2010</p> <p>By June 2009</p> <p>April 2009- March 2010</p>	<p>Outcomes from evaluation questionnaire will be presented to SLT by PSHE Coordinator at the end of each term.</p> <p>The evaluation of the pilot will be presented to SLT by PSHE Coordinator.</p> <p>Pupils/adults who receive support will reflect on their experience in a questionnaire. PSHE Coordinator will share the outcomes with SLT</p>	<p>Time to coordinate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Links with partner organisations. •To go on referrals and monitor delivery. •To coordinate evaluation. •The addition of relevant and up to date material to the Life Channel network. <p>Accommodation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Appropriate venues are available for consultations and group work. •The facilities available in the Health Room in the new school will be investigated. 	<p>FSES IDF / ISCYP</p> <p>North and West Belfast Health Trust</p> <p>Extended Schools</p>		

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Belfast Model School for Girls

Full Service Extended School Report



April 2009 – March 2010

Foreword

The Belfast Boys' Model and the Belfast Model School for Girls serve communities in North and West Belfast which have suffered more than most during the last 30 years. There exists within the area, some of the most disadvantaged wards in Northern Ireland and such high levels of social deprivation and disadvantage present a challenging environment in which to deliver "achievement for all".

Those involved in leading, delivering and supporting education in the city agree that high quality educational achievement for all pupils is dependent upon high quality teaching and learning within the classroom, coupled with high quality support beyond the classroom.

The Full Service Schools' Project provides such holistic support to young people in the pursuit of raising levels of achievement for all. This report outlines the range of services and activities provided during and beyond the school day which:

- attempt to address the needs of the 'whole' child;
- create an environment where community expectations, aspirations and support are high and success for young people is the norm;
- help identify and eradicate barriers to successful learning;
- create an environment where learners take responsibility for their learning outcomes.

The emphasis of the project is on outcomes; challenging targets are set together with established benchmarks for measuring success. An evidence based approach has been adopted where programmes and activities are developed in the light of identified need.

Much of the success highlighted in this report is due to the leadership of the principals of both schools, allied to the hard work and dedication of staff and co-ordinators in both schools.

The report presents clear evidence that the Full Service Schools' Project is achieving its objectives and disadvantage and underachievement are being tackled in a pro-active way. It is vital that policy makers continue to support and sustain this approach.

David Bayo

David Cargo

Chief Executive

Rationale

The Full Service Extended School project was initiated in the Belfast Boys' Model and Belfast Model School For Girls in September/October 2006. The purpose was to provide a full service programme which would integrate services by bringing together professionals from a range of services for the provision of education, family support, health and other community services. The overarching target was to raise performance in these Full Service Schools and in feeder primary schools.

The FSES auditing process and action plans were informed by the following policies:

- Children and Young People funding package
- Neighbourhood Renewal
- A Healthier Future
- The Programme for Government and Public Sector Agreement Targets
- Every School a Good School
- Extended Schools programme
- Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People

Context

A Full Service school focuses on the needs of the whole child – physical, emotional, social and academic – to create the conditions necessary for all children to learn. It is open to young people, families and community members before, during and after school, all year-round. Full Service Schools strive to strengthen families and communities so they are better equipped to support young people.

A comprehensive audit was conducted by the coordinators to ensure that partnerships and initiatives were established to meet the needs of all stakeholders and were fully integrated into the life of the school. With support from the coordinator, families, students, teachers, principals, community residents and partner organisations decisions are made together to foster student learning and personal development. School and community work together to help young people fulfil their potential.

Each Full Service programme will have discreet differences determined by the needs of the community. Some of the responses to these needs include:-

- Before- and after-school programmes build on classroom experiences and help students improve their aspirations, contribute to their communities and enjoy themselves. These programmes also encourage a whole school approach to raising levels of punctuality and attendance.
- Health and well-being initiatives are integrated into the curriculum in order to establish an environment where all pupils are ready to learn.

- Parents and community residents participate in adult education and job training programs. The aim of this is to encourage a family learning culture which will permeate into the school with the outcome of improved aspirations and attainment.
- Links with early years provision, primary schools and with the community is essential in order to deliver a holistic approach.

Key targets areas

Pupil engagement

- To improve pupil attendance in the identified cohort by 5% by end March 2010.
- To improve pupil engagement in after school activities to enhance learning experiences – overall attendance at after school activities is to increase by 10% by March 2010.
- To develop a 'readiness to learn' with those engaging in support strategies.
- Pupils to receive support services within 10 school days by January 2010.

Community engagement

- To develop purposeful engagement between the school and the community by organising 3 community forums by end of March 2010.

Parental engagement

- To improve parental engagement with school issues and FSES activities by 2% by March 2010
- To encourage life-long learning and increased educational aspirations
- 5% of those who attend evening classes will achieve an accredited qualification in the academic year September 2009 – June 2010

Health engagement

- Increased health awareness for pupils, parents and the community
- There will be a 10% increase in the number of girls using the breakfast club by January 2010

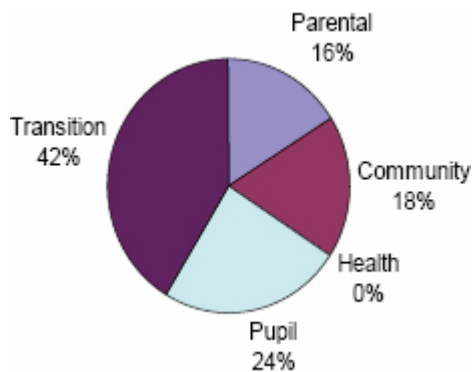
Transition

- To facilitate ease of movement from primary to post primary education
- To enable the sharing of good practice between primary and post primary staff in 6 schools by the end of March 2010

Distribution of 09/10 Action Plan costs

The pie-chart below summaries the distribution of actual Full Service project costs. Further details on costs are included in Appendix 1.

FSES 09/10 Budget allocation



The total Full Service budget allocated to Belfast Model School for Girls was £175k for the year ended to 31 March 2010. It is clear from the diagram that our key areas of spend were Transition and Pupil engagement.

The employment of two transition teachers to work with Year 8 pupils in the Belfast Model School For Girls and with all 18 of our local feeder primary schools constitutes 89% of this 42% spend allocation. Resources and additional programmes such as writing workshops, residentials, summer programmes and welcome evenings make up the remaining 11%. The support given to the primary schools is essential. This is a needs led programme for boys and girls which endeavours to ease transition from primary to secondary education. Partnership working and the sharing of good practice enables information to be transferred more effectively and pupil needs in relation to literacy and numeracy to be identified earlier and support systems put in place.

Pupil engagement constitutes 24% of the overall budget. This is one of the largest areas of spend as FSES is a child centred programme which aims to reduce barriers to learning. The employment of a Family Link Attendance Officer is included in this costing. An intervention programme is carried out with girls who have attendance between 80% - 90%. Partnership working has been established with the Education Welfare Service and attendance is monitored, home visits conducted and strategies for each individual young person are put in place to encourage improved attendance. This budget area also includes an extensive after school programme and the engagement of support services for emotional, learning and behavioural needs.

Health Engagement currently has a 0% spend. This is due to programmes being accessed from the local community in relation to drugs awareness, health and hygiene, sexual awareness etc which are provided at no cost to the school. This may however, in the future not be the case as funding becomes more difficult to secure by community and voluntary partners and a charge may be applied to the school.

Belfast Model School For Girls

Full Service Extended School Overarching Targets

April 2009 – March 2010

Pupil engagement

- To improve pupil attendance in the identified cohort by 5% by end March 2010.

- To improve pupil engagement in after school activities to enhance learning experiences – overall attendance at after school activities is to increase by 10% by March 2010.
- To develop a 'readiness to learn' with those engaging in support strategies.
- Pupils to receive support services within 10 school days by January 2010.

Community engagement

- To develop purposeful engagement between the school and the community by organising 3 community forums by end of March 2010.

Parental engagement

- To improve parental engagement with school issues and FSES activities by 2% by March 2010
- To encourage life-long learning and increased educational aspirations
- 5% of those who attend evening classes will achieve an accredited qualification in the academic year September 2009 – June 2010

Health engagement

- Increased health awareness for pupils, parents and the community
- There will be a 10% increase in the number of girls using the breakfast club by January 2010

Transition

- To facilitate ease of movement from primary to post primary education
- To enable the sharing of good practice between primary and post primary staff in 6 schools by the end of March 2010

Belfast Model School For Girls

FSES Overview of provision

Transition (£72,245)	Parent engagement (£28,000)	Pupil engagement (£42,755)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition teachers • Toplink • Residentials • Summer Scheme • Induction booklet • Programme costs • Friendstop • Primary school forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family link co-ordinator • Evening classes • Information evenings • Social evenings • Day programme (linking with primary schools) • Newsletter • Parent Voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Link Attendance Officer • Partnership with support services • Coursework clinic • Easter Revision classes • Year 8 reading support

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signposting • Home school liaison 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour Mentor • Key Stage 3 Careers Advisor
Community Engagement (£32,000)	Health Engagement (£000)	Extended Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSES Coordinator • Membership of statutory and non-statutory steering groups and committees • -Networking with community organisations • Sharing the FSES vision • Presentations and trainings • SLA's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast Club • Heartstart • Membership of North Belfast and Shankill health and wellbeing forums • NBCLC Health Team • Health promoting school • School nursing team • Health Fair • Partnership agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast Club • After school programme: • Homework club • Dance • GMSport • Trampolining • Hair and Beauty club • Cheerleading • Fashion Club • Cookery • Stage School • Drama • Hockey • Additional revision classes • Netball • Football • Transport

Belfast Model School For Girls

Full Service Extended School Report
2009 – 2010

Pupil Engagement

Target 1

- To improve pupil attendance in the identified cohort by 5% by end March 2010

Actions

Family Attendance Coordinator

The Family Attendance Coordinator works with both Key stages 3 and 4 to promote good attendance and punctuality across the school. The pupils are referred by the Head of Year when their attendance falls to between 80-90%. Poor attendance may be for many reasons including: family break up, poor relationships in school with peers and staff, inability to complete work, low self esteem etc. The role of the Family Attendance Coordinator is to remove these barriers, signpost to specialist support services and to integrate the young person back into school.

Various strategies employed by the Family Attendance Coordinator include, individual support, group work, extensive links with parents through telephone calls and home visits and incentives are offered to reward improvement. This in an intervention programme which aims to stop the young people falling into the remit of the Education Welfare Service and does not in any way duplicate the work of the EWO.

Outcomes

- Worked with 42 individual referrals across Years 8 – 12. Of this cohort 31 pupils (74%) have improved their attendance and 11 pupils (26%) have decreased with only 2 of the 11 pupils falling below the 80% threshold
- Parental support has been 100% and attendance is monitored by the Family Attendance Coordinator on a daily basis
- The overall percentage attendance for the 80-90% cohort improved by 8.9% with the target being 5%
- Overall school attendance since the introduction of the FSES programme has increased by 0.6% from 89.5% in 2006-07 to 90.1% 2009-10

Year	School attendance %
2006-2007	89.5
2007-2008	88.9
2008-2009	89.2
2009-2010	90.1

- A cohort of 10 girls across the years 8 – 10 were identified by punctuality statistics as being persistently late to school. Family Attendance Coordinator engaged with these girls. 8 are now in early each morning for registration, 1 has shown a slight improvement and 1 has not improved.
- The Family Attendance Coordinator has carried out 192 home visits and 15 referrals have been made to support services.

Partnership working is key to the success of this intervention. Collaborative working between school, home and partner organisations (community and statutory) is required to ensure a holistic approach to best meet the needs of the young person and their family.

Target 2

- To improve pupil engagement by 10% in after school activities to enhance learning experiences

Actions

A pupil audit was conducted in June 2009 to find out what after school activities the young people would like to see available. A staff audit was then carried out to assess the viability of offering the programmes requested. Programmes offered from September 2009 included; fashion and art clubs, ceramics, ICT, drama and hair and beauty groups. An after school homework club, additional classes in Maths, English and revision classes were provided to offer learning support to the pupils.

TOPLink and GMSport programmes continued both engaging people from the local community and feeder primary schools.

Outcomes

- 3 new activities were offered based on pupil audit bringing the total to 25.
- 89 pupils engaged with FSES after school activities (as listed above)
- 24 Year 11 pupils received specialist training as sports coaches to work with primary school children during the TOPLink programme
- 170 pupils from 14 primary schools from all sections of the community participated in TOPLink Festival
- 44 young people from the local community participated in the GMSport programme
- 10% improvement in engagement was achieved across all of these activities with the target being 10%.

Target 3

- To develop a 'readiness to learn' with those engaging in support strategies and pupils to receive support services within 10 school days by January 2010.

Action

3.1 Pupil Support Unit

The Pupil Support Unit established in 2008 is operational 5 days per week and is staffed by 2 members of teaching staff. Pupils are referred to the unit through the Pastoral Vice Principal. Reasons for referral include: behavioural issues, truancy and disregard for the school rules. The aim of this unit is to provide a stage before suspension and to enable the pupil to reflect on their behaviour. This unit offers welcomed support for the classroom teacher as they can continue with teaching and other pupils in the class can continue with their learning without disruption.

3.2 Behaviour Mentor

A behaviour mentor has been employed through Integrated Services for Children and Young People (ISCYP). Their role is to mentor the young person, liaise with FSES to provide support service, link with the parents and to track progress.

3.3 Easter revision classes and coursework clinic

Easter revision classes are held over 3 days. Girls indicate which subjects they would like additional support in. They receive intensive study support and have the opportunity to avail of small group teaching. Additional classes in Maths and English are also provided (Target 2).

The coursework clinic operates 2 days per week for 6 weeks. The pupils receive individual support to complete their coursework. Coursework can be the difference in a grade and the additional support can improve or maintain a grade.

3.4 Key Stage 3 Careers Advisor

A Key Stage 3 Careers Advisor was appointed in September 2009 and is funded through ISCYP. One aspect of this role is to interview Year 10 pupils to compile a personal profile. This will help the young people to make choices for the future based on skills and qualities they already possess. It also enables them to devise future plans and targets to acquire skills and qualifications they do not currently have. Parents are invited to attend the interviews as they must be involved in the process to work in partnership with the school in raising the aspirations of their daughters.

Outcomes

- Overall school attainment from the introduction of FSES has improved (GCSE)

Year	% A* - C	%A* - E
2006 – 2007	43	85
2007 – 2008	56	88
2008 - 2009	60	92

- In 2006/2007 5+GCSEs including Maths and English 16%
- In 2009/2010 5+GCSEs including Maths and English 22%
- Behaviour mentor worked with a cohort of 20 girls across Years 10 – 12. Improvement from year 1 to year 2 is significant in relation to days in PSU and days suspended. Of the cohort 19 (95%) have reduced their number of days in the PSU. 12 (60%) have reduced the number of days suspended, 4 (20%) have stayed the same and 4 (20%) have increased their number of days suspended. Behaviour mentor also supports girls who are in the PSU for lesser offences
- There was a 0.2% increase in attendance between Year 1 and Year 2 for those in the behavioural cohort who reduced their numbers of days suspended
- Easter revision classes from the sample who attended 63% achieved 5 or more A* - C. 85% achieved grade E or above. For those who were non-attenders 40% achieved A*-C
- Number of pupils and parents engaged with by Key Stage 3 Careers Advisor. Findings from the interviews will determine future programmes. (See table below).

Class	Pupils Seen	Not Seen	Parents
Total	117 (89%)	14 (11%)	24 (21%)

- Girls received support within 10 school days (See target 7 outcomes)

Community Engagement

Target 4

- To develop purposeful engagement between the school and the community by organising 3 community forums by end March 2010.

Action

4.1 Community Forum

Full Service Extended School community forum has continued to develop. It met twice this year with 32 partner organisations represented with another forum organised for June 2010. The aim of this forum is to encourage effective partnership working and to discuss how to make best use of the new facilities available in both schools. Future plans for this group include a review of Service Level Agreements, the sharing of good practice between school and community and the continual auditing of need, both in school and in the community.

4.2 Curriculum/pastoral input

Community organisations feed directly into the curriculum by facilitating classes in Learning for Life and Work. Information on drugs awareness, relations, sexual health etc which were delivered through Personal Development classes and Year assemblies.

4.3 FSES Coordinator

FSES Coordinator continued to promote the vision of the Full Service Extended School in the local community, with other stakeholders and with statutory organisations. The Coordinator is a member of many committees and groups in the local community.

Outcome

- 32 organisations are members of the community forum
- Curriculum and pastoral input:
- Total number of intervention programmes delivered was 43
- Total number of young people engaged with was 1933
- This is reduced from last year due to moving into the new school
- The FSES Coordinator works in partnership with the Greater Shankill Partnership in the delivery of the ISCYP programme and is a member of the Executive Committee, Education sub-group and Evaluation sub-group. 2 workers have been deployed in each school through ISCYP

- Links with North Belfast Partnership have been developed
- The FSES Coordinator can ensures stakeholder priorities are reflected in the School Development Plan
- 38 staff in school (other than the core team) currently engaged in Full Service School activities
- The partnership working which has been developed with Neighbourhood Renewal, Integrated Service For Children and Young People, and partnership boards are essential to ensure resources are not duplicated and these resources are put to best use for children and their families. The sharing of good practice and the auditing of need is enhanced through these partnerships.

Parental Engagement

Target 5

- To improve parental engagement with school issues and FSES activities by 2% by March 2010

Actions

5.1 Family Link Coordinator

The role of the Family Link Coordinator is to engage on an individual basis with parents and to encourage them to participate in school-based activities. Support is offered to the whole family and referrals are made to community and statutory organisations as required. The Family Link Coordinator is integral to all other areas as parental support is crucial to good behaviour, attainment and attendance. Events are offered based on an audit of parents. These have included behavioural courses, family welcome evenings, coffee mornings, first-aid courses, pamper evenings etc. Courses are run during and after the school day.

5.2 Parent Voice

Parent Voice meets twice a month to organise programmes to engage other parents and members of the community. This group is dedicated to providing support to the school and is keen to become more involved in decision making in school.

5.3 Community Newsletter

This is produced three times a year and circulated to parents and to the local community. It details events that have happened and promotes events which are planned. It offers advice on issues and the details of those to talk to if there is a problem either inside or outside of school. This is going on-line from September 2010.

Outcomes

Table below details numbers who have engaged in activities

Year 8 Parents Breakfast	60
Family Welcome Night	120

Parent Voice	13
Counselling Referrals	5
Zumba Class	31
Ladies Pamper Night	50
PV Social Night	45
Helping with homework classes	5
Family Link Support	17
EEP Course	2
Behaviour Course	2
Heartstart	14
Total	364

- 182 home visits conducted for a variety of reasons including attendance, bullying issues, mental health issues etc
- 2% increase in parents engaging with school issues was achieved.

Target 6

- To encourage life-long learning and increased educational aspirations
- 5% of those who attended evening classes will achieve an accredited qualification in the academic year September 2009 – June 2010.

Actions

Adult evening classes were provided two nights a week to the whole community. Classes offered included: astronomy, ceramics, cookery, GCSE English, GCSE Maths, ICT for beginners, EDCL, photoshop, zumba, trampolining and CLAIT.

Outcomes

- 15 attended BMC evening class
- 147 attended Girls' Model evening classes
- EDCL operated in partnership with Shankill Women's Centre was attended by 22
- Accredited qualifications taken:
 - GCSE English 7 C grades & 4 D grades
 - EDCL 11 passed
 - CLAIT 4 passed
- Results pending for GCSE Maths and English for 2009-2010
- 5% of those enrolled achieved an accredited qualification.

Health Engagement

Target 7

- Increased health awareness for pupils, parents and the community
- There will be a 10% increase in the number of girls using the breakfast club by January 2010

Actions

7.1 Outreach was initially difficult to access and much development is still needed in this area. The following are links school has developed with health providers:

- School nurses – immunisations of Year 11, HPV injections for Year 9 and health survey for Year 9.
- Health leaflets and posters available for pupils and parents
- Healthy breakfast club options
- SOLVE drugs awareness programme
- Jackie Burke drugs awareness programme
- HYPE relationships programme and counsellor support
- SHARPHE alcohol programme
- Mandy Martin relationship programme
- FSES Coordinator is a member of North Belfast and Shankill Health and Well being Forums
- Links established with the newly appointed Health and Wellbeing worker – Miss Justine Brown – to promote health initiatives and to integrate more with key personnel within the Trust

All of these programmes are fully integrated into the school Personal Development programme.

Health is represented on both the Steering and Operational groups.

7.2 Breakfast club

A healthy breakfast is offered every morning to all pupils and staff in the school. The cost of the breakfast is subsidised. There has been a 10% increase in the number of young people taking a breakfast.

7.3 Counselling

FSES works in partnership with counselling services in the local community to meet the needs of the young people and their families. This enables the counselling service to be fast-tracked to avoid waiting lists.

7.4 North Belfast City Learning Centre

FSES Coordinator is a member of the NBCLC Health Strategy Team. A health suite has been established in the Community Centre of the new school. Pupils and their families will be able to access health care and advice from this purpose built facility.

Outcomes

- Referrals to Counselling services

New Life Counselling – 8 individual and 5 family/parent referrals

PIPS – Suicide and self harm – 1 referral

Streetbeat – 18 referrals

FASA – drugs counselling – 2 referrals

HYPE – relationships (whole class intervention)

SAMS - 6 referrals

Lifeline – 24 hour help line – 7 calls have been referred back to New Life

- 154 referrals have been processed through FSES for counselling, behavioural, parenting and attendance support
- NBCLC strategy group has been developed.
- Girls received support within 10 school days (Target 3)

Transition

Targets 8 and 9

- To facilitate ease of movement from primary to post primary education
- To enable the sharing of good practice between primary and post primary staff in 6 schools by the end of March 2010

Actions

8.1 Transition teachers

Two Transition teachers have been employed through the FSES programme. Their role is to ease the movement from primary to post primary school. An audit of need is completed with the primary school and from this programmes are devised and delivered. This gives welcomed support to the primary school and enables the Girls' Model to identify the learning and emotional needs of the young people at an earlier stage. A timetable is collated to ensure all schools receive equal support and resources are not duplicated. The transition teachers have worked across 19 feeder primary schools as well as teaching Year 8 pupils in the Girls' Model.

8.2 Induction Booklet and home visits

A 'child friendly' induction booklet is posted to each new girl coming into year 8. A home visit is carried out by the Family Link Coordinator to each family. If any issues are identified a package of care is put in place.

8.3 Additional activities

Summer schemes, sporting events, writing workshops, fun days and after school clubs have been offered to all of the 19 feeder primary schools to enable the young people to become more familiar with the school and the staff. Present Year 8 pupils visit the primary schools in June to answer any questions the incoming Year 8's may have.

8.4 Primary School Forum

A primary school forum has been established with the main objective being to develop the sharing of good practice. Resources are to be centrally located on the Virtual Learning Environment.

Outcomes

- 19 different subjects offered
- 59 programmes delivered over the year
- 1442 children engaged with
- Additional activities: Story writing workshop, Fun day, summer scheme, mentoring programmes, welcome BBQ
- Parenting programmes being developed into the primary schools: Heart Start, Help Your Child with their Homework
- Induction booklets will be distributed during home visits over the summer months
- ICT training being developed for the primary school teachers
- Primary school forum established

Conclusion

The Full Service Extended School programme has a positive impact on the community we serve. It adheres to a needs-led, child-centred approach which provides wrap around provision for young people and for their families. It is an all inclusive programme which aims to engage parents, pupils, schools and community. Much needed support has been given to children and their families it would be detrimental to the welfare of the young person, their family and the local community if this was discontinued.

During the last four years, the development of the Full Service School has been possible due to the collaboration of statutory and community organisations. A shared vision has been created, as has a holistic approach to supporting families in North and West Belfast. This shared approach is essential to ensure resources are not duplicated and that these resources are put to best use for children and their families.

Through the North Belfast City Learning Centre we will have the opportunity to secure the Model Schools at the heart of the community, to create a hub of resources for community renewal and improve the life-chances for children and young people in North and West Belfast.

Case Study 1 – Attendance

Reason for referral

Year 9 Pupil aged 12 was referred in Year 8 for poor attendance. She lived at home with her mum and younger siblings.

Action

The Family Attendance Coordinator began working with this child in Year 8. A good working relationship was established, several home visits were carried out and Coordinator liaised with mum on a daily basis. This family had social service involvement. Pupil was collected and brought into school on a few occasions. This helped support the child by helping her to get into a routine of coming into school. She was given support to catch up on any work she had missed. Targets and goals for better attendance and punctuality were set.

Conclusion

This pupil is now in Year 9 and attendance is sitting at 93%. She is participating in all subjects. This child did not mix well but has now many friends and has even helped out at the parent's afternoon. She recently got rewarded as pupil of the week and has even been nominated to be a Young Leader. Support is ongoing. Mum has also been a great support and there is no longer social service involvement.

Case Study 2 – Attendance

Reason for referral

A Year 10 pupil was referred in Year 9 due with poor attendance. She lived at home with her mum, step dad and younger siblings. There was extensive social service involvement and mum suffered from depression.

Action

We began working with this child and put in a lot of support. This child was collected regularly and brought into school. There were numerous home visits carried out offering support to both mum and child. Family Link Coordinator worked with this child in school by supporting her in the Attendance group. We worked together to help achieve better attendance by setting goals and targets. If this girl wasn't in, we made contact with mum straight away. We liaised with teachers on the child's behalf and made contact with child daily.

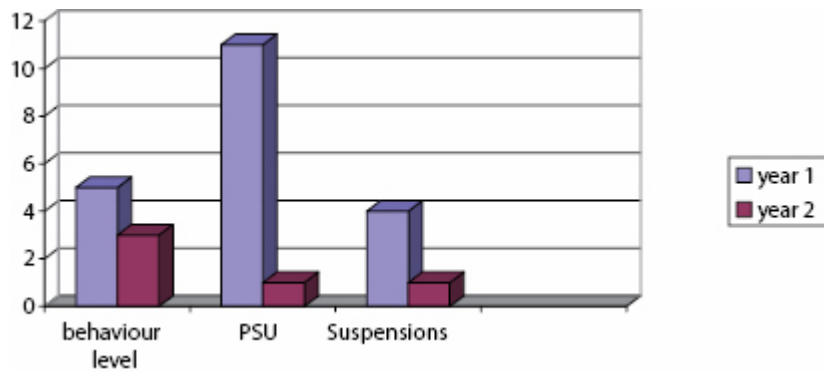
Conclusion

This child is now in Year 10 and attendance is sitting at 87%. She is involved in many activities and has helped out in many events. This pupil was able to receive counselling in school and family is getting support from the Younger carers' organisation (referral made through FSES). This girl seems much happier and has done well in many subjects. This child has been removed from the Child Protection Register and there is no longer social service involvement.

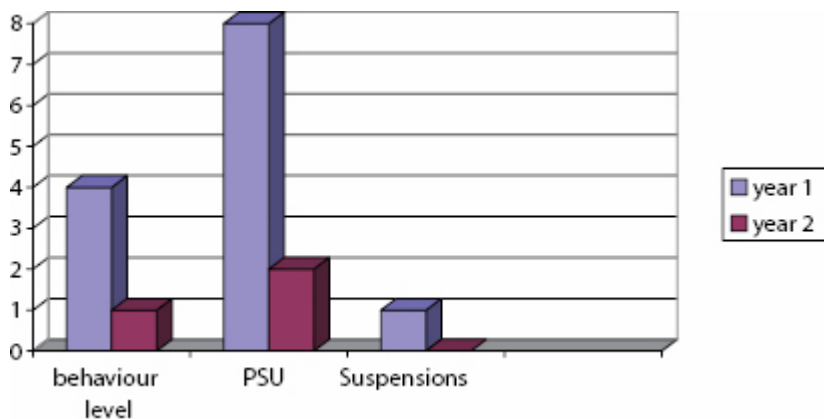
Behaviour Case studies

Two examples below of individual pupils who have shown steady improvement in their behaviour since work began with them last year. It is an indication of how, given time, improvement may be made with one-to-one intervention work.

A bar chart indicating the progress of a Year 11 pupil



A bar chart indicating the progress of a Year 10 pupil



Family Links Co-ordinator Case Studies

Case Study

Introduction

This new year 8 pupil was introduced to me via the Year Head as the child was extremely upset, wouldn't attend school and said she wanted to die. When I spoke with the father he explained there was a complex family background. The child had been removed from her mother by social services with her father being granted a residence order until the child reached the age of 16 years. The child had limited time contact with her mother and her mother was not allowed to initiate contact with the child directly. The mother and father did not communicate directly with each other. This situation resulted in the child feeling confused, isolated and different from her peers. There were issues surrounding the mother's new partner and a court case was pending after a physical assault on the child's father.

Action

After investigating child protection measures and establishing the child would not cause herself immediate harm I built up a trust with the child and her family. The child would be in a very distressed state each morning and felt unable to attend school. It was established there was no issue with attending school itself but stemmed from issues at home. Each morning the father and I would work together to calm the child to get her into school.

After a settled period the child again became increasingly distressed each day and on one occasion displayed self harming tendencies whilst I was on a home visit. Again the child protection policy was instigated.

Conclusion

The child attended a counsellor outside school on a weekly basis and linked in with myself at school on a daily basis. If necessary the counsellor would attend school on the child's request. I also worked closely with the family to assess the situation, reassure and implement support strategies in school as appropriate. Social services have liaised closely with the family and the designated Child Protection Officer to implement a satisfactory contact arrangement between mother and daughter.

The child continued to access support from her counsellor and intervention by myself continued although my input was gradually reduced as the child settled. The child has now settled into a good school routine, is happy and has good friendships. My input has come to an end but the child and her family are aware I am available again should they feel they need my support.

Area for development: PUPIL ENGAGEMENT

- TARGETS: To improve pupil attendance in the identified cohort by 5% BY END March 2010
 To improve pupil engagement in after school activities to enhance learning experience – overall attendance at after school activities to increase by 10% by March 2010
 To develop a 'readiness to learn' with those engaging in support strategies
 Pupils to receive support services within 10 school days by January 2010

Where are we now?	Action to be taken to effect improvement	Lead Staff and team	Resources (including staff development)	Timescale	SMART targets & success criteria	Monitoring and evaluation strategies	Funding details
<p>ATTENDANCE</p> <p>Family Link Attendance Officer employed</p> <p>Current school attendance for 09/10 is 89.2%</p> <p>Currently 3 attendance support groups established – for Years 7, 8 & 9</p> <p>See School Development Plan 2008-2011: Attendance Action Plan</p>	<p>Continue to implement of Family Link Attendance Officer</p> <p>Development of strategies to promote regular attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance groups for all years Home visits Individual support Offered to voluntary and statutory services Link up with EWO Discussions Parental group Monitoring timetable 	<p>MR (School VP)</p> <p>CL</p> <p>AC (School Attendance Officer)</p> <p>Family Link Attendance Coordinator</p> <p>Behavioral Team</p> <p>EWO</p>	<p>Financial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salary Transportation Printing Costs Materials and equipment Attendance data Records and booklets <p>Training – staff development</p> <p>A consultation</p> <p>Time – Team strategy meetings, home visits</p> <p>Equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff costs Programme Costs Transport Programme costs <p>A consultation</p> <p>Car parking costs</p>	<p>April 2009 – March 2010</p>	<p>Establishment of a PSES Attendance Improvement Strategy including how PSES strategies link with designated procedures by May 2009</p> <p>To establish attendance groups in every year group for pupils with attendance between 70% – 80% by October 2009</p> <p>The percentage attendance of each pupil in the identified cohort, will improve by up to 5% by March 2010.</p>	<p>Strategic approval and monitored by SLT</p> <p>Feedback from Parental Team and School Attendance Officer</p> <p>Attendance statistics</p> <p>Interviewing every month with EWO and School Attendance Officer</p> <p>Discuss progress review meetings of all support teams</p> <p>Attendance data to be monitored on a daily basis</p> <p>Regular feedback from pupils, parents and staff</p>	<p>Family Link Attendance Officer</p> <p>FSES £31,915</p> <p>Programme Costs FSES £1,000</p>
<p>AFTERSCHOOL COURSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish after school clubs 10 members 21 extra-curricular activities operational Transportation offered to those attending homework club 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment of staff in the role of after school programme activities Employment of Coordinator to manage the club Access to premises of after school programme 	<p>CL</p> <p>SS</p> <p>After school programme staff team</p>	<p>Financial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff costs Programme costs <p>A consultation</p> <p>Time – contractual establish partnerships</p>	<p>April 2009 – March 2010</p>	<p>Extra Curricular Coordinator to develop range of after school activities to ensure a coordinated approach by June 2009</p> <p>Provision of after school programs to Years 5/6 and 8/9 by end September 2009</p> <p>Overall attendance of after school activities to increase by 10% by March 2010</p> <p>Transportation to be offered to those attending all after school programmes activities</p>	<p>Costs of programme based on each subject</p> <p>Regular feedback from pupils, parents and staff</p> <p>Attendance statistics</p> <p>Number of those provided</p>	<p>Extended Schools (See separate Extended School action plan)</p>
<p>SUPPORT (Emotional and Learning)</p> <p>FSES works with school Parental Care team led by Parent & P to provide parental support throughout the school including the Drop Support Unit (DSU)</p> <p>Currently working in partnership with 12 organisations who offer parental and learning support</p> <p>FSES works with school to set of 16 clubs team led by SENCO to</p>	<p>EMOTIONAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop SEA's skills covered by a New Life Contact Youth Services and partner organisations <p>LEARNING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to provide all Conduct work off Enter the school doors 	<p>MR</p> <p>CL</p> <p>Partner organisations</p>		<p>April 2009 – March 2010</p>	<p>Pupils to receive support services within 10 school days by January 2010</p> <p>100% of under 16s will have access to FSES provision by December 2009</p>	<p>Feedback from Parental Learning Team</p> <p>Use of a Home visiting support</p> <p>Agencies and delivery of meetings facilitated globally</p> <p>Drop support</p> <p>FSE focus meeting</p> <p>To be 100% of under 16s will have access to FSES provision by December 2009</p> <p>Discuss pupil progress reviews</p>	<p>FSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £70000 net of 25% CV Clinic 2000 Enter Devices

<p>provide learning support</p> <p>A programme of support to be given for identified vulnerable young people</p> <p>See School Development Plan 2008-2011 – Student Welfare Action Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 8 Learning support Learning Mentor Creation of support £70000 net of 25% PSU support work 	<p>SL</p>			<p>£70000 net of 25% to be employed by April 2009</p> <p>PSU support worker to be employed by April 2009</p>	<p>Staff employed and monitored</p>	<p>IDS</p> <p>IDF (Integrated services) (See separate Integrated Services Action Plan)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PSU support worker LMS Learning Mentor <p>FSES: Student Welfare 2000</p> <p>TOTAL FSES BEND 142,720</p>
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Area for Development: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

TARGET:

- To develop purposeful engagement between the school and the community by organising 3 community forums by end of March 2010

Where are we now?	Action to be taken to effect improvement	Lead Staff and team	Resources (including staff development)	Timescale	SMART targets & success criteria	Monitoring and evaluation strategies	Funding details
<p>FSES Coordinator has established informal links with voluntary community partners, statutory bodies and feeder primary schools.</p> <p>FSES CO manages the delivery of the FSES provision.</p> <p>Currently working with 22 partner organisations</p> <p>4 New schools of choice year 10/11 community input</p> <p>784 families took 4 recommendations for engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs based analysis • Strategic development • Meaningful engagement with partners. • Evaluation • Good practice • Vision <p>See School Development Plan Year 7.</p>	<p>An audit of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People • Parents • Staff • Feeder primary schools • Community partners <p>Analysis plan will be provided to SLT, FSES Steering Group and Operational Group</p> <p>SLT agreed school partner organisations</p> <p>Develop pupil program review to ensure input need be captured</p> <p>Identify and develop meaningful partnerships with statutory and voluntary organisations</p> <p>Continue to build focused partnerships and CLPs</p> <p>Presentations prepared and materials produced to share the FSES vision and examples of good practice</p> <p>Establishment of FSES community forum</p>	<p>CL (FSES CO)</p> <p>Partner organisations</p> <p>SLT</p> <p>FSES Steering Group</p> <p>FSES Operational Group</p>	<p>Financial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff cost <p>Accommodation</p> <p>Time – resources</p>	<p>April 2009 – March 2010</p>	<p>Audit of organisations to be performed to agree baseline by end of month of the programme to be completed by April 2009</p> <p>Action plan will be updated and agreed with SLT and FSES Steering Group and Operational Group by April 2009</p> <p>SLT established with all partner organisations by March 2009</p> <p>Agreed to evaluate and baseline 9 items (to be established) to ensure community input by May 2009</p> <p>Ongoing networking to develop meaningful partnerships working towards meaningful partnership by March 2010</p> <p>Opportunities to share the vision and good practice of FSES must be utilised to ensure sustainability and best practice to be seen April 2009 and March 2010</p> <p>FSES Community Forum to be established by November 2009 and 3 forums organised by the end of March 2010</p>	<p>Audit findings will be provided to SLT, FSES Steering Group and Operational Group</p> <p>Action plan progress will be monitored by SLT, Steering Group and Operational Group</p> <p>SLT agreed to evaluate school and partner organisations</p> <p>Complete baseline pupil program review</p> <p>Feedback from pupils, parents, staff and community</p> <p>Monitor and update from community meetings</p> <p>Programme for new established days</p> <p>Grid doubling of success and growth by Sept</p> <p>Presentations and promotional materials</p> <p>Forum of relevance for Forum</p>	<p>FSES</p> <p>Coordinator</p> <p>£32,000</p> <p>TOTAL COST TO FSES</p> <p>£32,000</p>

Area for Development: PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

TARGET: To improve parental engagement with school issues and FSES activities by 2% by March 2010

To encourage life-long learning and increased educational aspirations

5% of those who attended evening classes will achieve an accredited qualification in the academic year September 2009-June 2010

Where are we now?	Action to be taken to effect improvement	Lead Staff and team	Resources (including staff development)	Timescale	SMART targets & success criteria	Monitoring and evaluation strategies	Funding Details
<p>Family Link Coordinator currently working with 28 families providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home visits • Individual support • Evening programme • Signposting to support services • Referrals to statutory organisations <p>105 people enrolled for evening classes. 4 accredited and 8 non-accredited courses offered.</p> <p>Community Newsletter is circulated 3 times per year.</p> <p>Parent Voice membership currently 9.</p> <p>Parents audit indicated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41% believe adult learning opportunities to be important • 79% believe that advice and child support development is important <p>See School Development Plan 2008-2009 Engagement with Parents Action Plan</p>	<p>Continual employment of Family Link Coordinator</p> <p>Home school liaison through home visits and referrals to support services will be developed to support the Pastoral Team</p> <p>Evening class provision to continue and develop life long learning and increased aspiration</p> <p>Actively engage parents and community through outreach work and promoting all activities</p> <p>Increased Parent Voice membership</p> <p>Referrals on careers advice and educational support to be made to Local Learning Signpost (LLP)</p>	<p>CL</p> <p>Family Link Coordinator</p> <p>Pastoral Team</p> <p>Transition Coordinator</p> <p>Staff facilitating evening classes</p>	<p>FINANCIAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary/staff • Transportation • Running costs • Newsletter and advertising <p>Accommodation</p> <p>Time – strategy meetings, home visits</p>	<p>April 2009 - March 2010</p>	<p>2% increase in numbers of parents engaging with all FSES activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evening classes • Information evenings • Social evenings • Parent Voice <p>by March 2010</p> <p>5% of adults who attend evening classes will achieve an accredited qualification in the academic year Sept 2009 – June 2010</p> <p>Building on the positive feedback from the recent parent audit regarding parental awareness of whole school issues and the recognition of the benefits of education for their children and for themselves by March 2010.</p>	<p>Record of parents attending events</p> <p>Record of adults attaining qualification</p> <p>Feedback from parents and community</p> <p>Family Link Coordinator report</p> <p>Records of referrals and enquiries made to LLP</p>	<p>Family Link Coordinator:</p> <p>FSES</p> <p>£17,500</p> <p>Evening classes:</p> <p>FSES</p> <p>£5,000</p> <p>Programme Costs:</p> <p>FSES</p> <p>£2,000</p> <p>Newsletter and advertising:</p> <p>FSES</p> <p>£3,000</p> <p>Training Costs:</p> <p>FSES</p> <p>£500</p> <p>ISCYP/IDF LLP</p> <p>TOTAL COST TO FSES</p> <p>£28,000</p>

Action Plan for the period: April 2009 – March 2010

Area for Development: HEALTH ENGAGEMENT

TARGET: Increased health awareness for pupils, parents and the community
There will be a 10% increase in the number of girls using the breakfast club by January 2010

Where are we now?	Action to be taken to effect improvement	Lead Staff and team	Resources (including staff development)	Timescale	SMART targets & success criteria	Monitoring and evaluation strategies	Funding details
<p>Health awareness is delivered through the PSHE/Learning For Life and Work programmes</p> <p>School nurse employed</p> <p>School Nurses meet the statutory requirements for inoculations and health assessments</p> <p>Partner organisations deliver health programmes for diet and lifestyle, relationships, drugs awareness, self esteem and Heartstart programme through assembly input and non-timetabled days</p> <p>Breakfast club running each morning offering a healthy breakfast: 36 members</p> <p>Currently a Health Promoting school</p>	<p>Continued input from partner organisations</p> <p>Liaison with PSHE coordinator</p> <p>Input into 'Non-timetabled days' programme</p> <p>Playboard health profiling pilot programme to be implemented with Year5. Nurse deployed to school to facilitate the programme</p> <p>Continued referrals to support services for pupils, parents and wider community</p> <p>Promotion of Breakfast Club</p>	<p>MR</p> <p>CL</p> <p>VE</p> <p>School nursing</p> <p>Partner organisations</p>	<p>Time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To network with partner organisations To process referrals and receive feedback <p>Accommodation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To facilitate classroom and non-timetabled day programmes Facilities for Health Room in New School to be investigated <p>ICT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life channel to promote health awareness 	<p>April 2009 – March 2010</p>	<p>Improved health awareness of pupils by March 2010.</p> <p>Pupils and their families have access to quality healthcare provision/information by March 2010.</p> <p>Pupils have the opportunity to successfully access the curriculum without being disadvantaged by recurring health issues by March 2010.</p> <p>10% increase in number of girls using the Breakfast Club</p>	<p>Attendance statistics</p> <p>Evaluation feedback from pupils</p> <p>Referral structure</p> <p>Number of referrals</p> <p>Feedback from partner organisation</p> <p>Feedback from parents</p> <p>Attendance statistics</p> <p>Regular review with Health care facilitators</p>	<p>Integrated Services Funding</p> <p>Life Channel</p> <p>LMS: School nurse</p> <p>Extended schools (See separate action plan)</p> <p>Breakfast Club</p> <p>Cost to PSSE: 6000</p>

Action Plan for the period: April 2009 – March 2010

Area for Development: TRANSITION

Target: To facilitate pupils moving from primary to post primary education
To enable the sharing of good practice between primary and post primary in 6 schools by the end of March 2010

Where are we now?	Action to be taken to effect improvement	Lead Staff and team	Resources (including staff development)	Timescale	SMART targets & success criteria	Monitoring and evaluation strategies	Funding details
<p>FSES team builds on existing provision working with Pastoral VP who oversees all areas of Primary School liaison.</p> <p>Principal is a member of Greater Shankill Principals' Group.</p> <p>Transition teacher employed working in all 18 feeder primary schools delivering individual, group and class teaching in 9 subject areas.</p> <p>FSES Working in liaison with Specialist school, PE and Music Departments</p> <p>See Specialist School Action Plan</p>	<p>Continued employment of transition teachers</p> <p>Coordinated approach to all transition activities</p> <p>A additional support to be provided in Literacy, Numeracy, ICT, social and communication skills in line with New curriculum</p> <p>Primary school forums to be established</p> <p>Continuation of transitional P7/Year 8 activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential Induction booklet Friends top Sentinel Toplink Summer scheme Young Enter prize 	<p>MR</p> <p>FR (Transition Coord)</p> <p>Transition Teacher</p> <p>CL</p> <p>Specialist school team</p> <p>Other relevant staff</p> <p>Forum: FR Primary School staff, representatives from ICT, Music and PE</p>	<p>FINANCIAL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Programme costs Transition <p>Staff training</p> <p>Time</p> <p>Accommodation</p>	<p>April 2009 – March 2010</p>	<p>Coordinated programme based on primary school needs identified by June 2009.</p> <p>Framework and schemes of work in line with Revised KS1 +2 curriculum to devised by May 2009</p> <p>Establishment of primary school forum by March 2010</p> <p>Improve levels of literacy, Numeracy and skills development in identified groups by March 2010.</p> <p>Staff in 6 feeder primary schools have the opportunity to share good practice with post primary staff</p>	<p>Programme to be implemented in the Primary schools</p> <p>Completed framework and schemes of work</p> <p>Feedback from staff, pupils and Principals</p> <p>Parenting programme evaluation</p> <p>Transition Coordinator report</p> <p>Base line pupil assessments in literacy and numeracy</p>	<p>FSES Staff costs: 664245</p> <p>Programme costs: 42,000</p> <p>Toplink 42,000</p> <p>Residential 43,000</p> <p>Sentinel 41,000</p> <p>EDF (See separate action plans) Summer scheme 41,400</p> <p>TOTAL COST TO FSES 672,245</p>

Drumragh Integrated College

Committee for Education Inquiry

'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'

Response Form

School Name Drumragh Integrated College

School Sector Integrated 11-18

Location - Rural/Urban Urban – but mixed urban / rural catchment

Boys/Girls/Mixed Mixed and all-ability

Your Name and Contact details Nigel Frith

Principal

028 8225 2440

Please indicate briefly below the top three practical actions in your school which address each of the following areas of Committee focus:

A. Effective School Leadership - To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

1. Creation of a child-centred ethos

The creation of a child-centred ethos includes the celebration of each child's personal best even when not capable of the top grades, and working hard with individual students who do not come from supportive or stable homes. This involves promoting mutual respect daily, creating a safe, secure learning environment and employment of a learning mentor who actively supports students with particular barriers to learning. It is also supported by an active, structured reward system that is particularly successful with our younger students. The principles of integration are ideal for the creation of this ethos.

2. Approachability

Modelling and living the principle of being approachable to students helps to give them the confidence to talk to staff and to benefit from strong, close and supportive staff-student relationships. We balance high behavioural expectations with relaxed relationships – the result is a positive and generally happy atmosphere throughout the school.

3. All-ability education

It is important to believe in and deliver all-ability, comprehensive education. This is not to be confused with mixed ability groupings, but rather the inclusion of students of all abilities, no transfer test-style hurdles to undermine self-esteem, and emphasis on all ability levels including gifted and talented, and those with special educational needs. Each student can achieve aspirationally, in appropriate groupings, and can be moved into a different-ability class if perceived capable of it. Our special needs provision is balanced by our Gifted and Talented Programme, which is structured by our Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator and includes a register of gifted and talented students.

B. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

1. Earning trust from parents

Parents need to see time and time again that if they bring a concern to the school, the school responds reliably and effectively. They need to know that they are listened to. They need to believe that their child is safe and well looked-after. They need to see that the school is approachable and, crucially, that bullying is dealt with well; our reputation, we gather, includes respect from the community for our responses to bullying. Parents need to see that staff will take the time to engage with them and with their child; these principles must not be rhetoric but rather must be lived out day after day.

2. Engaging with parents

We engage with parents in a range of ways including letters, phone calls, face-to-face meetings, an active Parents' Council attended by the Principal, and events for parents including:

- A 'welcome to year 8' evening
- Parents' consultation days rather than traditional parents' evenings
- An 'Introduction to GCSE' evening for students and parents
- An 'Exam Success' evening where GCSE students are taught revision skills with their parents.

We offer regular reminders to feel free to contact us with concerns, use a student planner which staff and parents can use to write comments for each other, and post home (not send in children's bags!) regular, detailed and informative general letters to parents. We operate a mentoring system for year 12 students, during the run-up to their GCSE exams, which parents are invited to be involved in. We strive to help parents feel that they are welcome in the school and are encouraged to be involved in their child's education.

3. Time and active support

Staff spend often-disproportionate amounts of time with disadvantaged children and in liaison with their parents. Key staff include the Special Needs Co-ordinator, the Head of Pastoral Care and the Learning Mentor. The latter can coach children with their social skills, their conflict resolution and their coping strategies. She will make home-visits and build relationships with parents who sometimes did not have good experiences of school themselves and who would normally distrust and avoid the school. One 'danger' here is that sometimes she finds herself listening to the parents' problems as well as the child's; the dividing line can be difficult to spot at times. Nevertheless this is important and effective work; engaging parents for the sake of their children.

C. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008) and potential measures to address this.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32_statistics_and_research-research_pg/32_stats_and_research_researchreports_pg/32_statistics_and_research_branch_research_reports_2008.htm]

1. Relationships

Central in addressing underachievement are relationships where students feel they are cared for, valued and respected. The importance of this cannot be over-emphasised. One of the key reasons why potential underachievers begin to succeed is because they are given that confidence by staff who will talk to them, listen to them, praise and encourage them. If in turn they truly respect their staff then they are more likely to begin to succeed because they want to – they are motivated to. Staff begin to help them build self-belief, through their daily interactions and the practical support provided. Students enjoy relationships where they feel they can enjoy a chat with staff, where they can talk about their interests and enjoy humour together, whilst knowing that staff also expect them to work hard. They need to feel relaxed and secure with their teachers, knowing that staff believe in them.

2. Helping parents to support their children

See my earlier comments about engagement with parents as well as students in disadvantaged situations. The more parents can become positively involved in their child's education, the better off the child will be. This can include helping them to see that they can help their child.

3. Helping students to learn appropriately

We promote an active emphasis on students' preferred learning styles, using the Multiple Intelligence model. This involves the principle that there are multiple types of intelligence, not just the traditionally-academic linguistic and logical-mathematical areas. Every child has intelligences in which they are strongest, they are encouraged to identify these and to progress using them – including when revising for exams. This approach reduces the concept of some people being 'less intelligent than others' and replaces it with the importance of finding and using your preferred learning styles. It also helps staff to be aware that they are preparing lessons for a range of learning-style needs, therefore they should plan and differentiate appropriately.

Please note:

The integrated ethos is central and ideal in promoting all of the approaches outlined in this response. Many people have a limited understanding of integration, thinking it is just a mixing of cultures and at worst encourages a 'watering-down' of one's own beliefs. In fact integration encourages young people to respect difference, to define themselves and to present themselves confidently. It is an all-ability, inclusive approach to education, thereby reducing barriers to learning and encouraging excellence.

D. Department of Education's School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

Please indicate briefly below any comments you may have on this and other relevant Departmental policies.

1. 'Every School A Good School' is an effective vision and framework. The Revised Curriculum is also impressive, aiming as it does to promote active, engaging and effective learning – in fact I believe DENI should resource it more fully in order to fulfil its potential in practice. The emphasis on collaboration, on the other hand, is in my view being over-emphasised, possibly to some extent 'a sledge-hammer to crack a nut'. Students respond well to being in a secure and supportive learning environment where they are helped to learn by staff who have strong relationships with them. Collaboration does not necessarily enhance these important 'ingredients' for successful achievement.

2. A growing emphasis on statistical targets is in danger of being over-played, providing easy but not necessarily useful measurement. The best targets have words in them, not numbers, because they identify actions to be taken in order to improve and move forward. Statistical targets too quickly can become 'big sticks'. Quality teaching and learning, supported by positive staff-student relationships and a warm, secure learning environment, are some of the most vital keys to success.

3. The current emphasis on self-evaluation is appropriate, because good schools self-evaluate and so determine how to move forward in order to fulfil their vision. The most recent version of 'Together Towards Improvement' offers a tool for this, although it feels a little rough at the edges and was not even proofread accurately. As part of a drive to self-evaluate, I believe principals and senior leaders should be able to observe classroom practice more easily, to monitor what is happening in the classroom; the Department is not doing enough to resolve the dispute with the NASUWT who are threatening industrial action against schools that attempt this.

Overall, learning is an emotional business. Students from disadvantaged situations especially often need help to believe in themselves. They need the support of their parents, as far as can be nurtured, and a secure, positive learning environment. They need quality teaching and caring, firm and supportive relationships with staff. They also need boundaries which are clear and fair, with behaviour policies that include reward as well as discipline. Departmental policies and resources should centre on these vital factors for young people's success.

**Thank you – please email to
committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk**

Committee for Education Inquiry
'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'

Summary of Key Points for Presentation

by Drumragh Integrated College

Some key factors contributing to the college's success

The college's mission statement and aims; reality not rhetoric:

Our mission statement is 'Excellence for Everyone', and we take this goal seriously. We aim to offer 'a shining example of integration in practice and to provide a quality of education that is second to none'. We have embraced the principle that happy children learn best.

Creation of a child-centred ethos:

The creation of a child-centred ethos involves the celebration of each child's personal best even when not capable of the top grades, putting children first in decision-making and working hard with individual students who have barriers to learning. This involves:

- Promoting mutual respect daily
- Encouragement
- Creating a safe, secure learning environment, underpinned by a strong discipline policy (for example, violence = suspension)
- An active, structured reward system that is particularly successful with our younger students
- Staff who will 'go the extra mile', combining compassion with expertise.

The principles of integration are ideal for the creation of this ethos.

Relationships and approachability:

Central in addressing underachievement are relationships where students feel they are cared for, valued and respected. The importance of this cannot be over-emphasised. One of the key reasons why potential underachievers begin to succeed is because they are given that confidence by staff who will talk to them, listen to them, accept them, praise and encourage them. In turn they truly respect their staff then they are more likely to begin to succeed because they want to – they are motivated to do so. Staff begin to help them build self-belief, through their daily interactions and the practical support provided. Students enjoy relationships where they feel they can talk about their interests and enjoy humour together, whilst knowing that staff also expect them to work hard. We balance high behavioural expectations with relaxed relationships – the result is a positive, productive and generally happy atmosphere throughout the school.

Time and active support:

Staff spend often-disproportionate amounts of time with disadvantaged children and in liaison with their parents. Key staff include the Special Needs Co-ordinator, the Head of Pastoral Care and the Learning Mentor, however this ethos prevails throughout the school. The Learning Mentor can coach children with their social skills, their conflict resolution and their coping strategies. She will make home-visits and build relationships with parents who sometimes did not have good experiences of school themselves and who would normally distrust and avoid the school.

All-ability education:

It is important to believe in and deliver all-ability, comprehensive education. This is not to be confused with mixed ability groupings, but rather it involves the inclusion of students of all abilities, no transfer test-style hurdles to undermine self-esteem, and emphasis on all ability levels including gifted and talented, and those with special educational needs. Our special needs provision is balanced by our Gifted and Talented Programme.

Engagement with parents:

Parents need to see that if they bring a concern to the school, the school responds reliably and effectively. They need to know that they and their children are listened to and, crucially, that bullying is dealt with well. These principles must not be rhetoric but rather must be lived out day

after day. We engage with parents in a range of ways including letters, phone calls, face-to-face meetings, use of a student planner in which staff and parents can write comments for each other, an active Parents' Council attended by the Principal, and events involving parents including:

- A 'welcome to year 8' evening
- Parents' consultation days rather than traditional parents' evenings
- An 'Introduction to GCSE' evening for students and parents
- An 'Exam Success' evening where GCSE students are taught revision skills with their parents
- A mentoring system for year 12 students, during the run-up to their GCSE exams, in which parents are invited to be involved. This is complemented by a programme of revision classes during the exam season, rather than the traditional 'study leave'.

We strive to help parents feel that they are welcome in the school and are encouraged to be involved in their child's education.

Teaching expertise:

The college works at providing quality, engaging learning experiences (rather than passive learning), including assessment for learning (involving student self-evaluation and target-setting); sharing of learning intentions with students; structured lessons; varied, active approaches to learning and aiming to stimulate learners. We aim for high exam results and are pleased to have achieved 81% 5 or more A*-C GCSE grades in 2010.

Helping students to learn appropriately:

We promote an active emphasis on students' preferred learning styles. This involves the principle that there are multiple types of intelligence, not just the traditionally-academic linguistic and logical-mathematical areas. Every child has intelligences in which they are strongest, they are encouraged to identify these and to progress using them – including when revising for exams. This also helps staff to be aware that they are preparing lessons for a range of learning-style needs, therefore they should plan and differentiate appropriately.

The integrated ethos:

The integrated ethos is central and ideal in promoting all of the approaches outlined in this response. Many people have a limited understanding of integration, thinking it is just a mixing of cultures and at worst encourages a 'watering-down' of one's own beliefs. In fact integration encourages young people to respect difference, to define themselves and to present themselves confidently. It is an all-ability, inclusive approach to education, thereby reducing barriers to learning and encouraging excellence.



- Lessons for Learning -



- **Starter activity** - something to do right away



- Learning begins immediately (even before others have arrived?)
- Engage students while still fresh and curious ('What are we doing today?')
- Can be involve recap on prior learning, intro to today's lesson or a brief standalone learning opportunity
- Register to be taken after students have begun learning

- **Learning intentions and success criteria**



- Shared, clear and explicit so that students understand what they are aiming to learn and why
- Also clarifying success criteria, ready for later review and self-evaluation
- Not 'what we're doing today', but 'what we're learning today'
- Define the learning in terms of knowledge, understanding and/or skills
- Include at least one transferable skill, eg research, teamwork etc
- Big picture and/or real life application ('the point of this')
- Consider use of 'WALT' ('We are learning to...'), 'WILF' ('What I'm looking for') and 'TIB' ('This is because...')
- Use Bloom's Taxonomy to pitch learning intentions (knowledge – comprehension – application – analysis – synthesis – evaluation)

- **Stimulating input**



- Teacher expertise
- Share your enthusiasm as well – be infectious
- Capture hearts as well as minds
- Appropriate, stimulating resources
- Cater for all, including G&T and SEN
- Preferred learning styles, based on Multiple Intelligence student profiles

- **Active learning**



- Engaging, active learning
- Meaningful and stimulating
- Multiple Intelligence based
- Planned variety or informed choice
- Applying, exploring and developing learning

- **Student engagement**



- A classroom climate where students come up with their own ideas, think aloud, take risks and explore their understanding
- Meaningful and often 'open-ended' questions
- Collaborative strategies like 'Think, Pair, Share'
- 'Think time' – thoughtful, quality answers rather than rapid-fire or teacher answering own questions
- Encourage student questions, voice and feedback

• **Skill and spark**



- The literacy, numeracy and ICT requirements of YOUR subject
- Independent learning, including study skills and positive attitudes (ie both skills and motivation)
- Perseverance with challenges and uncertainty – ‘learning what to do when you don’t know what to do’
- Transferable skills, including managing information, thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, creativity, working with others, self-management
- Explicitly ‘thinking about thinking’ – grow self-awareness and emphasise the **processes** of learning, not just the products
- Planning, monitoring and evaluating own progress, including setting own targets for further improvement

• **Assessment for learning**



- **Formative feedback** - three elements:
 - Two successes (‘two stars’)
 - A desired goal (‘a wish’)
 - Next steps or prompts (‘how’)
- **50% comment-only feedback**
- **Oral feedback:**
 - Personal and specific to the student
 - Immediate, encouraging quick improvement
 - Reinforces the relationship between teacher and student
 - Allow the student to respond and participate
- **Peer assessment and self-evaluation:**
 - Enable students to recognise success and areas for improvement, in their own and others’ work
 - Emphasise *how* they are learning as well as *what*
 - Promote independent learning and communication
 - Active involvement in learning, and deeper understanding
 - Develop students’ self-belief, their ability to set and to pursue their own targets

• **Classroom Assistants**



- Involved and familiar with their crucial role

• **Homework**



- Set well before the end of the lesson
- Include success criteria

• **Plenary session**



- Review, using learning intentions and/or success criteria
- Reinforcement and embedding of the learning
- Teacher gauging progress to aid further planning
- Self-evaluation and target-setting
- Pointers to future learning
- Plan and allow time for this crucial part of the lesson

• **Calm, orderly exit** from the classroom - after a uniform check



MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS



How can we enable our students to climb this hierarchy and so help them to achieve:

- RELAXED ALERTNESS
- MOTIVATION
- FULFILMENT
- SUCCESS

Sources:
'Accelerated Learning in Practice'
– Alistair Smith
'Leadership Skills'
– John Adair



Drumragh Integrated College

Committee for Education Inquiry
Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities

Follow-Up Response as Requested
by The Education Committee

Further information requested in four areas:

1. Multiple intelligences;
2. Reward / incentive merit scheme;
3. Cultivation of a state of 'relaxed alertness';
4. Procedures adopted in interviewing potential members of staff – particularly the observation of teaching and interactive elements, including the participation of a panel of pupils in the process.

Multiple intelligences

The Multiple Intelligence Theory is introduced in Professor Howard Gardner's book, 'Frames Of Mind' (1983). The theory promotes a positive and enriching view of intelligence, of immense practical value in the classroom and constructive for pupils' perceptions of themselves. It presents intelligence as being multiple not single (ie not solely academic or intellectual) and makes it clear that we all have our own unique blend of strongest intelligences – possibly around three of the eight. So the question to ask of our students is not 'How smart are you?' but rather 'How are you smart?'

Traditionally intelligence has been viewed as linguistic and logical/mathematical; if a pupil is not high in these intelligences, then too often he or she has been deemed unintelligent. These intelligences have dominated classrooms and schools for too long. Whilst linguistic and logical strengths are in fact two of the eight intelligences identified by Professor Gardner, they are worth no more nor less than the other six. This presents the following potential benefits:

- Every pupil is valued for his/her own blend of intelligences;
- There is an equality rather than a hierarchy between those who are academic, practical, sporting or creative;
- Pupils who are helped to understand their preferred learning styles can 'play to their strengths', thereby accelerating their learning, feeling more engaged in their studies, developing their self-awareness and moving toward being independent, lifelong learners;
- As they move toward examinations, students can adopt revision methods that are based on their preferred learning styles;
- Where parents understand this concept, they can support their children more effectively by saying, 'This works for you so I'll back you in it' rather than 'Work like this; it worked for me so it'll work for you, my boy.'
- Where staff understand their students' preferred learning styles, they can plan lessons and differentiate according to those preferences.
- These teaching and learning strategies can lead to increased self-esteem for pupils – and we know that learning is an emotional business. At Drumragh Henry Ford is often quoted; 'Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you're probably right.'

The eight intelligences identified by Professor Gardner are these:

Interpersonal / People-Smart

Example:

Richard Branson (who, incidentally, is apparently dyslexic)

Characteristics:

Understands, works and learns well with other people. Sociable people who enjoy group-work and teamwork, relating well to others.

Revision and study suggestions for students:

Discuss your learning with someone, talk while learning on your own, study-buddy, learn by teaching someone else, talk during breaks.

Intrapersonal / Self-Smart

Example:

Mother Teresa

Characteristics:

Thoughtful, able to grow and learn in a self-contained way. People who like organisation and order, working best independently and in peace.

Revision and study suggestions for students:

Be organised, work in quiet, pace yourself, stay in control of your learning, keep things tidy.

Linguistic / Word-Smart

Example:

Shakespeare

Characteristics:

Responds well to the power and rhythm of language. People who think and speak fluently, moving forward by finding the language to capture the moment or the idea.

Revision and study suggestions for students:

Discuss your learning, use key vocabulary, make great notes, put things into your own words.

Logical-mathematical / Number-Smart

Example:

Einstein, Carol Vorderman

Characteristics:

A problem-solver who enjoys order and can see patterns. People who are skilled with logic and use of number.

Revision and study suggestions for students:

Use post-its, flowcharts, graphs, sequences, structure, diagrams, charts, statistics.

Musical / Music-Smart

Example:

Bono, Beethoven

Characteristics:

Responds well to music, sound and rhythm. May work best with well-selected music that lifts their mood, energises them, helps them to concentrate OR may need to avoid music when working as it distracts them, they are drawn into it and so taken away from their work.

Revision and study suggestions for students:

Choose quiet music to learn to, or favourite music for breaks, put learning to music. Find out which music helps you to learn.

Visual / Picture-Smart

Example:

Picasso

Characteristics:

Able to see, imagine, create and learn through images. Responds well to colour, diagrams and imagery. Thinks visually as well as learning visually.

Revision and study suggestions for students:

Colour, diagrams, highlighting, underlining, mindmaps, pictures, A3 posters, colourful notes, Powerpoint presentations, imagery.

Kinaesthetic / Body-Smart

Example:

Steven Gerrard, the AA Man

Characteristics:

Uses the body and movement in active and skilful ways. Learns by doing. People who would like the minimum explanation, preferring demonstrations followed by 'having a go'. Too often told off for being fidgets in the past.

Revision and study suggestions for students:

Have frequent breaks, work in a variety of rooms, drink plenty of water, move post-its, find other ways of moving while learning, learn actively.

Naturalist / Nature-Smart

Example:

David Attenborough

Characteristics:

Enjoys and relates well to nature / the environment. Likes the outdoors, feels energised when in the open.

Revision and study suggestions for students:

Be well organised, get fresh air, create an interesting learning environment, create revision posters and put them up. Study in the garden in good weather.

Linked to the Gifted and Talented Programme at Drumragh, all students have taken a simple questionnaire to help them identify their key intelligences. Their dominant intelligence has been recorded on the college's information management computer system, thereby allowing staff to

access a pie-chart profile of the preferred learning styles of an entire class. They can then plan lessons according to the key preferred learning styles of the class, while maintaining an appropriate variety of teaching and learning strategies.

There is a great deal more that can be said about the multiple intelligence theory; this however hopefully serves as an introduction.

Reward / incentive merit scheme

The aims of the college reward system are to underpin firm behavioural standards with a celebration culture. We are aware of the suggestion that it takes three or more positives to balance out one negative comment; colloquially, students need more 'warm fuzzies' than 'cold pricklies' (they are also alert to false praise, or 'plastic fuzzies'). As mentioned earlier, learning is an emotional business and the reward system is designed to boost students' motivation, self-belief and self-esteem. It also seems clear that constructive criticism is much easier to take if the student knows that their efforts or achievements are appreciated.

The system is most successful in years 8-10. It involves the awarding of merits, which are stickers or stamps. These are placed into students' homework planners by staff, particularly for either outstanding effort or excellent attainment, as measured against a professional evaluation of the student's individual capabilities - his or her personal best. Once the student has achieved three subject-specific stickers or stamps on the homework pages of the planner, this becomes a merit in the pages at the back. These add up to achieve a series of levels, starting with bronze. Students receive certificates in celebration assemblies and, if they achieve sufficient numbers, are given a reward trip or activity, for example an outing to the cinema. This system is very popular with both students and parents.

We experiment with approaches that will prove successful with older students, and have achieved varying degrees of success. One system for example is commendations that go into a 'hat' for a monthly draw in assembly; the more slips you have in the more likely you are to win. Those drawn out might receive a voucher. One Head of Year, several years ago, offered an Ipad as an end-of-year incentive. Variations on this theme have also included putting on a special lunch for year 12 students who had completed their coursework in February, and earning the right to go to the 'Formal' by having coursework complete. It seems clear that a 'well done' letter or a congratulatory postcard is also a simple yet powerfully effective form of reward.

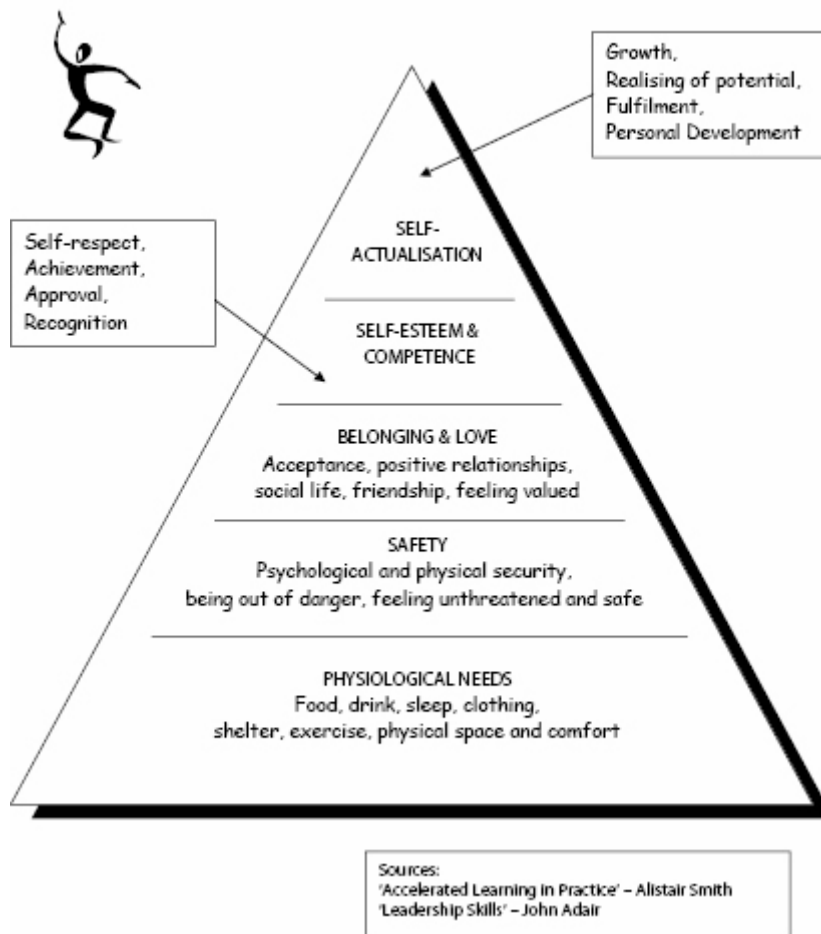
Relaxed alertness

'Relaxed alertness' is described as the optimal or ideal mental and emotional state for learning. It involves a balance of being comfortable (relaxed) and being challenged positively and stimulated (alert). If the balance tips toward being too relaxed, this results in lethargy or inertia. If too 'alert', this leads to anxiety or stress. In a state of relaxed alertness, the learner is stimulated, interested and motivated to succeed. It can also lead to what is described as 'flow' or 'being in the zone', where learners become so engrossed in their learning that time flies by unnoticed.

A key challenge for staff is to help students achieve relaxed alertness. A variety of factors can help in this:

- Ensuring that students' basic needs are met and the learning atmosphere is secure, as illustrated by Maslow's hierarchy:

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



- Helping students to learn in ways that suit their preferred learning styles – see section one of this paper.
- Providing variety and choice in teaching and learning strategies.
- Boosting students' self-esteem and motivation levels, through praise and reward – see section two of this paper.
- Providing appropriate, stimulating challenge and active, quality learning experiences, with appropriate levels of support and 'scaffolding'.
- Fundamentally, by creating a warm learning environment where students enjoy strong relationships with staff:

Three central suggestions:

1. Students learn most effectively when they want to learn.
2. Strong staff – student relationships improve motivation.
3. Mutual respect is the defining factor.

Clearly, every staff member may build constructive relationships with her or his students in varying ways. However, this complex process is likely to blend a number of the following:

- Treating each other with appropriate respect.
- Smiling.
- Humour.
- Use of students' names.
- Showing awareness of pupils' lives, interests and learning needs.
- Enabling tastes of success.
- Praise; frequent and genuine.
- Conversation.
- Consistency and fairness.
- Clear standards, expectations and boundaries.
- Making learning active and interesting.
- High challenge, low threat.
- Seeing the need, not the problem.
- Listening.
- Win – win.
- Appropriate responses to discipline issues.

Extract from 'Children's Voices on Education' (DfES & Save the Children, 2001):

What Makes a Good Teacher?

Children and young people agreed that a good teacher is:

- Child-focused
- Firm and fair
- Fun
- Enthusiastic
- Helps you understand
- Listens to you
- Doesn't humiliate or embarrass students
- Treats everyone equally.

Procedures adopted in interviewing potential members of staff – particularly the observation of teaching and interactive elements, including the participation of a panel of pupils in the process.

Too often, in the modern climate, it is tempting to see a dominant priority in recruitment processes as fear of litigation. In fact the clear, leading priority should be a desire to employ the best, most suitable candidate to care for our students and to help them learn. Avoiding litigation is of course important but must not distract. Schools - including students - pay dearly for poor recruitment decisions.

Several factors help considerably in the drive to employ the best candidate:

- The recruitment process must involve much more than an interview. Interviews are limited in their effectiveness, easy to misread and in fact may show most clearly who is best at interview performances; in fact we want the best teacher or member of staff.
- A range of tasks and situations will lead to the strongest decisions.
- In the case of teacher recruitment, it is essential to observe them teaching. The candidates are informed in advance of the class and the topic required, and are invited to prepare for this. Teaching is such a complex process that observing candidates teach is a powerful indicator of both their personal and their professional qualities.
- A requirement to prepare and deliver a presentation, to the interview panel, can also be a useful recruitment task.
- In the past, this college has regularly included a student interview panel in its recruitment procedure. This has involved:
 - Selecting responsible students, sometimes from the Student Council, to be on the panel;
 - Letting parents know in advance;
 - Training the students in the essential requirements of fair and consistent interviewing;
 - Working with the student panel in selecting their interview questions;
 - Observing the student interviews themselves;
 - Helping the students to process their notes and their views afterwards;
 - Ensuring that the formal interview panel is aware of the student panel's feedback and recommendations.

The benefits of this approach to recruitment are that it adds to the range and variety of feedback to be considered by the appointing panel. Student panels have a history of making sound recommendations. It also provides a rich learning experience for the students themselves, that will stand them in good stead in later life, and is a positive example of taking student voice seriously. It is acknowledged that not all teacher unions are comfortable with this approach to recruitment; this is under review and may in future involve observed discussions with students instead.

- Of course it is the formal interview panel which makes the final recruitment choice. In doing so they will take into account the application form, references, feedback from the lesson observations, feedback from the student panel or discussion, and the candidates' formal interview performances.
- For senior leadership positions, especially VP or principal posts, the range of recruitment strategies expands to include, for example:
 - Taking an assembly;
 - A time-limited in-tray exercise;
 - Role-play;
 - Leading a Student Council meeting;
 - An unseen, timed task after which a presentation is given to the interview panel.

In closing, may I take this opportunity to thank members of the Education Committee for undertaking this highly worthwhile enquiry? The meeting held in this college was stimulating,

and it was very encouraging to see how fully members listened and responded to the issues presented.

I look forward to reading your final report and hope it will inform educational developments in Northern Ireland. I would happily engage in further discussion if this would prove helpful to you.

With best wishes,

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Education and Library Boards Joint Summary Paper

**Northern Ireland Assembly
Education Committee**

**Inquiry into Successful Post - Primary Schools Serving
Disadvantaged Communities**

Education and Library Boards Summary Response

Wednesday 23rd February 2011

Aim and Terms of Reference:

Aim:

To consider examples of successful post-primary schools serving economically and socially disadvantaged communities, identify the key characteristics/factors which contribute to their success and consider how they can be reproduced in schools where they are lacking.

Terms of Reference:

1. Effective School Leadership

To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

2. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

3. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008), and potential measures to address this.

4. Department of Education School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

1 Effective School Leadership

'School leadership is second only to classroom teaching in terms of its influence on outcomes for pupils. Its impact is greatest in schools where pupils' learning needs are the most significant.' (NI Assembly Research and Library Service Research Paper 601)

Successful leadership in schools serving disadvantaged communities include the following characteristics.

- Ability to create a vision for the future direction of the school.
- Ability to inspire and manage teaching and non-teaching staff.
- Ability to create structures where the school can respond flexibly to those pupils who present with challenging behaviour.
- Ability to maintain staff morale.
- Ability to make staff feel supported.
- Ability to develop trust in their leadership.
- Demonstrate empathy with pupils and their families.
- Demonstrate high behavioural expectations.
- Create a culture of mutual respect.
- Develop a safe learning environment.
- Have a clear understanding of the context in which the school operates.
- Set high expectations.
- Demonstrate a belief and determination that the school can make a difference to pupil outcomes.
- Show optimism, tenacity.
- Harness support for the school.
- Willingness to distribute leadership.
- Undertake rigorous appraisals.
- Provide for CPD of staff.
- Approachable and visible.
- Courageous.
- Promote the importance of good education.
- Lead by example.
- Relentless in seeking improvement.
- Embrace change.
- Self evaluative.
- Effective planning.

Leadership needs to be demonstrated at all levels in the school. Appointment of effective leaders is critical.

Board of Governors must have a vision, expectation and aspiration combined with local knowledge.

2. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

'There is increasing recognition that schools cannot work in isolation from their Community, particularly where they serve deprived areas. A community orientated approach to schooling is viewed as important internationally, particularly with respect to helping and supporting disadvantaged communities.' (NI Assembly Research and Library Service Research Paper 601)

Key Features

- An approach which is tailor-made to the community context, attitudes, support and resources.
- Effective use of the Extended Schools Programme.
- Partnership with statutory, voluntary and community based organisations.
- Parent support programmes.
- Integrated services.
- Work with other schools – learning communities.
- Importance of parent and adult education.
- Involvement of parents and local community.
- Communication is effective with the home.
- Staff accessible to parents and the community.
- Strong link between formal curriculum and extended schools provision.

3. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

'The evidence indicates that differences in cognitive ability between children from families with higher incomes and those from less well-off families become apparent early in children's lives, even before they begin school.' (NI Assembly Research and Library Service Research Paper 601)

Key Features

- The importance of the home learning environment.
- The need to effectively address Special Educational Needs.
- Need for early intervention – address needs of boys.
- Effective transitions.
- Need to raise aspirations.
- Developing early literacy – avoiding pupils falling behind.
- Addressing needs of LAC.
- Need to take qualifications at the point of readiness – could address birth rate and maturation issues.
- Effective implementation of Northern Ireland Curriculum approaches.
- Making effective use of data and information to set appropriate targets.
- Use of mentoring programmes to support individual pupils.
- Ensure that all young people are given a voice within the school through effective consultation for a such as the School Council.
- Strong pastoral care procedures to support pupils, particularly those most vulnerable.

4. Every School A Good School - Department of Education School Improvement Policy

There is broad support for the policy which endeavours to support school improvement. There must be recognition that it takes time to embed the key messages in schools. With the high profile of using performance data as a mean of identifying the achievement levels of schools it is essential that this data is reliable, valid and robust.

The Department of Education needs to urgently establish a standard value added measure which is particularly relevant to schools operating in socially deprived areas.

There is a need for a joined up approach across departments and Arms Length Bodies to addressing the challenges within the 10 Year Strategies for Children (2006).

The process of self evaluation in schools is widely supported as an approach which should contribute to raising outcomes for pupils.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- The funding formula for schools should be reviewed to more accurately reflect the specific needs of children. There is a need to broaden the parameters particularly around indicators of disadvantage and deprivation.
- There must be a clear strategy for Early Years with a particular focus on early intervention to avoid pupils falling behind, particularly in literacy and numeracy with associated resourcing.
- There is a need for a more robust management information system to improve and monitor pupil performance.
- A more personalised approach to learning is required.
- There needs to be a more joined up cost effective delivery of services for children with shared accountability for improving outcomes.
- Extended schools investment must be maintained in relation to these schools.
- Effective leaders for schools serving socially deprived areas are critical and their appointment must reflect the particular skills and attributes outlined above which are likely to lead to improved pupil outcomes.
- Mentoring support must be available for school leaders and for Boards of Governors.
- Links with high performing schools in this context must be used to facilitate the sharing and dissemination of good practice.
- The need to be effective, resourced support programmes for parents to improve and develop the influence of the home on learning.
- The issue of education having low value in communities and amongst boys must be effectively addressed.

There is wide consensus that leadership is a key factor in ensuring that school serving socially disadvantaged areas gain success for their pupils.

Other Policies relevant to addressing underachievement are:

- Every School a Good School: A Policy for School Improvement;
- Strategy for Raising Achievement in Literacy and Numeracy;
- The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion;
- Extended Schools: schools, families, communities- working together;
- Together Towards Entitlement: Delivering the Entitlement Framework through Area-based Planning; and
- National Standards for Headteachers.

Belfast Education and Library Board

**Northern Ireland Assembly – Education Committee
Inquiry into Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged
Communities**

**Summary of main points raised (including recommendations
in bold)**

While ETI and others clearly state that a successful school is one that encourages all pupils to reach their full academic and personal potential it remains a fact that the most common measure of school performance across all phases of education is exclusively academic outcomes. At post-primary this is the percentage of pupils achieving 5 GCSEs at A-C.

Children should be assessed in regard to their well-being and learning. Their progress should be tracked throughout childhood. In order to maximise impact and break cycles of deprivation, interventions to address underachievement must be targeted at those in greatest need in early years. Pre-school education, parenting help, income support and everything that improves the home learning environment are essential components of what needs to be done if real change is to be made.

The existing analysis of data used by DE to consider school performance takes little account of "value added" or of the daily challenges faced by schools when delivering the curriculum for a high percentage of pupils from disadvantaged communities. Furthermore using free school meals as the only measure of a school's level of social deprivation is inadequate and results in some schools' performance being unfairly compared to others.

There is a need for a more robust, regional management information system to compare and monitor pupil performance while considering measures related to a pupil's home circumstances eg super output data. If correctly populated the new e-schools data warehouse has the potential to deliver a more sophisticated analysis of pupil progress and to provide more accurate information on initiatives worthy of replication across the region. It would also assist with a greater targeting of financial resources for those children in greatest need. Research evidence and experience in the board through existing initiatives clearly indicates that additional financial resources and improved pupil teacher ratios help to reduce low achievement for children from socially deprived backgrounds. The pupil premium proposed for England and Scotland is of interest.

Children's readiness for assessment varies. Those from disadvantaged backgrounds are particularly vulnerable when facing additional barriers to learning eg mild/moderate special needs and/or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and may require additional support or time to reach the same finishing point as their peers at key assessment stages.

A more personalised approach to learning is required with the potential for schools to receive funding for those with no qualifications who elect to remain in school post-16. Research indicates that pupils from disadvantaged communities are more likely to gain qualifications by remaining in school. Furthermore their presence in the school provides welcome role models for the other children.

The BELB has a great deal of experience in supporting schools and communities experiencing social disadvantage and in supporting pupils with additional needs both in and out of school. Partnerships with others and provision in mainstream and special schools is held in high regard and the city is a popular choice for parents of children with SEN from neighbouring education and library boards. However with a growing complexity of need in the population the increasing demands on some schools and services for children should not be underestimated. Too often schools express frustration at delays in accessing support for pupils from CAMHS and social services.

There needs to be a more joined up cost effective delivery of services for children with a shared responsibility for improving outcomes. Within the education sector and with other support services for children and young people across the province there is a need for some reallocation and enhancement of expenditure if equitable opportunities are to be provided for all.

Following broad experience across the city the board is committed to the school being at the heart of the community and in engaging community support to enhance learning and opportunities for all. However successful initiatives within the board eg School Liaison Groups, Communities in Schools, Parent Support Programme, Extended Schools, Full Service Community Schools, Integrated Services for Children and Young People, Achieving Belfast, have all suffered from fragmented and short term funding in initiatives where long-term planning, maintaining partnerships with other agencies and meeting shared targets proves difficult.

Partnerships with AMEY and the North Belfast Full Service Community Network could provide a blue print for the schools of the future. The board would wish to extend this model across the city and would be pleased to share lessons learned in this regard across the province.

Northern Ireland Assembly - Education Committee Inquiry into Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities

Context and Background

1. Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) is the education authority charged with providing education and school library services to schools in the Belfast area. The board provides support to over 170 schools, including nursery, primary, post-primary and special.
2. The Belfast area represents a diverse socio-economic population, including the most affluent and the most socially deprived wards in the province. The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation 2010 study ranks 890 small areas across Northern Ireland according to relative deprivation. More than half of the most deprived 100 areas lie within the Belfast Local Government District (LGD). The 9 most deprived areas are in Belfast, as are 22 of the top 30.
3. Of those schools in Northern Ireland that have 51% or more of pupils living in a neighbourhood renewal area (NRA schools), 53% of the primary schools and 65% of post-primary schools with this designation are in the BELB.
4. National research and experience within the board clearly indicates that the significant factors associated with a child's low educational achievement are eligibility for free school meals; the neighbourhood unemployment rate; the percentage of single parent households and the proportion of parents with low educational qualifications. However it should be noted that the impact of these factors varies when other issues are taken into consideration eg age, gender, ethnicity, the ability range within the school population etc.
5. Research broadly agrees that all things being equal approximately only 14% of the incidence of low educational achievement is attributable to school quality.
6. Identifying a successful school by comparison with other schools in Northern Ireland without allowing for a full analysis of the contributing variables, can result in inequitable comparisons and flawed hypothesis.
7. Northern Ireland has an unusual variety of options for parents when making their choice for their children's education; transport is provided for those pupils where the closest suitable school within their chosen category is 3 miles or more from their home, at post-primary this reduces to 2 miles. Parents with their own transport or the financial means to pay for public transport therefore (subject to available places) have a wider choice of schools.

8. Further selection impacts on school populations at transfer to post-primary where in Belfast 45% of the post-primary population is now educated within a range of grammar schools with the remaining 55% making their choice between controlled, maintained, and integrated secondary schools. It is significant that a higher percentage of children perceived as coming from a protestant background attend grammar schools thus resulting in a diminution of higher achieving pupils attending schools providing for children perceived to be from a protestant background in the controlled secondary sector.

9. In educational research carried out in Northern Ireland the most widely used measure of educational disadvantage remains eligibility for free school meals (FSM). This, while accepted as a useful broad indicator of social deprivation, is not sufficiently robust for comparing educational achievement across different populations. It neglects to allow for the differing impact of highly significant variables on educational outcomes for children within the FSM population, eg the neighbourhood unemployment rate; the percentage of single parent households; the proportion of parents with low educational qualifications and their ability to support education at home, gender, performance range and social mix within the school population etc. It is likely therefore, that many of the correlations relating to pupil/school performance across schools in the region (when using FSM as an indicator of need) may be flawed, and as such any resultant hypothesis should be interpreted with caution.

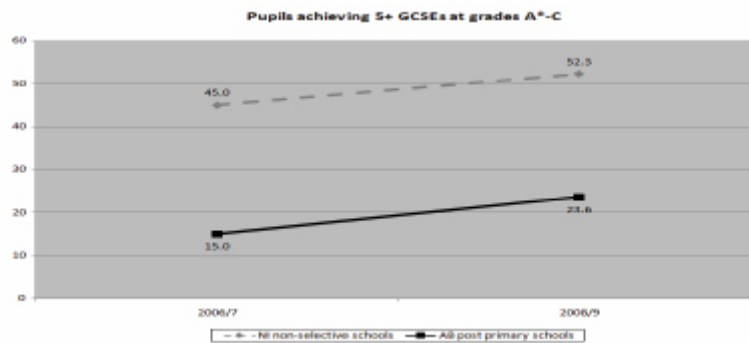
10. While it is recognised that a "successful" school encourages children to reach their full academic and personal potential it remains a fact that the most common measures of school performance remains the percentage of pupils achieving 5 GCSEs at A–C. Without negating the importance of examination results for achieving future employment there is a need for a more robust regional management information system to inform future analysis and to make meaningful comparisons across schools in regard to their success, including performance in limiting the extent of low achievement. The new e-schools data warehouse, if properly populated, should have the potential to deliver a more accurate analysis of initiatives that are having an impact on low achieving pupils. Without this, important messages regarding what can make a difference may be missed and some schools may continue to be unfairly judged and stigmatised.

11. In order to address low educational achievement within the city the BELB launched its Learning Strategy (2003) to provide a clear direction in implementing government policy related to raising educational standards. This, followed by Best Value reviews of Literacy and Behaviour and the implementation of their resultant recommendations in partnership with schools, their local communities and other providers, led to the development of a high level of expertise at board, school and community level in serving disadvantaged communities and raising achievement for pupils in Belfast.

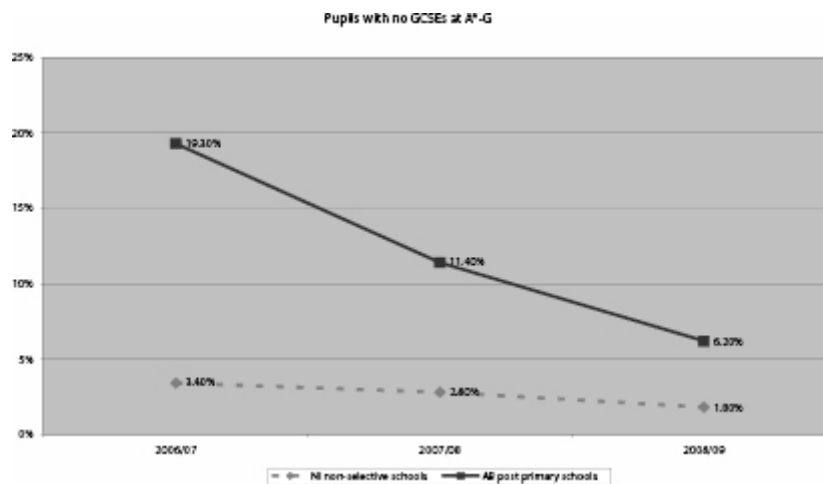
12. The issue of educational underachievement in areas of inner Belfast was further highlighted by the Public Accounts Committee in 2006. Following this, the BELB undertook an intensive programme of evaluation and research, involving study visits to the London Challenge, liaising with educational researchers (notably Sir Tim Brighouse and Professor Alan Dyson) and extensive statistical analysis of patterns in achievement. Working closely with the DE, the board devised a long-term improvement programme, Achieving Belfast (AB) which built upon existing initiatives. The Achieving Belfast programme, implemented in 18 Belfast schools since early 2008, was premised on the need to tackle both the underlying causes and the symptoms of underachievement.

13. Achieving Belfast, along with the full-service schools' provision in North and West Belfast, has been closely monitored since its outset, both by the board and by external quality assurance. This process has been hugely informative for the BELB in terms of the nature and complexity of the challenges being met by schools and of the most effective ways of addressing these. In

particular, it has shown that a school-based improvement programme alone can have significant short to medium term impact on pupil achievement (see illustration).



14. The following graph indicates how the gap between general performance (all subjects) at GCSE of the Achieving Belfast schools and that of other schools has narrowed since they entered the Achieving Belfast programme.



15. The potential for closing the gap with other schools remains dependent on addressing pupils' wider social, emotional, behavioural and health and wellbeing needs. To do so, for the benefit of all pupils, would require consistent access to and application of joined up, targeted support programmes. To meet this need, which exists across a very significant proportion of Belfast schools, there are implications for policy makers at government, community and local administration levels. These policy issues are discussed elsewhere in this response.

16. The full service schools approach in North Belfast is an example of how education providers and the community can work together. This Public, Private Partnership initiative with AMEY has ensured high quality buildings and offer opportunities beyond the school day for the wider community as well as high quality learning environments built around meeting the needs of the whole pupil. In 2 of the schools in North Belfast, a full-service extended schools approach has resulted in partnerships with health and social services where the school buildings are used for community clinics, crèches, nurseries, and evening classes for parents and others within the local community, including ICT, parenting, sporting activities and health promotion. The school has become the centre of the community with a variety of local organisations accessing the facilities available out of school hours resulting in a successful community-coherence model.

The Current Situation within BELB Schools, 2010

17. The performance of pupils in all school phases in Belfast is improving at a faster rate than across Northern Ireland as a whole.

18. Social disadvantage continues to be the factor which has the most detrimental impact on pupil outcomes.

19. There is a distinct difference in the achievement of boys and girls, with girls outperforming boys in all subjects but particularly in those with a high literacy component. This pattern is not unexpected and is replicated across all countries which participated in the recent PISA report.

20. The impact of gender difference is magnified in non-selective post-primary schools and reduced in grammar schools.

21. The board recognises the pressures placed on some schools where the current level of funding is insufficient to meet the needs of pupils in the manner that they would wish. It is noteworthy that within the current funding formula from the DE, during 2009/2010 the BELB received the smallest proportion of the education budget within the 5 education and library boards for SEN funding. It is felt that the high level of need for additional support for children and young people in the city is not realistically reflected in the current proportion of SEN funding to either the BELB or to schools. The indicator for calculating the allocated SEN budget for the board is pupil numbers with a limited allocation for social deprivation. The board would suggest that this indicators of need should be reconsidered.

22. Elsewhere in the UK there is more focused funding for TSN in recognition of the additional costs associated in providing equitable educational opportunities for children from socially deprived backgrounds. The proposed "pupil premium" in England and Scotland is of interest. Within the education sector and other support services for children and young people across the province there is a need for some reallocation and enhancement of expenditure if equitable opportunities are to be provided for all.

Effective School Leadership

To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

23. Key school leadership qualities have been well documented elsewhere eg Together Towards Improvement (DE, revised Sept 2010) and Every School A Good School (DE, April 2009). It is fair to say that these attributes and more, are required to successfully lead a post-primary school catering for high percentages of pupils experiencing social deprivation and manage the resultant impact on the pupils and wider school community.

24. Those who appear to be particularly successful in serving disadvantaged communities include those with the ability to inspire and manage the teaching and non-teaching staff to create structures where the school can respond flexibly to those pupils who present with often highly challenging behaviour in response to difficult circumstances in their lives rather than depending on a rigid adherence to 'rules'. Maintaining staff morale and avoiding staff feeling unsupported/undermined in this environment requires a great deal of trust in the leadership. It also requires the principal to lead by example and have a physical presence around the school/community - not in a threatening 'you're being watched' manner but conveying to pupils and staff, 'I'm interested in you and what's happening in our school'. They will be visible at all school and many community events. It is noticeable that leaders in this position have well developed social skills and excellent communication skills, particularly the ability to relate well to others regardless of their position or background.

25. Pupils from disadvantaged communities demonstrate high levels of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties that if not managed skilfully can quickly overwhelm the school and undermine the teaching and learning. Successful leaders demonstrate empathy in regard to the life experiences of the pupils and their families while demonstrating high behavioural expectations and creating a culture of mutual respect resulting in a safe learning environment.

26. A clear understanding of the context in which their schools operate and a belief and determination that the school can make a difference to pupil outcomes requires optimism, tenacity and commitment to engage with the local community on a personal level, at times in very difficult circumstances, to harness support for the work of the school and to promote the value placed on education. Successful leaders are also aware of factors likely to have a negative impact on the school community sooner rather than later and are proactive in putting measures in place to alleviate potential difficulties.

27. While leadership is a contributing factor in successful schools, this is not just at the level of headship but should permeate throughout the school in a distributed way at heads of department, year head and at classroom level where all key post holders have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and are held responsible for their actions. The staff working under this style of leadership feels a sense of ownership, there is a good teamwork and collective responsibility, with creative suggestions from staff listened to and adopted if thought appropriate. It is helpful when the Board of Governors also have the vision, expectation and aspiration combined with local knowledge to share the leadership role in setting the standard. The appointment of effective leaders at all levels to create and support a clear management structure is particularly important to the development of successful schools working with socially disadvantaged pupils.

28. Some schools, even with strong leadership, may not succeed because of regional or local area problems, eg a declining population can result in more able pupils accessing grammar school places resulting in a diminution of the secondary post primary school population. In the BELB 45% of the post-primary population now attend grammar schools.

School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents, guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to schools success and how this has benefited the wider community.

29. Given the concerns already expressed about the difficulty in comparing like with like in schools, when replicating successful practice from one school to another it is reasonable to say that within Belfast experience has been that much good practice has been "tailor-made" reflecting the needs and existing resources within the school and in cognizance of community attitudes, support and resources.

30. The Extended Schools programme works in collaboration and partnership with neighbouring schools and with a range of statutory, voluntary and community based organisations to deliver services and activities which support and motivate children and young people to achieve their full potential. A core aim of the programme is to provide schools with the flexibility to design creative responses to barriers to learning, in order to raise standards of achievement.

31. The leadership and vision provided by the principal and staff is crucial to the success of the extended school in helping to identify the specific needs of pupils, parents and the wider community. The Extended Schools policy encourages schools to benefit from making external links and to establish effective partnerships with other statutory services such as health, the

youth sector and local voluntary and community organisations that also work closely with families and children.

32. The Extended Schools programme provides a unique opportunity to blur the lines between school, home and community so that the school can extend its ability to positively influence and support children and their families. The programme has been an important catalyst for enhancing collaboration to deliver integrated services and this has significant benefits for both schools and community schools are perceived more clearly as part of the community, they are now accessible outside of school hours and provide a wide range of support services and activities for children, their parents and the wider community. Pupils have benefited from the experience of a wide range of adults outside the traditional school environment, supporting and encouraging them and sharing their different perspectives and expertise to raise pupil aspirations. Schools have also been impacting on community identity through a range of cultural diversity and cross community programmes.

33. The Extended Schools cluster model provides an effective framework for schools to work with key stakeholders for shared outcomes. Designated interagency planning days involving key statutory, voluntary and community based organisations, ensure area based planning with clear and shared outcomes is a priority. The benefits of cluster working has been well documented and the sharing of information, networking and synergy of an integrated approach cannot be underestimated. The schools report that the development of effective cluster working has increased their knowledge and networking ability to access the most appropriate services for the pupils and their families and that clustering maximises the potential for transformation of local communities.

34. Parent support programmes are facilitated for schools by the board's parenting officer and at the moment at an individual family level through Integrated Services for Children and Young People (ISCYP) in the Shankill and West Belfast. Schools involved have reported improved relationships with parents and improved attendance at events in the school. With parental attitudes to education considered fundamental to educational achievement, initiatives needs to be long term - to build up a community's support for education and raise the value placed on the benefits it can bring.

35. Unfortunately funding for school parenting support workers to develop programmes tailored to meet the needs of the school tend to be short-term particularly in the primary sector

36. BELB with Health Action Zone and the Integrated Services for Children and Young People Project has piloted developing and providing Integrated Services for Children and Young People (ISCYPS). The services focus on learner support, early years, parent support and health and well-being for communities in Shankill and the West. This innovative, bottom-up model, in partnership with community and statutory providers including health, education, youth justice and mental health services is in its third year of delivery. Some positive messages are emerging.

37. The Full Service Community Network in North Belfast is a good example of how education/school and community can work together. This Public, Private Partnership initiative with AMEY has ensured high quality buildings which are fit for purpose and offer opportunities beyond the school day for the whole community in addition to providing high quality learning environments built around meeting the needs of the whole pupil, including educational, social and recreational opportunities.

38. In 2 of the schools in North Belfast, a full-service extended schools approach has resulted in partnerships with health and social services whereby the school buildings are used for community clinics, crèches, nurseries, and evening classes for parents and others within the local community, including ICT, parenting, sporting activities and health promotion. The school has

become the centre of the community with a variety of local organisations accessing the facilities available out of school hours resulting in a successful community-coherence model and placing the school at the centre of the community

Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of Underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys and potential measure to address this.

39. Low achievement is strongly - but not universally - associated with disadvantage. It works in various ways some of them connected with poverty itself and its attendant stresses eg poor housing, nutrition health and social class. Research broadly agrees that all things being equal approximately only 14% of the incidence of low educational achievement is attributable to school quality.

40. Performance outcomes highlight that the achievement of boys, at all key stages, lags behind the performance of girls. This pattern is most notable in English and subjects with high literacy components. In mathematics, although there is a performance gap, it is much less pronounced.

BELB 2009 outcomes	Girls	Boys	Difference
KS2 English at Level 4 or above	77.1%	67.8%	9.3%
KS2 Maths at Level 4 or above	76.9%	72.2%	4.7%

41. While schools are left to address the symptoms of low achievement they are unable in most cases to address the cause when it is a result, in the main, of factors associated with social deprivation. Research has highlighted that a key factor associated with low achievement is the "home learning environment" including the amount that parents read to their children, the number of books in the home and the degree to which parents support their children's education both in and out of school.

42. Some low achievement is a likely result of a child experiencing special educational needs (SEN) In cases of more complex special educational needs the board will provide any additional resources as identified in the statement. (Stage 5 of the Code) Schools are normally responsible for providing any additional support at stages for children at stages 1-4 of the Code. . There are high numbers of children within the BELB who would be described as having mild special educational needs but who do not meet the criteria for a statement i.e. their needs should be met by resources normally available within the school. However it is widely recognised that any form of learning difficulty, when experienced by children who also experience social deprivation, is much less responsive to normal intervention, and more likely to increase in severity throughout the child's education often resulting in low achievement and disaffection. Post-primary schools in Belfast have worked closely with the primary feeder schools to support early intervention policies and transitions. However there is no doubt that there are high numbers of pupils in the BELB who are at risk of low achievement.

Additional risk factors for low achievement include:

(a) Low aspiration for educational achievement

Being brought up in a household where no family member has one or more educational qualifications and where education is not valued significantly increases the risk of a child having low achievement. The BELB Parenting initiative among others has worked hard at trying to promote parents involvement in their children's education

(b) Gender and delayed learning readiness

In 2002 the gender differences with girls out performing boys particularly in reading and literacy led to discussions with early years practitioners. In particular the boys and to a lesser extent girls, demonstrated significantly delayed levels of speech and language. These concerns were addressed in the development of a more hands on, needs led "enriched curriculum" promoting learning readiness. At post-primary programmes specifically designed to target boys have been adopted by many schools.

(c) Pupil population

A significant observation made by QUB as part of the evaluation of the revised curriculum, and as evidenced elsewhere, was that a higher than average number of children with low achievement in the class resulted in a detrimental impact on the achievement of all the children in the class.

(d) Date of birth at entry to education

There is clear evidence within the BELB that boys who have their birthdays in May and June are more likely to experience SEN throughout their education when compared to their male peers born earlier in the year prior to starting school and who therefore are more mature on school entry.

(e) Literacy difficulties

In relation to pupil performance, research has identified that when children are living in social deprivation there is a strong correlation between long-term literacy difficulties at post-primary and those who struggle to acquire literacy in early years, i.e. these particular children do not easily "catch up." A Best Value Review of Literacy in a Learning City was undertaken in order to harness support, better understand and target the low levels of literacy within the BELB. Since then, through the literacy team, linguistic phonics has been introduced in BELB schools and a major investment in promoting language development through the COMET project in early years is also well established in collaboration with speech and language services, BHSCT. In the primary sector targeted schools in the Achieving Belfast programme receive additional resources to assist with children's language development in an attempt to reduce low achievement in literacy. While these initiatives are very well received and are making a pleasing and significant difference to attainments, the board is aware that tackling deep seated literacy difficulties is a long term and complex task that requires support from government departments and initiatives from beyond the education sector.

(f) Pupils with lower ability/mild SEN

There is much anecdotal evidence that those with less complex SEN (eg mild enough not to require a statement of SEN but severe enough to place them well outside the measured 5 GCSE at A-C level) fail to get their needs met in a climate where schools feel under pressure to focus on their more able pupils in order to achieve a grade C, GCSE. The board has recently provided all schools within the city with a common diagnostic reading test in order to improve the monitoring of the attainments of pupils with SEN and particularly those with mild/moderate

learning difficulties. Additional teaching support is provided by the board to all controlled and maintained primary and secondary schools. This support is for those pupils with literacy attainments generally falling within the lowest 2% of the population

(g) Looked After Children (LAC)

More than half of all LAC children in NI reside in the Eastern Health Board Area. Underachievement and high levels of need have been identified for this population. The board in partnership with BHSCT has joined up and pooled resources to create a small team to monitor progress of the LAC and to provide support teaching as and when necessary. Early results from this multi agency approach are positive and should be extended.

(h) Late maturity

Many schools have raised concerns about the maturity levels of pupils sitting exams at specified times rather than when they are ready – particularly those who wish to stay post-16 but who do not qualify for AWPU funding due to their low attainments. Research has already demonstrated that disadvantaged young people are much more likely to achieve GCSEs by staying on at school than by accessing further education (FE) elsewhere. In addition the much needed positive male role models provided by post-16 pupils electing to continue their studies enhance the school environment. A more personalised approach to learning is required across all stages in a child's education.

Mixed Ability Opportunities

43. Given the research evidence on the negative impact on a class where the majority of children have lower achievement the opportunity for children to attend schools within other sectors through area learning communities is welcomed.

DE School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy ESGS and other relevant DE policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the DE.

Every School a Good School (ESAGS)

44. The board fully implements and supports the DE policy initiatives designed to impact on school improvement. We would however contend that it has taken some time for the key messages in Every School a Good School to be assimilated and for schools to recognise that the Together Towards Improvement document is part of the tool kit to achieve the objectives that result in positive school categories following inspection reports. The board welcomes the recommendations on community and parental engagement and involvement outlined in ESAGS as they are particularly relevant to schools in the Belfast area. However it should be noted, that as in raising the performance of pupils, for some schools engaging parents and the local community is a very complex task to achieve and it presents additional challenges in the absence of targeted funding.

Counting What Counts

45. Given that schools are now operating in a culture of performance data there are real concerns expressed that the staff feel obliged to focus on those children most likely to achieve. There are lessons to be learned from England where literacy standards have dropped over the last 10 years in spite of the availability of additional funding. Any system which only measures

performance at the top of the scale is at risk of further disadvantaging the lower achieving children and young people. The board would wish to see regional targets for reducing low achievement and a more personalised approach to learning.

46. The Child Poverty Act 2010 enacted on the 25 March 2010 places a statutory obligation on the NI Executive to develop a child poverty strategy by March 2011. One of the 2 key strands of work emerging is "to promote longer term outcomes through child based interventions which are designed to tackle the cyclical nature of child poverty." Experience in BELB indicates that while the needs of our most able pupils are well met within the current school provision, there remain a very significant number of pupils who do not necessarily have SEN that would meet criteria for statutory assessment, but who have a number of challenges and impediments to achieving educational success due to factors outside the control of the education sector and are in the main related to poverty. Schools that cater for high numbers of pupils in this category should be provided with the funding and additional staffing required to ensure that the pupil's needs are met in the most appropriate way. In particular, it has been noted through programmes such as ISCYP, Communities in Schools and Achieving Belfast, that access to additional adults as mentors, role models or learning support, particularly when this involves the local community, can have a noticeable impact on young people's attitudes, motivation and educational success. Educational research supports the view that resources make a difference; surveys across the UK sponsored by the Rowantree Foundation confirm a significant reduction in low achievement when there is enhanced funding per pupil and a higher adult to pupil ratio in the school.

Targeted, Integrated and Monitored Support

47. The 10 Year Strategy for Children (2006) highlights the need for a consistent and integrated approach to provision for children's health and wellbeing and for their educational achievement. We would reinforce the need for relevant departments to have a consistent approach to devising policy and for an integrated approach to be planned, implemented and monitored at government, administration and front-line levels. Any initiatives to raise achievement should be undertaken from birth. Pre-school education, parenting help, income support and everything which improves the home learning environment are essential components of what needs to be done if real change is to be made. Children's needs should be assessed before they enter formal education. Their early learning and well being requirements should be recorded and addressed in a coherent manner by all bodies in support of young children. Close monitoring of progress in learning should lead, without delay, to access to the appropriate support mechanisms, at the child's level, regardless of the provider agency.

48. A government led policy on information sharing across all services in issues relating to children's needs is also required if we are to avoid delay and duplication in the system. Streamlined, seamless and timely support is particularly relevant in addressing the learning needs of boys who reside in areas of high social deprivation, for example speech and language support, literacy support and support in addressing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Conclusion

49. The funding formula for schools should be reassessed to reflect more accurately the specific needs of children. While helpful as a broad indicator of need, free school meals (FSM) entitlement alone is an inadequate measure of need in calculating funding for schools through LMS. Other indicators of disadvantage such as the neighbourhood unemployment rate, the percentage of single parent households and the proportion of parents with low educational qualifications, are recognised as being statistically associated with low achievement. The current funding formula, based on FSM, is not sufficiently weighted to address the additional workload generated or the resources needed to engage children and young people with high levels of need and/or the costs associated with providing equitable educational opportunities.

50. The new e-schools data warehouse, if properly populated, should have the potential to deliver a more "value added" and accurate analysis of initiatives that are having an impact on the achievement of all pupils. Without this, important messages regarding what can make a difference may be missed and some schools will continue to be unfairly judged and stigmatised. In the current climate, it is essential that any funding for interventions to raise achievement are based on robust research based evidence.

51. The proposed "pupil premium" in England and Scotland is of interest. Within education and other support services for children across the province there is a need for some reallocation and enhancement of expenditure.

Research References

Throughout the document there are many references to research evidence. In the main all references can be found in Tackling Low Education Achievement, 2007, Professor Robert Cassen, Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, London School of Economics, and Dr Geeta Kingdon, Department of Educations, Oxford University.

This research, funded by Joseph Rowntree Foundation sought to unravel the large number of factors associated with low achievement particularly in white working class boys in order to better influence policy and practice in education.

The authors' findings are set in the context of a full survey of other educational research, and of public documents from the DfES, OFSTED and many other bodies. Although the data presented relates to children and young people in England, given the wide range of research examined and cross references, it is reasonable to conclude that the findings and recommendations are in the main transferable into the Northern Ireland context. The committee members may find this a helpful document. A full version of the research can be viewed at www.jrf.org.uk.

North Eastern Education & Library Board (NEELB)

Northern Ireland Assembly

Education Committee

Submission by North Eastern Education and Library Board

December 2010

Inquiry into Successful Post-Primary Schools serving Disadvantaged Areas

Aim:

"To consider examples of successful post-primary schools serving economically and socially disadvantaged communities, identify the key characteristics/factors which contribute to their success and consider how they can be reproduced in schools where they are lacking".

Introduction

This submission is on behalf of the North Eastern Education and Library Board.

While the Board is the Employing Authority for Controlled schools in the following nine District Council areas; Antrim, Ballymena, Ballymoney, Carrickfergus, Coleraine, Larne, Magherafelt, Moyle and Newtownabbey it is also responsible for the provision of professional development support for teachers in all school management types within its area (which includes all maintained, voluntary grammar, integrated and Irish Medium schools) .

This submission is based on long and extensive experience of working with schools serving disadvantaged areas.

The views expressed in this submission are based on a careful analysis of actual examples, as identified by pupil outcomes and Education and Training Inspectorate reports, of work in schools serving disadvantaged areas. It therefore draws upon real experience of supporting high performance in such circumstances and identified three key characteristics:

- Effective School Leadership
- School engagement with parents and the wider community
- Addressing underachievement in disadvantaged communities.

1 Effective School Leadership

- It is our experience that Principals in the schools we identify as successful schools serving disadvantaged areas have a clear vision for the future direction of the school which is shared by all the stakeholders.
- They continually re-visit the vision which is achieved through the process of School Development Planning.
- A knowledgeable and committed Board of Governors who is aware of their responsibilities is a factor towards effective school leadership.
- A Principal who is willing to distribute leadership to leaders at all levels in the school, delegate responsibility, is open to ideas and encourages staff to take on responsibility and builds collegiality among the whole school community. In these circumstances the Principal leads and encourages by setting and promoting through example, an ethos of mutual respect at all levels and with all stakeholders.
- High expectations are set by the Principal for all aspects of the pupils experience in school.
- Continuous professional development of staff appropriate to the needs of the school and the individual is encouraged and facilitated, with opportunities to share and implement new knowledge and skills gained amongst other colleagues.
- The Principal is approachable and visible on a day-to-day basis to all stakeholders.
- Effective school leaders are aware of the schools strengths and weaknesses and demonstrate courage in identifying and tackling priorities for development, supported by a strong senior leadership team with clear roles and responsibilities and targets for attainment.

2 School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

An appreciation of the important role that parents and the wider community contribute to the life of the school helps promote the success of the school.

- These schools seek to take advantage of every opportunity to develop community links and engage with external agencies for the purpose of improving the educational outcomes for all their pupils.
- They engage with other schools in their area in developing learning communities to maximise choice and learning opportunities for their pupils.
- Importance is placed on the provision of adult education classes for parents/carers.

- The involvement of parents and the business community in supporting pupils through reading support, mentoring and careers education are all factors contributing to the success of schools serving disadvantaged areas.

3 Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

The main causes of underachievement are evidenced by poor teaching and/or ineffective leadership at all levels in the school, low expectations, lack of parental support, mismatched curriculum offer, lack of performance data analysis and monitoring pupil progress, inadequate SEN provision, the lack of pastoral support and poor attendance.

- In contrast successful schools have implemented fully the Revised Curriculum, with its child centred focus, which encompasses a variety of teaching and learning strategies with a clear focus on assessment for learning.
- Successful Schools make use of all of the performance data that is available to enable them to set challenging but realistic targets for pupils' at all key stages at individual pupil and group level. These targets are shared with pupils and parents. Continuous monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress improves outcomes.
- Pupils that have been identified as having Special Educational Needs are provided with effective provision both at an individual level and across the school with the use of Individual Educational Plans and where necessary through the statementing process.
- Successful schools have mentoring programmes in place to support pupils at risk of underachievement.
- Early intervention systems are used to address poor attendance.
- The curriculum is appropriate and relevant to the needs of pupils in the 21st Century.
- Access to a wide range of courses is facilitated through membership of the learning communities.
- All pupils are given a voice within the school in decisions that affect them through for example through the setting up of School Councils.
- Outstanding pastoral care policies are evidenced in practice and a clear support system is in place for vulnerable and at risk pupils for example through additional counselling.

Successful schools serving disadvantaged areas implement DE policy appropriately.

Reproducing the Key Characteristics in Less Successful Schools

- Effective leadership established through appointment of school leaders who possess the particular skills, as outlined above , to lead schools serving disadvantaged areas
- Existing leaders should have access to mentoring support
- Build capacity within the Board of Governors
- Build capacity to raise standards through high quality learning and teaching
- Promote effective school self-evaluation and improvement
- Partner successful with less successful schools for the purpose of sharing good practice and provision of peer support
- Establish robust value added measures to assess pupil progress and impact of the school provision

Enquiries regarding this submission should be addressed to;

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South Eastern Education & Library Board (SEELB)

Inquiry into Successful Post Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Areas
Response by the South Eastern Education and Library Board

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Preface

This response is made on behalf of the South Eastern Education and Library Board.

One of the many services provided by the Board is the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service (CASS). This service is made up of a variety of professional officers, all of whom have teaching and other education/leadership experience. Their role is to advise and support schools in all matters relating to school development planning, self evaluation, target-setting, teaching and learning.

CASS has extensive experience of working with post primary schools in disadvantaged areas. Experience and evidence gained from Department of Education initiatives like 'Raising School Standards Initiative' have helped to inform the response. More recently implementation of the

DE Literacy and Numeracy Strategy and the 'Every School a Good School (ESAGS) Policy' has provided further evidence and re-affirmed our understanding of what contributes to success in these schools.

Specific examples are referred to in this response, however schools names have been omitted. Details about specific schools can be provided with permission from those schools involved.

A number of recommendations are included at the end of the document. Some of these relate closely to aspects outlined in the ESAGS policy .

Key Characteristics/factors contributing to success

1.1 Effective School Leadership

There is much research available which highlights the direct link between effective school leadership and successful schools. However, it is important to note that success can be measured in many ways. The educational experiences/opportunities provided for children should be wide ranging.

The most effective Principals we have seen and worked with provide visionary leadership. They exhibit high emotional intelligence and a passion and commitment to developing positive working relationships with the staff, pupils and parents.

They have a high regard for the importance of a good education and they continually strive to convey this to staff, pupils and parents.

These Principals lead by example. They encourage and promote positive attitudes and self belief amongst the staff. They respect and trust staff and delegate responsibility while also ensuring accountability. This 'distributed' leadership creates a dynamic which helps to promote a very positive 'learning' environment for teachers and most importantly pupils.

1.2 Effective School Management

From a management perspective these schools are well run. The principals adopt a collaborative, consultative approach towards school development planning involving all relevant stakeholders – governors, staff, pupils and parents. Policies, procedures, roles and responsibilities are clear and appropriate financial management takes place.

There is a clear focus on improvement with effective monitoring and evaluation strategies in place. These principals have a good relationship with their governors who along with the staff are strong advocates for the school within the local and wider community. There are also good relationships with other organisations, for example, through Extended Schools or other extra curricular provision.

The Principals have a strong commitment to staff development. They have clear development priorities and enable staff to access support, advice and training from CASS and/or other providers as necessary.

2.1 School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

In the successful schools parents are continually encouraged to be involved in and support of their children's education. Communication between school and home is regular. The Principal and other 'key' staff are accessible to parents. Where pupils are identified as 'at risk' of

underachieving appropriate staff will meet with parents to discuss how both can work together to help the pupils achieve their potential.

2.2 Extended Schools

A number of SEELB schools in disadvantaged communities are also involved in the Extended Schools programme. The programme has been very successful in providing opportunities for further engagement with parents and the wider community.

In one school a significant proportion of their 'extended schools' funding is used to open the school to the community until 9.00pm every week night and Saturdays. As well as use of facilities, including a state of the art Gymnasium which is open to the wider community, the school also runs evening classes for adults. The school has also recently introduced a home school link officer (part-time) who targets a small number of pupils/families for support. Referrals are usually made when a drop in attendance or attainment are noted by school staff.

In the most successful schools there is a strong link between the school 'formal' curriculum and the 'extended' provision.

3.1 Tackling Underachievement in Disadvantaged areas

It is widely recognised in these schools that a major barrier to learning relates to poor literacy levels. Pupils need to have a reading age of 12+ year or equivalent in order to be able to access GCSE examinations. Consequently there is a major focus on Reading in the junior school with additional time allocated for English/Literacy.

Year 8 pupils are baselined using standardised tests – often NFER Progress in English 11. Pupils who are identified as underachieving are then provided with additional support in order to improve their literacy skills.

3.2 Case study - Literacy

The nature of the additional support varies. However, in one school all year 8 pupils are given a phonics training programme. Underachieving pupils are then withdrawn for sessions with specialist intervention teachers. A literacy support teacher and classroom assistant has been trained to provide Reading Partnership Individual 1-1 support for pupils from Years 8 and 9. The lowest achieving children are taught by a specialist phonics teacher who is also withdrawn from timetable for a few hours/week to do one to one work with pupils.

Teachers of English have been trained in various literacy interventions (in keeping with the Literacy Strategy) in order to provide literacy teaching for all pupils. Interventions are monitored and evaluated regularly and necessary adjustments are made to meet the needs of the pupils.

3.3 Case study – Whole school approaches

The most successful schools will also adjust 'whole' school approaches to 'Literacy' to work in parallel with 'targeted' programmes. For example in another school the Special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) identified groups of students in Year 12 who needed additional support for GCSE subjects. The school started a mentoring programme to provide after school classes across all curricular areas. All departments engaged in professional dialogue sharing opportunities to improve literacy/communication across the curriculum. Each department identified 'key words' for inclusion in a Key Words Booklet. These were prioritised on a rotational basis and re-enforced in English classes as appropriate. Through sharing good practice in this way all teachers are now

taking responsibility for literacy across the curriculum and Heads of Department are collaborating with the English department and Literacy Co-ordinator for confirmation of materials.

In these schools similar types of programmes are in place to address poor 'numeracy' levels, although the impact on pupil learning across the curriculum is much greater if pupils have poor Literacy levels.

4.1 Department of Education School Improvement Policy

In these schools the six key areas of the ESAGS policy are being addressed successfully. The leadership and management of these schools are embracing the requirements of the policy focussing very clearly on school self evaluation as a means of identifying priorities for further improvement.

Performance data is used effectively to identify underachievement and apply appropriate interventions. Pupil achievement is tracked from year to year and each subject department sets out appropriate targets for their pupils.

There is a strong emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and learning, underpinned by effective leadership (at all levels) and an ethos of aspiration and high achievement.

4.2 Case study – Implementing The Revised Curriculum

In one of our schools The Revised Curriculum (Key Stage 3) has been successfully implemented with a focus on the centrality of assessment for learning practices and the use of formative feedback.

Research has shown (Black and Wiliam - Inside the Black Box) that formative assessment has a huge effect on learning quality.

With advice and support from CASS this school involved all staff in Assessment for Learning workshops which centred around self and peer assessment, formative feedback and effective questioning. Teachers shared practice, videoed classroom practice, engaged in detailed action based research and drew up departmental action plans with appropriate quality indicators/success criteria.

Further, the school reviewed classroom strategies and introduced more active learning and skills based approaches. This was particularly effective for boys who respond and learn better by 'doing'.

Underpinning the schools work on improving teaching and learning was an emphasis on whole school action planning and self evaluation. This work has also provided a focus for Performance Review Staff Development (PRSD) with all teachers carrying out action based research in one area of 'assessment for learning'.

Recommendations

- Earmarked funding needs to be available to ensure pupils literacy needs are addressed – hence ensuring appropriate access to the opportunities presented by the post primary curriculum
- Targeted provision to help parents to support learning in the home with a focus on literacy and to include the use of ICT

- Review of multi–agency provision to ensure that education and other services available to schools are contributing in a 'coherent' and 'unified' way to address underachievement , for example ELB support, CCMS, CNaG, Social Services, Extended School Programmes, Youth Service, DSD Neighbourhood Renewal, Counselling Services
- CASS Literacy advice and support to enable schools to identify the most appropriate intervention strategies – drawing on examples of good practice from other schools in similar circumstances
- CASS support and advice to Principals to help them build leadership capacity within and throughout their schools
- CASS to support, advise and challenge Principals/Schools when there is evidence of underachievement - and to ensure that improvement plans are appropriate and fit for purpose.

Southern Education & Library Board (SELB)

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Committee for Education

Inquiry into Successful Post - Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Areas

The Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Education is undertaking an Inquiry into 'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'.

The aim of the Inquiry is:

"To consider examples of successful post-primary schools serving economically and socially disadvantaged communities, identify the key characteristics/factors which contribute to their success and consider how they can be reproduced in schools where they are lacking."

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A. Rationale for selection

St Paul's High School Bessbrook

The choice of school was based on the following factors:

1. % FSM which is over 25% (31% for 4 year average 2004-2008)
2. Benchmarking data based on the 5A*-C figure including English and Mathematics
3. The Multiple Deprivation Measure figures according to NISRA

B. Sources of Information

Comments in *Italics* are taken directly from 2008 Standard Inspection of the School by ETI.

Performance Data: Taken from Information sent to SELB from DE "Post-Primary Non-Grammar Data 2006/7-2008/9"

All other comments are based on working knowledge of school and environment in which it operates.

Terms of Reference

1. Effective School Leadership

To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

The Principal and SMT provide outstanding leadership. The Principal is a visionary and inspiring leader, his management ensures the best possible provision for the pupils with a strong focus on enabling them to make a valuable contribution to their community. The long serving and very able curricular Vice-principal and the effective senior leadership team support the Principal very well. Through collegial management, they use their various skills well to bring an informed and balanced approach to school development planning and improvement. The Principal encourages and empowers all of the staff to develop professionally and builds their capacity to support and sustain the outstanding quality of senior leadership and management. The self-evaluation and school development planning processes are well embedded at all levels to the benefit of the pupils. The excellent school development plan is informed by a rigorous analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. The plan takes account of the external and internal factors which impact on the school's work and meets fully the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.

2. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

St Paul's is a specialist school for science and has established many links with primary schools in the area. In addition they are a member of Newry ALC involved in collaborations with other post-primary schools and with the Southern Regional College. Additional information on the extent of the collaborations with the wider community and other schools can be found on the school website.

3. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008), and potential measures to address this.

From the Report from a Standard Inspection 2008 the following comments are worth noting:

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is outstanding. This is demonstrated through the positive working relationships at all levels, the cognisance taken of the individual needs of the pupils and the inclusive and supportive ethos throughout the school. The Vice-principal in charge of pastoral care supported ably by the pastoral team, provides effective leadership and has developed a strong collegial approach to the provision in this area.

3a Performance Data:

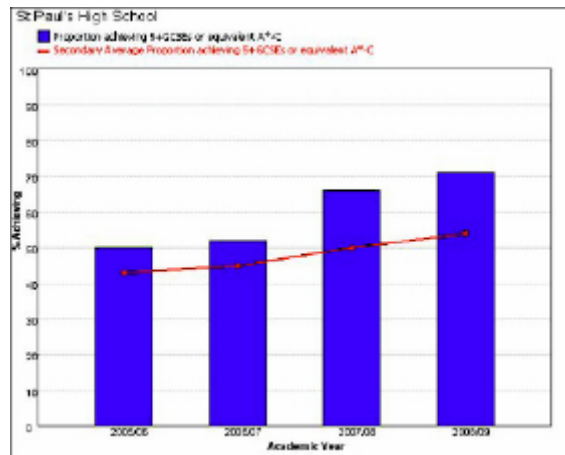
Performance of pupils at the school is above the Northern Ireland Average for Non-Grammar schools and when benchmarked against school in a similar FSM band is the top 5%. The following summarises academic performance at KS4 over four years.

Four Year Data Averages

DENI Ref	School Name	Town	% Pupils Entitled to Free School Meals (4 Year Average)	% achieving 5+ GCSEs at grades A*-C (4 year avg)	Benchmarked	% achieving 5+ GCSEs at grades A*-C (incl. Eng and maths) 2008/09	% SEN stage 1 - 4 pupil in a mainstream class (4 year Average)	% Statemented pupil in a mainstream class (4 year Average)
5230157	St Paul's Hs	Newry	31.13	59.51	>95 Percentile	47	19.93	2.63

Performance Trends Over Four Years: As the following graph indicates performance at 5A*-C has improved steadily over the past for years

5A*-C GCSE



Source ETI Website

http://www.denidata.nics.gov.uk/appinstitutes/Instdetails.aspx?org_id=1564&rn=6

Data taken from 2008 Inspection Report

Examination Results

Table showing the GCSE and GCE A level subject results over the previous three years ending in June 2008, in comparison with the respective Northern Ireland (NI) averages

Table 1

	More than 10 percentage points above	Between 5 and 10 percentage points above	Within 5 percentage points	Between 5 and 10 percentage points below	More than 10 percentage points below
GCSE A*-C	Art and Design Double Award Science 1 st Subject Drama English French GNVQ Construction and the Built Environment Home Economics Home Economics Child Development Information Technology Irish Music Single Award Science Spanish Sport/PE Studies	Design and Technology Geography Mathematics	Business Studies English Literature History Russian	Religious Studies	
GCE A-E			Art and Design Biology Business Studies Chemistry Design and Technology: Product Design Drama English Literature French Geography History Home Economics Information Technology Irish Mathematics Music Physics Religious Studies Sociology Sport/PE Studies		

3b. Measures of Deprivation

The Multiple Deprivation Measures (MDM) rank considers 582 wards in Northern Ireland. The Wards being served by St Paul's are in the top 50 of these wards. However these are relative meaning that the 100th is not twice as deprived as the 200th only more deprived. The wards being served by St Paul's Bessbrook include Bessbrook, Derrymore, Drumgullion, Daisy Hill and

Ballybot although many pupils from more rural wards such as Crossmaglen and the greater Newry and Mourne Area also attend the school.

Ward Code	Ward Name	Lgd Code	Lgd Name	Mdm Score	Rank Of Mdm Score (Where 1 Is Most Deprived)
95VV02	Ballybot	95VV	Newry and Mourne	50.87	36
95VV10	Daisy hill	95VV	Newry and Mourne	47.72	45
95VV09	Crossmaglen	95VV	Newry and Mourne	46.17	50
95VV03	Bessbrook	95VV	Newry and Mourne	43.91	60
95VV12	Derrymore	95VV	Newry and Mourne	37.07	89
95VV15	Drumgullion	95VV	Newry and Mourne	34.16	105

Source NISRA:

http://www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk/mapxtreme/InteractiveMaps/OA_Deprivation_Maps/95VV/atlas.html

From this data St Paul's can be seen to be situated in and drawing its student body from disadvantaged areas.

4. Department of Education School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

The school gives outstanding attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, through effective healthy eating policies and wholesome food provision in the canteen, which encourage the pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles.

The self-evaluation and school development planning processes are well embedded at all levels to the benefit of the pupils. The excellent school development plan is informed by a rigorous analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. The plan takes account of the external and internal factors which impact on the school's work and meets fully the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.

Additionally the school tracks progress at Key Stage 4 using Assessment Manager and uses this process for identifying under performance and setting appropriate targets. The behaviour management module is used extensively in conjunction with Assessment Manager to improve standards of behaviour and ultimately to improve attainment.

Western Education & Library Board (WELB)

Inquiry into Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities

Terms of Reference

WELB welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry. We wish to make the following points. Without criteria to select schools and without definitions of "successful" or "disadvantaged" we have taken the following approach.

As the scoping papers indicated that not all MLAs accept FSM as a proxy for social deprivation, WELB thought it best not to use simply the benchmarking percentiles based on the FSM factor but instead inclusion in the Extended Schools Programme. DE's Extended Schools, schools, families, communities – working together explains that "the programme should be targeted on children and young people who are disadvantaged, marginalized or have the most limited access to current services." It goes on:

"Measures of Deprivation

Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME) has a long established link to social deprivation (and also to low levels of educational achievement). As such it is a readily available and robust indicator of social deprivation for the pupils attending individual schools. In October 2005, the average FSME % in schools was 19.48%. However, FSME is not a robust measure of disadvantage in nursery schools, mainly because of the pattern of attendance of pupils, and thus, in this case, the Department depends on the percentage of children enrolled whose parent/s are in receipt of income based Job Seekers Allowance.

Alongside this measure, the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2005 (NIMDM 2005) is a measure of multiple deprivation at the small area level. The model of multiple deprivation which underpins the NIMDM 2005 is based on the idea of distinct domains of deprivation which can be recognised and measured separately. These are experienced by individuals living in an area. People may be counted as deprived in one or more of the domains, depending on the number of types of deprivation that they experience. The overall MDM is conceptualised as a weighted area level aggregation of these specific domains of deprivation.

There are seven 'domains' that make up the Multiple Deprivation Measure and describe the 'category' of deprivation they cover. The domains are as follows:

- Income deprivation.
- Employment deprivation.
- Health Deprivation and Disability deprivation.
- Education and Training deprivation.
- Proximity to Services deprivation.
- Living Environment deprivation.
- Crime and Social Disorder deprivation."

Since these indicators already have currency in our system, WELB has interrogated data for schools in the Extended Schools Programme.

Nonetheless, this kind of comparison and judgment needs to be made circumspectly since the only truly reliable measure of comparative success is a value-added one. To illustrate this point

the following comparison details the performance outcomes for a number of schools in the ESP in one town. Although, certain schools may seem to be "out performing" others, the additional information included shows that there are significant factors which could be influencing these outcomes. Therefore, any comparison is not of like with like. In a value-added system, it would be possible to see exactly where the starting line was rather than simply who was first past the post.

DE	School	Total Enrolment	FSM Pupils	% FSM Pupils	SEN Pupils	% SEN Pupils	NRA Pupils	% NRA Pupils	Board
2230254	Immaculate Conception College	238	117	49.16	59	24.79	152	63.87	WELB
2230225	St Brigid's College	722	464	64.27	215	29.78	599	82.96	WELB
2230188	St Cecilia's College	867	368	42.45	118	13.61	574	66.28	WELB
2230131	St Joseph's Boys' School	875	377	43.09	267	30.51	657	75.09	WELB
2230081	St Mary's College	854	428	50.12	150	17.56	670	78.45	WELB
2230181	St Peter's High School	231	150	64.94	80	34.63	197	85.28	WELB

DE	School	5+A*-G 4 Year Ave	5+A*-C 4 Year Ave	5+A*-C 4 Year Ave Inc Eng & Maths 4 Year Ave	No Gcses 4 Year Ave	2+ Gce A-E 4 Year Ave
2230254	Immaculate Conception College	72.92	20.31	7.72	8.33	77.42
2230225	St Brigid's College	74.58	19.57	9.01	7.69	93.55
2230188	St Cecilia's College	94.89	72.23	38.94	2.04	95.65
2230131	St Joseph's Boys' School	76.96	38.91	22.78	7	92.27
2230081	St Mary's College	96.65	64.44	24.98	0.7	97.05
2230181	St Peter's High School	55.11	20.89	10.49	17.33	74.29

Nonetheless, we have attempted to identify schools which we could reasonably argue appear to be adding more value in terms of performance outcome results than roughly comparable schools. (Once again a health warning, this does not account for any other value a school may be adding eg dispositions or attitudes.)

Case Study 1

The first comparison is between two all girls' schools.

School Context

St Mary's College is a single gender (girls) maintained post-primary school which was situated in the Creggan Central Ward (95MM10) until June 2010. The school relocated to a new site in the Pennyburn Ward in September 2010. The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010 ranks Creggan Central Ward as 8 out of 582 wards. It is ranked 47 out of 582 on Education, Skills and training domain.

The school is located in and draws the majority of its students from a Neighbourhood Renewal area. The school has an enrolment of 854 pupils (08/09). 50.12% (428) of pupils are in receipt of Free School Meals and the school is in FSM Band 5. 78.02% (678) of pupils are registered as living in a neighbourhood renewal area.

Attainment and Results

The school first participated in the Extended Schools programme in 2006/2007. Taking the 2005/2006 school year as a baseline the following trends have been noted:

- 5+ A*-G

There has been an increase from 95% in 05/06 to 98% in 08/09. The school is recorded as upper quartile for this category in 08/09 against the NI FSM Benchmark.

- 5+ A*-C

There has been an increase from 63% in 05/06 to 70% in 08/09. The school is recorded as in the 95th percentile for this category in 08/09 against the NI FSM Benchmark.

- 5+ A*-C including English and Maths

During the period 05/06 to 08/09 this category has decreased from 28% to 21%. This benchmark was only introduced in the 2008/9 year and the school was in the upper quartile. In 2009/10 the percentage increased from 21% to 46%.

- No GCSEs

In 05/06 1% of pupils left with no GCSE's. By 08/09 the school had reduced this to 0%. The school is recorded as in the 95th percentile for this category in 08/09 against the NI FSM Benchmark.

Educational Outcomes 4 Year Average

Key Indicator	St Mary's College	School A
5+ GCSE A*-G	96.75	94.25
5+ GCSE A*-C	64.75	58

Key Indicator	St Mary's College	School A
5+ GCSE A*-C INC E&M	24.04	37.44
No GCSEs	0.5	0.5
2+ GCE A-E	97.25	96.75

St Mary's College has a significantly higher percentage of pupils living in a NRA and a higher FSM factor. Both of these indicators would presuppose lower performance outcomes. However, this is not the case. Therefore we are deeming the school "successful" and will attempt to inform the debate as to why the school is doing better.

St Mary's College was led for over twenty years by a principal who, with high expectations, was relentless in pursuing improvement, a positive profile and a strong identity in, involvement with and commitment to the community. She worked hard at PR and securing loyalty from her stakeholders. She achieved a very public image for herself and her school which raised the esteem in which the school was held locally, nationally and internationally. She embraced change and cultivated and used connections and partnerships with all. The concepts of image, self-evaluation and professionalism were, within the public/education sector, ahead of their time. She was succeeded by an internal appointment, someone who matured professionally within this culture and who has worked hard to maintain it.

Comparator School A

School Context

School A is a single gender (girls) maintained post-primary school situated in a ward ranked 410 out of 582 on the NI Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010.

The school is located in a rural area on the boundary of the Neighbourhood Renewal Area. The school has an enrolment of 331 pupils (08/09). 23.56% (78) of pupils are in receipt of Free School Meals and the school is in FSM Band 2. 9% (28) of pupils are registered as living in a neighbourhood renewal area.

Attainment and Results

Taking the 2005/2006 school year as a baseline the following trends have been noted:

- 5+ A*-G

The school has not dropped below 93% achieving this category since 05/06 and peaked at 97% in 06/07. The school is recorded as Above Median for this category in 08/09 against the NI FSM Benchmark.

- 5+ A*-C

In the period 05/06 – 08/09 the school has recorded a decrease from 60% to 53% in attainment in this category. 66% of pupils achieved 5+A*-C in 06/07. The school is recorded as Above Median for this category against the NI FSM Benchmark.

- 5+ A*-C including English and Maths

In the period 05/06 – 08/09 the school has recorded a decrease from 39% to 36% with a peak to 50% in 06/07. The benchmark for this was only introduced in 2008/9 and the school was in the Above Median band.

- No GCSE's

In 05/06 0% of pupils left with no GCSE's. This remains the case in 08/09. The school is recorded as Upper Quartile for this category in 08/09 against the NI FSM Benchmark.

Case Study 2

The second comparison is between two all girls' grammar schools.

Thornhill College – 242 0052

School Context

Thornhill College is a single gender (girls) voluntary grammar school situated in the Culmore Ward (95MM13). On the Multiple Deprivation Measure ward level summary Culmore ward has an overall rank of 167 out of 582 wards. It is ranked 252 out of 582 on Education, Skills and training domain.

The school draws pupils from across the Derry City Council Area. The school has qualified for Extended Schools funding since the launch of the programme in 2006.

The school has an enrolment of 1400 pupils (08/09). 18.57% (260) of pupils are in receipt of Free School Meals and the school is in FSM Band 3. 36.1% (504) of pupils are registered as living in a neighbourhood renewal area. Both the schools FSM and NRA pupils are high for a grammar school.

Attainment and Results

Taking the 2005/2006 school year as a baseline the following trends have been noted:

- 7+ A*-C GCSE

In the period 05/06 – 08/09 the school has recorded an increase from 98% to 100% of pupils achieving this category. The school is recorded as in the 95th Percentile for this category against the NI FSM Benchmark.

- 7+ A*-C GCSE including English and Maths

In the period 05/06 – 08/09 the school has recorded an increase from 97% to 100% achieving this category. The school is recorded as being in the 95th percentile against the NI FSM Benchmark.

- No GCSE's

In the period 05/06 – 08/090 the school has consistently recorded 0% of pupils leaving with no GCSE's.

- 2+ GCE A-E

The school has recorded 100% of pupils achieving at least 2+ GCE A-E for each year with the exception of 06/07 when the figure was 99%.

- 3+ GCE A-C

The school has recorded an increase from 73% to 76% for the period 05/06 – 08/09. The school is recorded as Above Median in this category against the NI FSM benchmark.

Comparator School B

School Context

School B is also a single gender (girls) voluntary grammar school. On the Multiple Deprivation Measure ward level summary their ward has an overall rank of 170 out of 582 wards. It is ranked 200 out of 582 on Education, Skills and training domain.

The school has qualified for Extended Schools since 2008.

The school has an enrolment of 890 pupils (08/09). 10.56% (94) of pupils are in receipt of Free School Meals and the school is in FSM Band 3. 2.3% (21) of pupils are registered as living in a neighbourhood renewal area.

Attainment and Results

Taking the 2005/2006 school year as a baseline the following trends have been noted:

- 7+ A*-C GCSE

In the period 05/06 – 08/09 the school has recorded a decrease from 95% to 91% of pupils achieving this category. The school is recorded as Above Median for this category against the NI FSM Benchmark.

- 7+ A*-C GCSE including English and Maths

In the period 05/06 – 08/09 the school has recorded a decrease from 93% to 90% achieving this category. The school is recorded as being Above Median against the NI FSM Benchmark.

- No GCSE's

In the period 05/06 – 08/09 the school has consistently recorded 0% of pupils leaving with no GCSE's.

- 2+ GCE A-E

The school has recorded 100% of pupils achieving at least 2+ GCE A-E for each year with the exception of 08/09 when the figure was 99%.

- 3+ GCE A-C

The school has recorded a decrease from 79% to 76% for the period 05/06 – 08/09. The school is recorded as Above Median in this category against the NI FSM benchmark.

Educational Outcomes 4 Year Average

Key Indicator	Thornhill College	School B
5+ GCSE A*-C	100	97.25
5+ GCSE A*-C INC E&M	98.14	95.39
7+ GCSE A*-C	98.75	92.75
7+ GCSE A*-C INC E&M	97.52	91.88
3+ GCE A-C	73.25	74.25

Again one has a significantly higher percentage of pupils living in a NRA and a higher FSM factor. Both of these indicators would presuppose lower performance outcomes. Again, this is not the case as can be seen.

Thornhill College recognised, again over twenty years ago, that societal changes had resulted in their pupils presenting with more challenging behaviour and worked at creating a pastoral system within the school which more effectively met these needs. Around ten years ago, a new Principal (who had been VP in St. Mary's College) introduced a greater degree of professionalism, more rigorous approaches to performance management and a tighter focus on outcomes.

Conclusions

It is interesting that in both cases the process of improvement and change began a considerable number of years ago. When starting from a low base, it is possible to affect positive change and improvement over a short period of time. However, sustaining that level of improvement and continuing to improve is more difficult.

Our knowledge and experience of these schools and others indicates that the characteristics, identified within our school improvement policy, Every School a Good School, are reflected in more successful schools, as are the more detailed indicators although not all to the same degree.

It is our contention, evidenced by our case studies, that the enabling characteristic which supports all the others is "effective leadership".

Education Training Inspectorate (ETI)

Key Characteristics of Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities Briefing Paper for the Education Committee – June 2010

Introduction

1. The purpose of this paper is to set out for the Education Committee, the key characteristics of successful post-primary schools serving disadvantaged communities; and the Education and Training Inspectorate's perspective on the challenges of promoting such characteristics in less successful post-primary schools, including comment on the role of the Education and Library Boards' Curriculum Advisory and Support Service (CASS) to schools and the Inspectorate's role in the Formal Intervention Process (FIP).

2. The Inspectorate is responsible for promoting improvement through the inspection programme; in the post-primary sector, the main inspection model used to evaluate the overall effectiveness of a school is the Standard Inspection. Through this model, the inspection team identifies, evaluates and reports on the quality of the school's provision in the following key areas:

- leadership and management at all levels;
- achievements and standards;
- the provision for pastoral care and child protection;
- the quality of educational provision; and
- the school's process of self-evaluation leading to improvement.

3. In evaluating the various features of both primary and post-primary schools, the Inspectorate uses the following performance levels:

PERFORMANCE LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

Outstanding

Very Good

Good

Satisfactory

Inadequate

Unsatisfactory

4. From inspection findings and survey evaluations, the key characteristics of successful post-primary schools serving disadvantaged communities are set out below.

5. Leadership and management:

5.1 The senior leadership team (SLT) led by the Principal has a clear overview of the pupil's educational and pastoral experiences and demonstrates an appropriate vision for the school and a clear understanding of how to achieve this. The SLT inspires and challenges all in the school community, and distributed leadership and accountability structures ensure that the changing needs of the school are met effectively. There is collective responsibility for the welfare and performance of all the pupils and a very strong sense of collegiality permeates the school, reflected in high morale amongst the staff. In addition, there is effective communication with the governors and the Employing Authority; they are well informed about school developments, providing, in turn, an appropriate challenge function to the quality of provision.

5.2 Through liaison with feeder primary schools and community representatives, the school is well-informed of the barriers to learning experienced by their pupils. As a result, the school has clear strategies to help the pupils overcome these barriers to learning.

5.3 A well-constructed School Development Plan (SDP) guides the work of the school, with ownership by all, including governors, teachers, pupils and parents; with associated, good quality action plans to drive forward identified areas for improvement.

5.4 There is a culture of openness and transparency in the school. School performance information (both qualitative and quantitative) is shared across the school, and the analysis includes trends over time. The self-evaluative process enables the school to identify its key areas and priorities for improvement, thus ensuring that there is accountability at all levels for the quality of educational and pastoral provision by the school.

6. Quality of provision

6.1 The pastoral care provision is intrinsically linked to academic progress and is strongly pupil-centred. Teaching and learning is at the centre of all the school tries to achieve and the curriculum planning is creative and flexible in order to best meet the needs of individual pupils. Pupils are encouraged to be actively engaged in their learning and there are robust procedures in place for those who require additional support for their learning.

6.2 Evidence from inspection is that these characteristics hold true for all good schools irrespective of the levels of social/economic deprivation. In areas of social deprivation what becomes important is how these characteristics are contextualised by the school community to meet the needs of the pupils, their families and the wider community which it serves.

7. The challenges of promoting the above characteristics in less successful post-primary schools

7.1 Inspection evidence indicates that while there is a range of factors impinging on low achievement and attainment, the most important include: poor leadership and management; low expectations of teachers; and poverty of aspiration amongst parents, pupils and the wider community.

7.2 High quality leadership in a school will build on the smallest strengths of a school in order to bring about improvement. Over the last five years, there are no examples of schools inspected where the Inspectorate did not find some evidence of good practice, i.e. in every school inspected, either individual teachers or departments, were managing to achieve good outcomes despite the socio/economic circumstances of the school. Where the quality of leadership is poor, the SLT invariably does not have the capacity to analyse the problems nor plan strategically and realistically for improvement. Another significant factor is the lack of accountability at all levels throughout the school.

7.3 Of the schools inspected over the 2006-2008 period, which required a follow-up inspection (FUI), 96% improved by at least one performance level by the time of the FUI. Ongoing monitoring of schools by the District Inspector will indicate whether there is a problem in any of the schools of a 'plateau' effect and whether improvements can actually be sustained and developed.

8. Formal Intervention Process (FIP)

8.1 The response to under-achievement/performance has often been to introduce initiatives to try to address the issues rather than to look at each school in its individual circumstances and therefore tailor the support in order to ensure an improvement in the outcomes for the pupils.

8.2 For example, in both the Raising School Standards Initiative (RSSI) and the School Support Programme (SSP), while there were noteworthy successes, some schools did not have the capacity to plan or use the money they received wisely; they often just bought more resources, and, in the worst cases, became dependent on the additional funding and had no strategy or incentive to exit the programme. In contrast, the Department of Education's current school improvement policy – Every School a Good School (ESaGS), which includes the FIP, is one of support with a definitive end to the process.

8.3 Furthermore, while the quality of support provided by CASS was generally good, it was uneven within and across ELBs; and, in addition, a challenge function was not always exercised.

8.4 In the development of ESaGS, DE sought to address the identified weaknesses of previous support programmes. The current school improvement policy articulates clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for all of the key stakeholders (DE, ETI, the schools and the ELBs).

8.5 Prior to the introduction of ESaGS, DE did not respond formally to inspection reports. This has now changed with DE affirming schools where outcomes are good; and setting out clearly how DE expects poorly performing schools to respond to inspection findings in order to effect the required improvements within a specified time frame. Whilst the standard model of inspection is reviewed annually, the inspection process has not changed with the publication of ESaGS. Furthermore, inspection reports have been published for many years.

8.6 The FIP makes provision for an intensive programme of support from CASS, where the evaluation of the school's work is less than satisfactory. The small number of schools currently in the FIP is providing an opportunity for CASS to customise its support to the individual schools and build knowledge cumulatively on what strategies working and those which do not. The Inspectorate monitors the work of schools in the FIP more frequently.

CASE STUDY OF A POST-PRIMARY NON SELECTIVE SCHOOL

The school is a non selective all boys school situated in a large rural town.

Free School Meals (FMS): 33%

Over the past five years there has been a year on year improvement in the achievements of the pupils at GCSE; pupils achieving A* - C in five or more subjects at GCSE has increased from 27% in 2005 to 62% in 2009. The school's attainment is well above the N Ireland average when compared with the average for non selective schools. In addition, the percentage of pupils obtaining grades A*-C in five or more subjects including English and mathematics over a four year period, is consistently well above the NI averages for non selective schools.

Exam Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
School	27%	44%	50%	55%	62%
NI Average	40%	43%	45%	50%	54%
English & mathematics	23%	35%	41%	53%	44%
NI Average			30%	30%	38%

Five Year trend analysis of GCSE results 5+ A*-C

The following strengths in the school's work were identified during a recent inspection:

- the clear vision of the Principal and Senior Management Team for school improvement based on rigorous self-evaluation undertaken by staff at all levels;
- the excellent relationships and well-established culture of open communication within the school which is central to the quality of the improvement planning process;
- the very good quality of support provided by the CASS Link Officer;
- the very good use of data to inform school development planning, action planning and self-evaluation;
- the well-embedded opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own and each other's progress; and
- the primacy of the learning experiences and progress of the pupils which is strongly reflected in the mission and ethos of the school and central to raising standards.

General Teaching Council Northern Ireland (GTCNI)

Response to the Education Committee

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Whilst aware of the terms of reference set out by the Committee there is nonetheless merit in expanding those to a consideration of previous policy initiatives which sought to address the under-performing post-primary schools and some of the insights that emerged from such

initiatives and associated research. Over the last fifteen years or so, there has been a variety of initiatives and programmes designed to address underachievement. These ranged from area specific i.e. Making Belfast Work Initiatives, school specific i.e. the 'Group One Schools' and the more systemic i.e. the Raising School Standards Initiative. Whilst all of these initiatives were rigorously pursued and executed with diligence, their success was relatively limited and there is merit in reflecting on some of the barriers to success.

2.0 Previous Initiatives – barriers to success

2.1 Some of these will be what might be deemed structural issues such as:

(i) Demographic trends allied to selection and pupil driven funding.

Quite simply, the existence of a market forces element to education via pupil funding allied to selection creates a specific dynamic which when allied to falling numbers has the potential to create a socially differentiated cohort of schools. It is not the purpose of this paper to reflect on selection as a policy rather it is to reflect on one of the outcomes of that policy.

2.2 In essence, grammar schools whatever their level of performance will continue to fill up to their capacity. Today some 40% of children attend such schools whilst at their inception the percentage was 27. The effect of this has been to alter the academic profile within the non-selective sector and, indeed, to create a strong impetus towards what might almost be deemed an additional quasi-selective system in the non-grammar sector.

2.3 The impact of selection allied to open enrolment and deprivation was very evident in North Belfast in the past decade and it was interesting that the Group I initiative targeted in North Belfast and which embraced Castle High School, Mount Gilbert College and St Gabriel's did not ensure the survival of these schools despite schools within the initiative receiving considerable sums of money over a four year period. (The initiative provided for additional, non LMS driven, provision to the school budgets of approximately £250k per year for four years. The intention was to ensure a measure of financial stability which in turn would provide an opportunity for longer term planning.)

2.4 Two further factors emerge from (i) namely:

(ii) the creation of a potentially powerful culture of negativity arising from the coalescing of pupils with a lower socio-economic status within certain schools; and consequently

(iii) a culture of 'flight' from such schools.

2.5 With regard to the atmosphere of negativity which may result from the aggregation, within some schools, of pupils with high levels of deprivation; research indicates that this is the result of the multi-faceted impact of deprivation. Daly, P and Shuttleworth, (1999) identified the potential cumulative impact of deprivation operating on a number of levels as follows.

(a) On an individual basis i.e. the child arrives at school with what might be deemed a social/cultural deficit reflected in issues such as linguistic ability and commitment to education;

(b) On a contextual basis with problems arising when a school enrolment has a significant cohort of pupils of lower socio-economic status- an issue that successive administrations have sought to address via LMS funding. (Note some research suggests that the linkage between levels of deprivation is complex with what might be called a 'critical mass factor' operating). To put it

another way, the difficulties arising from a pupil deprivation level of 40% are not simply twice those associated with a level of 20% i.e. the effect is compounding.

(c) On a broader or ecological basis, an impact that arises when a school serving a significant number of deprived children, is itself situated in an area characterised by significant deprivation.

As noted earlier, the problems created by the above can result in a flight of the more socially mobile parents from a school or indeed of teachers. In addition there is the risk of the development amongst staff of a culture of fatalism and a lack of motivation. In essence, parents with higher levels of aspiration may and often do move their children to other schools. This manifestation of parental choice will see schools, already facing difficulties, suffering from falling enrolments and consequently of falling budgets. The net result of this is to reduce flexibility in staffing and curriculum organisation and a less than optimum social mix of pupils. Indeed where pupil numbers have fallen, schools may well be faced with a staffing profile that is increasingly expensive, possibly inappropriate in skills profile and potentially 'burnt out' or demotivated.

2.6 It is important that none of the observations, noted above, is seen as a negative commentary on those suffering from economic deprivation, or a denigration of those schools struggling to meet needs within the constraints of policies that, of themselves, help create or at least exacerbate problems. Rather, it is an attempt to indicate the full extent of the problems faced by some of our schools as a result of what might be deemed structural issues.

2.7 Before turning to the specifics of the enquiry and the terms of reference which itemises specific areas of concern and interest, it is appropriate to reflect on whether there is full recognition of the inter-relatedness of the variables that allow for a school to prosper, the impact of context and the possibility that in some circumstances the complex interaction of negative factors are perhaps insurmountable leading to the conclusion that some schools should be closed. This is not to adopt a fatalist approach. It reflects, in part, the thoughts of Frank Pignatelli, education and management consultant and former Chief Executive of the Strathclyde Education Authority, one of Europe's largest such bodies, who has speculated that educating children outwith areas of intense deprivation and in schools with a more heterogeneous social mix is one means of raising aspirations for children from more deprived backgrounds.

2.8 This is not to suggest a programme of wholesale closure but the adoption of a systematic and analytical approach to decisions re school viability bearing in mind the considerable resources expended in the Group I initiative with only two of the five schools originally in the programme still open. In some senses this notion resonates with the proposals enshrined within the Bain Report.

3.0 Successful Schools ?

3.1 The question mark should remind us that success will always be a relative notion dependent upon a variety of factors. Quite simply success for one school may not always be feasible for another and equally it must be recognised that there are no simplistic strategies or solutions readily transferrable between one school and another. Indeed, research indicates that principals who have enjoyed success in one school may well find that the social dynamic in a new school requires a different approach to management. The most competent principals will of course readily recognise that reality and work to bring about any necessary realignments with an appropriate measure of sensitivity and drive.

4.0 Terms of Reference and the significance of culture

4.1 Whilst understanding the basis of the Committee's focus, Council would suggest that perhaps more consideration should be given to the issue of context and how best to address the problems that can arise from that particularly in regard to social and cultural deprivation. It is worth considering the recently published OECD's comments on school effectiveness which reminds us that:

'As is known from research on the effectiveness of schools... the quality of the learning environment is the factor affecting student learning and outcomes that is most readily modified, given that background variables such as cognitive and motivational capacities, socio-economic background, social and cultural capital are mostly beyond the control of teachers and schools' (OECD 2009).

[Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environments, 2009]

However, what needs to be recognised is that the development of an appropriate and positive learning environment is a by-product of an interaction of values, moral purpose, vision and leadership which in itself is the culture of the school and the Council firmly believes that it is in developing an appropriate culture that school effectiveness is best promoted.

Undoubtedly, as the terms of reference suggest: School leadership, relationships with parents and the community served, and the impact of government policy all impact on the capacity of a school to develop a positive learning environment and a culture supportive of that. However equally, it must be realised that the factors relating to the processes of cultural development are resistant to simple analysis.

4.2 Any attempt to disaggregate factors in a simplistic way and which fails to recognise the human or community aspects of cultural reality simply denies the significance of staff and pupils in shaping or indeed challenging culture. It is the uniqueness of context and the importance of the role played by all within the school community that researchers suggest creates problems for those seeking to understand school improvement or to develop a simple template for change.

5.0 Staff Values as a determinant of School Culture and success

5.1 The importance of staff as a factor in school culture cannot be overstated. As noted earlier, a school's culture is made up of shared meanings, shared cognitions and points of consensus among the diverse 'actors'. As Elliot-Kemp 1989 reminds us:

'Each member of an organisation.... will have a unique perspective of the organisation ... The 'truth' about an organisation will always be an aggregate of individual perspectives...'

[Elliot-Kemp. J. 1989. Improving the Culture of Your Organisation.]

5.2 If, as research seems to suggest, the culture of a school plays a central role in school improvement then it follows that we must concern ourselves with this issue. Andy Hargreaves, one of the foremost thinkers in regard to school culture speaks of a spectrum of culture ranging from:

Fragmented Individualism: where the teacher is isolated and may seek refuge behind the 'sanctity of the classroom door'. He sees this culture as reinforcing uncertainty and insulating the teacher from feedback and support.

At the other end of the spectrum he talks of:

Collaborative cultures: which he sees as facilitating development through mutual support, joint work and a broad agreement on educational values. He sees in schools with this culture a simultaneous valuing of the individual and the group. It is within this culture that one finds the synergies that can sustain motivation and promote a culture of excellence and positivity even in difficult circumstances.

5.3 As might be expected the development of culture and ethos is complex and multi-faceted. Dalin, reflecting on the interaction of values and culture, speaks of values operating on a variety of levels which are described as :

- Transrational : based on moral and ethical values and codes;
- Rational : grounded within a social context and conventional expectations and norms; and
- Subrational : based on personal experiences and preferences and grounded in emotional rather than rational thought.

Dalin et al 'Changing the School Culture London' (1993)

5.4 The significant point to be gleaned from Dalin's analysis is the fact that a school's culture evolves over time and is a complex interaction of history and experiences. The reality is that several subcultures may exist within a school at any one time and the values and norms of these may be congruent or incongruent, with different implications for the school and its structural effectiveness. It follows from this that any change to a school culture will, of necessity, be evolutionary rather than revolutionary; requiring sensitivity and coherence of action and leadership and a clear understanding of the nature of professional communities and the need for change to be rooted in a sense of mission that in turn creates a rationale for change. Research also indicates that success is most likely where conditions or attributes exist that create a clear sense of moral purpose and a belief that positive outcomes are possible. It is at this juncture that the significance of leadership becomes apparent.

6.0 Leadership, Culture and Community Outreach

6.1 This situation is more likely to exist where there is:

(a) A positive and clear view of the purposes of education which can be shared by all stakeholders within the broader school community and which is underpinned by a valid and 'realised' value system such as that set out in the GTCNI Code of Values and Professional Practice

Note – the vision must not simply be expressed it must be lived in both the structures and processes of the school i.e. it must be modelled in relationships, strategies –in essence the values noted above must suffuse both actions and structures.

(b) There is a sense of shared responsibility for progress and an expectation that pupils will learn.

(c) There needs to be a culture of outreach to parents embracing:

- the school vision and the values underpinning it;
- the 'compact' with parents;

- a statement of parental rights and their responsibilities; and
- an understanding as to the school's expectation of parental support

(d) A stability of action predicated upon structured planning process in which all stakeholders have a role i.e. a commitment to sustained action and consistency allied to a recognition that appropriate change in response to emerging challenges is to be welcomed.

6.2 As noted earlier, success in the above also requires a clear sense that the institution itself is secure i.e. viable that resources are available to secure longer term planning and a staffing profile appropriate to the challenges existing and emerging. Without a sense of security the social dynamic required to sustain change, motivation and energy will be much harder to sustain.

7.0 Leadership the Practicalities

7.1 Central to all of the above will be the professional leadership offered at all levels and the ability of those in leadership to do several things.

(i) Articulate and develop within the school community a sense of shared purpose.

(ii) Be congruent with the values espoused by the school establish appropriate pathways in regard to relationships, decision making, target setting and professional evaluation.

(iii) Flowing from the above establish protocols and processes that sustain motivation and which model the culture and values deemed to be valuable. Note this will include decision making, professional evaluation, the development of protocols re pupil behaviour, parental involvement etc.

Note where school rituals are not congruent with the professed culture then the result will be a retreat to cynicism and destructive individualism.

(iv) Develop a 'compact' with parents predicated upon a clear understanding as to the purposes of education schooling and setting out mutual responsibilities of school/parents.

8.0 Conclusion

8.1 The central premise of this paper has been that school effectiveness or improvement requires not just the absence of a critical mass of structural impediments but the development of a positive culture rooted in a clear sense of mission and purpose and the recognition that this is most likely to emerge in an atmosphere characterised by professional collegiality and parental engagement. The effectiveness of any school is effectively to be found in the aggregated experiences within the diverse classes thus it is essential that staff teaching and otherwise are enthused by the vision, values and mission of the school and empowered by the structures, culture and professional development opportunities.

8.2 Schools are above all social entities and any drive to sustain or improve the quality of education must embrace the totality of the school community and create a sense for all including parents and pupils that they have a part to play in the life of the school. Whilst the notion of school principal as 'heroic leader' is wholly inappropriate equally there must be a recognition that the principal is a central player in ensuring that the mission, values, structures, and processes are coherent, appropriate and accepted.

8.3 Administrators and policy makers have a vital role to play on several fronts:

- In ensuring that the broader school system is managed and resourced in a way that ensures that the structural barriers noted earlier do not arise; and
- In articulating a philosophy of education that recognises the need for education to contribute not just to personal well-being and economic prosperity but to broader social cohesion. Note all political parties have in the past endorsed the GTCNI Charter for Education which addresses these issues in a succinct document.

8.4 At a time of economic constraint and a realignment of world economies with the BRIC economies moving to ever increasing prominence education becomes ever more important in sustaining social well-being and cohesion. It follows that the most necessitous within our society in terms of social or cultural deprivation must not be left behind. This may require hard decisions such as those suggested by the Bain Report allied to a drive to address the broader structural constraints. It is, of course, recognised that this is not an original perspective given that past administrations embraced the notion of TSN i.e. Targeting Social Need perhaps we need to revisit such initiatives but mindful of Pignatelli's observations.

Glengormley High School

Committee for Education Inquiry
'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'

Response Form

School Name Glengormley High School
 School Sector Non-selective Maintained Secondary School
 Location - Rural/Urban Urban
 Boys/Girls/Mixed Mixed
 Your Name and Contact details Alexander Hayes : Principal
 134 Ballyclare Road, Newtownabbey,
 BT36 5HP
 Telephone: 028 90837223
 Email: info@glengormleyhigh.com

Please indicate briefly below the top three practical actions in your school which address each of the following areas of Committee focus:

A. Effective School Leadership - To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

1. Clear school improvement targets based on Teaching and Learning within the school.

Using benchmarking data and other audits to improve the learning and teaching standards within the school.

2 Raise the aspirations of pupils and parents by communicating a clear vision of how success can be achieved by them and the importance of partnership between school and home.

3 A culture of self-analysis and improvement in all areas of school that all stakeholders can support and a culture of celebration of success at all levels.

B. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

1. The engagement of pupils, parents and the community through our school website, virtual learning environment and related innovations which allow 24/7 access to support and inform.
2. Audits of parental and community needs and expectations of the school and related actions which address these needs and issues.
3. Developing links with other schools and bodies to use our expertise to develop and improve the community through the school initiatives that we plan.

C. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008) and potential measures to address this.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32_statistics_and_research-research_pg/32_stats_and_research_researchreports_pg/32_statistics_and_research_branch_research_reports_2008.htm]

1. We provide access to learning opportunities 24/7 by use of our VLE. Our data shows that 300 pupils per weekend access learning materials and an average of 90% of pupils access these outside the school day.
2. We use pupils and Classroom Assistants to address reading partnerships with boys particularly to make massive gains in literacy for those with most need. This is costly but has impressive results with all cohorts of pupils.
3. We tackle the aspiration and academic self-concept of low achieving pupils from a "can do" perspective. Pupils are encouraged to set realistic but challenging targets for themselves and to plan actions to achieve these. Teachers act as role models and we provide aspirations for pupils, particularly boys who have no access to such role models and where the school is the only source of raising aspirations for them.

D. Department of Education's School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

Please indicate briefly below any comments you may have on this and other relevant Departmental policies.

1. School Action Planning must be allowed to mainly address a small number of key areas while maintaining action in other areas to drive improvement. At present School Development Plans are not working documents for staff, they are too large.
2. Principals need to be given the power to act quickly to assess standards of teaching and learning in the classroom and to address underperformance in a relatively short time span ie. 18 months.

3. The key driver to School Improvement is the standard of teaching. More funding needs to be given to the development of pedagogy and improving teaching within the schools and this needs to be disseminated to other schools with more funding.

**Thank you – please email to
committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk**

Hazelwood Integrated College

Committee for Education Inquiry
'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'

Response Form

School Name Hazelwood Integrated College
School Sector Integrated
Location - Rural/Urban Urban
Boys/Girls/Mixed Mixed
Your Name and Contact details Eileen Lenehan (Principal)

Please indicate briefly below the top three practical actions in your school which address each of the following areas of Committee focus:

A. Effective School Leadership - To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

1. The Hazelwood School Leadership Team articulates a clearly defined vision. Defined in the College mission statement "Educational excellence through integration" Hazelwood Integrated College aims to promote personal achievement and the realisation of each student's potential irrespective of ability, religion, race or social class. This vision is shared by parents, governors, staff and students.
2. The College vision and subsequent aims are laid down in the School Development Plan 2007-2011. This is a four year strategic plan drawn up in consultation with staff and governors. It informs the management of school at all levels and is reviewed and revised collaboratively at the start of each year. Targets are set at whole school, middle management and individual staff level. A Student Council is in place to ensure that students have an input into the School Development Plan and the opportunity to discuss issues of interest to them.

Ref. Hazelwood Integrated College School Development Plan 2007-2011

3. Leadership is widely distributed throughout the school with members of staff encouraged to assume responsibility for leading whole school issues. The College believes in the old adage 'Good teachers make good schools'. We are convinced that quality teaching leads to quality learning and have in place a College Staff Development Programme that provides opportunities for staff to improve their own knowledge and skills and to disseminate their learning through Sharing Best Practice sessions. The College particularly welcomes the new RTU Senior Management and Middle Leadership training courses

B. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

1. Every parent wants the best for their child. They want their child to do well at school and to achieve the best possible examination results. In Hazelwood our zero tolerance of underachievement for children of all ability ensures that parental aspirations are met. Hazelwood is a high performing over subscribed integrated school. Our popularity is testament to the high regard with which the College is held in the local community.

2. Hazelwood was founded by parents and parents continue to play an active role in the school; parents hold at least 4 positions on the Board of Governors, run a Parents' Council, are encouraged to engage in on-going contact with staff, have open access to the school and make use of school facilities after school hours.

3. Research shows that children achieve their best when schools work in close collaboration with parents. Hazelwood recognises this and involves parents at every stage of their child's development.

- From the outset parents are encouraged to establish a personal contact with the school through their child's Class Tutor.
- Year 8 parents meet their child's Class Tutor at an introductory Parent/Tutor meeting that takes place in August prior to their child's start in the College. At this meeting they are encouraged to share any information that they have which will help their child achieve his/her personal best. The Year 8 Class Tutor teaches the children for 1 hour each day helping the child make the transition from the primary school where he or she is taught by only one teacher to the secondary school where the child may have a different teacher for each subject. The system provides the Tutor with the time to pick up, at an early stage, any problems that a child may have.
- Parent Tutor interviews are repeated annually, mid-term in the Junior School, and at start of year for Year 12 and Post 16 students. They complement the more traditional parent teacher meetings and ensure that a valuable line of communication exists between Tutor and parents, the people most likely to influence the overall progress of the child
- In addition parents are kept informed of their child's progress through the Student Diary, Annual Reports and Parent Teacher Meetings.
- Parents are invited to Parental Information Evenings to discuss curriculum and pastoral issues such as their child's subject choices at KS4 and Managing Adolescent Behaviour.
- Parents can access Subject Schemes of Work and general information about school events through the College website. They are encouraged to use this information to support their child's learning and to track their progress throughout the year. Ref: www.hazelwoodcollege.co.uk
- Parents are contacted if there is a problem with their child's academic performance and/or behaviour.
- A Parent Call system is in place to inform parents if their child has not arrived into school by 9.30am. If necessary the parent is invited to school to discuss the problem with the Tutor, Head of Year or Pastoral Vice-Principal.
- Parents have access to a wide range of pastoral and curriculum support services for their child including counselling and Phonics.

- Parents who have difficulty managing their child's adolescent behaviour are offered private interviews with the College Parenting Coach.

4. In Hazelwood we believe that the College has a valuable role to play in the wider community. We aim to be a force for reconciliation, to support lifelong learning and to provide opportunities for community development. We do this through in many ways including the following:

- Specialist School Community Programme (Sullivan Upper, St Malachy's College, Studio On, Cinemagic, North Belfast LAC Partnership, Cliftonville I PS, Hazelwood IPS, Glengormley IPS,
- Extended Schools Programme (Cluster programme organised for Hazelwood College/Hazelwood Primary School/St Mary's Star of the Sea/Lowwood by College Youth Worker)
- Let and Key programmes
- Princes Trust xl programme
- Charity work
- Whtecity/Whitwell Interface Group
- SEP (Hazelwood/Boys Model/St Malachy's College Sports Programme and Post 16 course 'Living in a Divided Society')
- SEP STEM/Cope Project (Hazelwood/Belfast High/Fortwilliam)
- OSF Citizen Panel
- Membership of Hazelwood Community Partnership (local community groups including White City, Longlands and Greencastle)

C. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008) and potential measures to address this.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32_statistics_and_research-research_pg/32_stats_and_research_researchreports_pg/32_statistics_and_research_branch_research_reports_2008.htm]

1. Hazelwood Integrated College promotes personal achievement and the realisation of each child's potential irrespective of ability, religion, gender, race or social class. The school educates all children together and children are accepted into the College on the basis of their commitment to 'integration', no entrance examination is required. Each child is proud of their place in the College. Each is encouraged to develop as mature, confident, well qualified young adults with high self-esteem, young people who value diversity and tolerance and are well equipped to play their part in the new peaceful and increasing multi-cultural Northern Ireland

2. In Hazelwood the curriculum is designed to meet the needs of all the students.

At KS3, with the exception of Year 10 Maths, students are taught in mixed ability classes. We set the highest standards for our students and hold the highest expectation for them. We do not label our students and tell them what they cannot do, we expect all of our students to achieve while recognising that some children may need additional help to fully realise their abilities. In

keeping with the College child centred ethos support classes in literacy and numeracy are offered to students on the basis of individual need.

3. At KS4 and KS5 the College tailors the curriculum to the needs of our mixed ability intake. We deliver the Entitlement Framework. In collaboration with the Newtownabbey Learning Community, students are offered a wide range of academic and vocational subject choices at GCSE and A level; 30 at GCSE and 24 at A level. The Learning Community delivers a capacity that no individual school can provide. It unites the educational community as a source of learning for young people and blurs the distinction between grammar and secondary school. Access to a wide range of academic and vocational courses that interest them and provide them with future career pathways motivates our young people to succeed. Our examination results are testament to the success of this approach. Ref: Hazelwood NLC KS4 and KS5 2010-2011 Subject Choices.

4. The College uses a sophisticated performance data management system to monitor individual student progress, subject achievement and overall GCSE achievement to effect improvement. School performance is measured against internal and external data (PSA and NI targets) and results are used to inform College management decisions regarding the curriculum on offer and the support strategies in place for students. Support strategies for students include:

Curriculum

- Continuous revision of the curriculum to meet the needs of the students

Support Staffing

- KS4 Learning Support Officer
- AEP (Alternate Education Provision) Support Officer
- SEBD (Social, Emotional and Behaviour Disorder) Support Officer
- ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) Support Teacher
- Newcomer Children's Support Officer
- Raising Boys Achievement Co-ordinator
- Literacy Coordinator
- Numeracy Coordinator

Staff Development/Information Evenings

- Staff Development Sessions on curriculum and pastoral issues such as Data Handling and Raising Boys' Achievement
- Parent Information Evenings on curriculum and pastoral issues such as Study Skills, Raising Boys' Achievement and Managing the Adolescent

Student Support Strategies

- GCSE Revision Classes for boys and girls (continuation and extension of the successful BELB funded Greater Shankill Easter GCSE Revision School for Boys)
- Students provided with Student Friendly Schemes of Work
- Tutor Monitoring System

- GCSE Study Support Centre
- Greater use of ICT - Success Maker/Web sites /CD ROMs- for revision.
- Close communication with the home for Year 12 students beginning with a Parent Tutor Interview in August prior to start of Year 12 and including a Parent Teacher meeting following the mocks in January.
- Students encouraged to meet the College 93% attendance target

D. Department of Education's School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

Please indicate briefly below any comments you may have on this and other relevant Departmental policies.

1. Hazelwood integrated College supports the Department's aspirations outlined in the document 'Every School a Good School'. Our mission, as an integrated school, is to educate all children together, to actively promote mutual respect and understanding and to ensure that every learner fulfils his or her full potential.

The College is very interested in the Every School a Good School's proposal to integrate AEN students into mainstream schools. Presently we deal with an increasing diversity of need; 34% of our students are on the SEN register, 49 at Stage 5. These young people have the right to equal access to educational opportunities however we would like DE to be mindful of the cost of meeting their diverse needs and to provide appropriate professional expertise to schools and appropriate training for school staff.

We look forward the establishment of effective partnerships with Health and Social Services so that together we can meet the needs of students with mental health problems and behavioural difficulties. We believe that placing a Family Liaison Officer in each school could be advantageous but only if schools are fully supported by external agencies. The 'team around the child' and Full Service Schools approach sounds good, again only if these are given appropriate funding, staffing and time to work together.

We support the proposal that AEN funds will be delegated directly to schools to deliver provision for these students. We would like the proposal to go further and for DE to ring fence the AEN funding. In addition we would like to be assured that the level of AEN and funding will be determined by appropriate indices of social deprivation such as Free School Meals.

2. In these times of economic stringency we feel that there is a strong argument for DE to take full responsibility for the development of Area Based Planning. Many schools will not facilitate the sharing of resources until they are directed to do so. In the meantime young people will be denied access to the wide range of subject choice and hence the career progression pathways envisaged by the Entitlement Framework

3. We welcome the role that ESA is expected to play in the implementation of 'Every School a Good School' and we fear that the effectiveness of this policy will be undermined if a single educational authority is not established as a matter of urgency.

**Thank you – please email to
committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk**

Integrated College Dungannon

Committee for Education Inquiry

'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'

Response Form

School Name Integrated College Dungannon

School Sector Grant Maintained Integrated

Location - Rural/Urban Urban

Boys/Girls/Mixed Mixed

Your Name and Contact details Andrew Sleeth

Integrated College Dungannon

Gortmerron Link Road

Dungannon

BT61 7LS

Phone: 02887724401

Fax: 02887725499

Please indicate briefly below the top three practical actions in your school which address each of the following areas of Committee focus:

A. Effective School Leadership - To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

1. College Development Planning is based on the areas of our college vision; Ethos, Education, Enrichment and Everyone. These tie in very well with the characteristics of ESAGS and since the introduction of ESAGS we have included a section on Effective Leadership. In addition to whole college priorities, all post-holders action plan development in their own area of responsibility. Progress is monitored twice a term in the presence of our CASS Link Officer and Chairperson of Board of Governors – who subsequently reports back at the next Board of Governors' meeting.

2. Restorative Justice Practices were introduced as a whole college approach to prevent conflict or to resolving conflict should it occur. The result of this approach has been more positive than we could have anticipated as it impacts on all aspects of college life at in a way that has improved relationships at, and between, all levels. We have a student team trained in restorative techniques to help other students – this team has won The Diana Antibullying Award in recognition of their efforts. The overall impact of this work is having more students in class ready to learn more of the time and staff better trained to enable this to happen. If things go wrong, parents are involved to help restore relationships.

3. Tracking Progress is our method used assess and report student progress and to inform the level of intervention required to best support our students. We use continuous assessment and at five Assessment Points across the academic year we report to parents on their child's readiness to learn, progress, attendance, homeworks not completed and level of support in place – this is in addition to the required written annual report. All departments and Heads of Year review each completed report and minute intervention to Curriculum, Assessment and Tracking Team. Our CAT Team reviews level of intervention for all aspects of the child and shares this with the Mentoring Team who decide if a more formal approach to mentoring is required. We use baseline tests at various levels PASS, MIDYIS, YELLIS, various SEN and EAL tests and all data is shared with relevant staff. Parents are contacted, if required, after each assessment point and we have various tracking progress interview days to discuss the level of support required. The emphasis is on a partnership with school, parents and their children.

B. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

1. Keeping parents informed of their child's progress and areas where support is needed has proved very beneficial to our students. Our ethos and practices in section A, part 2 and 3, mean that parents are involved at an early stage and are appreciative of our efforts to support their child and engage with us more readily.
2. Collaborative practices with other schools and colleges in the Dungannon and Cookstown Learning Community allow us to offer a greater number of more relevant GCSE and A Level subjects to our students.
3. Energy Saving Project with Greiner Packaging will result in them piping their hot water to us to use to heat our buildings. This exciting new project will save us money for other educational projects, strengthen our links with the local community, lend itself to Education for Sustainable Development and provide STEM opportunities for our students.

C. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008) and potential measures to address this.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32_statistics_and_research-research_pg/32_stats_and_research_researchreports_pg/32_statistics_and_research_branch_research_reports_2008.htm]

1. Tracking Progress – already outlined in section A
2. Use of PASS data – mentioned in section A. This data measures Pupil Attitude to Self and School over nine indicators and can be used to inform early intervention to prevent problems for children. We have worked with the SELB to develop strategies to help children if they are identified as raising a concern in any of the indicators. We use this data in connection with other baseline tests and our own assessment and pastoral data to stay informed of the development of the whole child as much as possible and to plan intervention if necessary.
3. Mentoring – we have formed a Mentoring Team consisting of Senior Teacher for Curriculum & Assessment, VP for Pastoral Care and Child Protection, SENCO, Coordinator for Gifted & Talented, Head of Newcomer Students, Coordinators of the Cross-Curricular Skills and the rest of senior management. We are using eg our tracking progress data, PASS data, MIDYIS, YELLIS, feedback from Heads of Department and Heads of Year, information from parents or outside agencies, pastoral data, expertise of team members to decide what level of mentoring should be given to individual students.

D. Department of Education's School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

Please indicate briefly below any comments you may have on this and other relevant Departmental policies.

1. I have worked through ESAGS documents with staff, comparing the indicators to those found in Together Towards Improvement, to give staff a better understanding of what is meant by each statement and to work towards an agreed whole college understanding.

2. Staff found time spent using the 'Evaluating Series' to self-evaluate and reflect very useful. This helped them decide the areas for development within their departments. I intend to use Staff Development Days to facilitate self-evaluation against the new Together Towards Improvement document.

**Thank you – please email to
committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk**

Integrated Services for Children & Young People



Páirtíocht Iarthar Bhéal Feirste
West Belfast Partnership

218 – 226 Falls Road, Belfast BT126AH

The Integrated Services for Children and Young People Programme is designed and delivered through two Local Implementation Action Groups with funding secured as a result of the work of the West Belfast and Greater Shankill Task Forces to address the legacy of poverty, disadvantage and underinvestment in these areas.



The AEP Forum

The Alternative Education Providers' Forum was set up in 1999 and is made up of Community based Stakeholders and Organisations set up in response to the identified need of our (school age) Young People who, for a wide variety of reasons, were outside the mainstream school system and who were 'best served' in smaller, multi disciplinary educational settings to meet their needs.

Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

Education provision in areas of Social and Economic disadvantage.

A quality educational experience is one where each child / young person is treated with respect and dignity inclusive of difference and where their identity is valued, acknowledged, and celebrated in an ethos which enables them to realise their full potential. Equality of access means that education is accessible to / for / by every child /young person where they choose to engage in their education and learning in an environment which nurtures their abilities, skills and talents. This will help ensure better outcomes for every child / young person and enhanced life skills, resilience and employment opportunities.

Realising full potential relates to the academic, vocational, creative and personal development and achievements to the best of their skills, talents and abilities. The AEP Centres adopt this approach.

Key characteristics/factors which contribute to success

- Resource allocation on the basis of objective need at every stage is crucial.
- Schools / Education settings need to ensure an ethos of inclusion / awareness of issues related to high social and economic deprivation.
- Teacher training curriculum should also reflect greater awareness of the impacts of social and economic deprivation – in NI 1 in 4 children live in poverty; 1 in 10 in persistent poverty (Save the Children 2009). CPD* and EPD** of new and current Teachers and all School Staff.

* Continuing Professional Development

** Early Professional Development

- Creative approaches to the curriculum where it is made 'relevant' to the lives of Young People as well as the pedagogy employed will impact (activity based learning is vital).
- Schools need to ensure effective assessment at key stages where the necessary support and specialist interventions are applied as and when necessary throughout a child/young person's education 'career'.
- Effective, smaller pupil:teacher ratios are a major contributory factor in ensuring successful educational experiences.
- External agencies and organisations should be encouraged to become part of the school community and contribute to the timetabled curriculum.
- Multi disciplinary approaches e.g. health agencies, support services, youth & community workers, peer mentors as well as student placements from relevant disciplines should also not only be encouraged but embedded. (I have initiated and developed this approach through my work in Newstart Alternative Education Centre over the past 12 years and this has proved very successful in working with marginalised, disadvantaged young people (post-primary)).
- Schools at all levels are responsible for creating welcoming, safe environments for young people.
- Pre-engagement and participation of young people and parents in friendly, welcoming environments will create ownership over education.
- Supported transition programmes – at all stages - for young people and young people are key in building confidence / self esteem to enable successful progression and 'comfortableness' in the school environment.
- Attitudes to education, as in other areas/communities, is key to whether our young people / young people value education per se.
- More informal work / activities involving the community will aid this and impact on overall outcomes for young people.
- School development plans should also explicitly state HOW this is to be achieved.

Effective School Leadership

Key leadership qualities include:

- Vision;
- Driving ethos of school;
- Commitment;
- Strategic and operational skills;
- Understanding in the broadest sense;
- Vested interest in the success of their Young People; and
- High expectations are crucial if we are to ensure our Young People realise their full potential.

School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

The AEP Forum has consistently engaged with Schools/ Education options Panels / Parents/Guardians and Carers throughout the period of engagement with their Young People. It is vital to work with the 'whole child' appreciating the context of their everyday lives. Greater involvement has meant greater participation levels – not only of the Young People themselves but also of parents in formal and informal education. Home visits and relationship development has been core to this approach.

Involving parents from the initial induction stages is important to ensure their ongoing engagement and 'joint investment' / 'ownership' over their young people's education.

Involvement of wider community agencies and organisations has been key to our work. The growing realisation that we have to integrate the work of all relevant agencies is to be welcomed. It has been this approach begun within the AEP Sector and developed through 'Integrated Services' which has ensured / is ensuring the desired and necessary outcomes.

All necessary resources – human, financial and physical should 'inform' development of this approach.

School development plans should also explicitly state HOW this is to be achieved.

Approach

It is to be welcomed that the Inquiry will include evidence based sessions with:

- Other organisations serving disadvantaged communities.

These include the:

- AEP Forum;
- West Belfast Partnership Board's Integrated Services for Children & Young People Programme; and
- West Belfast Partnership Board's Education Sub Committee.

These can be contacted via:

Mairéad McCafferty
 ISCYP / WBPB
 218 – 226 Falls Road

Belfast BT12 6AH
Tel: 028 90 809202

mairead@wbpb.org
maireadnewstart@hotmail.co.uk
maireadmccafferty@hotmail.com

Appendix 1[1]

	West Belfast	N. Ireland
% of young people receiving free school meals	39%	18%
FSME in post-primary sector	40%	19%
% of Statement/ SEN Young people	27%	13%
% Lone Parent Households with Dependant Young people	18.3%	8.1%
% Young people in Income Support Households	53%	21.2%
% of Unemployed	7.8%	4.1%
% of Unemployed, who were long-term unemployed	46.6%	40.4%
% Working age population claiming benefits ¹	8.9%	4.7%

Nearly 80% of the West Belfast population live in the most deprived Super Output Areas[2] in Northern Ireland (NI).

[1] Source: The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment Claimant count Publication of Claimant Count of Northern Ireland Parliamentary Constituencies July 2009

[2] Super Output Areas (SOA) are used within the Noble Measures of Multiple Deprivation (MMD) to enable comparative analysis of small areas across Northern Ireland. The final rank given to an individual SOA is based upon several indicative domains including: income, health, employment, education, environment, services and crime/disorder.

Killough, D, J

Committee for Education

Effective School Leadership.

Leadership within a school is achieved only by the leaders knowing their teachers' capabilities their subject areas, and contents, the pupils and their particular educational and emotional

needs. As a leader you must constantly give praise to achievement and push every pupil to achieve. Targets set for individual pupils should be established upon entry to the secondary school. This is helped by having a close association not only with the Principal of the feeder school but also with the pupils past teacher.

Upon setting up individual educational plans for the pupils the next stage is the monitoring of progress. There is little need for leaders to establish long paper chasing exercises which reduces teacher teaching time and frustrates teachers. Teachers are professionals and when treated as such will go out of their way to fulfill the ambitions of all the pupils they teach.

School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Communities.

Parents are familiar with the school and how it feeds into the local community by attending regular functions carried out in the school. Parents are invited into the school to meet form teachers and the Principal before the pupil starts school. During this meeting any needs of the parent or pupil are met. The Principal sets targets for the pupil when present at this meeting. The teachers are informed of the targets set for the pupil and the aspirations of the parents. Some parents have low regard for education and sometimes it is necessary to take charge of their child's education. This task is quite often time consuming but the results can be amazing.

When I started teaching twenty two years ago the success within the school was quite low. It was only when I was appointed Acting Principal that I could implement the changes needed to produce the results I knew were possible for each pupil. After the Key Stage Three results I started by examining the capabilities and skills of each individual pupil. Historically I have taught six different GCSE's and this assisted me in directing pupils towards subjects that would suit the skills of the child, this was assisted by appropriate back up from the subject teachers. It was only after this that the subject choices were sent out to the parents. Pupils were given an open choice for the subjects with the exception of Science where the pupils were selected for Double Award Science by virtue of their scoring at Key Stage Three. English Literature as a choice was determined by their scoring in English at GCSE. Additional Mathematics as a choice was determined by results at Key Stage Three. The Single award class was offered a double award option in three different areas. The VEP program offered the equivalent of two GCSE's, Health and Social Care and Travel and Tourism offered two GCSE'S. This for the first time enabled me to state that every pupil in the school had the possibility of achieving five GCSE'S at Grade C or better. Individual teachers were not difficult to convince but there were still doubters. The first target I set myself was for 80% pass at C grade or better in five GCSE'S. To the teachers I had set a target of 75%. To achieve this I spent a summer holiday teaching myself how to timetable.

A timetable was devised releasing teachers from a small portion of Key Stage Three teaching and facilitated focusing on GCSE teaching. This was achieved by organizing the Junior school timetable in a carousel. This enabled me to have the specialist teachers I needed to deliver specific GCSE's it also enabled me to release those same teachers from form class responsibilities. Quite often these teachers would be teaching on three separate GCSE courses. A literacy support teacher was employed specifically to assist pupils with all their GCSE's. The role of this teacher cannot be underestimated. Teachers with module exams provided this teacher with past papers thus enabling the teacher often on a one to one basis to familiarize the pupil with the language and vocabulary needed for that specific exam. Teachers were encouraged to become markers for their exam; this was a very valuable way of sharpening their teaching and resulted quite often with a 100% grade C or better in their subject.

Mentoring was introduced where a teacher provided assistance to the pupil's. Each teacher was allocated a low achieving pupil, a pupil from the middle group and a high achieving pupil. The Principal also had an allocation. A tracking sheet was used to monitor each pupil's progress.

Dept

Initiatives from the Department often reinforced what I felt myself. Every School A Good School gave me the confidence to approach the staff and parents with positive outlooks for the pupils of the school. My main push to all in the school was that every child matters.

The first set of exams for the year 11's was November and all the teachers would facilitate additional teaching to occur the day prior to an exam. This often meant those teachers not with an exam class covering for the teacher carrying out the additional teaching. It was imperative that those pupils requiring additional help was given such help prior to the first module.

The importance of this first module result would set up a chain of events with the low achievers and their parents that was almost unstoppable.

Addressing Underachievement

The first results from the November Modules would come out towards the end of January. It has to be remembered for some of these pupils failure had always been the case. They arrived in the school having FAILED the 11+, they then fail their first Christmas exam followed by their summer exam, this then continues up to their Key Stage Three exam when they are told that their Level at this exam has resulted in them being placed yet again in the weakest group. The results arrived in January and the majority of those sitting this first module have achieved a Grade C. Time to celebrate. The results are "talked up" by all the teachers, special assemblies are held, photographs are taken, records are sent home to the parents, certificates are given out. Teachers in the corridors talk to the pupils encouraging them to also achieve in their subject.

Some pupils have not achieved as well as they could. Quite often there are circumstances at home hindering their progress resulting in bad attendance. These pupils are interviewed and given a chance for individual tuition and an opportunity to retake the module.

Over the three years where I had control over the timetable and choices of subjects taken for GCSE and the results were as follows. Year 1. 70% Grade C or better in five subject's. Year 2. 79% Grade C or better in five subject's. Year 3. 99% Grade C or better in five subjects.

I retired from teaching last September and if I can be of any assistance contact me at my Email address.

Submission from D J Killough MSc BSc Adv Dip Ed

Literacy and Numeracy Taskforce

Education Committee Inquiry into Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities

Submission from the Literacy & Numeracy Taskforce

A Effective School Leadership

1 A passionate belief and commitment on the part of the school leader that improvement is possible. A clear vision with precise timescales about how this will be achieved. An enthusiastic,

resilient and inventive personality who has the ability to motivate and inspire the school and wider community.

2 Concentration on improving what happens in the classroom and an emphasis on teaching and learning. Clear systems of assessment for all staff and all students and a rigorous analysis of data to establish performance.

3 Confidence to take the tough decisions and confront poor practice.

B School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

1 Leadership is again vital and principals must see the relevance and advantages of 'blurring the edges' and working in close partnership with parents and the community. There has to be a fundamental 'culture change' in terms of communications, use of facilities, day to day involvement of parents etc.

2 Close liaison must be established with primary schools and post 16 education and every medium (newsletters, the media, websites etc) must be used to constantly reinforce the vision and aspirations of the school and the importance of education to young people.

3 The establishment of working links with other agencies, educational charities, industry and commerce.

C Addressing Underachievement

1 Measuring systematically the attainment, progress and value-added of all students and communicating this regularly to staff, governors, parents and students.

2 Achieving consistency in what constitutes a 'good lesson' and agreeing standards of behaviour. Having a regular 'rewards system.'

3 Regular 'accountability' of staff by agreeing clear job descriptions, effective line management and appraisal of individual performance. Ensuring staff have a sense of 'ownership' in strategies to improve their own performance and of the school's plans and policies for improvement at a whole-school level.

D Department of Education School Improvement Policy

1 Following the policy laid down in Every School a Good school should bring results. Importance of promoting the sharing of best practice but in an appropriate way that enables each school, and its staff, to develop a sense of ownership and contextualise practice to meet the needs of pupils in their school.

2 Inspection aimed primarily at underperforming schools.

3 More rigour in challenging (and if necessary removing) ineffective leaders.

Malone College

Committee for Education Inquiry

'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'

Response Form

School Name Malone College
School Sector Integrated Post Primary
Location - Rural/Urban Urban
Boys/Girls/Mixed Mixed
Your Name and Contact details Mr Gerard Price (Principal)

Please indicate briefly below the top three practical actions in your school which address each of the following areas of Committee focus:

A. Effective School Leadership - To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

1. Well qualified and caring staff who are given access to the most up to date professional development available.
2. College leaders at all levels share common goals for the pupils_viz Ethos of Malone College
3. Strong awareness of the needs of the pupils and strong awareness of the importance of the partnership and cooperation with the parents.

B. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

1. As referred to in the last section. It is vital to have regular and meaningful communication with the parents on the issues which affect their children. It is vital to have supportive parents who are working in partnership with the college.

2. Involvement in Careers Education and work experience programme allows the pupils to interact with the community in a real sense. Visiting speakers a regular feature of college life. We also collaborate closely with other schools and colleges and open our doors willingly for primary school visitors.

3. _Parents' Council, as well as the strong parental influence on our Board of Governors ensures that we have the support of our parent body.

C. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008) and potential measures to address this.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32_statistics_and_research-research_pg/32_stats_and_research_researchreports_pg/32_statistics_and_research_branch_research_reports_2008.htm]

1. As a post primary school with 54% of our pupils on the Special Needs Code of Practice (Stages 1-5) and 6.1% of our pupils with a Statement of Needs, we have a very strong

Individual Needs Department in which the pupils are assessed, monitored and supported to a high level. This is done through classroom support, withdrawal and close liaison with the various support agencies.eg Link Centre, Outreach support etc

2. We have a strong Pastoral Care system i.e. Form Teacher, Year Head, Councillor, Pastoral Care Coordinator, Pastoral Vice Principal, Principal. We engage support from outside agencies when and where appropriate. We also have a Peer Mentoring system in place for Year 8 pupils.

3. In Key Stage 4 we have a flexibility of curriculum on offer to pupils e.g. Newstart, Impact Training, Bridge Project, etc. The courses on offer are continually under review to ensure their suitability for our pupils

D. Department of Education's School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

Please indicate briefly below any comments you may have on this and other relevant Departmental policies.

1. I feel that the rationale from the Every School a Good School Policy document could have been lifted directly from our school ethos and rationale as we stress the importance of the development of the whole child. I disagree with the selection of pupils at 11 years of age as the traditional and long established grammar schools can still pick and choose which pupils they wish to take. In a declining population they have been able to select pupils of an ability that they would not have considered accepting five or ten years ago. If the decline in population is, say 5%, then the intake of all schools should be reduced across the board by 5%. At present the non selective schools such as ourselves have taken the reduction in pupils, and hence staff as well.

2.

Thank you – please email to committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk

McGuinness, S

Aim

"To consider examples of successful post-primary schools serving economically and socially disadvantaged communities, identify the key characteristics/factors which contribute to their success and consider how they can be reproduced in schools where they are lacking."

Terms of Reference

1. Effective School Leadership

To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

Submission from Sam McGuinness BSc DASE MBA D Phil

- Past Principal of Cookstown High School,
- Past Principal of Limavady Grammar School,
- Professional Associate of the Regional Training Unit working with First-time Post-primary Principals in Northern Ireland and aspiring school leaders on the PQH programme.
- Current post: Lecturer in Educational Leadership and Management, School of Education UU at Coleraine, delivering a Master's degree programme to cohorts of aspiring school leaders in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland; bidding to deliver a similar programme to aspiring school leaders in Saudi Arabia.

Recommendations to the Department.

These recommendations are based on research and on professional practice.

"You can't improve schools without leaders" Michael Barber (2010)

The research literature correctly emphasis four main themes for successful leaders:

- (1) Clarification of Values and Vision,
- (2) Proactive and continuing development of Leadership and Management,
- (3) Improved Recruitment supported by continuing skill development,
- (4) Ongoing Relationship Building.

Vision and Values

Building a compelling vision of the organization's culture and goal is a fundamental task in transforming any school, but particularly a disadvantaged one. Such a vision focused on learning, caring and preparing people for life must be founded on personal values such as trust, respect, optimism intentionality and care. Such a vision forms the basis for strong relationships with staff, students, parents and the community; staff become enthusiastic and committed to their job; students like their school, respect their teachers, and improve their academic achievement.

Fundamental to that vision must be the need to raise student achievement through the quality assurance of classroom practice, 'Right First Time'. Such quality assurance is achieved though:

- (a) robust recruitment practices and
- (b) the development of a school culture which embraces conversations about the craft of classroom instruction.

Such an approach must be aligned with a thorough quality control approach with the implementation of improvement strategies founded on, but not dominated by realistic target-setting based on performance data.

Leadership and management

The development of such a culture is predicated upon the competence and willingness of the Principal to engage in transformational leadership, implying the need to put resources and

support into the development of such leadership skills and competences. Currently the School of Education at Coleraine has put resources and expertise into such an initiative, developing a blended learning programme involving a mixture of face-to-face seminars combined with a sophisticated virtual learning environment. It is imperative that this or a similar initiative is made available to all practicing Principals throughout Northern Ireland, many of whom have completed the Professional Qualification for Headteachers programme but who need to continue to develop their competence to Master's level. Research shows that subsequent improvement in leadership practice results in major changes in attitudes and assumptions of students and their communities.

School leadership must intentionally adopt styles that address the complex demands of implementing change. They must practice distributed leadership, involving others in decision making, giving professional autonomy, and encouraging risk-taking in curriculum development and delivery. They must engage staff, parents, community representatives, and students together to develop an environment that promotes a student-centered culture, with learning and achievement at its core.

"The job used to be bells, buildings, budget, buses; now the pendulum has swung to instructional leadership"

McKinsey (2010)

School leadership must spend time on actual instruction including meeting staff on a regular basis. They must maintain a visible presence in corridors and classrooms, and develop systems to provide routine feedback to teachers regarding their teaching learning. Such high visibility and activity enables leaders to recognize and respond to problems, and to develop strong relationships. Acknowledgement of the staff's contribution to the school coupled with recognition for high quality performance generates a greater sense of efficacy resulting in greater job satisfaction. Such intentional instructional leadership is vital for school's success in creating an environment that meets the needs of every individual as well as promoting a positive school learning and working climate. Such instructional leadership develops shared accountability, responsibility, pedagogic and curricular understandings, again leading to student success.

Staff Development and Recruitment

Transformational school leaders need to engage in capacity building. They need proactively and intentionally to develop the skills, motivation and disposition of individuals. People are motivated by what they are good at, so building capacity that leads to a sense of efficacy and mastery is highly motivational. They need to develop professional learning communities, to ensure a focus and coherence through all the activities of the school, a well-oiled machine. They need to focus on maintenance and enhancement of human resources, and to develop leadership teams.

Leaders in successful schools consistently promote staff development through in-service training, peer support and teacher mentoring programmes. Such leaders ensure that teachers implement the skills learned from professional training programmes, since staff development results in school development, and that motivates students to excel academically. Such emphasis on continuing staff development clearly points to the leaders' recognition of the importance of teachers. The School of Education at Coleraine has been investing in a series of development courses for schools, focusing on the quality assurance of classroom practice, the improvement of relationships in the classroom, and on distributing school leadership. Groups which have availed include Ashfield Girls' School, Omagh CBS Grammar School, the Ballymena Learning Together area learning community and the Association for School and College Leaders.

School leaders need to promote an ongoing peer support culture in which highly skilled teachers share their experience with less experienced teachers, especially when dealing with challenging students. Issues with regard to classroom practice need to be addressed through promoting dialogue about the key indicators of high quality teaching.

Transformational leaders challenge the status quo. They encourage teachers to take intellectual risks, promote innovation, and, place themselves at the centre of instructional management in their schools.

In the top-performing school systems, e.g. Finland and Singapore the mechanisms for selecting people for teaching are extremely effective. Selection to teacher training courses ensures that the academic calibre of teachers is in the top 10% of the cohort of graduates. Rigorous checks are used to assess teacher capability and competence and salaries are in line with other graduate salaries. As a result, teaching is viewed as one of the top career choices.

Andy Hargreaves(2007), with regard to Finland, pointed out that:

Finland has defined and defended a particular value system that connects contemporary innovation and traditional creativity within a strong welfare state that supports high economic competitiveness. Public education is seen as vital to the country's growth and security, and the shared high regard for educators who are seen as central to this generational mission, draws highly qualified candidates into the teaching profession. Finland's systemic leadership is in this respect, a fundamental kind of moral leadership that means much more than raising the bar and closing the achievement gap (Fullan, 2006; Hopkins, 2007). Instead, in Finland, there is compelling clarity about and commitment to inclusive, equitable and innovative social values beyond as well as within the educational system.

Relationship Building

Finland, leader in the OECD PISA results, has particularly strong societal engagement. Parental involvement through school visits and regular communication with teachers has a positive impact on student achievement. The development of collegial professional relationships among school staff, and students enhances student engagement and achievement, while the quality of the relationship between leaders and followers impacts positively on commitment to the organization as a whole.

Leaders must place an emphasis upon people rather than policy and systems, and invite others to lead. They must have the courage and competence to address challenges and problems, perhaps the result of diversity, to empower others and foster collaboration. They must have the skill to understand the context of their school in the community, within the network of organizations and institutions through which students move, and to articulate recognition of the differences and potential tensions between the cultural norms and values students experience in the school, and in their home.

Leaders in successful schools emphasize the need to have a productive relationship with parents and community, which involved communicating and understanding community needs and aspirations, and establishing dialogue with parents. Such involvement in community not only helps leaders understand the culture and values of interest groups, but also provides a platform for students to gain work experience, and develop confidence in preparing for their future. Regular communication with parents helps them understand the school's goals and visions, reinforcing their commitment in ensuring the success of all students. Knowledge of their children's achievement and behaviour fosters prompt reward and praise of students for their achievement, while identifying problems promptly. Such relationship between schools, parents

and the community creates the reciprocal responsibilities and mutual support that benefit all students.

School Improvement

School improvement has been a strategic policy both within the UK and internationally for a number of decades. In Northern Ireland, the document Every School a Good School clearly signals that school improvement is a continuing focus for government. The recently published comparative study How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top by Michael Barber and Mona Mourshed, the McKinsey Report (2007), identified three guiding principles that should underpin school improvement policies and strategies:

- the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers;
- the only way to improve outcomes is to improve instruction; and
- achieving universally high outcomes is only possible by putting in place mechanisms to ensure that schools deliver high-quality instruction to every learner.

David Hopkins (2007) in Leadership for Transforming Learning placed school leadership at the centre of the issue asserting that:

School leadership must be purposeful, inclusive and values driven, must embrace the distinctive and inclusive context of the school, promote an active view of learning, be instructionally focused, be distributed throughout the school community and must build capacity by developing the school as a learning community. School leadership must be futures oriented and strategically driven; it must be developed through experiential and innovative methodologies, be served by a support and policy context that is coherent, systemic and implementation driven and be supported by a National College that leads the discourse around leadership for learning.

We need to use the expertise that exists in Northern Ireland to create such a discourse. All Finnish school teachers are educated to Master's level. At the very least all school principals in Northern Ireland should be educated to Master's level in school leadership and management.

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Minister for Employment & Learning

FROM THE MINISTER



Adelaide House
35/49 Adelaide Street
Belfast
BT2 8PD
Tel: 028 9025 7791
Email: private.office@delfni.gov.uk

Mervyn Storey MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Education
Room 241, Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
BELFAST
BT4 3XX

Our Ref: COR/370/10

17 December 2010

DEAR MERVYN,

Thank you for inviting me to contribute to the inquiry into Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Areas.

My Department does support the Department of Education in the achievement of its educational aims by providing independent information, advice and guidance in the post compulsory education environment through the Careers Service and by participating in a number of initiatives, including the implementation of the Extended Schools Programme, the Full Service Community Network and the Literacy and Numeracy Taskforce.

In the case of the latter, it is imperative that standards in schools rise as good literacy and numeracy are pre-requisite to developing and enhancing the skills needed by the Northern Ireland economy. The Northern Ireland Audit Office Report on 'Improving Adult Literacy and Numeracy' (December 2009), highlighted the fact that 4000 young people continue to leave school each year without the appropriate basic literacy and numeracy skills and outlined the consequences on their everyday lives, including unemployment, poor physical health and mental well-being. My Department commits very significant resources to essential skills particularly for 16-24 year olds. It is a major concern that 60% of our resources for essential skills must support the development of basic literacy and numeracy skills for those who have just finished their compulsory schooling.

In addition, my Department supports the work of the Department of Education in implementing the Entitlement Framework whereby further education colleges and training suppliers work collaboratively with local schools to provide young people with access to a wider range of professional and technical subjects. If young people

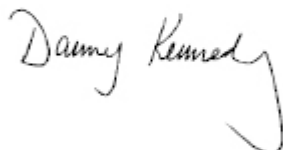


can follow courses that interest and motivate them and enable them to develop relevant knowledge and skills, including literacy and numeracy skills, they are more likely to stay engaged with education and improve their life chances.

My Department also supports the widening of participation in higher education through the Step-Up and the Discovering Queens Programmes. These programmes are aimed at encouraging participation in higher education by disadvantaged pupils who may have low attainment levels and relatively low expectations and who therefore may not have previously considered this as an option.

I understand the Department of Education's school improvement policy 'Every School a Good School' adopts a similar approach to my Department's quality improvement strategy 'Success Through Excellence'. Both place an appropriate emphasis on the importance of good self-evaluation and good leadership and management as key drivers for quality improvement. As with this Department's Strategy, the success in driving up quality will only be achieved if 'Every School a Good School' is implemented rigorously.

Therefore, while not in a position to comment specifically on the quality of an individual school's leadership and management or on how effectively a particular school engages with parents and the wider community, I trust the above demonstrates how our two Departments are engaging effectively for the benefit of the community at large.



DANNY KENNEDY MLA
Minister for Employment and Learning

people skills jobs.

Newry High School

Committee for Education Inquiry
'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'

Response Form

School Name Newry High School
School Sector Controlled Post-Primary

Location - Rural/Urban Urban
Boys/Girls/Mixed Mixed
Your Name and Contact details Fiona Pride, Principal
028 3026 2383
info@newryhigh.newry.ni.sch.uk

Please indicate briefly below the top three practical actions in your school which address each of the following areas of Committee focus:

A. Effective School Leadership - To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

1. Individual pupil centred ethos – the school treats every pupil as an individual and has high expectations for each pupil, based on their individual potential, alongside a rigorous self-evaluation cycle embedded at all school levels – classroom practice/departmental and whole school. This is to be expanded to a mentoring programme. Strong positive focus on merits and rewards for positive behaviour and achievement – pupils respond well to immediate and long-term positive feedback, regular rewards as well as verbal praise. It is vital that the school allows and creates as many opportunities for recognition and encouragement as possible. Active Student Council is up and running.

2. Effective school structures established – clear line management structure with each department responsible to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Clear Job Descriptions and responsibilities understood by all staff. Effective pastoral structures. All allow for regular review and monitoring of Learning and Teaching practices across the whole school. This includes a Learning and Teaching Policy.

3. Open door policy for shared school/parental responsibility for each pupil's attainment across and beyond the curriculum. Parents are welcomed at the school and are consistently encouraged to engage in partnership with the school for the pupil's learning.

B. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

1. Close and regular links with parents- as well as reporting to parents three times a year, parents are regularly invited in to meet with staff on a variety of issues and are welcomed to events throughout the year.

2. Regular consultation with parents on new policies and initiatives. Use of parental focus groups and questionnaires to obtain feedback.

3. Involvement of parents when pupils have poor attainment or attendance.

4. Use of school website as portal for information and method of communication with parents and local community.

5. Facilities available for community use – outside school hours the facilities of the school are regularly used by community clubs and societies for sports and events.

6. Role of charity committee and sporting events to continually rise the school profile and promote contact with the local community.
7. Links with external agencies and community groups to help support specific needs of specific pupils eg CAMHS, Social Services, PSNI, Women's Aid, Love for Life, STEPS programme.
8. Primary School liaison eg Taster Days - primary school pupils come to Newry High School to experience lessons at a post-primary school.

C. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008) and potential measures to address this.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32_statistics_and_research-research_pg/32_stats_and_research_researchreports_pg/32_statistics_and_research_branch_research_reports_2008.htm]

1. Focus on literacy and numeracy to ensure basic skills requirements are met and to encourage these as cross curricular responsibilities throughout the school. These transferable skills are vital baselines for improvement and key to success throughout the pupil's education and on into the workplace.
2. Use of multimedia and ICT to focus attention and provide stimulus and interest, especially to boys. Lessons are as stimulating as possible in order to encourage thinking skills and intrinsic motivation. It is vital that any ICT is pupil led, active and hands on and not merely impressive presentational tools.
3. Careers provision focussed on from Year 8 to provide a reason and a point to learning – a clear target, reason and goal throughout the school years encourages and motivates all learners but especially boys.
4. Use of data by staff for target setting and diagnostic testing to ensure specific and individual areas of need are being targeted for improvement. High expectations must be individualised and driven towards.
5. Mentoring pupils – use of PASS data to identify underachieving pupils. Clear targeting of specific pupils. Academic and social mentoring introduced to support targeted pupils.
6. Effective monitoring and tracking of pupil progress. Target setting and measuring performance. Follow-up action and regular reviews. Regular contact with parents.
7. Provision of vocational courses, including links through Area Learning Community.
8. SEN support – ensuring pupils have every possible support to tackle barriers to learning.

D. Department of Education's School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

Please indicate briefly below any comments you may have on this and other relevant Departmental policies.

1. This policy, "Every School a Good School" is central to our policy and practice.
- 2.
- 3.

**Thank you – please email to
committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk**

Newtownabbey Educational Guidance Centre

**The full text of this report can be found on the ETI website:
http://www.etini.gov.uk/report_detail.asp?id=4899**

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROVISION INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Newtownabbey Educational
Guidance Centre

Report of an Inspection
in April 2010



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE



GOVERNMENT EXCELLENCE

Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (nicie)



A Response to the Inquiry into Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities

Introduction:

The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) welcomes this opportunity to submit written evidence to the Committee for Education's inquiry into 'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'.

NICIE supports integrated schools across Northern Ireland and is committed to not only bringing children from different religious traditions together to learn, but also to teaching children from all backgrounds and of different abilities together, to a high standard, in the same school environment. The issue of ensuring that pupils from disadvantaged communities have a successful education is therefore one which is of particular importance and relevance to the organisation. NICIE believes that it is unacceptable that so many children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds are still leaving school with few or no qualifications.

There are now 20 post-primary integrated schools in Northern Ireland, educating thousands of children every day. With the exception of two, they are entirely non-selective and all-ability. The schools serve a wide variety of catchment areas and attract children from both disadvantaged and more affluent communities.

High numbers of students attending post-primary integrated schools are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), and many of the pupils who go on to study at sixth form level receive Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA). NICIE therefore believes that it is vital that students in Northern Ireland continue to receive EMA and that its provision should not be cut as it has been in England. Receiving the EMA payments encourages students to continue their education at the school they want, where they can study the subjects they want and prevents travel and supply costs becoming prohibitive.

During the 30 years of the existence of integrated schools, we have developed an evidence base which defines the key characteristics for success for all in our schools.

A strong defining ethos

A key defining factor in the success of integrated schools is their distinctive ethos focussing on reconciliation through the provision of an excellent education. The vision which drove the establishment of these schools is one which engages the support of young people and their parents alike. That vision establishes the connection between the education of the individual and the wider society. That vision presents the young person with the challenge of creating a better society and embeds within the individual student a belief in his/her capacity to make a difference. This empowerment is an important component in enabling success for all.

All ability and co-educational schools

One of NICIE's key founding principles was that integrated schools should be coeducational and all-ability in character and seek to educate each child according to his or her educational needs. The importance of these 2 principles cannot be underestimated. We have had much debate about the selective system and its impact on achievement, particularly on those from disadvantaged communities. The all ability nature of our schools ensures that equally high expectations are held for all children. The results show that the level of ability for all children is raised in the all ability setting. There has not been a similar focus on the impact of single sex education. The experience of our integrated schools shows that children learn best when they learn together and that applies equally to educating boys and girls together. Boys in particular are disadvantaged by single sex education.

There are no societal or educational reasons for maintaining single sex schools.

Child centred schools

Integrated schools are child centred. Resources and teaching strategies within the school are organised to accommodate the all-ability nature of the school, providing additional help for both

children with particular learning difficulties and children who are at the top of the ability range. The child centred emphasis focuses on the holistic development of the young person and a full range of activities both curricular and extra curricular are provided. This focus allows each student to achieve and to succeed. This focus ensures that school life is about more than exam success and recognises and celebrates the full range of talents to be found in the student body. This focus creates thriving school communities in which the individual student feels valued and in which his voice is heard.

Educational excellence

NICIE is committed to supporting our integrated schools in ensuring the quality of the education provided is high and in ensuring all students get the support they need to achieve to the best of their ability. As well as teaching children tolerance and how to be individuals in a pluralistic society, integrated schools also aim to stand on their own merit as good academic schools. The exam results of integrated schools usually meet or exceed the Northern Ireland average for schools in the same sector and some individual post-primary integrated schools have achieved exceptional results during the last few years. All integrated schools offer the Northern Ireland revised curriculum. Our integrated colleges are all working to provide the full Entitlement Framework in collaboration with other schools in their Area Learning Community.

During 2009/2010, 63.1% of students from grant maintained integrated (GMI) schools achieved 5 A* to C grades at GCSE level, while 41.9% gained 5 A* to C grades including English and Maths.

This is considerably higher than the Northern Ireland average for all students attending non-grammar schools, 59% of whom gained 5 A* to C grades at GCSE level in 2009/2010, 34.9% gaining 5A* to C including English and Maths.

The results of controlled integrated (CI) schools were lower than that for the GMI schools last year. However, they were still high when compared to the results across the whole controlled non-grammar sector. 49.9% students at CI schools gained 5 A* to C grades at GCSE in 2009/2010, while 27.5% gained 5 A* to C grades including English and Maths.

Across the whole integrated sector, 59.7% of all students gained 5 A* to C grades at GCSE and 38.2% gained A* to C grades including English and Maths.

Parental partnership

Integrated schools are strongly encouraged by NICIE to foster strong links with their parents to ensure that parents are involved in their children's education, as well as in the life of the whole school. Historically, parents have been central to the development of integrated schools in Northern Ireland. All of our integrated schools were established by groups of parents, who wanted their children to have an education free from divisions, either through establishing a new school or by parental ballot to 'transform' a school to integrated status. NICIE believes that parental and community involvement in integrated schools is extremely important. If parents are encouraged to have an active role in their child's education then they are more likely to offer them the support they need at home.

An important factor in ensuring educational advantage for all is the creation of a welcoming environment for all parents where their voice is valued and their feelings recognised. Many parents from disadvantaged areas will themselves have had a bad experience of school and may be suspicious of school authority. A successful engagement with these parents is critical to the success of their children in school if the cycle of educational deprivation is to be broken. The

inclusive values of the integrated sector, based on a firm commitment to parental partnership, ensure that parents feel part of a school community. As a result positive attitudes towards school are engendered in students who might otherwise be hostile to school.

School Leadership

Integrated schools are committed to transforming people's lives for the better and this means they are able to attract a quality of leadership committed to integration, equality and inclusion. Integrated schools often draw in teachers who are highly committed, have innovative ideas and are prepared to work extremely hard to help their students.

Every year NICIE provides training programmes which support the teaching staff at integrated schools and enable them to continue on in their professional development. NICIE recently entered into a partnership with Northern Ireland's Regional Training Unit (RTU) and has created new leadership fora for senior staff members at integrated schools. Leadership development in partnership with RTU has been established to ensure that the current leadership structure in integrated schools is solid, and to encourage succession development with the right calibre of people ready to come forward when principalships fall vacant.

The intensive training programme uses a toolkit, *Improving School Leadership* which was created by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), an organisation set up in 1961 to help European governments fight poverty and foster prosperity. Some years ago, the OECD looked at school leadership across Europe, identifying examples of best practice, and then used their research findings to create the toolkit. It is comprised of four different modules which cover distributing school leadership tasks; developing skills for effective school leadership; making school leadership an attractive career choice; and defining the roles and responsibilities of school leadership.

NICIE is currently rolling out this leadership training programme across the integrated sector, with the first 12 schools taking part in it at present. There is much evidence which suggests that strong leadership can go on to improve school outcomes and NICIE hopes that this course will help integrated schools increase their effectiveness and, in this way, go on to boost student attainment levels.

The various fora coordinated by NICIE ensure that best practice is discussed and shared.

A culture of accountability

Each GMI school has been founded by parents anxious to ensure that their children are educated together. This has in turn resulted in the leadership of those new schools being committed to providing an excellent education for the children of parents who have shown such courage and initiative. From day one, there has been a level of accountability built into integrated schools which perhaps is not found in schools in other sectors. This culture of accountability embeds a self evaluating culture in integrated schools, one which is always seeking ways to find improvement for both individual students and for the school population as a whole. The need to establish numbers and reputation is great driver for finding means to continuously improve!

The Excellence in Integrated Award

Last year, NICIE piloted a new Excellence in Integrated Education Award (EIEA), which has now entered into a second year. The EIEA scheme has been developed to complement the Department of Education's 'Every School a Good School Policy' and is used to encourage integrated schools to evaluate 'integration in practice' and the added value that integration

brings to our schools.. Any schools that sign up to the programme work through a detailed toolkit which has been designed to help them identify any areas they can develop and improve with the assistance of NICIE.

At present, 18 integrated schools are taking part in the self-evaluation process and it is hoped that more will become involved in the future. Although one of the main reasons the award was developed was to help create a shared understanding of what it means to be an integrated school, the toolkit also encourages the schools to look in detail at the way they handle learning and teaching.

For example, the schools are asked to:

- Show how the needs of the individual child are put at the heart of the organisation and structure at the school.
- Provide evidence of high pupil attainment throughout the school
- Provide evidence to show that high expectations are held for all students
- Explain what support mechanisms are in place for vulnerable pupils
- Explain what steps are taken to involve parents in supporting pupil learning and development.
- Explain how they ensure how all children can experience success
- Explain how they celebrate a full variety of achievement across the school
- Provide evidence that the organisation of the school structure supports an all-ability intake.

If they identify shortcomings in any of these areas, NICIE will help them go on to introduce positive changes.

NICIE believes that the Excellence in Integrated Education Award scheme will contribute to school improvement, both by strengthening ethos and by improving overall performance.

Effective and innovative support systems for students

A central tenet of Integrated Education is its child centred focus. Integrated schools are committed to providing support to ensure each student realises his/her full potential. This child centred focus recognises the full potential of the young person, not just what can be measured in terms of exam success. This broader recognition means that each student feels valued and feels part of the school community. A sense of alienation from the schooling process prevents young people from disadvantaged backgrounds participating fully in the school experience or believing in their capacity to access fully the educational experience. The inclusive ethos of our schools based on the principle that equality is a determining factor in delivering educational excellence for all.

To further support this educational excellence, all of our schools have well-developed systems of pastoral care. Many also develop their own programmes to help disadvantaged students. All the schools aim to put a strong support network put in place which can help any students who begin to struggle academically. The aim is to combine an excellent standard of teaching with comprehensive pastoral care.

A underpinning tenet of the pastoral system is a non punitive approach to promoting good behaviour. Our schools have developed policies and practices to ensure good behaviour is the

norm. An important element in doing so is through the development of the 'student voice'. Students Councils are a typical component of the integrated school giving a voice to students and engaging them actively in the life of the school.

Our schools recognise that some young people start second level schooling at a disadvantage; they may have developed negative attitudes about school and may have low expectations of themselves as learners. The induction period for new students is all important. This structured programme engages each individual and offers a fresh start to all. A successful induction period is critical in building positive attitudes towards school in instilling self belief in all students in their capacity to learn and achieve.

In addition, because of their inclusive ethos, all of our schools have a high percentage of young people with Special Needs or Statements of Special Needs. The structures to support these young people and to ensure their full integration into the school community ensure equality of access to all.

There are many individual examples of good practice from across the integrated school sector in Northern Ireland.

Case Studies

Hazelwood Integrated College:

Hazelwood Integrated College is based on the Whitewell Road in North Belfast and is a specialist school for the creative and digital arts. It has a school population of over 800 and 37% of the pupils are entitled to receive free school meals. In 2009/2010, 67% of the students gained 5 A* to C grades at GCSE.

Hazelwood operates around the core principle that every single one of its students can achieve if they are given the right level of support. From day one, all the college students are encouraged to develop their own sense of self-belief and to have high aspirations. They are all set personal goals and targets. The expectation and norm is that each student will continue in full time education until the age of 18.

Students are given regular careers advice and, in particular, are provided with guidance when they have to make their Year 12 and Year 14 subject choices. They are encouraged to consider what they would like to do when they are ready to leave full-time education. This helps students to realise the importance of getting good grades in their subjects so they can go on to have the career and the life they want.

Hazelwood identifies its extensive use of all-ability classes as one of the main factors contributing to its exam success. In Year 8 students are placed in classes which are a microcosm of the school community being balanced by gender, background/tradition, ethnicity and ability. This construction prevents the ceiling of lowered expectations and under achievement which can develop as a result of a selective school system and of streaming in schools. An added advantage is that students of different ability levels learn directly from each other.

All-ability classes give every child a chance to do well and mean no-one ends up having their self-esteem badly damaged because they have been labelled as a failure. Hazelwood believes the selection process in place in Northern Ireland makes some children feel that they are 'failures' from a very young age. The school therefore does not look at anyone's grades when considering applications from prospective students.

Hazelwood offers its pupils a wide-ranging curriculum and range of revision and study support programmes. The college achieves high exam results. It also has alternative educational provisions in place for pupils who continue to struggle academically. For example, it has a project room which is used to give pupils specialist teaching to improve literacy, numeracy, social and emotional skills.

At GCSE level, students who are facing difficulties in their school life have the opportunity to take part in the Prince's Trust xl programme which helps them to develop skills in leadership, team work, enterprise and problem solving, and can lead to them returning to school for further study. The programme runs over two years and aims to improve the self-esteem and confidence of the students. A partnership with Pathways, a programme run by Extern, ensures that the needs of the most vulnerable students are met and that no young person is excluded from completing compulsory education.

Hazelwood has a strong focus on pastoral care and many different strategies work together to help the students. As well as the teachers providing the students with a significant level of support, they also have access to relaxation therapy, anger management, counselling and peer mentoring, among other interventions.

A fulltime nurse and part time counsellor provide significant support to children at risk. The employment of a full time Youth worker has provided significant intervention and support for disadvantaged young people.

Teachers at Hazelwood are highly dedicated to their students. One current student, who admitted that he could have been expelled multiple times during his first and second year at the college, credited the Hazelwood staff with turning his educational experience around.

He said, "I didn't enjoy Maths or English when I was younger and I didn't want to work at them. I was also having a hard time at home which made the situation worse, but then I got to my GCSE year and realised I needed to pass both of the subjects to go on to study the A Levels I wanted to. The teachers had never given up on me so when I began to make more of an effort we began to get on better with each other and things started to turn around. They stuck by me, and I ended up passing both English and Maths.

"I always enjoyed PE, and got on well with the PE teachers, so I was always able to go down to that department if things got difficult. The school kept encouraging me and I'm now predicted to get an A, B, and C at A Level and I'm planning to go on to study either Sports Science or Photography at University."

Involving parents in their children's education is another priority for Hazelwood and this is done through the parent's council, parental interviews and a parents' section on the college's website. An automated text/call facility also keeps parents updated on the latest developments at college.

In recent years, tackling the underachievement of boys has been a school priority with a range of successful strategies being deployed.

Oakgrove Integrated College:

Oakgrove Integrated College is situated in Gransha Park, on the banks of the River Foyle in Londonderry. Many of the college's students come from deprived areas and 32% are entitled to receive free school meals. Over the last decade, the school has seen rising attainment levels. In 2002, 45% of the students gained 5 A* to C grades at GCSE, 54% achieved this standard in 2010.

Oakgrove is a child-centred school and has a strong focus on pastoral care, believing that if a student is unhappy or experiencing problems in either their home or school life then they will be far less likely to be able to reach their full potential. One main elements of this policy is the opportunity for students to have access a counsellor if they need to talk to someone. This helps students to move past their problems so they can then put more of their focus into their studies. One on one mentoring can also be offered to pupils who are struggling with their school work.

Form teachers play a vital role in the pastoral care of the pupil since they are usually the people who know individual students the best. They are taught to be sensitive to any change in behaviour and act appropriately.

Students also attend a Personal Development (PD) class each week and a programme covering many aspects of personal development is provided for each one of them. If a child is identified as having a problem which the Form Teacher or Year Head judges to be serious then the Principal and the parents will be involved in arriving at a solution.

Oakgrove is an official UNICEF Rights Respecting school and this means that it puts a strong focus on students' rights. The pupils are given the opportunity to have their say on what goes on across the school, including aspects of learning and teaching, even though they may not make the final decisions. A whole school council is elected annually through PR voting.

Students are encouraged to look out for each other. For instance, sixth form students can become involved in a mentoring programme and sign up to provide support to younger students. This has been very successful so far and has helped to foster a close school community where children who are beginning to experience difficulties can receive help from their peers as well as the teaching staff.

Oakgrove also sees parents as an important part of the team as they can help ensure that all students have the self-esteem they need to develop into a happy, confident young adults.

Although Oakgrove has a major focus on pastoral care, the college also goes to great lengths to make sure it is offering pupils an excellent education. For example, it recently implemented a targeted strategy to raise the attainment level of its male pupils. The college identified subjects in which boys were underachieving and then looked at ways of helping begin to perform better including by structuring lessons differently and using different learning materials more suited to their needs.

At GCSE level, timetables are worked around students so they have more chance of an opportunity to study the subjects they prefer. Pupils can choose to go down a more vocational pathway which means they spend one day per week at the North Western Institute of Further and Higher Education, one day per week on work experience placements and the other three days studying for their GCSEs within the college grounds.

Oakgrove believes that all students should leave its gates with a strong understanding of integrated education and the ability to offer something to society.

Drumragh Integrated College

Drumragh Integrated College is based in Omagh and has a mixed ability intake. During 2009/2010, 81.5% of Year 12 pupils gained 5 A* - C grades at GCSE. 24.8% of the pupils are entitled to receive free school meals.

Drumragh's motto is 'excellence for everyone' and over the last few years the college's exam results have been outstanding for a non-selective school. Students of all-abilities are welcomed into the school, without having to go through any transfer test-style assessment.

Children are placed into appropriate groupings based on their ability, but they can readily be moved into a different ability class if they are perceived to be capable of the step up. Special needs provision is offered to any pupils who need extra help, while a Gifted and Talented Programme also operates to support students capable of becoming high achievers.

The college does not just celebrate high exam scores, but tries to reward students when they achieve their personal best.

At the heart of the school is the belief that it should always be delivering a comprehensive, all-ability education. Drumragh tries to put an active emphasis on the students' preferred learning styles, using the Multiple Intelligence model. This model is based on the principle that there are different types of intelligence, and every individual has different strengths. Pupils at the college are encouraged throughout their studies to identify their own strengths and therefore what learning style works best for them.

In Year 11, students are offered the choice of three different study pathways, some of which have a more of a vocational focus than others. They can then choose to pursue the one best suited to their skills and ability level.

Pathway 1: GCSE English, GCSE Maths, GCSE Science (double or single award), GCSE Religious Education and 4 other GCSE options (3 if Double Award Science is taken). Pupils also have classes in Careers/Employability, Personal Development and PE.

Pathway 2: GCSE English, GCSE Maths, GCSE Science (double or single award), GCSE Religious Education, GCSE Learning for Life and Work and 2 other GCSE options. Pupils also have classes in Careers/Employability, Personal Development and PE, and take part in the AQA Learning to Learn Programme.

Pathway 3: GCSE English, GCSE Maths, GCSE Science (double or single award), GCSE Religious Education (half award) and GCSE Occupational Studies (double or single award). Pupils also have classes in Careers/Employability, Personal Development and PE, and also gain the Duke of Edinburgh Award, a Certificate of Personal Effectiveness and the Growing, Learning and Developing (GLAD) award.

When they begin Year 12, students are allocated a staff mentor on either an individual or group basis, who then takes responsibility for monitoring the progress they make. During study leave, pupils also take part in a targeted revision programme at the school so they continue to have the support of their teachers.

Drumragh aims to do everything it can to help students through their exams and believes that the perception that only grammar schools can achieve excellent results for their pupils should be challenged.

The School has a very child-centred ethos. A key part of this is ensuring that the pupils feel like they can approach staff for help whenever they need to. The school tries to foster strong, close, respectful and supportive staff-student relationships, and to maintain a positive atmosphere at all times.

Support staff, including the Special Needs Co-ordinator, the Head of Pastoral Care and the Learning Mentor are in place to help any students who begin to struggle. The Learning Mentor has a particularly important role because they can coach children on social skills, conflict resolution and coping strategies. Her remit sometimes involves visiting parents and building relationships up with them as well as with the students.

Drumragh believes encouraging parental involvement also helps to ensure that every one of its students can achieve well. Parents are involved in many ways, including through regular parents' consultation days. They are given regular reminders which let them know that they can contact the school if they have any concerns and a considerable effort is made to make sure that all parents feel welcome at the school.

Underlying every aspect of Drumragh's approach to helping children from disadvantaged backgrounds is its commitment to the integrated education ethos. Children of all abilities are welcomed with open arms and given the help and support they need. They are also taught how to have mutual respect for each other and to develop their sense of self-belief.

Shimna Integrated College

Shimna Integrated College is based in Newcastle and is a specialist school for modern languages. In 2009/2010 73% of the Year 12 pupils gained 5 A* - C grades at GCSE, while 58% gained 5 A* - C including English and Maths. Last year, 15% of the pupils were eligible for free school meals and 21% were on the special needs register.

Shimna believes it cannot put its exam success down to one single factor. It holds high expectations for all students and, because the school is non-selective, no one coming in to Year 8 is labelled based on a transfer-test style exam. Everyone, without fail, is encouraged to do well. The college strives to operate under a student-centred ethos and to build support for all students into every aspect of planning.

All-ability teaching is a core part of the Shimna's success. The school believes putting students of different abilities together in the same classroom raises the aspirations of all the pupils. There are no 'low' groups and nobody is led to believe that any less is expected of them than it is of others.

Being a specialist modern language school means high academic expectations are held for Shimna, and it strives to meet them. All students at the school take English language and English at GCSE level and are given the opportunity to study two foreign languages. The key message given out by the college is that everyone can achieve in these subjects, and this boosts student confidence. Shimna now has a very high exam success rate in language subjects.

MidYis data capture at Year 8 and Alis at Year 13 is used to track student ability (like in many other integrated schools). Three years ago, the school was included in a DE pilot of ALPS (Advanced Level Performance System) for benchmarking at A level, and it has continued to use this scheme despite DE's decision not to continue funding.

Students in need of extra help can also be identified through close contact with parents and guardians. Shimna uses its student's homework diary as a channel of communication with the home. The school tries to foster positive and trusting relationships with all parents and guardians and encourages them to get involved in their children's education. Evening language classes are even held for interested adults.

Shimna offers strong pastoral care which is led directly by the principal, who has an open door policy, but also involves all the other staff members. The school has its own counsellor, Counselling4Youth counsellor and an art therapist who can all help students. It liaises closely with its Education Welfare Officer (EWO) as well as with social services.

The school believes it is important to invest in creating good relationships. Even housekeeping, caretaking and kitchen staff are closely involved in supporting students. Staff are given training to help them learn how to communicate well with the children.

Shimna also operates an ongoing Pastoral Briefing, which is available on the college intranet and gets updated with any information as may help staff understand what a particular student is coping with. This information is also used to decide on EWO or behaviour support referrals, counselling referrals or early careers interviews.

All Shimna staff commit themselves to making sure no student is left behind academically.

Conclusion:

NICIE looks forward to the day when every student in Northern Ireland can achieve well, regardless of their social or economic background. NICIE is proud of the work integrated schools are already doing to make this aim become a reality.

In summary the key factors in ensuring that needs of all young people are met include:

A strong ethos based on the vision of a better society

The concept of Integrated Education appeals to the idealism of young people enabling them to see the connection between school and wider society.

The child at the centre

Our integrated schools are constructed around the needs of individual students. Young people do not have to fit into an organisation; they are a valued part of a community in which they have a strong voice.

Parental partnership.

Parents are valued and respected. It is recognised that their support is vital to the success of the young person in accessing fully the educational experience.

High expectations.

All of our colleges are all-ability in composition. All are committed to developing the self esteem and self belief of the young person and to removing barriers to achievement.

Effective and creative support systems.

All of our schools have developed their own innovative, joined up support systems to ensure that each student realises his/her potential.

Professional and focussed systems for the use of data for promoting improvement.

Our schools are committed to using data to identify potential, track progress, identify and fill gaps and to instil accountability.

Strong leadership aligned to a culture of accountability.

A strong sense of accountability devolved throughout the school, including students, is a key factor in continuous self evaluation and improvement.

Co-educational schools.

The single immediate change which would promote greater achievement among boys would be the removal of anachronistic single sex schools. All of the evidence shows that boys in particular achieve more in co educational settings.

All-ability education.

The evidence shows that our selective system build in disadvantage from an early age, distorting the Primary school curriculum, lowering the expectations of children and staff, alienating children from school, damaging their image of themselves as learners. In particular reference to this enquiry, children from disadvantaged backgrounds most likely to suffer from the impact of exclusion.

Appendix 1

Table showing free school meal provision and GCSE results of all post-primary integrated school in Northern Ireland.

School name	Number of pupils	FSME*	FSME %	% achieving 5+ A* - C at GCSE	% achieving 5+ A* - C at GCSE (EM**)
Hazelwood College	865	318	36.8%	66.39%	32.80%
Malone Integrated College	751	268	35.7%	51.64%	26.20%
Oakgrove Integrated College	848	271	32.0%	54.01%	30.70%
Erne Integrated College	417	85	20.4%	47.83%	40.60%
Drumragh College	636	158	24.8%	81.48%	58%
Crumlin Integrated College	300	38	12.7%	44.26%	16.40%
Parkhill Integrated College	677	144	21.3%	45.38%	27.70%
Slemish College	746	98	13.1%	80.67%	63%
North Coast Integrated College	475	140	29.5%	55.42%	31.30%
Ulidia Integrated College	534	66	12.4%	59.52%	39.30%

School name	Number of pupils	FSME*	FSME %	% achieving 5+ A* - C at GCSE	% achieving 5+ A* - C at GCSE (EM**)
Sperrin Integrated College	475	78	16.4%	74.03%	50.60%
Priory College	471	98	20.8%	60.49%	24.70%
Fort Hill College	876	120	13.7%	58.65%	41.40%
Lagan College	1,229	155	12.6%	67.20%	51.90%
Shimna Integrated College	521	73	14.0%	72.60%	57.50%
Strangford Integrated College	525	60	11.4%	57.14%	30.80%
Blackwater Integrated College	342	68	19.9%	42.50%	25%
Brownlow Int College	430	152	35.3%	38.54%	17.70%
New-Bridge Integrated College	520	53	10.2%	76.92%	52.60%
Integrated College Dungannon	461	121	26.2%	45.45%	29.90%

* FSME = Free School Meal Entitlement

** EM = English and Maths GCSE

Appendix 2

The NICIE Statement of Principles

Declaration of Ethos

The integrated school provides a learning environment where children and young people from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds, as well as those of other faiths and none, can learn with, from and about each other. The promotion of equality and good relations extends to everyone in the school and to their families regardless of their religious, cultural or social background. Integrated education is value-driven and child-centred. It is delivered through a holistic approach with an emphasis on developing every aspect of a child's or young person's potential.

Context

The history of Northern Ireland is one marked by prejudice and intolerance. It is a society divided politically, religiously, culturally and economically, where ignorance of those who are different has led to sectarian violence and strife. The current Peace Process reminds us that change is possible through dialogue and negotiation. At the same time the influx of newcomers from other parts of the world brings with it the challenge of enhanced ethnic diversity, demonstrating that Northern Ireland cannot afford to remain isolated and trapped in time. The 21st century therefore brings hope for the future, despite being burdened by the legacy of the past. Communities now find themselves in transition, feeling their way cautiously towards equality and sharing but still troubled by old loyalties and beliefs. At the core of their journey lies

the need to create shared spaces where all have the opportunity to live, learn and grow together in understanding, rather than mistrust. For over 25 years, integrated schools have sought to influence societal change and promote greater choice for parents. Thousands of young people have shared in the unique experience that is Integrated Education, but many thousands more have never had the opportunity to meet, or make friends with, someone of a different faith or tradition. In 1991 when the Statement of Principles was first written, Northern Ireland was a very different place to what it is today, although the common thread of sectarianism connects that past with this present. The revised Statement of Principles reflects an integrated movement that is still dealing with the country's internal divisions, while at the same time witnessing greater ethnic diversity and an increased reluctance for people to categorise themselves as being from a particular religious background. It is in this context that the Statement of Principles reaffirms the meaning of Integrated Education and articulates the integrated ethos.

Definition

In the spirit of promoting a better and shared future, the friends and supporters of the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education define Integrated Education in the Northern Ireland context as: 'Education together in a school of children and young people drawn mainly from the Protestant and Catholic traditions, with the aim of providing for them an excellent education that gives recognition to and promotes the expression of these two main traditions. The integrated school, while essentially Christian in character, welcomes those of all faiths and none, and seeks to promote the worth and self-esteem of pupils, parents, staff, governors and all who are affected by the presence of the school in the community. The core aim is to provide children and young people with a caring and enhanced educational experience thus empowering them as individuals to affect positive change in a shared society.'

Affirmations

1. Parents, together with their children, have rights in determining the nature of each child's education as set out in the European Convention on Human Rights (Human Rights Act, 1998) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
2. Children and young people of all religious, social and cultural backgrounds, regardless of ability, race, gender or sexual orientation have a right to an education which respects and gives expression to their individual identities, while providing opportunities for them to explore the diversity of the world in which they live.
3. In an inherently segregated and contested society, children and young people can learn to respect difference more effectively when they are afforded the opportunity to have meaningful and sustained engagement with those who are different from themselves.
4. Young people should be encouraged to recognise those less fortunate than themselves, the oppressed and victims of injustice.

Core Principles of Integrated Education

The 4 core principles of Integrated Education represent the cornerstones of the integrated ethos. The integrated school demonstrates its distinctiveness and vision through a commitment to these principles.

(i) Equality

The integrated school promotes equality in sharing between and within the diverse groups that compose the school community. This occurs structurally at every level amongst pupils, staff and the board of governors, as well as culturally within the overt and hidden curricula of the school.

To achieve these ends each integrated school aspires to the following:

(a) an annual intake of at least 40% pupils from a perceived Catholic background and at least 40% pupils from a perceived Protestant background;

(b) a board of governors comprising at least 40% members from a perceived Catholic background and 40% from a perceived Protestant background; and

(c) the active recruitment of teachers whose cultural or traditional background reflects that of existing or potential pupils.

Furthermore the integrated school subscribes to:

(d) maintaining high academic and vocational standards within an all-ability framework and providing equal access to the curriculum for all its pupils;

(e) supporting the personal and professional development of all members of staff, with particular emphasis on enhancing the integrated learning experience of each pupil;

(f) ensuring that all policies developed by the school reflect and respect the diversity within the school community; and

(g) taking a democratic approach to all relationships between pupils, staff, parents and governors.

(ii) Faith & Values

The integrated school provides a Christian based rather than a secular approach. It aspires to create an environment where those of all faiths and none are respected, acknowledged and accepted as valued members of the school community.

In this context:

(a) pupils will learn together all that can reasonably be expected for them to learn together;

(b) the school will facilitate specific provision, where necessary, for Catholic pupils whose parents wish them to undergo sacramental preparation. It will also seek to acknowledge significant religious and cultural celebrations which are representative of other faiths;

(c) the school will encourage religious and community leaders to visit and participate in school activities;

(d) pupils will be introduced to the ideas, beliefs and practices of the major world religions and humanist philosophies, in a manner appropriate to their age and ability, and in line with the NI curriculum; and

(e) alternative provision will be made for those pupils whose parents do not wish them to participate in any religious activities or classes.

(iii) Parental Involvement

The support and commitment of parents is a fundamental element of Integrated Education and historically, parents have been central to the development of integrated schools.

The integrated school therefore seeks to encourage and sustain effective parental involvement in the life and work of the school by:

- (a) maintaining significant levels of parental representation on the board of governors (i.e. in accordance with legislative requirements and structures);
- (b) creating a forum for parents which cultivates and focuses parental support for the school;
- (c) establishing appropriate arrangements and procedures for individual and collective communication between parents and:
 - (i) the principal
 - (ii) other members of teaching staff
 - (iii) the governing body; and
- (d) ensuring that parents are made fully aware of the school's integrated ethos.

(iv) Social Responsibility

The integrated school delivers the curriculum on an all-ability and inclusive basis to all of its pupils. It respects the uniqueness of every pupil and acknowledges his/her entitlement to personal, social, intellectual and spiritual development in the attainment of individual potential.

This philosophy affirms that pupils should be encouraged to:

- (a) understand and engage with the use of non-violent means of conflict resolution;
- (b) demonstrate mutual respect and understanding towards others, and develop tolerance and trust of those who are different;
- (c) nurture self-confidence and self-respect; and
- (d) appreciate the interdependence between society and the natural environment it inhabits.

Furthermore, the integrated school:

- (e) will deliver the curriculum in a way that reflects its particular ethos. Where possible, the subjects and activities offered, and the resources complementing their delivery, should reflect the diversity within the school's own pupil population;
- (f) has a duty to be open in its relationships with schools, learning partnerships, churches and other local institutions;
- (g) should present itself to the wider community as a shared civic space.

North Coast Integrated College

Committee for Education Inquiry
'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'

Response Form

School Name North Coast Integrated College
School Sector Secondary
Location - Rural/Urban Urban
Boys/Girls/Mixed Mixed
Your Name and Contact details Jim Frizelle

Please indicate briefly below the top three practical actions in your school which address each of the following areas of Committee focus:

A. Effective School Leadership –

To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

1. Equality of opportunity irrespective of creed, colour or economic status.

In line with a key principle of 'every school a good school' and fundamental to integrated education this vision was fundamental and interlinks with all other priorities.

In order to allow this to occur the child came first. An in-depth knowledge of the pupil's background was essential. Their attitude to rules and regulations in school; low self-esteem; combined with the type of learner was taken into consideration. This information was used by staff to motivate and stimulate pupils, particularly in after-school activities - specifically in homework clubs that allows children from less privileged areas to have access to equipment and professional assistance to aid completion of homework and allow extension work to take place.

2. Setting target:

Target setting through a process of Assessment for Learning informs everyone of the process of learning as it was happening, rather than simply measuring its outcome afterwards. This form of assessment can raise pupil's achievement and increase pupil's motivation and confidence. It allowed pupils to become active participants in their learning and encourages independent learning. High quality teaching allowed this to succeed.

In addition, pupils were given increased subject options through the District Learning Partnership, in line with entitlement framework guidelines. These options were mainly additional vocational options offered through other Coleraine schools and the Regional College.

3. The promotion of employability:

Employability and careers guidance have been another priority area set out by the Senior Management Team. This priority allows pupils to get involved in work placement and see the link between school subjects and work. This in turn helps students and their parents to appreciate the importance of striving towards achievement in subjects studied in school and acting as a positive incentive for them.

B. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

1. Extra-curricular activities & parent / pupil courses

After school activities include homework club, which allows pupils to study homework under supervision from volunteer staff; Modern Language club, which allows pupils to practice European languages such as Spanish & French; ICT Club, that allows pupils to reinforce skills learned in class or produce other homework activities using ICT; Library Club, allowing pupils to gain knowledge from books or ICT; Sporting activities, including football, netball, rugby, keep fit, Gaelic sports, gymnastic or athletic activities depending on the time of year, and cheer leading. Parent courses include Home Economics, ICT, Technology and Hair Dressing.

2. Parental Vocational DIY Courses & Information Evenings

The DIY courses include plastering, tiling and grouting; plumbing and electrical wiring. All of these were provided by the teaching staff who had qualifications in the relevant skills.

Information evenings involved providing information on a range of topics to help parents assist with their children's difficulties on issues such as sexual relationships, fireworks, knife and street crime as well as how to help their child with coursework, examinations or examination pressure.

3. Pre-School Football Club, Dancing Classes & Wheelchair Club

Parents from disadvantaged areas were given training as coaches and child-protection training to allow them to take football training for pre-school children from Millburn, Ballysally and Harpur's Hill in the school on Wednesday evenings. They were also allowed to play their home games on Saturday mornings on the school out-door pitch. The Causeway Wheelers, a wheelchair club with 25 wheelchair bound children, used the sport's hall on Saturday mornings as a games and activity event. All these activities are done by the staff without financial remuneration and are done to make the school a more community based school.

Salsa and Irish Dancing classes take place on Monday and Tuesday evenings, respectively.

Polish classes take place on a Saturday morning for pre-school and early primary school age pupils. Approximately, 40 children participate, one school teacher and two pupils.

C. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008) and potential measures to address this.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32_statistics_and_research-research_pg/32_stats_and_research_researchreports_pg/32_statistics_and_research_branch_research_reports_2008.htm]

1. Target Setting

Base-line predicted data, using NFER Nelson CAT scores, combined with cumulative examination results are used to predict pupils who may not achieve a 'C' grade at GCSE. Pupils and parents are invited into school and given help and advice on how to turn the situation around. These pupils are selected after the mock GCSE exams and this gives them sufficient time to make improvements before the actual examination. The strategies involve parent, teacher and pupil agreement on the way forward. This strategy improves the success rate significantly.

2. Raising Self Esteem

Self-belief has been restored over a 5-year period, after the detrimental effect of the transfer procedure. The pastoral care and academic staff combine to achieve this difficult task.

3. Additional Help in Mathematics & English

Additional classes are provided for pupils who exhibited weaknesses in English and/or Mathematics. This child-centred approach is credit worthy and typical of all staff in this school. The English Department conduct tests on all Year 8 pupils and identify weaknesses early in the child's secondary educational life. They make every effort to redress any problems encountered. A similar strategy occurs in the Mathematics Department, where one teacher assists academic pupils while another redresses specific weaknesses in mathematics in additional after school classes. These classes are arranged in consultation with the parents.

D. Department of Education's School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

Please indicate briefly below any comments you may have on this and other relevant Departmental policies.

1. Child-centred approach

The child is at the centre of efforts to improve educational achievement and tackle underachievement.

2. Effective leadership

A clear vision for improvement was met through:

- Promoting a high quality of opportunity, irrespective of creed, colour or economic status.
- Improvement in attainment through target setting through a process of assessment for learning.
- Emphasis placed on the promotion of employability

3. High Quality Teaching

It is recognised that improvement comes first and foremost through high quality teaching from committed and professional teachers who put the child first and whose skills and competence are recognised and respected and their professional development supported.

**Thank you – please email to
committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk**

Oakgrove Integrated College

Committee for Education Inquiry 'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'

Response Form

School Name	Oakgrove Integrated College
School Sector	GMI
Location - Rural/Urban	Rural
Boys/Girls/Mixed	Mixed
Your Name and Contact details	Jill Markham, Principal

Please indicate briefly below the top three practical actions in your school which address each of the following areas of Committee focus:

A. Effective School Leadership - To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

1. The focus on the mental well being of pupils, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Counselling provided for all Year 8 pupils (in groups) and for extensive numbers of individual pupils as and when the need arises.
2. Pastoral led school structure with an 'Open door' policy. Pupils are confident that they will be listened to and supported by adults who work in the school and also by 'senior mentors'.
3. Practical support with help for uniform, equipment, trips etc. ensuring that all pupils regardless of background have the chance to avail of all opportunities.

B. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

1. After consultation with Parents the timing and format of consultation meetings was changed. This enhanced communication and contact to include parents from disadvantaged communities who identified that their preference was to come into school during the day.
2. The Welcome Evening became much more pupil led with a focus on the inclusion of pupils from disadvantaged communities as leaders for various workshops during the evening.
3. Parent classes offered at school in the evening in various activities which provided certain parents with an increased confidence about coming into school.
4. Huge support for all community initiatives so that Oakgrove is seen as an integral part of the local and wider community.

5. Pastoral staff go out to visit parents at home if and when they feel unable to come into school.

C. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008) and potential measures to address this.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32_statistics_and_research-research_pg/32_stats_and_research_researchreports_pg/32_statistics_and_research_branch_research_reports_2008.htm]

1. Year 9 Boys' Literacy/Numeracy programme funded by extended schools.
2. Whole school focus on the use of suitable 'texts' for boys through the Literacy strategy.
3. Extensive analysis of data to identify underaspirers, largely of whom are boys.
4. Mentoring by staff of underachieving Year 11 pupils, largely boys, followed up with support by senior students.

D. Department of Education's School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

Please indicate briefly below any comments you may have on this and other relevant Departmental policies.

- I think that 'Every school a good school' is largely an excellent policy for school improvement. I do, however, feel that it is inappropriately named and should be called 'Every school an excellent school' which would give the impression of much higher expectations.
- Obviously the continual reference to ESA should be revised.
- The absence of a set of 'valued added measures' is a grave cause for concern.
- As regards funding/awpu the money should be targetted where it is most needed, ie. disadvantaged pupils. This alone would begin to address the issue of underachievement and allow schools to implement vital interventions without having to rely on external funding which is only available for short periods.

Thank you – please email to committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk

Presentation to the Education Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly on Wednesday February 2nd, 2011

Presented by:

Jill Markham, Principal

John Harkin, Vice Principal

An all-ability, integrated school, Oakgrove Integrated College has been serving the local community since 1992. Current enrolment is 846; the school is always over-subscribed. ETI spoke of improved standards in examination results, students showing respect for diversity, and high standards in teaching and learning.

Jill Markham was appointed

We will present under three headings: Leadership, Parents & The Community, and Underachievement. We see our work in these three areas as being linked; together these have brought some of the improvements which we have seen.

Leadership

Students see models of leadership from staff and older students; this brings out their own qualities of leadership – leaders of learning, leaders of change, leaders of life.

- An open door leadership style
- Staff leading teams of empowered colleagues
- A Rights Respecting School with Citizenship responsibilities across the school
- Projects which empower young leaders: eg Spirit of Enniskillen, Hands For A Bridge; these students in turn train other students and lead the welcome events.
- BoG support for staff training, and student leadership interviews,

Parents & The Community

As an integrated school, we believe we have duties to our community, and we try to engage with every request from the community, which is mutually beneficial.

- Extended schools initiatives such as parent classes
- Community initiatives – requests for student support for events
- Home visits where parents cannot easily come to school
- Literacy/ numeracy projects, including parents
- Changes to the structure of parental consultation meetings, in response to parental suggestions
- Integration initiatives – such as multicultural evening in school
- Keen supporters of the Foyle Learning Community

Underachievement

Schools, and students are judged by standards. Our focus has been to raise these for each child, and for the school.

- Academic support – mentoring by staff and senior students
- Analysis of data, with students, to highlight areas for improvement
- Each student as a person with a range of needs which must be met

- Increased counselling support for students and strategies to encourage talking about problems
- Accessing all available support from other agencies for young people eg Opportunity Youth's Reach Them Young.
- Identifying needs of young people where they are, and helping them to have a vision and arrive where they want to be.

We hope that the committee is that you will see what can be done from the fairly limited resources. Our school, dealing with disadvantage, does not have significant extra support. The pilots we have tried have been successful. Our experience shows that to raise standards, achievement and engagement in the widest sense, invest in those areas where improvement is needed, and let us lead the change.

Priory Integrated College

Committee for Education Inquiry 'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'

Response Form

School Name	Priory Integrated College
School Sector	Controlled Integrated
Location - Rural/Urban	Urban
Boys/Girls/Mixed	Mixed
Your Name and Contact details	Peter McCreadie

Please indicate briefly below the top three practical actions in your school which address each of the following areas of Committee focus:

A. Effective School Leadership - To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

1. An understanding that those coming from disadvantaged communities are more likely to underachieve at school.
2. An understanding of the reasons why these young people are more likely to underachieve: family culture; low self esteem with regard to education; negative parental experiences of education; lack of education stimuli at home to develop literacy and numeracy skills.
3. A belief that school can intervene and enact strategies to connect these young people to education/learning and make up the deficit.

B. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

1. By stressing to parents from the outset, and throughout the child's school career, that education is a partnership between school, parent and child. By encouraging and setting up

systems that encourage and facilitate easy two way contact between school and parent and to encourage, monitor and evaluate parent attendance at consultation meetings.

2. By engaging parents in the management of the school by means of (i) parent governors (ii) some kind of parents' forum. In our case Parents 4 Priory – a group that supports school, parents and children. They raise funds to improve school infrastructure. They organise out of hours learning for parents: e.g. drugs education; internet safety; study skills seminars, throughout the year. They meet once a month to discuss current school based issues and to socialise.

3. By working to make the wider community aware of the school's aims and successes – linking with community groups and making school spaces available to them to meet; inviting business representatives into school to talk to and work with pupils; by supporting and joining local neighbourhood initiatives.

C. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008) and potential measures to address this.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32_statistics_and_research-research_pg/32_stats_and_research_researchreports_pg/32_statistics_and_research_branch_research_reports_2008.htm]

1. By understanding that all young people have different learning styles e.g. visual, auditory and kinaesthetic and designing lessons that contain a variety of VAK activities which will engage all learners

2. By encouraging and rewarding progress in the knowledge that all children respond positively to success. By understanding the particular types of rewards that are most motivating for boys.

3. By establishing the type of constructive competitive classroom environment in which many boys thrive and by using teaching resources that will engage boys.

D. Department of Education's School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

Please indicate briefly below any comments you may have on this and other relevant Departmental policies.

1. We completely agree with and implement this 'child-centred' policy and are committed to delivering a quality of education that ensures every pupil 'will leave compulsory education with the appropriate standards of literacy and numeracy'. We also agree with the indicators of successful schools suggested by the document.

2. However we understand we work within a system that is structurally biased against those from disadvantaged communities. This will always be the case where there is a two tier system where one sector (selective) is viewed by the general public as being better than the other (non-selective). Selective schools are still populated in the main by children who do not come from

disadvantaged communities. It is extremely interesting and significant that the 2 post primary schools selected for new builds this academic year are selective schools. This suggests that these schools, in the main populated by pupils from backgrounds that are not disadvantaged, are more important than the many dilapidated secondary schools.

3. We do not believe that all children are the same. We understand that children learn differently and have different skills and talents that must be developed if they are to contribute to and succeed in society in the 21st Century. However we do believe that all children should have equality of access to a broad and balanced curriculum delivered in schools fit for purpose in the 20th Century. All post primary pupils should have access to a very broad range of subjects – vocational and general. This offering can be delivered under one roof or as part of collaboration – providing the logistics of the collaboration are financially viable. Our biggest collaboration is with the local grammar school, Sullivan Upper School. Sixty five Sullivan pupils attend Priory to study applied A Level Business and Health and Social Care. Eleven Priory pupils attend Sullivan to study A Level English and Biology and GCSE Drama. This significant collaboration between selective and non selective school sends out a very important message to the whole community and, we believe, has improved community cohesion. It has also resulted in Priory pupils, boys and girls from all backgrounds, understanding that their school is not a second best option. Governors in both schools are committed to developing curricular links. This will undoubtedly connect more children from disadvantaged backgrounds with education as they internalise that they have equality of educational opportunity.

Thank you – please email to committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk

Regional Training Unit (RTU)

The Committee for Education's Inquiry concerning 'successful secondary schools- which have succeeded in raising standards and/or maintaining good standards in the face of social/economic deprivation'.

An RTU Perspective - Dr Tom Hesketh Director

We welcome the Committee's interest. Your intended enquiry and its results will make a significant contribution to the growing interest and evidence base globally that School Matters and that, amongst the numerous contributory factors to school success, leadership is a key variable.

Education Reform is a global enterprise. There is much that we can import from successes elsewhere, (what Andy Hargreaves calls the 'horizons of hope'). Much too that we in Northern Ireland have to offer to the outside world about what works, particularly I believe in the area of school leadership- a fact remarked on by Professor Sir Tim Brighouse in the work which he undertook with BELB and RTU as part of the Achieving Belfast initiative. A fact too which finds endorsement in the OECD's Improving School Leadership project which involved Northern Ireland alongside 22 other jurisdictions.

The Committee's intentions in all of this therefore are to be applauded.

School Leadership Matters

Since 1977 there has been a recognition that leadership is the most important single factor in the success of schools (HMI/DES 1977)

Since then, the evidence base for leadership linked to learning has grown enormously (both in volume and sophistication). Also the claims have become more assertive.. e.g. As Christopher Day has asserted, " As far as we are aware there is not a single documented case of a school successfully turning around its pupil achievement trajectory in the absence of talented leadership".

There is now a global consensus concerning the linkage between leadership practices on the one hand and pupil learning on the other.

Yet this is a complex issue. There is a complex chain of variables linking leadership to student learning. The extent to which leadership impacts on pupil learning can be documented in two main ways- direct impact and indirect impact.

In terms of direct impact, studies suggest that leaders contribute up to somewhere between 5-7% of the cross school variation in pupil learning. Although at first glance relatively small it is important to point out that this constitutes one quarter of the total school effects. By contrast, teachers make up for one third of the variation across schools.

The indirect impact of leadership is perhaps even more profound. This consists of the impact on teacher (more generally staff) efficacy via for example, Principals working simultaneously on motivation, abilities and work settings including climate, culture, school organisation, and teacher working conditions. In short principals can have a significant impact on the 'internal states' of their teachers and in turn on teacher efficacy. Teacher efficacy is the key ingredient in school success.

There is therefore a complex set of variables which principals can impact on both directly and indirectly, the cumulative result of which when worked on simultaneously is higher learning outcomes for pupils.

The characteristics of successful leadership

Since leadership matters, leaders therefore have a tremendous responsibility to 'get it right'. The good news as Leithwood and colleagues observe, is that 'fortunately we know a great deal about what getting it right means. We actually know a great deal about the leadership behaviours, practices or actions (i.e. the 'core practices' or 'basics' of successful school leadership) that are helpful in improving the impact of schools on the pupil outcomes that we value'.

Successful school leaders, have recognizable characteristics. These characteristics are both cognitive and affective. Cognitive in the sense of their knowledge, intelligence and problem-solving ability. Affective in terms of emotional stability, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience and frankness. In general they have a belief in their own ability and in the ability of their colleagues to achieve success.

The research (National College for School Leadership (NCSL) (RR800) shows that the core practices of successful leaders in schools are seen in four major ways. First they set directions from a sense of moral purpose and motivate their colleagues by building a shared vision with high expectations for the school's future. Second they develop the capacity of people, supporting individuals, giving intellectual stimulus and providing an appropriate model by example. Third they redesign the organization by building a culture of collaboration, restructuring the way the school works, building productive relationships with families and communities and connecting the school to its wider environment. Fourth they manage the programme for learning and teaching, staffing it appropriately, providing necessary support and resources for staff and pupils.

All of which finds reflection in the various frameworks within Northern Ireland describing and articulating effective leadership(e.g. National Standards for Headteachers, ETI's Together Towards Improvement, Every School A Good School, inspection commentaries etc..) These frameworks underpin the work of RTU and its partners across the CASS services. In particular, they provide the templates against which those who aspire to become school principals are assessed and developed through the Professional Qualification for Headship (Northern Ireland).

Leadership in the face of social/economic deprivation:

The Committee's interest in leadership in the context of social /economic deprivation finds reflection in developments elsewhere for example:-

- New Leaders for New Schools in the U.S;
- NCSL's work on Schools in Challenging Circumstances;
- The work and successes of London Challenge with inner London Schools (for long behind the National average in terms of pupil attainments, now significantly above);
- RTU's collaboration with the Institute for Education in London and London Challenge on Leadership on the Front Line (copies provided);
- The Centre for Social Justice's anti-poverty strategy launched recently in Belfast has also much to say about the significance of leadership in tackling educational failure;
- And, at the behest of the Minister, combating under-achievement was the focus of a North South Ministerial Council meeting at which I had the privilege of chairing a symposium involving a number of local heads.

The socio-economic context is of course particularly difficult. Study after study has suggested that the socioeconomic status (SES) of families typically explains more than half of the variation in student achievement across schools. SES also is highly related to other student-related effects such as violence, dropping out of school, entry to post secondary education and levels of both adult employment and income.

As leithwood et al observe, "Schools serving low SES families often find themselves in an 'iron circle' that begins with the family's impoverished economic conditions... Low SES families are also more likely to have low expectations for their children's performance at school"

Family SES is a crude proxy for powerful conditions in the home that have a significant influence on pupils' successes at school- family work patterns, academic guidance and support, stimulation to think about issues in the larger environment, academic and occupational aspirations, the provision of adequate health and nutritional conditions, physical settings in the home conducive to academic work.

A considerable proportion of the research carried out in schools has treated student background variables such as SES as unalterable. Many teachers and headteachers have, as well. However, these features of pupils' backgrounds do not directly shape pupils' abilities to be successful at school; they influence but do not determine it"

As the Joseph Rowntree Foundation study on low achievement has remarked, "The great majority of low achievers come mostly from disadvantaged backgrounds. But many students from the same backgrounds succeed. The girls come from the same families and mostly go to the same schools, but do much better. Low achievers are commonly to be found in poor urban areas, but there is very considerable variation by schools.....Some schools with high

proportions of disadvantaged pupils do much better than others. So disadvantage is not the only factor".

Low achievement is therefore a complex interplay between SES factors, systemic factors and school based factors.

We believe passionately that in those circumstances where the correlation between low SES and low attainment is turned on its head, leadership and quality teaching are the twin pillars of success. However, it is important to note that this success is always against the odds, since not just the 'iron circle' factors mentioned but other systemic features of the system can contribute to low achievement. As the study by the Rowntree Foundation observes,

- disadvantaged students are likely to attend worse-performing schools. This can affect their outcomes adversely and does so particularly for minority ethnic students and students with Special Educational Needs.
- Anything which gives schools greater opportunities to select their pupils works to the detriment of the disadvantaged; Measures which assist fair selection will help them.
- Research has shown that national school league tables and /or schooling systems which accentuate the significance of targets such as the 5A* - C GCSE have adverse effects for low achievers, as schools often concentrate resources on better performers. If targets are to continue, they need to be broadened.

However the key point in all of this is the fact that these SES variables are not deterministic. This is what underpins/inspires/motivates efforts both within and beyond schools to reverse their impact. In all of this, given the Committee's interest, leadership practices and orientations (typified usually by a zero tolerance of underachievement) play a fundamental part:

Leadership practices known to be effective in these contexts include:-

- an assertive and positive form of leadership
- interaction with pupils directly and as frequently as possible
- the shaping of practices around an ethic of care
- sponsoring programmes aimed at helping parents acquire additional parenting skills development
- assisting parents to gain access to the full range of social services which they need by helping integrate the full range of social services around the school (i.e extended or wrap around provision, sometimes referred to as school plus)..
- focusing on teaching and learning, including the fostering of an academic climate
- purposeful use of data (especially in relation to within school variation)
- leading professional development including the creation of positive collaborative and achievement oriented cultures
- building productive relationships with families and communities
- building a shared vision-including the cooperation and alignment of others to (the leaders) set of values and vision
- modelling behaviour desirable to achieve the school's goals
- the internal buffering of staff from excessive pupil disciplinary activity

In short, as the authors of the compellingly powerful Ten Strong Claims About Successful School Leadership, an NCSL research paper assert,

'most successful heads draw on the same repertoire of basic leadership practices,the selection and combination of practices used depends on context, with a greater number of leadership practices required to effect change in more disadvantaged schools. Substantial improvements in pupil behaviour, attendance, attitude and motivation are important precursors and facilitators for improvements in students' academic achievement, especially in schools in highly disadvantaged contexts' (my emphasis)

Successful heads in disadvantaged contexts, therefore, make greater efforts to effect improvements across a range of areas – especially pupil behaviour, motivation and engagement, and school culture- because they know that improvements in only one or two areas are unlikely to be enough to secure sustained gains in pupil outcomes.

Headteacher' values are also known to be key components in their success- invariably, they exhibit,

- a strong sense of moral responsibility and a belief in equal opportunities (zero tolerance of underachievement)
- a belief that every pupil deserves the same opportunities to succeed
- respect and value for all people in and connected with the school
- a passion for learning and achievement
- a commitment to pupils and staff

Successful heads see pupil achievement as having behavioural, academic, personal, social and emotional dimensions: their strategies to combat underachievement reflect this.

Is School Leadership development working in Northern Ireland are we making a difference..?

This is a perennial theme of ongoing research and enquiry, including by ETI. There are we believe a number of indicators that we can highlight which are positive relating to:-

- The high and growing percentage (in 2010 63%) of PQH Graduates into First time Headships.
- The high and growing percentage (in 2010 57%) of PQH Graduates into First time Vice Principalships.
- Investors in People (IiP) successes across our schooling system (now standing at 170 schools)
- EFQM successes- with N.I quality award winners every year between 2005 and 2009; British quality award winners in 2006, 2007, 2008; a European School Leadership award in 2009; and, in 2010 alone at the N.I quality awards – 1 gold award and 5 marks of excellence.
- Chief Inspectors reports over last 6-8 years provide an improving picture in terms of school leadership and in terms of attainment e.g 2006-2008 Chief Inspectors Report noted that 'In three quarters of the (primary) schools inspected, the principal provides leadership and management which is good or better, an improvement on the previous reporting period' In relation to post primary the same report recorded leadership and

management within post primary schools to be satisfactory or better in nearly 90% of schools; good or better in nearly 72% of schools.

This is however no time for complacency. In relation to leadership and management, challenges remain, particularly the 2006-8 Chief Inspector report's references to leadership and management in one tenth of Post Primary schools as 'inadequate or unsatisfactory' and that ' in one quarter of primary schools, the quality of leadership is an area for improvement'.

We believe that the context created by ESAGS provides an opportunity to:

- Focus leadership development/support on those contexts where it is most needed
- With the enhanced evidence base forthcoming from OECD work and related research on the 'attractiveness to headship'- address issues of leadership supply and succession planning, particularly acute in Northern Ireland with 77% of our post primary heads aged 50 or over.
- Address the PQH/recruitment gap – with greater focus on boards of governors and appointments committees on the value of PQH and investment in leadership development generally, including too an appreciation of the characteristics of successful headship practices.
- Affirm and celebrate headship in part via new models of leadership development which realise greater use by the system of the insights/expertise of Heads e.g. peer mentoring especially for trainee headteachers on the new PQH (NI) programme and new first time heads (especially those working in challenging circumstances)

Successful school leadership is fundamental to the health of our education system and wider society. The work of developing school leaders in Northern Ireland is genuinely collaborative involving DE, the Employing Authorities (ELBs, CCMS), sector support bodies (NICIE , CnaG) the profession itself and RTU. I value the Education Committee's interest as in partnership we seek to advance the critically important dual agendas of developing tomorrow's leaders today and preparing today's leaders for tomorrow.

Salisbury, B & R

Education Committee

Bullet Points on School Improvement.

Since we have been working in schools in disadvantaged areas for many years (see attached CV's) it may be useful for members of the Education Committee to see the 'checklist' we both use to determine what a school is actually doing and what perhaps it needs to change. This list has been put together from hard practical evidence and helps us ask the right questions and quickly get to the key issues.

Quality Leadership

Those leaders who are clearly making things happen have:

- Have a clear vision of the need for improvement and a short time scale to implement this.
- They identify clear success criteria and check regularly that these are being met.

- They are committed to the notion of high achievement for all students and do not tolerate systems which block pathways for some improvement.
- They have identified priorities for the improvement of teaching and learning and check regularly that these are being achieved.
- They are enthusiastic, credible, inventive and resilient.
- They have high visibility around the school and are known by all of the students. They in turn know all of the students.
- They take tough decisions and confront poor practice.
- They empower and support others and encourage professional maturity and quality leadership at all levels.
- They have high expectations of others and make it clear that the 'Standards expected of you are.....'

Monitoring the Organisation.

Those schools making progress always have:

- A very good knowledge of every aspect of their organisation and can give an accurate appraisal of what needs to be done.
- They have clear measurement systems and present the data collected back to staff in order to further improve performance.
- They have an emphasis on monitoring what happens in the classroom so it is accepted and expected, that teaching will be observed and recorded.
- They measure systematically the attainment, progress and value -added of all students and communicate this regularly to staff, governors, parents and students.
- They rigorously analyse the effectiveness of the school by conducting Department Reviews, measuring the impact of policies and identifying their current strengths and weaknesses.

Accountability.

The most effective schools try to make every one professionally accountable by:

- Having clear job descriptions.
- Effective line management.
- Appraisal of individual performance.
- Daily communications to reinforce the message.

Consistency.

Those schools which are improving see the value of concerted action and:

- Agree some standard principles for lesson structure by gaining collective agreement on what constitutes a 'Good Lesson'
- Agree about the standards of behaviour which are acceptable and unacceptable and make sure that 'rights and responsibilities' are maintained.

- Aspire to achieve consistency in all things.

General Ethos

There are some further pointers which seem always to be evident in those schools making good progress in disadvantaged areas and these are:

- A welcoming reception area with helpful staff.
- Up to date display material which represents the work of the school and its students.
- Evidence that the school wishes to work with parents and the wider community.
- Evidence that there is a pride in the appearance of students, staff and the buildings.

Of course there are many more aspects involved in moving a school forward but using these practical guidelines does seem to make a difference.

Rosemary and Bob Salisbury Dec 2010.

St Cecilia's College

Committee for Education Inquiry

'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'



School Name St. Cecilia's College
School Sector Catholic Maintained
Location - Rural/Urban Urban- Derry
Boys/Girls/Mixed Girls
Your Name and Contact details Kathleen Gormley
St. Cecilia's College
Bligh's Lane, Derry
BT48 9PJ



School Summary

St Cecilia's College is an all ability school in Northern Ireland's second city. It is situated in the Bogside and looks over the 17th century Walls of Derry.

The school has just completed a 5 year decant to the Northland Road (to the former Templemore Secondary School) to facilitate our new build on our original site on Bligh's Lane. We opened in September 2010. It will open its additional sports site on Fanad Drive in September 2011. These facilities link with our international sized sports hall on Central Drive, which is a £1.4m lottery funded project in conjunction with Derry City Council and the Old Library Trust.

It has won several local and national awards for performing arts, leadership, ICT and Extended Schools initiatives, sporting and quality marks. The school is a Catholic school for girls and currently has 874 pupils between 11-19 years old. We reduced our enrolment to accommodate our New Build Capacity of 825 (outlined by Department of Education). The present pupils come from 23 primary schools in the Derry City Council area. The school has been over subscribed for the past 2 decades. St Cecilia's, as a brand, has gained a high trust from the community and the city that are proud of the school and tell us so.

The college has high academic achievement at KS3/GCSE and Advanced – 2010, 84% 5 A*-C at GCSE, 100% pass rate at Advanced Level (See Appendix 3 for results analysis). It has the 3rd largest sixth form in the city with over 200 pupils. It significantly out performs both FSM and NI Average Benchmarks. (See Appendix 4: St Cecilia's Context – free school meals).

Please indicate briefly below the top three practical actions in your school which address each of the following areas of Committee focus:

A. Effective School Leadership - To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

1. Strategic Planning

The College has a strong 5 year strategic plan (Appendix 1 – 'One Strong Storyline' - 2009-2014). This is backed up by a yearly Operational Plan. This planning is informed not just by best practice but next practice. We have been fortunate enough to avail of opportunities to have study visits to other schools in Northern Ireland, England, USA and Australia and Strategic Planning training and continuing Professional Development is key to leadership and whole staff and governor training.

2. Standard Setting – Success for All is part of our ethos

As a college we are never content to stand still and become complacent about standards. Various bodies have recognised this. We are not afraid to seek external verification. Eg:

Investors in People recognised many strengths of the organisation including:

- St Cecilia's is dedicated to delivering a high quality of child-centred education. This is achieved by teaching and learning styles based on values, relationships and partnerships with parents and the community.
- St Cecilia's is truly inspirational it has many positive examples of innovation and 'good practice' in relation to how employees at all levels are supported to unleash their potential and that of the pupils.
- It was clearly evident during the review that the Principal and top team within the school have made sure that St Cecilia's has a clear set of core values which support the school's purpose and vision and that these are at the heart of the organisation's strategy and govern the way it operates.

The Education and Training Inspectorate Report noted the following key strengths, amongst others, in its January 2010 report:

The good quality of the lessons observed.

The clear vision held by the Principal and the Vice Principal of the role and contribution of the specialist areas with regard to whole school improvement.

Over the past 3 years the percentage of pupils obtaining Grades A* - C in five or more subjects at GCSE has risen and is very significantly above the NI average for non-selective schools. The school exceeded its targets in each of the three years.

Well above average results in English, Maths and Science at GCSE Level.

The successful links and excellent working relationships with a wide range of external stakeholders who support the specialist subjects.

The effective work carried out with primary schools.

The collaborative programme developed with post-primary schools in the Foyle Learning Community.

The strong contribution the school makes to the local community.

The strong commitment, through the specialism, to meeting the needs of all the pupils across the full range of ability and to raising standards in external examinations.

3. Self Evaluation / Performance Management

The school engages in self evaluation processes and endeavours to improve performance by monitoring, evaluation and review. The Strategic plan in turn creates an annual Operational plan, monitored, evaluated and reviewed by the staff, governors and leadership team. Staff at all levels, are engaged in performance reviews, staff consultations and surveys which all inform on the decision making. Each Head of Department meets with the Principal in the Autumn term to set targets for pupils in Year 12, 13 & 14. All targets are SMART targets based on previous knowledge, previous evaluations and tracking of each pupil. Heads of Year also give Pastoral targets to complement Curriculum targets. The Action plans drawn up by each Head of Department reflect the Strategic plan targets. Pupils in Year 8 – 11 are targeted by their Form Teacher who feeds this information to their Head of Department.

Performance Management

- There are a range of informal and formal performance management tools in place.
- Quarterly Principal's Report to Board of Governors
- Governors review of Principal and Vice Principals
- Annual PRSD and target setting for teaching and support staff
- Classroom observations – formal and informal by Principal and Subject leader
- 10:10 observations for all teaching staff (10 minute observation looking for 10 things)
- Whole school responsibility to deliver the Operational Plan
- Induction observations for all new staff and Early Professional Development staff.
- Pupil assessment of lessons.
- Pupil evaluation using ICT tools eg.surverymonkey.com
- Student Leadership team and Student Council

B. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

Being a city centre school over the last four decades, a lot of the history of Derry and its less favourable times has touched and influenced the school. This has led to a resilient staff, parent and pupil body in the face of adversity, the shooting of pupils, a knife attack on a pupil and being a billet for British forces. Even with this, the school has managed to be a real source of community pride and it knows only too well the value of working in conjunction with local neighbours. It is a school in the community and a community in the school.

1. Partnerships locally

There are a number of partners and suppliers who help the school. These are listed below.

Educational Support:	Western Education and Library Board, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, Regional Training Unit, Awarding Bodies, Department of Education.
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Collaborations:	Foyle Learning Community, Sharing Education Programme, Extended Schools Cluster (5 post-primary schools with the Triax area of Neighbourhood Renewal), North West Regional College, University of Ulster.
External Agencies:	(including but not exclusively) Social Services, Education Welfare Officer, Neighbourhood Renewal, Chamber of Commerce, Ilex Regeneration, Foyle Skills and Employer Connections, Derry City Council, Old Library Trust, Wall2Wall Music, peripatetic music tutors, sports coaches, Princes Trust, Young Enterprise, gordon gallery, Bogside & Brandywell Health Forum, Wilderness Foundation, Cresco Trust, The Honourable the Irish Society, Verbal Arts Centre, Nerve Centre, International Peace School, PSNI, patrons.

St, Cecilia's success has been due to many of these partnerships and the community is recognised in any celebration of success we have.

As well as local and national partners we have now branched out to international partnership with USA and Italy.

2. Facing the challenges of being in a disadvantaged community head on. – Below is the present plan.

Society	Impact	Action
Demographic Downturn in an area of TSN (Target Setting Need)	Fewer children for schools	Proactive PR and maintaining of standards Constant achievement message Increased number of pupils post 16 Increased number of collaboration pupils
Economic Downturn present	More children on free school meals Less access to additional funding	Ensure parents are aware of provision Additional counselling and out of school hours support (out of school hours) More OSH programmes as part of directed time. Moving towards a more flexible workforce
Health issues	Children's work and attendance affected Increase in staff stress levels	Liaise with health professionals and continue strong emphasis on health and well being Staff Welfare policy
Family issues	Problems with children in school	Provide strong pastoral care/ listening ear Liaise with Social services and PSNI/ to provide training for staff on drugs. Use of MLA's to talk about anti-social behaviour in School Assembly
Societal Problems	Children's work in school impacted	Liaise with external agencies in area on individual child basis
Local opportunities i.e. City of Culture status 2013	Increased opportunities for school community to engage with the city	Proactive engagement in planning and delivery on the City of Culture process to ensure our pupils are able to engage.

Out of School hours for parents and pupils – These are led by staff and outside agencies. St Cecilia's joined the Extended Schools programme in September 2006 and was allocated £34,157 as a budget to improve services and opportunities for the pupils, families and the community. We appointed an Extended Schools Development Manager who evaluates the activities and

completes an annual report. The graphs below the type of activities as well as from the 2009 / 2010 Annual Report, show the breakdown of activities at different times of the school day, different target groups and the benefits for those involved.

Type of Activities OSH*

Staff Led		External Clubs
Art	Lunch Bunch Club	Athletics
Ballet	Maths	Active Families
Breakfast Club	Netball	Cake decorating
Choir	Science	City of Hope Collective (Music Group)
Drama	Young Enterprise	Cookery
Environmental Group		DJing
Football		Drumming
History		Irish Dancing
Homework Club		Yoga
ICT		Slimming World

These change and are added on demand.

High Level Outcomes from the Extended Schools Report



C. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008) and potential measures to address this.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32_statistics_and_research-research_pg/32_stats_and_research_researchreports_pg/32_statistics_and_research_branch_research_reports_2008.htm]

1. Building self-esteem through a curriculum where pupils can achieve.

The school has a child centred approach to education through teaching and learning styles based on values, relationships and partnership with parents and the community. We strive to meet the needs of each individual pupil and to provide them with every opportunity to grow and develop academically, spiritually, physically as well as socially and emotionally. Every programme, partnership and policy is based on the principle that it will set every pupil on their path to success. All staff and pupils are united under the school motto – "Aspire, Endeavour and Achieve".

2. Parent Engagement

We have high parental attendance at Parent Teacher Meetings. This is recorded and monitored by middle management levels pastoral heads who are key in supporting the academic attainment of each year group. They are remunerated on TA3 which reflects the high level post.

Year Group	2009 / 2010	2008 / 2009	2007 / 2008
Year 8	83.0%	78.2%	79.3%
Year 9	77.0%	83.1%	79.0%
Year 10	79.2%	78.0%	78.6%
Year 11	79.0%	74.3%	79.5%
Year 12	76.7%	78.0%	78.0%
Year 13	73.0%	72.0%	75.0%
Year 14	78.0%	77.0%	78.0%

This in turn has a very positive correlation with pupil attendance.

Post Primary School Attendance Rates – 2008 / 2009 (DE Data)

DENI No	School Name	% Attendance	% Absence	% Authorised Absence	% Unauthorised Absence
2230188	St Cecilia's College	93.1	6.9	5.6	1.2
2230081	St Mary's College	87.3	12.7	4.2	8.5
2260276	Oakgrove Integrated College	91.8	8.2	7.2	1.0
2230225	St Brigid's College	85.9	14.1	6.3	7.8
2230254	Immaculate Conception College	87.8	12.2	7.8	4.4
2230122	St Patricks & St Brigid's High School	94.1	5.9	4.9	0.9

DENI No	School Name	% Attendance	% Absence	% Authorised Absence	% Unauthorised Absence
	Northern Ireland Post-Primary Average	92.3	7.7	5.1	2.5

Our new college has a parent room and is open

3. Not settling for less. 'Can do' Philosophy

Our pupils are never told that they are disadvantaged. Staff are trained to expect and get the best. We further enhance the learning and provision of teaching and learning by keeping up to date with improvement programmes and initiatives:

- Driver for improvement in GCSE/A Level results towards success for all – above average for the last 10 years.
- Investors in People 2009
- ETI Inspection Surveys 2008 & 2010
- Revised Curriculum 2007
- Specialist School Status 2006 – to date
- Sharing Education Programme (Atlantic Philanthropies) 2006 – to date
- International Peace School programmes 2006 – to date
- Foyle Learning Community 2006 – to date
- Specialist Schools Pilot 2006
- Building a school for the future 2005 – to date
- Extended Schools Programme (inc. cluster) 2005 – to date
- International links programmes including Comenius 2005 – to date
- Healthy Eating Schools 2004, 2007 – to date

D. Department of Education's School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

Please indicate briefly below any comments you may have on this and other relevant Departmental policies.

1. Target Setting/ Bench marking and data

St Cecilia's fully takes on board the advice of the department on target setting and benchmarking and this is a regular feature in our planning and academic cycle. See Appendix 3 for our results analysis. We would however welcome a more value added approach to data.

2. Post- Primary Admissions

We would welcome a further debate on the out workings of Transfer 2010 which put a tremendous administration burden on an over subscribed school such at St. Cecilia's. Transfer 2011 took little notice of the comments of those schools who followed it to the letter.

Northern Ireland education does not have to have a one size fits all policy. Our flexibility and uniqueness can be a real strength. We have a lot to be proud of in Northern Ireland. Schools like St. Cecilia's have a lot to contribute to this debate. Success should be encouraged and post 16 policy by DE towards admissions into sixth form total distorts the learning continuum.

3. Collaboration

This initiative has had great success in this city post-16. It extends and deepens choice particularly for disadvantaged. However future curriculum planning needs to involve real sector skills debates on a twin track approach to curriculum reform post-16. we need to ensure students leaving our institutions are either college ready/ work ready or both.

As principal for the last 9 years of a successful post-primary college I welcome the current philosophy of devolving more sensible autonomy to leaders of schools towards policies and procedures so that they can be applied locally with maximum impact.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment

Kathleen Gormley

Appendix 1

Strategic Plan 2009-2014

One Strong Storyline

1. Instilling Values

1.1 Ensure the students, staff and governors know and value the history and traditions of St. Cecilia's College.

1.2 Develop the spiritual life of the College by fostering the Catholic faith.

1.3 Prepare students for life as responsible citizens.

2 Developing Character

2.1 Promote positive behaviour, increase self esteem and celebrate success.

2.2 Ensure consistent application of pastoral policies and procedures for staff and students.

2.3 Encourage physical and mental well-being for all.

3 Inspiring Achievement

3.1 Provide a challenging curriculum that allows every child the opportunity to achieve success

3.2 Build and foster Independent Learning.

3.3 Inspire the achievement of one's personal best.

4 Uniting Vision

4.1 Implement workforce development in pastoral and curricular areas.

4.2 Improve communication structure for pupils, staff, parents and community.

4.3 Actively manage our Private, Public Partnership in consistent and effective use of facilities, in line with the strategic direction and ethos of the College.

5 Building Trust

5.1 Promote partnerships, and support, for St. Cecilia's College internally, nationally and internationally.

5.2 Develop collaboration to enrich our staff and students' experience both locally and globally.

5.3 Share innovations, policies and practices internally, locally, nationally and internationally.

Appendix 2

ETI Quotes from Specialist Schools Surveys and Inspection at the College

ETI made the following observations regarding Leadership and Self Evaluation within the school:

"The key strengths of leadership and self-evaluation in the school are:

- the strong strategic leadership of the Principal and Vice Principal;
- the good management of the additional investment, including the effective support of the pupils provided in the areas of literacy and numeracy which has improved standards in these areas;
- the strong contribution the school makes to the local community;
- the strong commitment, through the specialism, to meeting the needs of all of the pupils across the full range of ability and to raising standards in external examinations; and
- the improvement in the standards which the pupils attain across the range of subjects."

Appendix 3

Results Analysis for St. Cecilia's College 2005-2011

Key Stage 4 Outcomes

5+ Grades A* - C At GCSE Level

	2005	2006 (C1)	2007 (C2)	2008 (C3)	2009	2010	2011
No Of Pupils	144	151	150	145	143	136	137

	2005	2006 (C1)	2007 (C2)	2008 (C3)	2009	2010	2011
Target		56	60	63	72	75	80
Actual	50	66	77	72	78	84	
Difference		+ 10	+ 17	+ 9	+ 6	+9	+ / -
NI Average	40	43	45	50	50	NAY	
Average For Similar Schools	n/a	n/a	47	52	NAY	NAY	
Change In Target?		No	No	No	No	No	

Key: NAY = Not Available Yet

5+ Grades A* - C At GCSE Level Including Maths and English

	2005	2006 (C1)	2007 (C2)	2008 (C3)	2009	2010	2011
No Of Pupils	144	151	150	145	143	136	137
Target		30	40	33	48	52	55
Actual	34	29	43	34	50	60	
Difference		-1	+ 3	+ 1	+ 2	+ 8	+ / -
NI Average		28	29	30	30	NAY	
Average For Similar Schools			29	31	NAY	NAY	
Change In Target?		No	No	No	No	No	

Key: NAY = Not Available Yet

Post 16 Outcomes

2+ Grades A – E At A Level

	2005	2006 (C1)	2007 (C2)	2008 (C3)	2009	2010	2011
No Of Pupils	66	77	77	82	85	84	99
Target		96	96	97	97	100	100
Actual	98	96	91	96	99	96	
Difference		0	-5	-1	+2	-4	+ / -

	2005	2006 (C1)	2007 (C2)	2008 (C3)	2009	2010	2011
NI Average	92	95	94	93	93	NAY	
Average For Similar Schools			95	93	NAY	NAY	
Change In Target?		No	No	No	No	No	

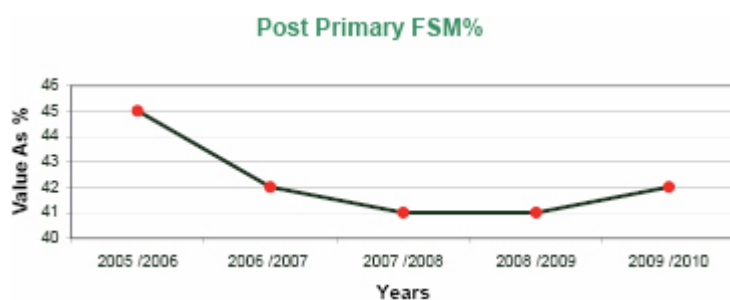
Key: NAY = Not Available Yet

Appendix 4

St Cecilia's College Context – Free School Meals

The table below shows the percentage of pupils in receipt of free school meals.

Figure 35 – Post Primary FSM %



Achievement V Benchmark.

Figure 36 – 5+ Grades A* - C At GCSE Level

Year	%	FSM Benchmark	Above / Below Benchmark	NI Average
2005 / 2006	62.00	30.86	31.14	63.00
2006 / 2007	77.00	19.60	57.40	64.00
2007 / 2008	72.00	34.80	37.20	68.00
2009 / 2010	84.00			

Thank you – please email to
committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk

St Franchea's College

18-JAN-2011 15:31 From: ST FRANCHEA'S COLLEGE 02846328972

To: 90521371

P.2

Committee for Education Inquiry
'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'
RESPONSE FORM

School Name	St. Franchea's College
School Sector	Maintained
Location - Rural/Urban	Eastwilton - Rural
Boys/Girls/Mixed	Girls
Your Name and Contact details	Martha Smyth Phone 02846322919

Please indicate briefly below the top three practical actions in your school which address each of the following areas of Committee focus:

A. Effective School Leadership - To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

1. Having a clear and shared vision
 - Ensuring the values of the college underpin decision making and development priorities
 - Sharing a commitment to improvement in all aspects of school life
 - Having high expectations
 - Positive role models.
 2. Developing effective and purposeful working relationships with an inclusive approach to decision making ensuring all those within the school community feel valued. Working together as a team to enhance pupil outcomes in an effective learning and teaching environment.
 3. Leadership is devalued and exists in all levels across the school community. We are all leaders in our classroom, in our departments and in extra curricular activities. Pupils (School council, prefects, parent and daughter clubs, sports field etc.) are also leaders. We are responsive to the needs and wishes of pupils, parents and staff.
- Support for staff development (Investors in People, Bronze Award)

Committee for Education
Room 241, Parliament Buildings, Ballynacree, Stormont, Belfast, BT4 3XX
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Committee for Education Inquiry
 'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'
 RESPONSE FORM

B. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

1. Very positive relationships with pupils, staff and parents
 - Principal has an open door policy and parents are always made feel welcome and valued
 - Close working partnerships with parents re academic progress and pastoral concerns.
 - Continuous two way communication between teachers and parents.
 - Mentoring programme - invite support/feedback from parents.
2. Receive and react to feedback from parents/pupils/stakeholders through audits, questionnaires, parent/teacher meetings on policies, procedures and school issues
 - Provide parent / daughter clubs in ICT / Cooking / Keep Safe programmes
 - Close liaison with external agencies (Social Services, School Nursing / Health Team, PSNI, St. Ann's, Cancer / Library / Museum services, local community groups.)
3. close links with feeder primary schools and local post-primary schools
 - pupils' involvement in joint cross-curricular events eg, County Show, joint school musical, rowing, enrichment courses has increased pupils' self-esteem and has provided them with opportunities to succeed not just academically but in a more holistic manner.

Actively provide opportunities for pupils, parents and local community to avail of facilities in the college. (GAA county and local club, WESB Music Service concerts; Fermanagh Choral Society, Ulster Youth Orchestra, Summer scheme ('School's Out'))

Committee for Education Inquiry
'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'
RESPONSE FORM

C. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008) and potential measures to address this.

[<http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statistics-and-research-pg/32-statistics-and-research-research-pg/32-statistics-and-research-research-reports-pg/32-statistics-and-research-branch-research-reports-2008.htm>]

1. Balance of low able / more able pupils in mixed ability class settings
 - Consistent adherence of Behaviour Management Policy with continual emphasis on rewarding positive behaviours
 - Organised and aesthetic working environment in new building that is responsive to pupil learning and care
 - Teachers are positive role models and are always willing to recognise and support pupils experiencing difficulties
2. Well prepared lessons with differentiated learning and teaching activities to suit learning needs and styles of pupils
 - Rigorous record keeping of data to identify and address underachievement and set targets for improvement (SIMS tracking software + Maths)
 - Value added measurement / evaluation of pupils results in national tests
 - Development of Assessment for Learning Techniques to inform practice and to improve standards
3. AFL embedded in classroom practices (generation of success criteria / sharing success criteria / sharing learning intentions / self assessment / peer assessment)
 - Improve levels of literacy and numeracy (Paired Reading, Reading Week, Reading Clubs, Revision classes after school in Maths + English)
 - Providing opportunities in both curricular and extra curricular areas for pupils to succeed
 - Celebration assemblies every Friday - celebrating success
 - Homework clubs - providing support for underachieving pupils

Committee for Education Inquiry
'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'
RESPONSE FORM

D. Department of Education's School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School - A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

Please indicate briefly below any comments you may have on this and other relevant Departmental policies.

1. longer term targets for improving educational outcomes within 'Every School A Good School' document may be aspirational for schools within the secondary sector who realistically will have a significant number of pupils enrolling in Year 8 at levels in literacy and numeracy below DE expected/target levels. The long term educational
2. outcomes stated provide little detail re the value-added impact of schools in the secondary sector.

More clarity required by targets which specify that - % pupils achieve 5 good GCSEs including

2. English and Mathematics. What does DE specify as 'good' GCSE A-C qualifications - will the focus of 'good' GCSEs centre around academic / vocational courses?

Thank you - please email to committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk

Committee for Education
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St Louise's Comprehensive College

Committee for Education Inquiry
'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'

Response Form

School Name St Louise's Comprehensive College
School Sector Catholic Maintained
Location - Rural/Urban Urban

Boys/Girls/Mixed Girls

Your Name and Contact details Mrs C McCartan, Principal

Please indicate briefly below the top three practical actions in your school which address each of the following areas of Committee focus:

A. Effective School Leadership - To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

1. Values Driven Practice

The first key leadership quality is a shared value system passionate about equality of opportunity, social justice and excellence in an all-ability context which is totally opposed to selection. Our belief that every young person should be valued equally finds expression in personalised learning. There is a whole school drive to ensure that every student achieves her full potential through quality learning and teaching underpinned by compassionate pastoral support to overcome barriers to learning experienced by some of our young people. In order to make the vision a reality and to ensure that no child is left behind, there is high quality strategic planning and detailed action plans at all levels in a rigorous culture of ongoing self evaluation and improvement.

2. Shared 'Learning Centred' Leadership

Over the last number of years the leadership structure has been revised to facilitate a shared leadership model in line with the seminal work of Hargreaves on the 'deeps', namely, deep learning, deep experience and deep support. There is on-going professional development focused on improving classroom practice aligned to pupil experience and outcomes. Staff at all levels frequently share good practice and lead staff development initiatives.

At the heart of this distributed leadership model is a culture of clear responsibility and accountability for ensuring every student's success. Students are tracked at a pastoral and curriculum level using detailed quantitative and qualitative data. A more recent development has been the use of student voice to self evaluate and to empower our students to be equal partners in the learning process. We also use value added data to ensure that every student achieves her full potential.

3. Whole School Development Planning

Our WSDP clearly articulates our strategic intent and aims and is reviewed constantly with a sharp focus on the external dimension and 'next best practice'. The strategic priorities are realised in detailed action plans at departmental and pastoral level with a sharp focus on self evaluative outcomes. As a specialist college we work collaboratively with other schools and organisations and frequently exercise systems leadership. The constant pursuit of excellence has ensured the College's strong position in terms of the Entitlement Framework. Other examples of innovative, forward thinking practice is our quality work on the Revised Curriculum and integrated assessment framework as well as an effective extended schools programme.

B. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

1. Extended Schools-Parent Support Officer

We have employed a Parent Support Officer using Extended Schools funding. He provides an invaluable link with families through home visits and quality targeted support in the Pastoral Support Centre. Some examples include liaison with external agencies, circle time programmes, parent support programmes and counselling. Furthermore our Pastoral Support Centre has been developed to provide a high quality network of multi-agency support for the entire school community. We are also involved in the Full Service Community Network

2. Specialist Schools Initiatives

Through a variety of specialist schools initiatives, we have strengthened our partnerships with local community organisations and other schools. One example is our successful transition programme organised in liaison with our partner primary schools and local community organisations. Other examples of successful partnerships include links with local businesses, primary and post primary schools and BHSC programme for adults with learning disabilities. We are actively involved in our Area Learning Community. Our school facilities are also increasingly available to local community groups for a variety of purposes.

3. Warm Relationships with Parents

Based on our value system, we strive tirelessly to work in equal partnership with our parents at all levels. Form tutors and subject teachers nurture warm, mutually respectful relationships with parents at events such as Parents' Meetings, Prize Givings, school shows, religious services and concerts. We also provide parents with quality Progress Updates at regular intervals to empower them to work in partnership with us in supporting their daughters. In addition, we offer Reading Programmes and Learning Programmes in partnership with the home. A Newsletter, entitled Sharing Excellence which celebrates the achievements of our students in a variety of contexts, is distributed termly to the homes and in the community. Our pastoral structure facilitates open, accessible links between the Year Teams and the home. We also engage the parent voice using questionnaires and focus group discussions.

C. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008) and potential measures to address this.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32_statistics_and_research-research_pg/32_stats_and_research_researchreports_pg/32_statistics_and_research_branch_research_reports_2008.htm]

1. Quality Teaching and Learning

We have always been passionate about improving the quality of the pupil experience through innovative lesson planning and delivery. Two concrete drivers have been the adoption of the Accelerated Learning Cycle and Assessment for Learning. All pupils are provided with a Learning and Assessment Calendar and Cycle Ahead Models to engage them as partners in taking responsibility for their learning. Teachers use innovative strategies including recent technology to engage the students. At the heart of all classroom practice is a drive to develop communication skills and higher order thinking skills. Programmes on Learning to Learn and Study Skills are also provided both in-house and using external agencies.

2. A Rigorous Model of Target Setting and Pupil Tracking

From Year 8 to Year 14 students are rigorously tracked using value added information in conjunction with quality assessment for learning tasks. There is deep support from the pastoral team to ensure that all students feel valued and are challenged to have high expectations in partnership with their teachers and parents. Students also receive mentoring support from a 'wrap around' pastoral and academic model which also encompasses peer mentoring. We have invested considerable time and energy in ensuring that our Management System allows us to use pastoral and academic data in a whole school, coordinated manner. Every student has a Personal Learning Plan.

3. Appropriate Pathways Aligned to the Entitlement Framework and Local Labour Market Information

Using the rigorous tracking model, we strive to ensure that every student has access to appropriate pathways at Key Stage 4 and Post 16. We constantly review local labour market information to ensure that the courses offered are relevant to the economy as well as nurturing a sense of worth and achievement in our students. We are also in the strong position of being one of the few schools already offering the full Entitlement Framework.

D. Department of Education's School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

Please indicate briefly below any comments you may have on this and other relevant Departmental policies.

I would like to commend the Department on two particular policies, namely Every School a Good School and Together Towards Improvement. The Specialist Schools initiative has also been a very positive development for young people. However there is an overwhelming need to make additional resources available to schools serving disadvantaged communities. The barriers faced by many of our young people require additional support and investment if we are to continue to improve life chances and promote equality of opportunity. Indeed one of the most obvious inequalities is the difference in school buildings and resources between the selective and non selective sector. The recent investment in new builds in the selective sector has not been matched by a similar programme for schools such as Saint Louise's Comprehensive College. Our students deserve, at the very least, access to state of the art facilities and resources in line with their peers in selective schools. Such systemic inequality is exacerbated by unequal access to additional income generated by parental fees in the grammar sector. We also fully endorse the Minister's removal of academic selection. We believe that selection is morally, educationally and socially unjust. Many high quality, all ability schools such as Saint Louise's provide excellence for all young people without the need for a discredited, damaging examination at a tender age. We look forward to a fair deal for all young people in Northern Ireland.

**Thank you – please email to
committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk**

St Louise's Presentation to the Committee

Wednesday 19 January 2011

St Louise's is a highly successful, 11-19, all-ability College. We have been ranked in the top 10% of schools for A Level Performance using value added measures for the last four years. At 5 GCSE A* to C level, we were the highest performing, non-selective Belfast school and one of the top ten schools in Northern Ireland in 2009. Our most recent GCSE, Yellis Value Added Measure ranks us in the top 5% of schools and colleges. We have received the Jerwood Award for Excellence in Education and the Schools Curriculum Award on three occasions. In March 2006 we were one of the first twelve specialist colleges in Northern Ireland. St Louise's is one of the few schools in Northern Ireland already offering the full Entitlement Framework of general and applied courses in line with Government policy.

Section 1: Effective School Leadership

1.1. Values Driven Practice

The first key leadership quality is a shared value system passionate about equality of opportunity, social justice and excellence in an all-ability context which is totally opposed to selection. Our belief that every young person should be valued equally finds expression in personalised learning. There is a whole school drive to ensure that every student achieves her full potential through quality learning and teaching underpinned by compassionate pastoral support to overcome barriers to learning experienced by some of our young people. In order to make the vision a reality and to ensure that no child is left behind, there is high quality strategic planning and detailed action plans at all levels in a rigorous culture of ongoing self evaluation and improvement.

1.2. Shared 'Learning Centred' Leadership

Over the last number of years the leadership structure has been revised to facilitate a shared leadership model. At the heart of this distributed leadership model is a culture of clear responsibility and accountability for ensuring every student's success. Students are tracked at a pastoral and curriculum level using detailed quantitative and qualitative data. A more recent development has been the use of student voice to self evaluate and to empower our students to be equal partners in the learning process. We also use value added data to ensure that every student achieves her full potential.

1.3. Whole School Development Planning

Our WSDP clearly articulates our strategic intent and aims and is reviewed constantly with a sharp focus on the external dimension and 'next best practice'. The strategic priorities are realised in detailed action plans at departmental and pastoral level with a sharp focus on self evaluative outcomes. As a specialist college we work collaboratively with other schools and organisations and frequently exercise systems leadership.

Section 2: School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

2.1. Extended Schools-Parent Support Officer

We have employed a Parent Support Officer using Extended Schools funding. He provides an invaluable link with families through home visits and quality targeted support in the Pastoral Support Centre. Furthermore our Pastoral Support Centre has been developed to provide a high quality network of multi-agency support for the entire school community. We are also involved in the Full Service Community Network.

2.2. Specialist Schools Initiatives

Through a variety of specialist schools initiatives, we have strengthened our partnerships with local community organisations and other schools. One example is our successful transition programme organised in liaison with our partner primary schools and local community organisations. Other examples of successful partnerships include links with local businesses, primary and post primary schools and BHSC programme for adults with learning disabilities. We are actively involved in our Area Learning Community. Our school facilities are also increasingly available to local community groups for a variety of purposes.

2.3. Warm Relationships with Parents

Based on our value system, we strive tirelessly to work in equal partnership with our parents at all levels. Form tutors and subject teachers nurture warm, mutually respectful relationships with parents at events such as Parents' Meetings, Prize Givings, school shows, religious services and concerts. We also provide parents with quality Progress Updates at regular intervals to empower them to work in partnership with us in supporting their daughters. In addition, we offer Reading Programmes and Learning Programmes in partnership with the home.

Section 3: Quality Learning and Teaching

3.1. Quality Pupil Experience

We have always been passionate about improving the quality of the pupil experience through innovative lesson planning and delivery. Two concrete drivers have been the adoption of the Accelerated Learning Cycle and Assessment for Learning. All pupils are provided with a Learning and Assessment Calendar and Cycle Ahead Models to engage them as partners in taking responsibility for their learning.

3.2. A Rigorous Model of Target Setting and Pupil Tracking

From Year 8 to Year 14 students are rigorously tracked using value added information in conjunction with quality assessment for learning tasks. There is deep support from the pastoral team to ensure that all students feel valued and are challenged to have high expectations in partnership with their teachers and parents. Students receive mentoring support from a 'wrap around' pastoral and academic model which also encompasses peer mentoring.

3.3. Appropriate Pathways Aligned to the Entitlement Framework and Local Labour Market Information

Using the rigorous tracking model, we strive to ensure that every student has access to appropriate pathways at Key Stage 4 and Post 16. We constantly review local labour market information to ensure that the courses offered are relevant to the economy as well as nurturing a sense of worth and achievement in our students. We are also in the strong position of being one of the few schools already offering the full Entitlement Framework.

Other Comments

I would like to commend the Department on two particular policies, namely Every School a Good School and Together Towards Improvement. The Specialist Schools initiative has also been a very positive development for young people. However there is an overwhelming need to make additional resources available to schools serving disadvantaged communities. Extended Schools funding and Specialist Schools funding must be sustained. As a large school we are grossly disadvantaged by the funding mechanism. The barriers faced by many of our young people require additional support and investment if we are to continue to improve life chances and

promote equality of opportunity. Indeed one of the most obvious inequalities is the difference in school buildings and resources between the selective and non selective sector. The recent investment in new builds in the selective sector has not been matched by a similar programme for schools such as Saint Louise's Comprehensive College. Our students deserve, at the very least, access to state of the art facilities and resources in line with their peers in selective schools. Such systemic inequality is exacerbated by unequal access to additional income generated by parental fees in the grammar sector. We also fully endorse the Minister's removal of academic selection. We believe that selection is morally, educationally and socially unjust. Many high quality, all ability schools such as Saint Louise's provide excellence for all young people without the need for a discredited, damaging examination at a tender age. We look forward to a fair deal for all young people in Northern Ireland.

St Mary's High School, Newry

Committee for Education Inquiry

'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'

Response Form

School Name St Mary's High School, Newry

School Sector Secondary High School

Location - Rural/Urban Urban

Boys/Girls/Mixed Girls

Your Name and Contact details Mrs Margo Cosgrove

Please indicate briefly below the top three practical actions in your school which address each of the following areas of Committee focus:

A. Effective School Leadership - To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

1. The Principal and Senior Leadership Team lead and manage a school that has a very strong Pastoral ethos and has established an effective working relationship with all stakeholders. We value the role of parents in their child's education and consult widely with them on key issue such as School Policies, student progress, career progression and celebrating success.
2. We create an environment whereby we work collaboratively and in partnership with other education providers to maximise the academic and creative potential of all students. This is achieved by additional support, both academic and pastoral and by the wealth of extra-curricular activities on offer.
3. We work in collaboration with all staff to create an effective School Development Plan that offers breadth and opportunities and meets the needs of all the pupils.

B. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

1. We are a Specialist School in Mathematics and Business and a key area in our plan was to strengthen existing links with the local community, in particular Primary and Post Primary

Schools, a Special School and local Community Associations. Many of these Schools and Associations have a large number of students from Neighbourhood Renewal Areas.

Current Projects include:

- Year 13 Maths Mentors working in six local Primary Schools
- Young Enterprise for Northern Ireland (YENI) deliver a six week Enterprise Programme to complement the Primary World Around Us Curriculum
- Devised a Numeracy Programme to help parents understand the curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 – Six week Programme delivered in two Community Halls.
- We hosted a number of Business events involving six Post Primary Schools and Rathore Special School to develop an understanding of entrepreneurial skills.
- Worked with a local Traveller Group to help parents understand basic Numeracy.

2. We are an Extended School and we encourage the wider community and our parents to attend classes that will improve their skills, fitness, health and well-being.

Classes available:

- ICT
- Cookery
- Fitness Suite
- Dance

3. The school belongs to the Newry and Mourne Extended School Cluster (NAMES). We support parents from the wider community by providing finance and other support to community groups at key times when students are on holidays i.e. Summer, Christmas, Halloween and Mid-term Breaks. This has strengthened the trust and relationship between school and community groups.

C. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008) and potential measures to address this.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32_statistics_and_research-research_pg/32_stats_and_research_researchreports_pg/32_statistics_and_research_branch_research_reports_2008.htm]

1. The welfare, happiness, academic and pastoral successes of every student is embedded in the ethos of St Mary's. We have a very inclusive Pastoral Programme that is complemented by the SELB and external Counselling Services. We engage with external agencies that support students and parents.

We have established a Mentoring Programme to support underachievement at Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 and work closely with parents to generate support for Home Study.

2. We create opportunities for success outside the Curriculum, many of which enables the students to gain additional qualifications. Students have achieved Bronze, Silver and Gold successes in the President's Award. Also underachieving pupils are completing the Gold Award

and Wider Key Skills in the Prince's Trust –xL Award. Annually students complete the Young Enterprise KEY and LET Programmes. We encourage success by harvesting the student voice through our School Council, Eco-Schools and Rights Respecting Councils.

3. We offer after school Support/Booster Classes to students in Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 and these are targeted at underachieving pupils. These classes support the teaching and learning during the school day. Our results at Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 are consistently above the Northern Ireland averages.

D. Department of Education's School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

Please indicate briefly below any comments you may have on this and other relevant Departmental policies.

1. Every School a Good School:

Child Centred Provision – In St Mary's there is appropriate Curriculum/Career Provision that meets the needs of all with Curriculum Pathways that lead to progress and informed choices. Embedded in this is an inclusive, effective Personal Development Programme.

High Quality Teaching and Learning – Creating opportunities for staff's Continuing Professional Development that in turn enhances their teaching and the students' learning. We ensure the Northern Ireland Curriculum is fully embedded ensuring young people's skills and personal capabilities are developed. Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented to ensure progression across the curriculum. In St Mary's the use of Assessment Manager enables teachers to monitor and track progress and inform pupils and parents. We have established a Self-Evaluation Process and it is currently being revised in light of the new Together Towards Improvement (TTI) guidelines.

Effective Leadership – We have an inclusive, effective School Development Plan that is shared with all stakeholders. The Principal and SLT monitor, evaluate and review the policies, practices and procedures in school. Prudent monitoring of finances and attendance is central to effective management of the school. The SLT are inclusive in their approach to leadership, involving staff and Governors in the decision-making processes.

School Connected to Local Community – In St Mary's we value the positive relationships that have been fostered and developed with parents and the wider community. As a Specialist School in Mathematics and Business and as an Extended School we have developed a wide range of strategies and programmes to raise underachievement, develop skills and also encourage a clear understanding of the need for good health and well-being. Opportunities are open to all our students, parents and the wider community. We offer a school-based counselling service and have established strong relationships with a range of external agencies to ensure the academic, social and emotional needs of all our students are met.

2. DE Policies (Together Towards Improvement, Preparing for Success, Transition in Mathematics – Primary and Post Primary and the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies) provide the guidance and structures required to implement the key areas for development outlined in our School Development Plan over the next three years.

**Thank you – please email to
committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk**

St Paul's High School, Bessbrook

Committee for Education Inquiry 'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'

Response Form

School Name	St Paul's High School, Bessbrook
School Sector	Maintained
Location - Rural/Urban	Rural
Boys/Girls/Mixed	Mixed
Your Name and Contact details	Oliver Mooney 028 30830309

Please indicate briefly below the top three practical actions in your school which address each of the following areas of Committee focus:

A. Effective School Leadership - To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools. (serving disadvantaged communities.)

1. A vision for what is possible and the will and skills to develop the structures that will deliver it.
2. The skills and personal qualities to convince all the stakeholders to strive towards a common vision and the personal confidence to allow others to share the leadership role so that capacity building takes place within the organisation. This allows new sources of energy and spreads the progress of improvement which then achieves a self perpetuating momentum.
3. The ability to select a team of "leaders" that is more than the sum of its parts. This team must challenge itself, yet work together for the common vision. It can never be complacent and must always seek further improvement for the students through how it develops the institution. This in turn encourages all staff and spreads ownership of the change or drive for improvement across the school and causes new teams to develop or spin off with their own energy and commitment. This creates vibrancy throughout the school that is infectious and can be caught by students, parents, all other staff and the wider community.

B. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

1. Real partnership with parents so they can feel confident that their children's interests are paramount in the school. They need to be confident their children are safe, happy and well taught in school. Every opportunity for contact should be valued and a constant flow of information on what is happening so that rumours don't rule. Regular and consistent celebration of achievement that is publicised for parents and the community and a fair, consistent pastoral policy that is based on rewarding good behaviour and dealing quickly with inappropriate behaviour and moving on with the expectation of improvement based on redemption. Encourage

parents and community to visit the school often and see what's happening. Open up the school for community use where possible so that it is seen as a real community resource.

2. Build pride in the school through extra curricular activities and achievements in Sport, Music, Dance and Drama. Encourage after school clubs, have a community outreach to bring in parents and grandparents so they can interact with the students and see the "new" face of education. Become a community focus building a two way loyalty between school and the community. This assists in removing barriers to ambition for families and their children and encourages increased entry to third level study.

3. Provide opportunities to build community pride by involving community in school events and competitions and work very closely and supportively with the feeder primary schools and parishes. Encourage them to really make it their community school so they are proud of it and promote and perpetuate its success.

C. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008) and potential measures to address this.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32_statistics_and_research-research_pg/32_stats_and_research_researchreports_pg/32_statistics_and_research_branch_research_reports_2008.htm]

1. Creative and imaginative curriculum planning based on interest and need and relevant to the needs of future employment and that encourages and motivates all students and their parents to aspire to much higher expectations of what life chances are possible.

2. A choice of Curriculum pathways is essential. These will allow both boys and girls to reflect on what they enjoy learning about and what is needed for them to achieve their career goals. The notion of career goals needs to happen early in second level education so that it helps motivate the individual and gives them something to measure their progress against. All this needs to involve the young person and their parents and requires considerable time to be invested by expert teachers in explaining what is contained within the pathways and the potential outcomes and the impact on future choices. Pathways should be designed to allow future changes in direction as children develop into young adults and perhaps vary their goals. They should not exclude youngsters from opportunities for third level study because they had chosen a particular pathway at 14. They need to be sufficiently inclusive and broad to provide a launch pad for new career directions if student aspirations change at Key Stage 4.

Pastoral and curricular mentoring programmes are needed to assist and support those students who are academically vulnerable or who have not sufficiently bought into their own potential for the future. These mentoring programmes can help students achieve the target of 5 GCSEs at A* to C which helps unlock the door to post 16 study, trades and apprenticeships. The achievement of an A* to C grade in English and Mathematics is exceptionally important so extra assistance is needed in those areas. Essential skills programmes need to be available for the minority who struggle with GCSE in these two subjects to ensure an adequate level of functional communication and numeracy skills to help prepare them for their personal, social and working lives.

D. Department of Education's School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

Please indicate briefly below any comments you may have on this and other relevant Departmental policies.

1. I am supportive of the various programmes that have come from Government in the past number of years but I would warn against the constant flow of such measures whereby there hasn't been the chance to embed one policy before another, not necessarily complementary policy, takes its place. Schools have proved to be resilient places but it sometimes seems as if they are treated like laboratories of guinea pigs where you can experiment at will to cure all society's ills. Young people need to be nurtured and supported at home and in school and a school needs to be a stable place for our youth. Constant change which does not always bring about improvement should be avoided and school leaders and governors should be strong and act with care in how they take onboard the constant wave of new policies.

2. I believe that a culture of self evaluation is the most important characteristic a school can adopt to ensure a continuum of improvement. The system cannot afford to rely on an inspection by the Education and Training Inspectorate every 8 to 10 years to signal the level of performance of an institution that carries responsibility for the life chances of so many young people. Evaluation must be strenuous, consistent, continuous and internal and become the norm for all aspects of the school.

3. The education of young people must be holistic. The most important personal quality we can help students acquire is self respect because if we don't respect ourselves we are unlikely to respect others. Our children are our most precious resource in building a new society, how we behave towards ourselves and them is the example we provide as to how they should treat others. There needs to be much more collaboration between schools as not only does it make sound economic sense but it builds relationships between children from disparate situations and backgrounds.

Thank you – please email to committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk

St Pius X College

Committee for Education Inquiry
'Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities'

Response Form

School Name St Pius X College
School Sector Post –primary Maintained
Location - Rural/Urban Rural
Boys/Girls/Mixed Mixed
Your Name and Contact details M White 02879632168

Please indicate briefly below the top three practical actions in your school which address each of the following areas of Committee focus:

A. Effective School Leadership - To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

1. Provide clear and realistic direction based on a strong vision for the college-this is reflected in the SDP and all stakeholders buy into this at each key stage-planning, implementing and reviewing
2. Establish clear channels of communication at all levels based on respect for the contribution that each makes towards raising achievement and supporting learners
3. Set high standards and expectations underpinned by knowledge of all stakeholders and their ability to set targets to effect improvement. All need to accept responsibility for their learning.

B. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

1. Parents' views are sought and acted upon; it is only with the engagement of parents that we can support improvement. However often it is the parents we need to contact who do not respond and a valuable opportunity is lost.
2. Relevant information is exchanged with parents to ensure continuity and progression in the pupils' learning and pastoral care at the key transition stages. Much work is done at all stages with feeder primary schools and through post-primary stages
3. We have appointed – Feeder Primary Schools Co-ordinator; business Links Co-ordinator to support and challenge the work we do with the engagement of parents and the wider community. Our E-learning Co-ordinator attended a BECTA Conference- engagement of parents. He has returned with some innovative ideas which we will build into our Action Plan for next week.

C. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008) and potential measures to address this.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32_statistics_and_research-research_pg/32_stats_and_research_researchreports_pg/32_statistics_and_research_branch_research_reports_2008.htm]

1. Focus this year is on mathematics and English Key Stage 4 results. We have reviewed our curriculum at KS4 to include more applied and occupational studies subjects. We have introduced Essential Skills to our less able pupils
2. We ensure that the curricular provision is open and accessible to all pupils in a manner that takes account of their abilities. We continually monitor our provision by evaluating pupils' learning and use outcomes to inform planning
3. We use target-setting to encourage pupils who are under-achieving. We provide mentors who carry out monitoring meetings and support pupils who are under-achieving

D. Department of Education's School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

Please indicate briefly below any comments you may have on this and other relevant Departmental policies.

1. The above was used to write College Development Plan- found structure useful in implementing same. Worked well with revised Together Towards Improvement Quality Indicators.
2. Clear guidance required from Department on initiatives. Too much change too quickly; giving insufficient time to embed initiatives.

**Thank you – please email to
committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk**

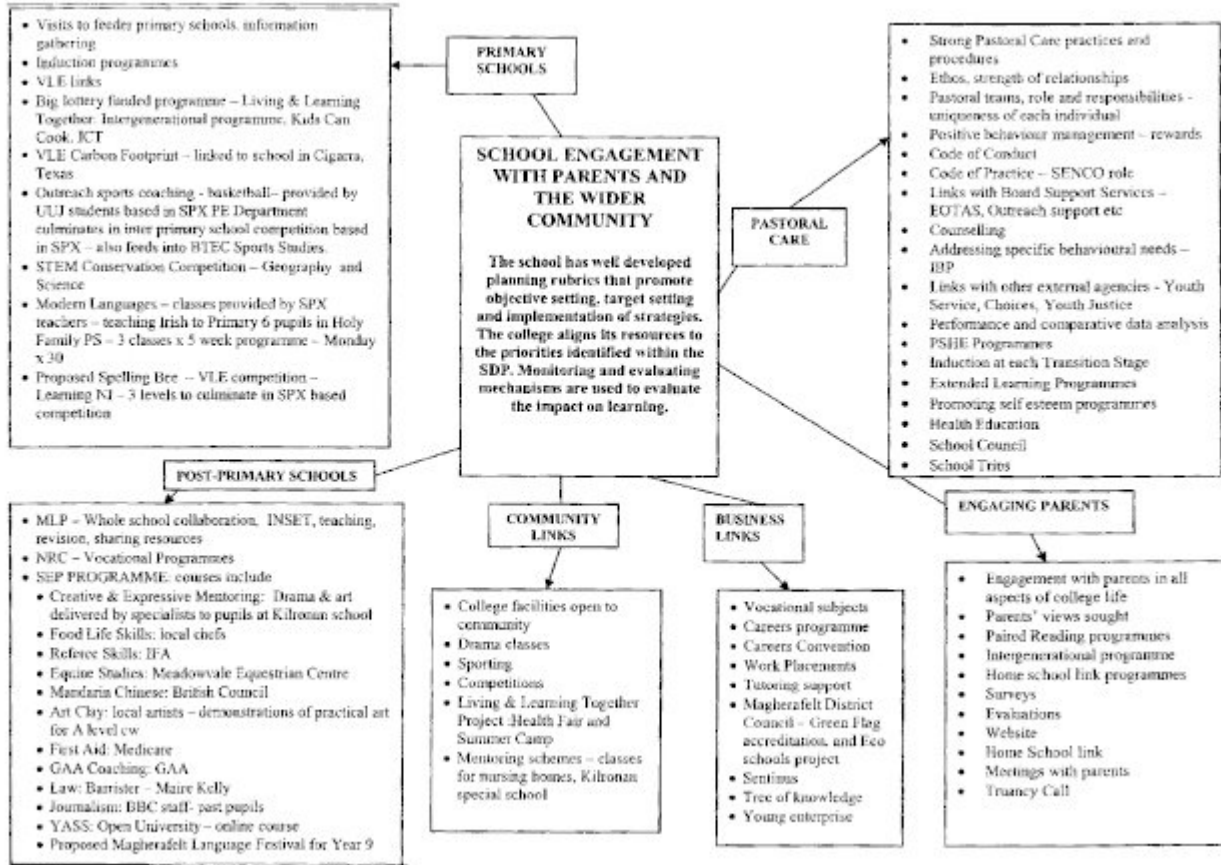
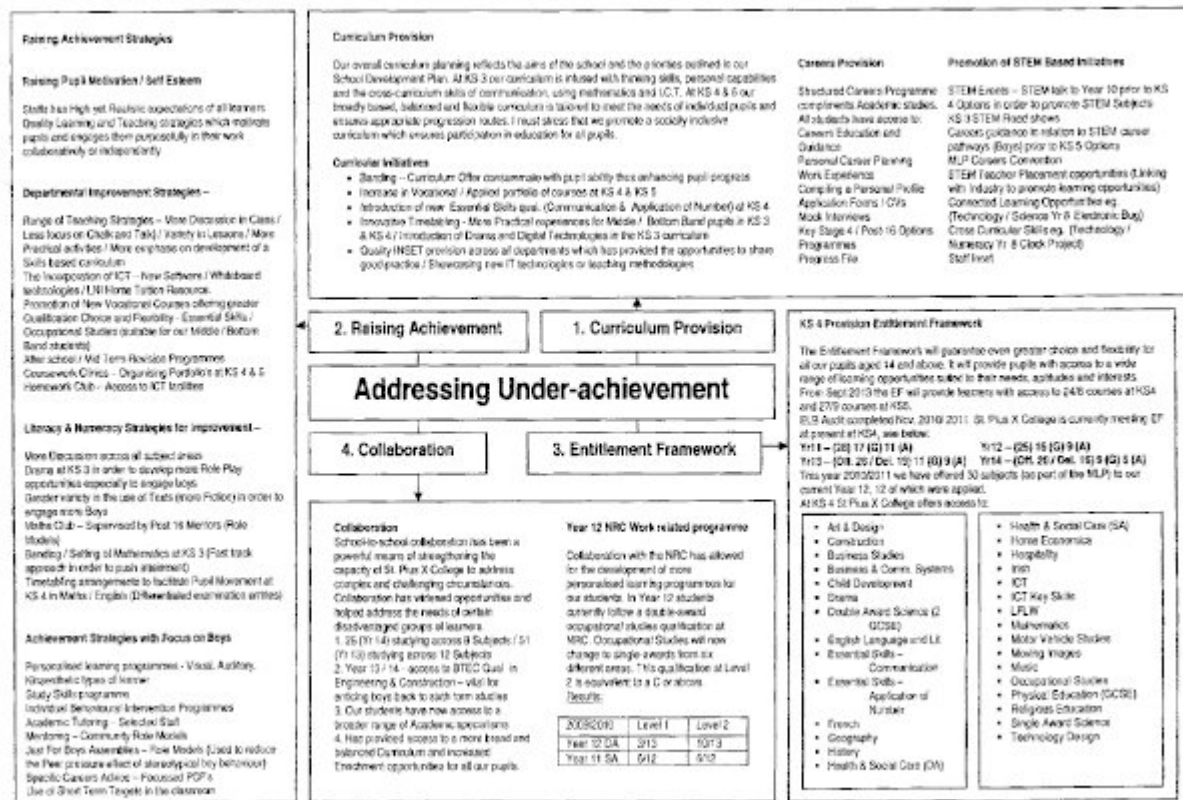
**Northern Ireland Assembly
Committee for Education Meeting**

**Inquiry into Successful
Post-Primary Schools**

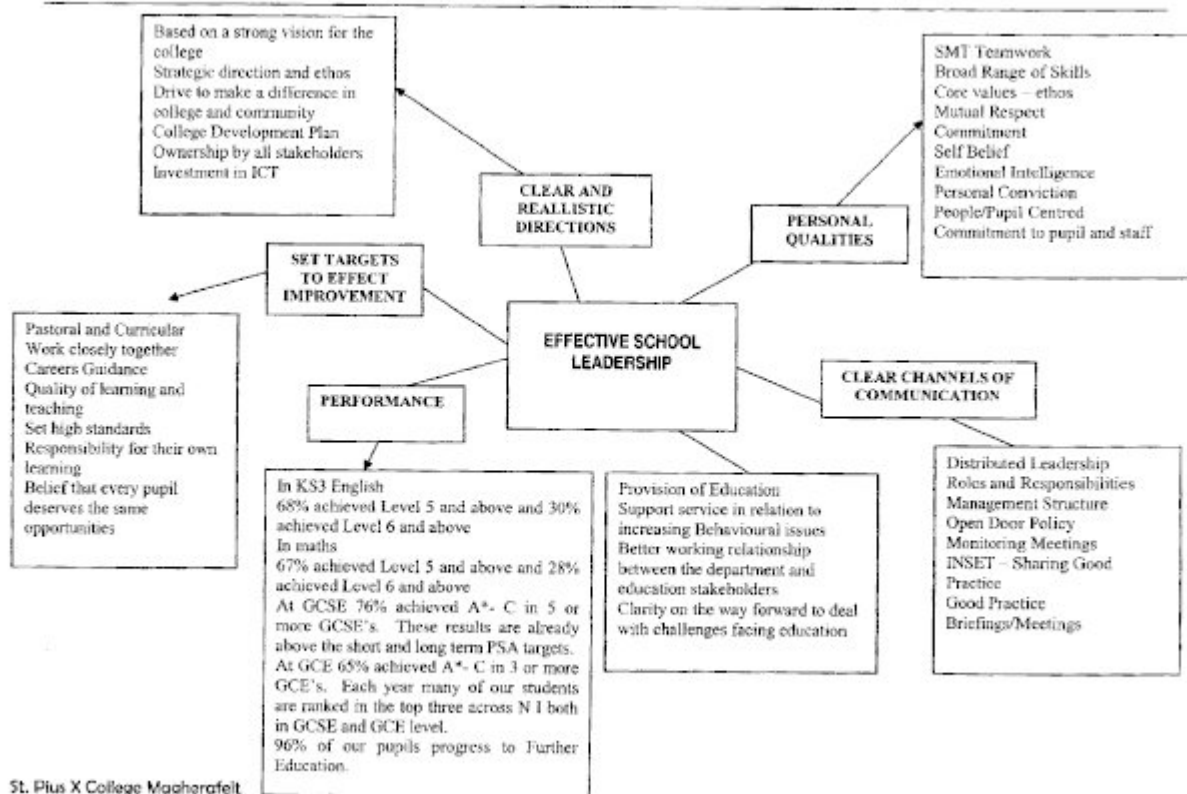


**Wednesday 2 February 2011
St Pius X College Presentation**

Addressing Under-achievement



INQUIRY INTO SUCCESSFUL POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS



The Prince's Trust



Prince's Trust

Inquiry into Successful Post - Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities

Response to Education Committee Inquiry

10 December 2010

1. Introduction

The Prince's Trust welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Education Committee's call for evidence to identify factors that contribute to the success of post-primary schools serving disadvantaged communities.

In submitting a response, it is important from the outset to state that as a Charity, our mission is to help hard-to-reach young people in Northern Ireland who experience multiple barriers to participation to move into education, training or employment.^[1]

On 02nd December 2010 The Prince's Trust released a report, The Cost of Exclusion, revealing the cost of youth disadvantage to our economy. It finds that youth unemployment in Northern

Ireland costs the state a staggering £4.5million a week through benefits and lost productivity.^[2] It also revealed that young people with few qualifications have been hit particularly hard by the recent recession. More than a quarter of young men with few qualifications are now unemployed – a much higher proportion than in previous recessions.^[3]

We work in some of the most deprived areas throughout Northern Ireland, support over 3,000 disadvantaged young people every year and deliver a range of personal development programmes in association with post-primary schools, Further Education Colleges and local employers that are proven to produce positive outcomes for three out of every four young people that complete a programme with the Trust.

In accordance with the terms of reference issued with the inquiry, we have focused our response on section 4: 'addressing underachievement in disadvantaged communities'.

2. Proven Solutions that Complement Mainstream Education

The Prince's Trust currently runs over 100 xl clubs in 69 mainstream schools, special schools, EOTAS Centres, a youth offending Institution and Youth Clubs throughout Northern Ireland. (A complete list of xl schools is attached as an appendix)

Each club is delivered by a trained xl teacher (xl advisor) and aims to improve the attendance, motivation and social skills of 14-16 years olds who are at risk of truanting, exclusion and underachievement in the last two years of compulsory education.

xl Clubs are delivered around five key themes, including: personal and team skills, citizenship and social action, preparation for the world of work, community based projects and entrepreneurship.^[4]

The programme is proven to develop confidence and self-esteem, increase attendance and motivation; improve pupil's chances of completing compulsory schooling and improve social skills and behaviour in schools. Currently 91% of young people completing the xl programme progress to further education, employment, training or volunteering.

The xl programme was evaluated by the School of Education at the University of Ulster in 2009. It found that xl provides a much needed facility for young persons who were at risk of continuous non-attendance with consequent concerns that they would not have the required skills or attitudes for the labour market or, in the worst case that they might become young offenders.

The Prince's Trust is currently developing the xl programme within the youth club sector where the opportunity exists for those who have disengaged from education to re-engage through an informal learning environment and prevent thousands more young people from becoming NEET (not in employment, education or training).

3. Address barriers to participation for young people

The Trust's xl programme is highly successful because it addresses the barriers experienced by hard-to-reach young people through a range of activities that are proven to work, including:

- An initial competency skills assessment with each young person who is at risk of underachieving to identify their personal circumstances and skill requirements;
- Preparation of an individual action plan that enables each young person to plan and record their 'learning journey' and progress;

- Access to an xl advisor, who will act as a single point of contact for each young person to help them address barriers to participation and achieve the targets agreed in their learning action plan;
- Support to develop literacy, numeracy and ICT skills where appropriate;
- A supportive learning environment that will boost young people's motivation and confidence through leadership and team-building work;
- A supportive learning environment that is fully accessible for young people with a physical or learning disability in accordance with The Disability Discrimination Act 2005;
- Community projects that encourage young people to be more progressive members of society and respect difference through, for example, cross-community work between local schools;
- The opportunity for young people with little or no qualifications to work towards, for example, a Prince's Trust Entry Level, Level 1 or 2 qualification in Personal Development and Teamwork (equivalent to 2 GCSEs);
- The development of job search and interview skills, as well as CV preparation.

4. Working in Partnership

As a national charity, the Prince's Trust works for the benefit of all young people that experience barriers to participation in Northern Ireland. This is an important point. Because our clients are first and foremost disadvantaged young people, it means that we can bring a great deal of experience and a national perspective to any local initiatives that target particular groups of young people.

Across Northern Ireland, the Trust already works with the PSNI, mainstream schools, special schools, EOTAS Centres, youth offending Institutions, Youth Clubs, FE Colleges and a wide range of local employers.

By working in partnership, the Trust has built up a strong local presence and delivers our programmes so that they complement and add value to mainstream provision by addressing the gap in provision for the hard-to-reach young people.

We believe that mainstream education provision can be complemented by more informal outreach programmes delivered through local community organisations and youth clubs where hard-to-reach young people may find it easier to engage in a less formal education setting. This is why we are committed to exploring ways in which we can link with, for example, local youth clubs, to deliver our proven interventions to more disadvantaged young people, 60% of which are young males.

5. Trusted Brand

The Prince's Trust built up a brand that is trusted by young people from all communities; we receive hundreds of enquiries from young people through our website and 0800 phone line each month and 96% of those we have supported report they would refer a friend to The Trust.

6. Value for money

Across all of our programmes, The Prince's Trust provides excellent value for money, which can deliver significant savings to the public sector in terms of moving hard-to-reach young people

into education and training, and getting unemployed young people off benefits and into employment.

The xl programme, for example, is very cost effective, with a cost per pupil at £250 a year. This is particularly low in comparison with the cost of excluding a young person from school per year which is estimated to be £15,000.^[5]

7. Conclusion

The Prince's Trust believes that Government needs to invest in support and training for disadvantaged young people now, to prevent them from becoming a lost a generation that we will all end up paying for.

By providing support that is tailored to each young person's needs and working in partnership, The Prince's Trust can deliver cost effective solutions with high positive outcomes to thousands more disadvantaged young people. Our programmes are proven to help break the cycle of dependence on welfare support, long-term unemployment, deprivation and workless households and help young people progress further than they ever thought was possible and create a better future for themselves, their families and their communities.

Following the completion of your inquiry, the Trust would welcome the opportunity to submit further evidence to evidence based sessions held by the Committee in future.

Appendix: xl Schools

- Arvalee School, Omagh
- Ballee High School, Ballymena
- Ballymoney High School
- Banbridge High School
- Bangor Academy & Sixth Form College
- Beechlawn Special School, Hillsborough
- Belfast Boys' Model School
- Belfast Girls' Model School
- Blackwater Integrated College, Downpatrick
- Cedar Lodge Special School, Belfast
- City of Armagh High School
- Coleraine College
- Corpus Christi College, Belfast
- Cross and Passion College, Ballycastle
- Devenish College, Enniskillen
- Donard School, Banbridge
- Dunclug College, Ballymena
- Dundonald High School
- Dunmurry High School
- Eotas Antrim

- EOTAS Ballymena
- EOTAS Coleraine
- Enniskillen AEP
- EOTAS, Dungannon (Tamnamore)
- EOTAS, Greenisland
- EOTAS Learning Centre, Newry
- Limavady AEP
- Strabane AEP
- Fleming Fulton School, Belfast
- Foyleview School, Derry
- Glengormley High School
- Glenveagh School, Belfast
- Greater Belfast Road Youth Club
- Hazelwood Integrated College, Belfast
- Holy Trinity College, Cookstown
- Hydebank Young Offenders Centre, Belfast
- Integrated College, Dungannon
- Jordanstown Schools
- Killard House School, Donaghadee
- Larne High School
- Lisnagarvey High School, Lisburn
- Lough Road Learning Centre, Lurgan
- Magherafelt High School
- Mitchell House, Belfast
- Monkstown Community School
- Movilla High School, Newtownards
- Newtownabbey Educational Guidance Centre
- North Coast Integrated College, Coleraine
- Omagh High School
- Parkanaur College, Castlecaulfield
- Pennyburn Youth Club, Derry
- Priory Integrated College, Holywood
- Rathore School, Newry
- Sunlea Education Guidance Centre, Coleraine
- St.Cecilia's College, Derry
- St. Comhghall's High School, Lisnaskea
- St Gemma's High School, Belfast

- St Gerard's Educational Resource Centre, Belfast
- St. Joseph's College, Belfast
- St Killian's College, Garron Tower
- St. Mary's High School, Limavady
- St Mary's High School, Newry
- St. Patrick's College, Ballymena
- St Patrick's College, Banbridge
- St.Patrick's Academy, Lisburn
- St. Rose's High School, Belfast

[1] A scoping study of Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) published by DEL in October 2010, acknowledges that these young people are the most difficult to reach because they face multiple barriers to participation, including: In, leaving or left care; Negative experience of education; Suffered from bullying at school; Problems with literacy and numeracy; Carers or having parental responsibilities; Experience of drug and alcohol abuse; Having a physical disability/learning disability; Committed a crime; Having a mental illness; At an economic disadvantage; Homelessness.

[2] This calculation is based on Jobseeker's Allowance and estimated lost productivity. Figures have been taken from the Office of National Statistics

[3] The Cost of Exclusion (2010), page 13. See also Gregg and Wadsworth (2010)

[4] Accreditation is achieved through either The Prince's Trust Entry Level, Level 1 or 2, recognised on the Qualification Credit Framework, as well as opportunities to work towards the Wider Key Skills of Problem Solving, Working with Others and Improving Own Learning and Performance.

[5] (Department for Children, Schools and Families in response to Parliamentary Question; 7 December 2009).

Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC)



**Submission by the Transferor Representatives' Council
to the
Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Education**

Inquiry into Successful Post - Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Areas

22nd December 2010

Inquiry aim

"To consider examples of successful post-primary schools serving economically and socially disadvantaged communities, identify the key characteristics/factors which contribute to their success and consider how they can be reproduced in schools where they are lacking."

Introduction

The Transferor Representatives' Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Assembly Education Committee's call for evidence regarding this inquiry and presents this submission on behalf of the Boards of Education of the Church of Ireland, Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland.

While recognising that the focus of this inquiry is upon the factors which contribute to successful schools, it is important to reflect on some of the underlying issues regarding underachievement in economically and socially disadvantaged areas.

As a range of research into underachievement shows, there is a complex of factors influencing educational outcomes for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. These factors include: social deprivation, lack of pupil and parental aspiration and special educational needs. There is also an additional set of factors particular to pupils for Protestant working class young people. Some of these factors are societal and include for example negative generational attitudes towards education particularly among many from an urban Protestant background. Further research is needed to enable a better understanding of why there is such a disparity in achievement between boys and girls particularly from Protestant working class backgrounds.

Some parents may not have had positive educational experiences themselves which can lead to negative attitudes towards education being passed on to the next generation. Other factors such as the legacy of the troubles have left their mark on society. Some would argue that these have led to the growth of attitudes of resentment and antipathy towards authority.

It is also important to note that this is not just a Belfast problem; underachievement is present among pupils in rural and provincial town settings too.

Terms of Reference

1. Effective School Leadership

To identify the key school leadership qualities necessary for the success of schools serving disadvantaged communities.

There is much good practice in improving educational attainment already present in the NI Education system or elsewhere in GB in areas of similar level of social deprivation. Successful teaching strategies and approaches are used in many secondary schools and must be shared with other schools struggling to improve pupil performance. This is partly a school leadership training issue and relates to the continued professional development of teachers and school principals. Regionally, there is a need to centralise Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and establish a centre of excellence in teacher training for NI. The current fragmented teacher education provision needs greater cohesion with a focus on strategies for raising standards.

Schools in disadvantaged areas need high quality and enthusiastic leaders however, those best placed to give effective leadership are not always attracted to these posts. There is a need for positive encouragement to perspective leaders to undertake these roles.

School leadership also includes governance; transferor governors, present in most controlled schools, believe that underachievement should be a vital area addressed by each school board. Governor awareness raising and training in this area is essential.

2. School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities have engaged with parents/guardians and the wider community, the extent to which this engagement has contributed to such schools' success and how this has benefited the wider community.

One important issue arising regularly in the research is the lack of parental support, absence of routine and favourable study conditions at home. To counterbalance the absence of parental support a suggested policy initiative might be to develop further the practice of Homework clubs for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. This links with the policy of the Extended Schools programme which we understand is currently suffering a cut back in funding. Effective support for young people after school in a conducive study environment with skilful and caring leaders could help to stimulate better attitudes to learning and lead to enhanced outcomes.

Also positively encourage and resource the voluntary sector (including churches) to further develop provision of after-school activities, both those which directly complement the work of local schools (e.g. homework clubs etc) and those that will have an indirect, but equally important, contribution (e.g. youth club provision that focusses on building self-esteem etc)

3. Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

To consider how successful schools serving disadvantaged communities address the causes of underachievement, including higher levels of underachievement of boys (reference DE Report by PWC No.49, 2008), and potential measures to address this.

Within NI there are widely held and unhelpful attitudes to selection at eleven which tend to give academic education a higher status than vocational education. There is a need for positive reinforcement of the value of both academic and vocational education and will involve a change of mindset on the part of both parents, and professionals. It is important that at all stages of education to avoid labelling or stereotyping pupils.

However, it needs to be stressed that for a high percentage of under achieving pupils, the damage has already be done before they enter the school system. Poor housing conditions, poor health, lack of visible future work opportunities and community attitudes all contribute to the difficulty.

This problem is of course related to poverty, the remediation of which is beyond the reach of education alone. The issue of child poverty has been highlighted by others such as the Child Poverty Alliance and is currently being considered by the OFMDFM Assembly Committee. Tackling this issue will require an inter-departmental government approach.

The wider issue of the purpose of education and learning has yet to be adequately addressed by departmental policy initiatives. The problem of under-achievement is we believe linked to impoverished understandings of self-identity and community identity. Learning must fundamentally be about empowering children; achievement in school is one of its aspects. Learning must also include developing a young person's sense of who they are, their self-esteem, their sense of purpose and value. These matters are significantly bound up in their identity and how that relates to the community of which they are a part. Schools where these

values are developed through their ethos, will we believe be laying a very important foundation stone for the more formal aspects of learning leading to enhanced achievement.

The TRC has expressed its views on this matter in its published document, Forward together - a perspective on ethos in Controlled schools.

'At the individual level, schools should promote: reflection on the purpose of life, the intrinsic value of the individual, the encouragement of the individual's gifts and talents, a sense of self-worth and self-esteem, life-long learning, the acceptance that rights and privileges bring responsibilities, the role of conscience in discerning right or wrong attitudes or actions' p2.

From these individual values will flow other important values at the inter-relational and community levels.

4. Department of Education School Improvement Policy

To consider the Department's Policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' and other relevant Departmental policies in light of the evidence received in the course of the Inquiry and make any relevant recommendations to the Department.

In its 2008 response to the DE policy 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement', the TRC commented that, 'while characteristics of a potentially successful school can be identified, it must be remembered that schools are not merely mechanisms to deliver high performance but have broad social purposes. These include: to enable pupils to learn in a happy and fulfilling way; to contribute to the spiritual dimension of a child's development; to contribute to the life of society by promoting social cohesion, mutual understanding, and to encourage a sense of a shared future. Transferors were disappointed that these qualitative characteristics were underdeveloped or ignored in this policy document'. Transferors concluded their response, 'this policy must be reformulated with a more holistic approach, addressing as well the intellectual, spiritual, moral, physical, emotional and social development of pupils'.

Other relevant departmental policies:

A selective system of post-primary education is believed by many to engrain educational disadvantage. Some have highlighted that internationally countries with selective educational systems are associated with the greatest range (highs and lows) of educational achievement. In NI the selective system seems to deliver excellence for some, but it does appear to favour the already advantaged. There is however a small number of notable exceptions to this trend and some pupils from working class communities have excelled though the selective system.

The declining pupil numbers coupled with the requirement on grammar schools to fill to their enrolment level has depleted secondary schools of more able pupils. As a result the pupil profile of many secondary schools tends to include fewer more able students; the lower ability mix of these schools poses greater challenges for teachers in addressing pupil needs and attitudes to learning. These schools also have the greatest level of pupils on FSMs which heightens the connection between lack of attainment and social disadvantage. The system of selection is in need of review. If Grammar schools are to continue in the future, they should be encouraged to find a way of ensuring their admissions criteria enable them to have a largely academic focus, rather than enrolling pupils to the maximum of their admissions number. This would allow secondary schools to have a wider ability intake of pupils in any particular year.

While underachievement might seem to affect all sectors of schools, it seems to have a more detrimental effect on some urban controlled secondary schools. One observation is related to the

housing mix in the vicinity of secondary schools in Belfast. Some maintained secondary schools seem to have a more heterogeneous social mix of pupils than their controlled counterparts where housing near such schools can be more uniformly working class. This may be a factor affecting pupil profile in certain school areas and it may also be related to skewed perceptions of secondary schools by parents of more middle class backgrounds.

While the conundrum of the presence of selection at 11 in NI remains unsolved, this skewing of the under-performance of pupils in some secondary schools will worsen. It is imperative that an agreed solution to the 11+ problem be found which will enable academic excellence to remain yet provide educational opportunity to all pupils.

Early intervention has been shown to be a particularly important aspect of addressing underachievement. Unsatisfactory levels of numeracy and literacy can and must be identified in certain pupils at an early stage in their school careers and appropriate intervention applied.

Note

The Transferor Representatives' Council presents this submission on behalf of the Boards of Education of the Church of Ireland, Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland.

Transferor Representatives' Council

Chair: Revd R Herron
Vice-Chair: Miss SR Rainey
Secretary: Revd IW Ellis
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Belfast
BT1 2QH
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University of Ulster, The School of Education

A response to the Assembly Education Committee on 'Successful Post Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Areas'

from

The School of Education, University of Ulster

23 December 2010

"In considering the challenge of promoting 'Successful Post Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Areas' elected politicians and public servants have a duty, in shaping public policy, to ensure that new policies strengthen and build on previous and existing best practice and policy so that they assist the wider society 'mourn some features of our ...past with new present awareness that we must never repeat such events in our future' (Shriver, 2005, p9)."

Dr Linda Clarke
Head of the School of Education

Dr Alan Mc Cully
Senior Lecturer in Education & Research Co-Ordinator, School of Education
Dr Derick Wilson
Reader in Education

Contents

Background Experience of the Contributors

Summary of Recommendations

Text underpinning Recommendations

1. Curriculum Matters and Initial Teacher Education
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3. Some Specific Approaches –School Cultures and Community / Civic Partnerships
4. Promoting Opportunities for Young People to Grow and Develop their Potential
5. Best Innovative Learning and Personal Support Practices that need multiplied
6. Future Responses to Pupil Under Achievement-The Need for an Institutional Learning Culture within and between Departments of Government

Appendix of Research Abstracts

A response to the Assembly Education Committee on 'Successful Post Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Areas'

Background Experience: This response comes out of the experience of the following three School of Education Staff and the colleagues they work with.

Dr Linda Clarke is Head of School of Education and currently Chair of the Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET). She is also a Board Member of the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCOTENS).

In addition she is a member of: The British Educational Research Association; The Educational Studies Association of Ireland (ESAI); The Geographical Association; The Steering Committee of the Centre for Global Development through Education, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, The Steering Committee for the Department for International Development's EES (Enabling Effective Support) initiative in Northern Ireland and The Irish-African Partnership for Research Capacity Building.

She is a Paper Reviewer for: British Education Research Journal 2008-; Technology, Pedagogy and Education 2006-; Geography 2006-; International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education 2007; Computers and Education.

Dr Alan Mc Cully is a Senior Lecturer in Education specialising in Community Relations, Citizenship Education and the History of Divided Societies. He is the Research Co-Coordinator for

Education in the Institute for Research in the Social Sciences and Course Tutor with the PGCE Course and Module Co-ordinator for the Masters in Education.

Having been a secondary school teacher, he then initiated innovative approaches to community relations work, citizenship and history education in the formal secondary education sector, in teacher education and in youth work since the late 70's and has published extensively on these topics. He has given seminars in Quebec, Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo and Sri Lanka on the role for history education in contested societies.

Dr Derick Wilson is a Reader in Education specialising in community relations and restorative practices. He is a co-editor of a recent set of Northern Ireland based research articles on the challenges facing diverse young people in 'Youth and Society', Sage USA entitled 'Creating Restorative and Intergenerational Cultures for Youth: Insights from Northern Ireland and the United States', November 2010 (See Appendix for Abstracts).

As a teacher and youth worker he was the lead worker in innovative school-home-community interventions (70-73) with the initial 'ROSLA -schools community relations interventions' in four disadvantaged areas of Belfast with the Schools Community Relations programmes under the direction of the late John Malone with the NI Community Relations Commission;

He has developed: community and residential youth work experiences (73-present); innovative residential and community based programmes supportive of potential young leaders in disadvantaged areas with the Corrymeela Centre (65-present). He established the professional training of youth workers from 1973-78 at the Ulster Polytechnic and was Chair, Youth Committee for Northern Ireland, Department of Education, (87-89).

He has developed access and masters level courses for people from diverse cultural and social and professional backgrounds on the theme of 'Promoting a Shared Society' and 'Promoting a Restorative Society' (1998-present). He has been an Equality Commissioner, 2003-08 and is currently a member of the Transition Victims and Survivors Forum (2009-10).

Summary of Recommendations

The University of Ulster's School of Education welcomes the far-sighted and imaginative School Curriculum for Northern Ireland. In considering this curriculum in terms of promoting 'Successful Post Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Areas' we recommend:

1. Curriculum Matters and Initial Teacher Education

1.1 The revised curriculum should equally value the importance of academic, vocational and civic education for all pupils. The diverse needs of the underachieving pupils requires that they are challenged around these themes and supported as young adults to take their place alongside others who achieve higher qualifications.

In our view the Department and the Assembly needs to give a renewed priority to those working in the high school sector.

We believe that the existing cohort of talented and experienced teachers working with vulnerable young people needs linked across the generations with those emerging newly qualified teachers, many of whom, in the experience of this School of Education, would wish to make a commitment in favour of working with this cohort of pupils, should opportunities be open to them.

1.2 We need more equity in how resources are targeted to this sector and especially this section of pupils who underachieve.

We need more mentoring opportunities for newly qualified staff to work alongside these pupils in an innovative and supportive fashion.

We need an inter-generational cohort of seasoned and young teacher practitioners committed to tackling those who are underachieving in partnership with informal youth work and community based approaches.

We need young people in high schools exposed to specialist teachers and not just generalists, they too are deserving of dedicated specialist teaching.

We caution against a narrow 'traditional' measurement approach being driven through with this cohort.

2. Conceptual Changes needed if we are to Stand with Young People not Isolate them

2.1 That all approaches to tackling community disadvantage (inequality) are shaped within a wider umbrella of policies that promote trust and building greater prosperity for all citizens.

2.2 That all public policies and organisational cultures associated with young people are characterised by hopefulness, an openness to change being possible and a belief that all young people are assets to this society and the wider world.

2.3 An inter-generational perspective and practice is needed that adopts principles of respect and inclusivity as cornerstones of public policy and promotes youth-adult partnerships in civic life within the larger context of explicitly working to secure a more open, shared and interdependent society.

2.4 In some communities the history of schools and other services is that they have failed generations and certain local areas. Such inter generational failure has to be addressed within a more restorative framework where explicit cross departmental, inter professional and political, public and civic energies are, for a sustained period, committed to restoring fairness, restoring personal belief and resilience, offering affirmative experiences and renewed opportunity and long term healing and hope.

3. Some specific school-civil society approaches are needed, linking whole school policies, cultures, working partnerships with parents and guardians, community and civic partners and teaching support.

3.1 We need to fundamentally address the violent subcultures of young men, especially those from poor areas that, historically, have been most significantly affected by "the troubles," and who were used in sustaining the conflict, and who often feel free to engage in sectarian, ethnic essentialist or racist actions.

3.2 Such an approach demands a new configuring of the relationship between politicians, the senior executives of public institutions delivering services and wider civil society.

4. Promoting opportunities for young people to grow and develop their potential is a societal task, not simply a task of those at the edges and bottom.

4.1 This has implications for the criminal justice sector:

At a minimum, young people will need to be primarily viewed as citizens of this society rather than as problems. We must break those growing ways in which many will increasingly distance themselves, and be distanced from, wider society. Changing this dominant mental model requires not minor adaptations in police strategies, but in the ethos, management, language, and training of policing institutionally.

4.2 Young people growing up in the vortex of poverty and the legacy of violence need specifically focussed support.

Being low status appears to draw overzealous attention, too often punitive or paternal, from a variety of professionals, such as police and teachers. Other consequences include lower school achievement and greater risks of poor mental health and self-harm.

4.3 The challenges are:

- For local Councils under their 'good relations' and projected 'power of well being' functions to create shared public and civic spaces that enhance integration and interaction among residents.
- Schools will have to take a greater responsibility for adopting practices that embrace, rather than exclude, students from low-income families and neighbourhoods.

4.4 The restorative challenges in addressing the needs of young women from disadvantaged areas are to ensure compliance and the proper implementation of existing public directives and to create a societal openness to, and opportunity for, these young women to learn from the contributions of women leading grassroots organisations.

4.5 Political and civic leadership need to be brought to opening up opportunity for the talents and abilities of young women from disadvantaged backgrounds.

4.6 There is a cost and a loss of talent to our wider society if the exclusion, stigmatization and the mental health of same-sex attracted young people in Northern Ireland is not addressed and the institutional rejection they face, particularly in schools and within religious traditions, is not faced into and changed.

The restorative challenges include a need for existing law to be exercised when the rights and freedoms of these young people are diminished, and policy efforts that demand the creation of institutions, particularly schools, that are welcoming to all youth.

4.7 Creating places for optimism and hope are central.

Many young people see politicians as incapable of delivering reconciliation at present. It is imperative that broader political and civil society leadership underpins a commitment to promote a non-violent and inclusive society continually working at the task of reconciliation relationally and structurally.

4.8 The restorative tasks include the imperative for intergenerational engagement to bolster movements to a more reconciled future.

4.9 A final dimension of intergenerational practice is leadership succession.

Restorative cultures need to be restored themselves. It is essential to prepare the "next generation" to take on future leadership (Kunreuther, Kim, & Rodriguez, 2008).

5 Best innovative learning and personal support practice with young people need multiplied and imagined around:

5.1 across social class and inter cultural leadership and learning developments

We need a regional structure that gathers the experience and talents of formal, informal and community based approaches with young people; critically examines how diverse local and regional programmes can be generated and promotes more demanding, high quality challenging interventions with under achieving young people.

5.2 integrated inter professional, inter agency and civil society partnerships

The development of inter agency and inter professional approaches in support of schooling and youth provision such as Lancashire RAIL^[1] Programmes and the Scottish Executive's Every Child Matters Programme^[2] should be promoted here.

We also need local examples of exemplary practice highlighted and multiplied.

5.3 integrated school and informal youth and community provision need promoted;

e.g. The UU Step Up Programmes

The UU based IFI Funded 'Sparking the Imagination Programme'

The learning from these should be gathered and applied across all areas of disadvantage.

5.4 integrated public and civic engagement.

Many of the innovative school and community partnerships, alongside the earlier 'Community based youth work' initiatives funded by the Community Foundation and Children in Need, should be revisited to learn about how energy, commitment and voluntary resources were released in support of statutory resources.

5.5 Initial Teacher Training

We wish some specific resources to underpin trainee teachers linking with experienced teachers and dealing with the challenges of under achieving pupils in areas of social deprivation. We would build a 'Promoting Genius' programme as part of our existing PGCE cohort, linking students in a long term University commitment with specific schools wishing to tackle this theme.

5.6 Inter-professional reflective learning and training initiatives linked to specific on-the ground initiatives should be deliberately established between youth workers, social workers, police officers, community development workers and speech therapists.

These models of best practice should then be developed and multiplied out across the region.

6. Future responses to pupil under achievement and proposals for addressing this challenge will be better served by a stronger institutional memory being preserved within and between Government Departments.

6.1 That the Education Committee establishes a more critically reflective learning organisation culture within itself, within the Department of Education and across Departments regarding how knowledge of earlier initiatives and their successes and failures are tracked, acknowledged and used in future policy reviews.

6.2 Several baseline approaches around home-school liaison, school and community links, school – youth tutor programmes should be reviewed and new practice targets generated.

A response to the Assembly Education Committee on 'Successful Post Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Areas'

1. Curriculum Matters and Initial teacher Education

The University of Ulster's School of Education welcomes the farsighted and imaginative School Curriculum for Northern Ireland.

We argue for the Assembly to ensure that flexibility is allowed in how the implementation of this curriculum is fostered and delivered to meet the needs of all young people, because each is an equal citizen worthy of value and respect.

The School of Education in the University of Ulster has been, and is, committed to a vision of a more equitable educational provision that stands with those pupils from areas of disadvantage who also have untapped potential within them.

The School has a strong tradition of preparing teachers for all levels- primary, secondary, further and work based educational settings.

For many years, we have developed innovative action research and developmental practice programmes in community relations, diversity, human rights education, citizenship, reconciliation and professional values practice. We have consistently prepared our students undertaking the PGCE courses to develop a personal competence and confidence in community relations practice and the development of the full potential of the citizenship curriculum. The school also has distinct research and teaching expertise in supporting staff working with pupils with Special Educational Needs.

This research and developmental practice has been honoured internationally and is underpinned by the presence, within the school, of one of the few UNESCO Chairs of Education and the UNESCO Centre within the School of Education specialising in research on the longitudinal needs of children on this island.

Our Experience with Trainee Teachers

In our engagement with student teachers we present the widest possible vision of engaged teaching with pupils of all abilities and have encouraged our students to face these challenges in their first teaching practice experiences.

In all our practice we have been committed to equip trainee teacher with the openness and ease to discuss sensitive themes with colleagues and pupils, something the wider society, steeped in the dynamics of avoidance and politeness, has still difficulty dealing with openly.

In all manners this school, in an integrated manner, develops a practice that underpins the proposed CRED Policy of the Department of Education.

In our experience to date many young trainees develop a priority to serve this high school catchment and yet there are few jobs available to them in this sector.

Recommendations:

1.1 We argue that the revised curriculum should equally value the importance of academic, vocational and civic education for all pupils. The diverse needs of the underachieving pupils requires that they are challenged around these themes and supported as young adults to take their place alongside others who achieve higher qualifications.

In our view the Department and the Assembly needs to give a renewed priority to those working in the high school sector.

We believe that the existing cohort of talented and experienced teachers working with vulnerable young people needs linked across the generations with those emerging newly qualified teachers, many of whom, in the experience of this School of Education would wish to make a commitment in favour of working with this cohort of pupils, should opportunities be open to them.

1.2 We need more equity in how resources are targeted to this sector and especially this section of pupils who underachieve.

We need more mentoring opportunities for newly qualified staff to work alongside these pupils in an innovative and supportive fashion.

We need an inter-generational cohort of seasoned and young teacher practitioners committed to tackling those who are underachieving.

We need young people in high schools exposed to specialist teachers and not just generalists, they too are deserving of dedicated specialist teaching.

We caution against a narrow 'traditional' measurement approach being driven through with this cohort.

2. Some broad conceptual changes that we need if young people are to be stood with.

2.1 That all approaches to tackling community disadvantage are shaped within a wider umbrella of policies that promote trust and building greater prosperity for all citizens.

In conflicted societies that have glossed over major historical abuses, civic cultures often become characterised by sensitive issues being conscientiously avoided. This avoidance contributes to separations and inequalities among residents and communities, and prevents the establishment of policies that build trust and promote integration across lines of separation. Long term practice in this area has recently been supported by economic and community planning research by Gaffikin and Morrissey (to be published 2011) that argue that ease with difference, decreasing inequality and promoting sustainable economic growth are deeply inter related. The current

policies that appear to separate social inclusion and social cohesion approaches are flawed (Gaffikin & Morrissey, 2010)

2.2 That all public policies and organisational cultures associated with young people are characterised by hopefulness, an openness to change being possible and a belief that all young people are assets to society and the wider world.

In conflicted societies many young people are often seen as problems, not assets, in public discourse. Such mental models disable a reconstructive, future oriented policy climate where young people experience being of value. Policies and practices are needed that challenge this 'pessimistic common sense' about what young people can contribute.

At its core, a shared society demands that all young people be given the opportunity and support necessary for positive development, for learning, and for thriving. Given the breadth and depth of existing divides, it is essential to engage youth, not as "problems" or "symptoms" of discord, but as citizens, as contributors, who are willing and able to enact restorative practices. In brief, intergenerational practices bring youth into the centre of society by allowing them to partner with adults, in the present, for the common good. (Zeldin, Larson, Camino, & O'Connor, 2005; Zeldin & Petrokubi, 2009)

2.3 An inter-generational perspective and practice is now needed that adopts principles of respect and inclusivity as cornerstones of public policy and promotes youth-adult partnerships in civic life within the larger context of explicitly working to secure more open, shared and interdependent societies.

Increasingly in youth work practice, and in some school based-community partnerships, especially with disadvantaged young people, the potential of young people and adults working together on community, civic and policy issues has been shown to demonstrate:

- the generation of stronger, more empowered civil societies;
- more engaged citizen participation and more informed political debates and policy making;
- greater longer-term opportunities for young people to develop skills, confidence and competence in making choices and re-entering channels that give them greater opportunity.

2.4 In some communities the history of schools and other educational services is that they have failed generations and certain local areas. Such inter generational failure has to be addressed within a more restorative framework where explicit cross departmental, inter professional and political, public and civic energies are, for a sustained period, committed to restoring fairness, restoring personal belief and resilience, offering affirmative experiences and renewed opportunity and long term healing and hope.

In recent years there have been some important 'turn arounds' in the culture of schools that were associated with failing children. These experiences have drawn on dedicated leadership and committed staff from diverse agencies and yet there is still much to do. The work of turning school success rates on their head is not for schools alone. It is important that there is a new commitment to, and comprehensive funding of, restorative and intergenerational practices in the building of just societies where schools are central and the use of school and community premises is around the clock use.

3. Some Specific Approaches need considered and linked to School policies, cultures, working partnerships with parents and guardians, community and civic partners and teaching support.

(The points in 3 and 4 are drawn from the recently published Sage Journal of Research mentioned above: 'Creating Restorative and Intergenerational Cultures for Youth: Insights from Northern Ireland and the United States', eds: Wilson, Zeldin & Collura, November 2010)

3.1 We need to fundamentally address the violent subcultures of young men, especially those from poor areas that, historically, have been most significantly affected by "the troubles," and were used in sustaining the conflict, and who often feel free to engage in sectarian, ethnic essentialist or racist actions.

Harland examines how these young men provide a window into the causes and consequences of community distrust and separation, and into the ways wider society and its institutions can dismiss certain populations. He argues for an intergenerational approach to these citizens to challenge the pessimistic common sense that dominates their daily lives. It is important that these young adults not be stereotyped as antisocial, but be given opportunities to accept responsibility for their actions and space to make new and informed choices.

3.2 Such an approach demands a new configuring of the relationship between politicians, the senior executives of public institutions delivering services and wider civil society.

This priority requires cross-departmental policy support and a new configuration on the manner in which politicians are advised about policy matters and public institutions challenged to deliver services.

We need a new concordat on young people delivered by the triangulation of policy, public provision and wider civil society agencies. Some civil society actors must be given the chairing or audit and challenge functions for these new structures so that politicians can learn and that public services be held to account. This would be a more restorative structure recognising the interdependence between these areas in providing services and opportunities for young people and acknowledging the high voluntary and community 'at no cost' contribution that organisations bring to this work.

4. Promoting opportunities for young people to grow and develop their potential is a societal task, not simply a task of those at the edges and bottom.

4.1 This has implications for the criminal justice sector:

Byrne and Jarman's work highlights the failure of government to consider the needs of young people when establishing policing policies, plans, or training structures. While relationships among police and adults may slowly be changing for the better, there is some evidence of heightened distrust between police and the next generation that need addressed.

That said there exists a legacy of collaboration and promising programs that could become institutionally embedded. Such efforts will require new mental models.

At a minimum, young people will need to be primarily viewed as citizens of this society rather than as problems. We must break those growing ways in which many will increasingly distance themselves, and be distanced from, wider society.

Changing this dominant mental model requires not minor adaptations in police strategies, but in the ethos, management, language, and training of policing institutionally.

4.2 Young people growing up in the vortex of poverty and the legacy of violence need specifically focussed support.

For these youth, fear and isolation have become a way of life. Most grow up in environments of high unemployment. Such conditions are an affront to social justice and corrosive to the life chances of these youth. Being low status appears to draw overzealous attention, too often punitive or paternal, from a variety of professionals, such as police and teachers. Other consequences include lower school achievement and greater risks of poor mental health and self-harm.

4.3 The challenges are:

to create shared public and civic spaces that enhance integration and interaction among residents (See the earlier work of Eyben et al for Belfast City Council^[3]; see the current work on various local councils addressing wider social needs in anticipation of their 'power of well being' under the RPA.

schools will have to take a greater responsibility for adopting practices that embrace, rather than exclude, students from low-income families and neighbourhoods.

The University of Ulster's 'Restorative Practices Programme' now involves staff from the Schools of Sociology and Applied Social Studies with School of Education Staff in training a diverse range of school principals and teaching staff, youth justice, young offender, social work and social care staff in integrated restorative approaches with young people. (Also see the work of UU School of Education within a UK Wide Seminar Series on 'Restorative Approaches to Conflict in Schools' with the Universities of Cambridge, Nottingham and Edinburgh and with Republic of Ireland initiatives on a similar theme).

4.4 The restorative challenges in addressing the needs of young women from disadvantaged areas are to ensure compliance and the proper implementation of existing public directives and to create a societal openness to, and opportunity for, these young women to learn from the contributions of women leading grassroots organisations.

Gray and Neill analyse the perspectives of young women who have grown up in conflicted areas arguing that "the troubles" were largely designed by men, and that women, with some notable exceptions, have subsequently been largely excluded from the processes of conflict resolution.

Consequently, gender inequality builds a culture of exceptions, rather than an embedded culture of inclusion as a right. This thesis is supported by the data showing that although young women evidenced many accounts of how their lives were shaped by living in a conflicted society, most failing to identify these themes with the conflict.

4.5 Political and civic leadership need to be brought to opening up opportunity for the talents and abilities of young women from disadvantaged backgrounds to be developed.

In this research young women focussed on their disillusionment with politics and a sense that they, and those like them, will continue to be invisible unless they are given the space, freedom, and encouragement to offer their voice.

Such programmes would give space, freedom, and opportunity for young women to make their voices heard and to become engaged in local forums of decision-making.

4.6 There is a cost and a loss of talent to our wider society if the exclusion, stigmatization and the mental health of same-sex attracted young people in Northern Ireland is not addressed and the institutional rejection they face, particularly in schools and within religious traditions, is not faced into and changed.

There have been few societal commitments developed in support of this dispersed community of young people who represent ten percent of the youth population.

The restorative challenges include a need for existing law to be exercised where the rights and freedoms of these young people are diminished, and policy efforts that demand the creation of institutions, particularly schools, that are welcoming to all youth.

Schubotz and O'Hara highlight how the isolation of these young people is corrosive to a shared society and describe how the silencing of same-sex-attracted youth means that society loses the collective voice of this population. Evidence further indicates that this community may be making the choice to permanently leave Northern Ireland. The exclusion of these same-sex-attracted youth contributes to a broad range of developmental and behavioural problems: bullying, mental health, self-harm, pressure to enter sexual relationships, smoking and diet issues.

4.7 Creating places for optimism and hope are central. Many young people see politicians as incapable of delivering reconciliation at present. It is imperative that broader political and civil society leadership underpins a commitment to promote a non-violent and inclusive society continually working at the task of reconciliation relationally and structurally.

Many young people, researched in three age categories, growing up in a post conflict period, still fear that their own cohort will get caught up in repeating the habits of the past.

Magill and Hamber, explore how "post conflict" generations understand reconciliation and understand their own role in contributing to a shared society. At a minimum, the young people expect a certain compliance standard for fair treatment. They expect support in finding employment during bleak economic times. But, foremost, the youth express a wish for a societal commitment to justice that is more than merely legally driven, youth want their generation to be engaged in reconciliation processes.

4.8 The restorative tasks include the imperative for intergenerational engagement to bolster movements to a more reconciled future.

Through such efforts, in conjunction with enhanced employment prospects, it will become possible for young people to move freely within their communities, to imagine peace after so many years of violence, and consequently, to develop a positive sense of self-worth and a commitment to be an integral part of the reconciliation agenda.

The challenge to promote trust building (CR) and an openness to difference (D) must always be linked to the need to alleviate poverty and lack of opportunity and secure a more open and fair society (E). Current limited thinking on this integrated approach by Government and a failure to locate this policy across a number of departments with delivery responsibilities for children and young people dilute this approach and marginalise it within public policy.

4.9 A final dimension of intergenerational practice is leadership succession. Restorative cultures need to be restored themselves. It is essential to prepare the "next generation" to take on future leadership (Kunreuther, Kim, & Rodriguez, 2008).

The conditions for young people from disadvantaged communities will improve when we promote and support policies and practices that, over time, secure a normal civil society in which all individuals are considered equals, where differences are resolved through dialogue in the public sphere, and where all people are treated impartially.

Most fundamentally, shared societies are characterized by equity, respect for diversity, and recognition of the interdependence among citizens (Eyben, Morrow, & Wilson, 1995).

Most centrally, it is quite difficult for many youth to develop an ease with "different others" as peers when the adult communities view each other as "less than us" or "not deserving."

It is also difficult for youth to visualize a shared future when the larger society may implicitly support internal levels of inequality.

Restorative practices are those that explicitly seek to bring people together around principles of respect, inclusivity, and a common future.

- At the relational level, restorative practices adopt an openness to acknowledge and heal groups of people that were fractured in the distant and recent past. They raise new options and strategies to restore a sense of mutual humanity.
- At the structural level, the push is to create organisational cultures, spaces and opportunities to meet others who are different and with whom there has been minimal communication.
- Restorative practices also have a policy dimension, with the aim being to create public and institutional policies that support and sustain respectful relationships and inclusive structures. They promote public and civic awareness of working for a just society.
- Legal issues are also considered within restorative practices for the purpose of protecting people from hurt and violence, and for holding perpetrators accountable.

5. Best innovative learning and personal support practice with young people that need multiplied and imagined:

5.1 across social class and inter cultural leadership and learning developments

5.2 within integrated inter professional, inter agency and civil society partnerships;

5.3 within more joined -up school and informal youth and community programmes

5.4 within greater integrated public and civic engagement around educational disadvantage;

Best practice in community relations and reconciliation work in Northern Ireland or the North of Ireland is internationally recognised to be as such and should be built on, not made peripheral or trivialised. Such practice should be embedded into schools and youth service provision for young people from disadvantaged areas.

Additionally this region has been the nursery of high quality, demanding and challenging youth work practice that should be more valued locally.

Much best practice, such as that work done through Public Achievement, Youth Action, The Corrymeela Community, QPEP, Holywell Trust, Glebe House, Spirit of Enniskillen, CRIS, NICE and many others has to be underpinned for its practice, its voluntary and civic experience, its voluntary time generated and its experienced staff.

5.1 across social class and inter cultural leadership and learning developments

Nurturing young leadership to connect across social and educational divides are important bridges

The Seed Group experience with the 15-17 and 18-25 age groups, associated with the Corrymeela Community, is now being multiplied with encouraging results, especially in terms of those young people from areas of disadvantage.

Since 1975 the long established 'seed group' programme of 6 residential weekends plus on-going in community mentoring and support and a two-week 'out of country experience' for young people in 15-17 and in the 18-25 age group have proved to be seminal. These programmes have supported young people with leadership potential emerge and access opportunity whilst living in disadvantaged communities plus given them a safe and diverse space to speak about, reflect on and learn about diverse themes impacting on their life opportunities.

They have also conscientised young people from more advantaged backgrounds and have established potential life-long friendships and structures between previously out of touch young people as they move into study, professional, trades and service industry employment. The evidence for these developments is accruing as 'graduates' from such programmes emerge later in civic and community organisations, professional and public service provision.

Bringing these young people into diverse groups, socially, religiously, politically, culturally and educationally offers links and relationships that model a future more interdependent society.

We need a regional structure that gathers the experience and talents of formal, informal and community based approaches with young people to critically how diverse local and regional programmes can be generated and promote more demanding, high quality challenging interventions with under achieving young people. This must be wider than the existing Education Boards and also anticipating the projected 'power of well being' that the new Council arrangements will have.

5.2 within integrated inter professional, inter agency and civil society partnerships;

The development of inter agency and inter professional approaches in support of schooling and youth provision such as Lancashire RAIL^[4] Programmes and the Scottish Executive's Every Child Matters Programme^[5] should be promoted here.

We also need local examples of exemplary practice multiplied such as:

The development of the crèche facility within secondary schools for young mothers

The Girls Model School initiative on this is most commendable.

5.3 within more joined -up school and informal youth and community programmes

Emerging from the existing University of Ulster, Youth and Community Work and Restorative Practices Programmes a number of young adult apprenticeship youth work training courses have been initiated alongside diverse disadvantaged communities.

In addition adults from these communities have been enabled to attend courses in restorative practices and encouraged to apply them to their work with young people in their areas. (Suffolk and Dunmurry; North Belfast and Loughshore; Ardoyne)

Step Up Programmes

The UU initiative in offering opportunities to young people from areas of social disadvantage opportunities for mentoring support has been instrumental in promoting access and opportunity for these same young people.

Drawing on the UU-Flax Trust Funded 'Sparking the Imagination Programme'

The learning from this nursery to primary level interface should be gathered and applied, where relevant, across the primary to secondary school interface.

5.4 within greater integrated public and civic engagement around educational disadvantage;

Many of the innovative school and community partnerships, alongside the earlier 'Community based Youth Work' initiatives funded by the Community Foundation and Children in Need, should be revisited to learn about how energy, commitment and voluntary resources were released in support of statutory resources. The energy around such schemes became dissipated and diluted.

As such civic responses were dissolved and important role models for under achieving young people were lost.

5.5 Initial Teacher Training

We would like some specific resources given to underpin trainee teachers linking with experienced teachers and dealing with the challenges of under achieving pupils in areas of social deprivation. With such dedicated resources we would build a 'Promoting Genius' programme as part of our existing PGCE cohort, linking students in a long-term commitment between the University and specific schools wishing to tackle this theme.

5.6 Inter-professional reflective learning and training initiatives linked to specific on-the ground initiatives should be deliberately established between youth workers, social workers, police officers, community development workers and speech therapists.

In the work of the University of Ulster's Schools of 'Sociology and Applied Social Studies' and 'Education' in the different prison and young offender establishments we continually come across the link between a lack of competence in speech and language, low self esteem, experiences of social deprivation and incidences of humiliation and victimisation in the lives of many in these places. While in no way condoning violent behaviour, we do however believe that unless the spaces and places people experience outside prison are of a more restorative and redeeming nature, then many young men will inevitably end up in prison.

Our current work on enabling offenders to look at experiences of humiliation and shame (Gilligan et al) in their own lives in order that they can acknowledge the victimisation and hurt they have inflicted throws up major societal challenges about the conditions many have grown up in.

There are intervention models in communities as well as in criminal justice institutions that need promoted further and their learning applied to the nature of schooling and education in the future. These models of best practice should then be developed and multiplied out across the region.

6. Future responses to pupil under achievement and proposals for addressing this challenge will be better served by a stronger institutional memory being preserved within and between Departments

6.1 That the Education Committee establishes a more critically reflective learning organisation culture within itself, within the Department of Education and across Departments regarding how knowledge of earlier initiatives and their successes and failures are tracked, acknowledged and used in future policy reviews.

Recent consultation documents such as CSI and CRED from the Executive have been characterised, in my view, by a lack of understanding of the earlier history of such initiatives.

The processes by which new civil servants are inducted into their professional duties needs considered where there apparently are gaps in the historical memory of the relevant Department or division.

This is not just a minor complaint. In considering the challenge of promoting 'Successful Post Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Areas' elected politicians and public servants have a duty, in shaping public policy, to ensure that new policies strengthen and build on previous and existing best practice and policy so that they assist the wider society 'mourn some features of our ...past with new present awareness that we must never repeat such events in our future' (Shriver, 2005, p9).

6.2 Several baseline approaches around home-school liaison, school and community links, school –youth tutor programmes should be reviewed and updated.

Up to date responses to these innovative ways of working should be established, current best practice generated and long term innovation programmes supported in diverse areas, regionally.

Appendix: Research Abstracts Published November 2010

Ref: Young People in Northern Ireland.

Creating Restorative and Intergenerational Cultures for Youth:

Insights from Northern Ireland and the United States

A Special Issue of SAGE USA "Youth and Society" November 2010

Guest Editors

Shepherd Zeldin, Rothermel Professor of Human Ecology, University of Wisconsin

Derick Wilson, Reader in Education, University of Ulster

Jessica Collura, Researcher, University of Wisconsin.

Creating Restorative and Intergenerational Cultures for Youth: Insights from Northern Ireland and the United States

Wilson, D.A., Zeldin, R. S.

Abstract

In conflicted societies and in societies that have glossed over major historical abuses, civic cultures often become characterised by sensitive issues being conscientiously avoided. This avoidance contributes to separations and inequalities among residents and communities, and prevents the establishment of policies that build trust and promote integration across lines of separation. In such societies young people are seen as problems, not assets, in public discourse. Such mental models disable a reconstructive, future oriented policy climate where young people experience being of value. This special issue argues for policies and practices that challenge this pessimistic common sense about what young people can contribute. It stresses the importance of restorative and intergenerational practices in the building of just societies. The articles further emphasize the importance of adopting principles of respect and inclusivity as cornerstones of policy, promoting youth-adult partnership and other devolved models of leadership in civic life, all within the larger context of explicitly working to secure more open, shared and interdependent societies.

Ten Years After Patten: Young People and Policing in Northern Ireland

1. Jonny Byrne, PhD byrne-j1@email.ulster.ac.uk

1. University of Ulster Jordanstown

1. Neil Jarman, PhD

1. Institute for Conflict Research

Abstract

Through a comprehensive review of existing literature, this article documents young people's experiences of policing during the period of political transition and extensive reform of the structures of policing in Northern Ireland since the publication of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland (The Patten Report) in 1999. The article explores the nature and context of these relationships and provides a commentary of how young people's experiences and perceptions of policing have been shaped by their social, economic, and community backgrounds. Furthermore, a number of ideas and activities that have been developed with the aim of improving the attitudes of young people toward the police, the attitudes of police officers toward young people, and the interactions between the two are also discussed.

Violent Youth Culture in Northern Ireland: Young Men, Violence, and the Challenges of Peacebuilding

1. Ken Harland k.harland@ulster.ac.uk

1. University of Ulster

Abstract

This article discusses violent male youth culture in Northern Ireland within the context of a society emerging from a prolonged period of political violence toward peacebuilding. Specifically, the article focuses on the findings from a qualitative study carried out by the Centre for Young Men's Studies with 130 marginalized young men aged 13 to 16 from 20 different communities across Northern Ireland addressing themes of violence, conflict, and safety. Despite a changing context of peacebuilding, findings reveal that violence and paramilitary influence continue to perpetuate a male youth subculture epitomized by sectarianism and increasing racist attitudes. Underpinning this is an enduring cycle of suspicion, fear, and distrust of others and a confused state of mind that leaves these young men "stuck" somewhere between the ceasefire mentality of paramilitaries and the ambiguous messages of peacebuilding. This article concludes by stating the need for more realistic ways to engage and integrate marginalized young men into their communities.

Creating a Shared Society in Northern Ireland: Why We Need to Focus on Gender Equality

1. Ann Marie Gray am.gray@ulster.ac.uk

1. Gail Neill

Abstract

International evidence has increasingly highlighted the necessity to understand the impact of conflict on the lives of girls and women and the importance of addressing gender equality as part of peace processes. This article argues that women, and especially young women, have been left out of much of the conflict discourse within Northern Ireland and there is little understanding of how the conflict has affected them. Analysis of in-depth interviews with young women reveals how their opportunities and choices in many areas of their life have been restricted by growing up in a divided society. There is a high level of disillusionment with politics and politicians with many identifying what they see as continuing sectarianism in Northern Ireland politics. Yet the "invisibility" of young women is unlikely to be addressed, or their confidence in politics strengthened, unless they are given the space, freedom, and encouragement to begin to articulate their thoughts and concerns.

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The Making of an Outsider: Growing Up in Poverty in Northern Ireland

1. Goretta Horgan g.horgan@ulster.ac.uk

Abstract

The young people who are the focus of this article grow up in communities ravaged by poverty and conflict. School is where they spend most of their time, but their experience of school is, generally, not motivating and increases their feelings of social exclusion; almost one in ten young people whose family depends on benefits leaves school with no educational qualifications and the future they see is bleak. Small wonder, then, that so many suffer from emotional and mental health problems and engage in self-harming behavior. This article will use qualitative data from two studies carried out over the past 5 years to explore the experiences of young people growing up in poverty in Northern Ireland and look at the extent of their exclusion from the norms of society. It will argue that this exclusion is such that some of them feel "outsiders" even within their own, disadvantaged, community, and this is dangerous in a society which is still emerging from conflict.

A Shared Future? Exclusion, Stigmatization, and Mental Health of Same-Sex-Attracted Young People in Northern Ireland

1. Dirk Schubotz d.schubotz@qub.ac.uk

1. Queen's University Belfast

1. Malachai O'Hara

1. The Rainbow Project

Abstract

For more than a decade the Peace Process has fundamentally changed Northern Irish society. However, although socioreligious integration and ethnic mixing are high on the political agenda in Northern Ireland, the Peace Process has so far failed to address the needs of some of the most vulnerable young people, for example, those who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Public debates in Northern Ireland remain hostile to same-sex-attracted people. Empirical evidence from the annual Young Life and Times (YLT) survey of 16-year-olds undertaken by ARK shows that same-sex-attracted young people report worse experiences in the education sector (e.g., sex education, school bullying), suffer from poorer mental health, experience higher social pressures to engage in health-adverse behavior, and are more likely to say that they will leave Northern Ireland and not return. Equality legislation and peace process have done little to address the heteronormativity in Northern Ireland.

"If They Don't Start Listening to Us, the Future is Going to Look the Same as the Past": Young People and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and Bosnia and Herzegovina

1. Clare Magill c.magill@ulster.ac.uk

1. University of Ulster Magee Campus

1. Brandon Hamber

1. University of Ulster Magee Campus

Abstract

This article, based on empirical research from Northern Ireland and Bosnia and Herzegovina, explores how young people conceptualize reconciliation and examines the meaning this concept holds for them. Qualitative data are collected through one-to-one interviews with young people aged 16 to 18 living in Northern Ireland (N = 15) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (N = 15). Results indicate that young people's conceptualizations of reconciliation are largely relationship based. In terms of their role in the reconciliation process, young people see themselves as both potential peacemakers and potential troublemakers. They feel that politicians and the older generations have a significant impact on whether the role of young people in the future would be constructive or destructive. The research finds that a lack of political and economic change was one of the major factors that negatively influenced the potential for reconciliation, as did the lack

of intergenerational dialogue. The research also indicates that it is vital to include young people in the debate about reconciliation.

[1] Lancashire Council, Restorative Approaches in Schools Guidance Document 2009/2010 Helen Flanagan

[2] <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/12/18140606/3> Vision for Children 2.9 Scotland's children and young people should be confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens. 2.10 To achieve this, children need to be safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, respected, responsible and included.

[3] 'A New Shape for One of the Oldest Professions?' Politics and Civil Society, The Good Relations Task in Belfast City Council, 2006

[4] Lancashire Council, Restorative Approaches in Schools Guidance Document 2009/2010 Helen Flanagan

[5] <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/12/18140606/3> Vision for Children 2.9 Scotland's children and young people should be confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens. 2.10 To achieve this, children need to be safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, respected, responsible and included.

West Belfast Partnership



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The Integrated Services for Children and Young People Programme is designed and delivered through two Local Implementation Action Groups with funding secured as a result of the work of the West Belfast and Greater Shankill Task Forces to address the legacy of poverty, disadvantage and underinvestment in these areas.



The AEP Forum

The Alternative Education Providers' Forum was set up in 1999 and is made up of Community based Stakeholders and Organisations set up in response to the identified need of our (school age) Young People who, for a wide variety of reasons, were outside the mainstream school system and who were 'best served' in smaller, multi disciplinary educational settings to meet their needs.

Addressing Underachievement in Disadvantaged Communities

Education provision in areas of Social and Economic disadvantage.

A quality educational experience is one where each child / young person is treated with respect and dignity inclusive of difference and where their identity is valued, acknowledged, and celebrated in an ethos which enables them to realise their full potential. Equality of access means that education is accessible to / for / by every child /young person where they choose to engage in their education and learning in an environment which nurtures their abilities, skills and talents. This will help ensure better outcomes for every child / young person and enhanced life skills, resilience and employment opportunities.

Realising full potential relates to the academic, vocational, creative and personal development and achievements to the best of their skills, talents and abilities. The AEP Centres adopt this approach.

Key characteristics/factors which contribute to success

- Resource allocation on the basis of objective need at every stage is crucial.
- Schools / Education settings need to ensure an ethos of inclusion / awareness of issues related to high social and economic deprivation.
- Teacher training curriculum should also reflect greater awareness of the impacts of social and economic deprivation – in NI 1 in 4 children live in poverty; 1 in 10 in persistent poverty (*Save the Children 2009*). CPD* and EPD** of new and current Teachers and all School Staff.
 - **Continuing Professional Development*
 - ***Early Professional Development*
- Creative approaches to the curriculum where it is made 'relevant' to the lives of Young People as well as the pedagogy employed will impact (activity based learning is vital).

Effective School Leadership

Key leadership qualities include:

- Vision;
- Driving ethos of school;
- Commitment;
- Strategic and operational skills;
- Understanding in the broadest sense;
- Vested interest in the success of their Young People; and
- High expectations are crucial if we are to ensure our Young People realise their full potential.

School Engagement with Parents and the Wider Community

The AEP Forum has consistently engaged with Schools/ Education options Panels / Parents/Guardians and Carers throughout the period of engagement with their Young People. It is vital to work with the 'whole child' appreciating the context of their everyday lives. Greater involvement has meant greater participation levels – not only of the Young People themselves but also of parents in formal and informal education. Home visits and relationship development has been core to this approach.

Involving parents from the initial induction stages is important to ensure their ongoing engagement and 'joint investment' / 'ownership' over their young people's education.

Involvement of wider community agencies and organisations has been key to our work. The growing realisation that we have to integrate the work of all relevant agencies is to be welcomed. It has been this approach begun within the AEP Sector and developed through 'Integrated Services' which has ensured / is ensuring the desired and necessary outcomes.

All necessary resources – human, financial and physical should 'inform' development of this approach.

- Schools need to ensure effective assessment at key stages where the necessary support and specialist interventions are applied as and when necessary throughout a child/young person's education 'career'.
- Effective, smaller pupil:teacher ratios are a major contributory factor in ensuring successful educational experiences.
- External agencies and organisations should be encouraged to become part of the school community and contribute to the timetabled curriculum.
- Multi disciplinary approaches e.g. health agencies, support services, youth & community workers, peer mentors as well as student placements from relevant disciplines should also not only be encouraged but embedded. *(I have initiated and developed this approach through my work in Newstart Alternative Education Centre over the past 12 years and this has proved very successful in working with marginalised, disadvantaged young people (post-primary)).*
- Schools at all levels are responsible for creating welcoming, safe environments for young people.
- Pre-engagement and participation of young people and parents in friendly, welcoming environments will create ownership over education.
- Supported transition programmes – at all stages - for young people and young people are key in building confidence / self esteem to enable successful progression and 'comfortableness' in the school environment.
- Attitudes to education, as in other areas/communities, is key to whether our young people / young people value education per se.
- More informal work / activities involving the community will aid this and impact on overall outcomes for young people.
- School development plans should also explicitly state HOW this is to be achieved.

School development plans should also explicitly state HOW this is to be achieved.

APPROACH

It is to be welcomed that the Inquiry will include evidence based sessions with:

- Other organisations serving disadvantaged communities.

These include the:

AEP Forum;

West Belfast Partnership Board's Integrated Services for Children & Young People Programme; and

West Belfast Partnership Board's Education Sub Committee.

These can be contacted via:

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Tel: 028 90 809202

Appendix 1.

	West Belfast	N.Ireland
% of young people receiving free school meals	39%	18%
FSME in post-primary sector	40%	19%
% of Statement/ SEN Young people	27%	13%
% Lone Parent Households with Dependant Young people	18.3%	8.1%
% Young people in Income Support Households	53%	21.2%
% of Unemployed	7.8%	4.1%
% of Unemployed, who were long-term unemployed	46.6%	40.4%
% Working age population claiming benefits [1]	8.9%	4.7%

Nearly 80% of the West Belfast population live in the most deprived Super Output Areas [2] in Northern Ireland (NI).

1 (Source: The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment Claimant count Publication of Claimant Count of Northern Ireland Parliamentary Constituencies July 2009)

2 Super Output Areas (SOA) are used within the Noble Measures of Multiple Deprivation (NMD) to enable comparative analysis of small areas across Northern Ireland. The final rank given to an individual SOA is based upon several indicative domains including: income, health, employment, education, environment, services and crime/disorder.

Appendix 4

Other Correspondence and Written Evidence

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PISA 2009 Results

Department of Education 26 January 2011

GCSE Results

ETI 16 November 2010

Department of Education 2 December 2010

Department of Education 31 January 2011

PHQ (NI) Qualification

ETI 1 July 2010

RTU 30 September 2010

Department of Education 14 October 2010

Derg Mourne Learning Community - WELB - 2 March 2011

The benefits for boys of accessing courses through collaboration within the rural Derg Mourne Learning Community including ways in which career pathways are being developed.

Derg Mourne Learning Community covers the geographical area of Strabane District Council. This is a rural area served by the two market towns of Strabane and Castlederg.

The member schools are:

- Holy Cross College - a recent amalgamation of two maintained non selective schools and one voluntary grammar school.
- Strabane Grammar School and Strabane High School - from 1 September 2011 will form the newly amalgamated Strabane Academy.
- Castlederg High School
- St Eugene's High School, Castlederg
- Knockavoe Special School
- The Learning Community is served by two colleges of Further Education – North West Regional College, Derry and South West College, Omagh.

The Derg Mourne Learning Community (DMLC) was established in September 2006 under the direction and guidance of the WELB CASS Entitlement Framework Development Officer.

Prior to the establishment of the Learning Community (LC) the non selective schools had begun to consider the curriculum that they offered to those pupils who did not wish to study a language at Key Stage 4. Boys were the significant majority of this cohort.

The process used by the LC from the outset has been the School Development Planning process. Initial review led the LC to set as a target the trialling of a number of collaborative projects between individual schools and between schools and the local FE colleges. A significant proportion of the pupils targeted were offered the opportunity to access a range of Occupational Studies Courses in South West College, Omagh and North West Regional College, Derry.

Since then the beginning of each academic year sees DMLC undertake an overview and evaluation of the current curriculum provision. This includes an extensive review of the outcomes of pupils involved in collaborative courses in the previous academic year.

The findings of the review process inform the setting of targets and actions which describe how the LC will achieve their targets. The action plans when agreed by the Principals' group define the work of the Curriculum subgroup and the CEIAG (Careers) subgroup.

A member of the SMT with curriculum responsibility from each school and a representative from each of the two FE colleges and the DMLC co-ordinator form the membership of the Curriculum subgroup.

The CEIAG (Careers) subgroup includes the Head of Careers from each member school, a representative from each of the two FE colleges, a representative from DEL Careers Service for NI and the DMLC co-ordinator.

Both groups are supported by members of WELB CASS.

As experienced professionals in their own field the members of the two subgroups seek to evaluate and identify areas for the development of the curricular offer including courses offered in house and through collaboration and plan how these could be addressed to meet the needs of the pupils.

The CEIAG subgroup provides evaluation of careers provision for KS4 and Post 16 pupils and analyses and interprets the appropriateness of the range of courses offered and delivered.

Taking into account labour market information, progression routes, the needs of the pupils, both boys and girls, alongside the requirements of the EF this has led to a particular emphasis on expanding the number of applied courses and an agreed common approach to CEIAG at the key transition points at Year 10, Year 12 and Year 14.

The approach agreed by DMLC Principals is implemented and progress monitored in each school in a way that supports the teaching and learning environment in that school.

For example in Castlederg High School, the careers provision is an extension of the work undertaken as part of the Learning for Life and Work (LLW)/ Employability Provision.

In addition some strategies that have worked particularly well for boys in Castlederg High School are:

- The provision of oral and written case studies focusing on GCSE and Post 16 pupils who are currently completing their studies and other students who have moved into various pathways including Further and Higher Education and employment.
- Access to relevant Labour Market Information, both locally and nationally which ensures that pupils and their parents are aware of the employment trends and the important growth and priority skills areas.

- Information about provision within the area learning community including names of pupils who have accessed provision, the outcomes achieved and the progression route they have followed.

All pupils in Castledearg High School benefit from a free choice of courses that they want to study, including those on offer from FE and other schools within DMLC. There are no restrictions placed on pupil choice. The Curriculum Vice-Principal organises these choices into option blocks. While this is a cumbersome task, it has given the vast majority of pupils' access to the courses they really want to study.

This is particularly relevant for boys as it helps maintain their interest, enthusiasm and motivation for the course they have opted to study at Key Stage 4 or Post 16.

Similarly, Strabane Grammar School implemented the DMLC approach in order to extend pupil choice at Post 16. An analysis of progression routes accessed by pupils showed that many boys in particular pursued careers in the Construction, Engineering and Agriculture fields. In September 2008 pupils entering Post 16 studies in Strabane Grammar School were able to choose from a range of BTEC National Awards offered by South West College, Omagh and North West Regional College, Derry.

Analysis of Pupil Outcomes

In the period September 2008 - June 2010, 148 pupils at Year 12 were recorded as having participated in collaborative courses:

School	Boys	Girls	Total
Castledearg High School	9	24	33
Holy Cross College	36	33	69
Knockavoe School	2	3	5
St Eugene's High School, Castledearg	12	5	17
Strabane Grammar School	11	8	19
Strabane High School	3	2	5
Total	73	75	148

From the data submitted, 5 students either did not complete their course or registered no result of whom 2 were boys and 3 were girls.

Of the 120 residuals calculated 79 were positive, 4 were neutral and 37 were negative. (The home school results from one school were not submitted although the results of the courses taken by pupils via collaboration were available).

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total
Boys	43	3	11	57
Girls	36	1	26	63
Total	79	4	37	120

Of the 37 students who had negative residuals, the figures would suggest that a significant number were as a consequence of collaboration courses below the level of pupils' ability. This suggests that had Occupational Studies not been grade restricted (ie the highest grade available being a grade C) or had a proportion of the students been doing a BTEC Certificate^[1] the number of negative residuals would have been considerably reduced.

Of the students whose gender was known and who had recorded a result, there were 64 girls and 56 boys. The residual for the girls was 2.63 points and for the boys was 7.65 points. A grade is equal to 6 points at GCSE.

49 pupils at Year 14 were recorded as having participated in collaborative courses at Post 16

School	Boys	Girls	Total
Castledearg High School	4	7	11
Holy Cross College	10	6	16
Strabane Grammar School	9	13	22
Total	23	26	49

33 had a positive residual, 6 had a neutral residual and 10 had a negative residual.

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total
Boys	18	3	2	23
Girls	15	3	8	26
Total	33	6	10	49

26 boys had an average positive residual of 28 points for their collaboration course while 23 girls had an average positive residual of 23.7 points for theirs. A grade is equal to 30 points at GCSE.

Conclusions

- At Key Stage 4 75% of boys and at Post 16 78% of boys have positive residuals for their collaborative course.
- At Key Stage 4 boys have benefitted at least one grade (7.65 points where 6 points = 1 grade at GCSE level) and at Post 16 by almost one grade (28 points where 30 points = 1 grade at advanced level) through accessing a range of collaborative courses.
- From analysis of the EF Audit data the majority of courses accessed are Occupational Studies and BTEC Certificates at Key Stage 4 and BTEC National Certificates at Post 16 largely provided by South West College, Omagh.
- As a result of the work undertaken by the Curriculum and CEIAG subgroups of DMLC, Castledearg High School increased the number of BTEC Certificates on offer to pupils commencing Key Stage 4 studies in September 2010. Taking account of the academic ability of these pupils South West College has amended the course offered to a BTEC Extended Certificate, the equivalent of 4 GCSEs. At present 12 of these pupils are on target to achieve distinctions and 2 are on target to achieve merit.

	Boys	Girls
BTEC Level 2 Extended Certificate in Agriculture	8	1
BTEC Level 2 Extended Certificate in Construction	5	0

- At Occupational Studies level the majority of boys across all participating schools select Construction, Engineering or Sport with a lesser number opting for Motor Vehicle Maintenance, Plumbing and Agriculture.
- All schools with pupils studying at Post 16 (Holy Cross College, Strabane Grammar School and Castledearg High School) access collaborative courses, the majority of these are BTEC National Award Qualifications offered by South West College, Omagh.
- With the development of BTEC courses at Key Stage 4 it is likely that this will increase the number of pupils wishing to access National Award Qualifications at Post 16 level.
- Analysis of progression pathways suggest that many boys at Key Stage 4 progress to study courses at Post 16 in the same/similar vocational area. A similar picture is evident after Post 16 studies.
- Boys are choosing courses which suit their abilities, learning styles, interests and career pathways.

Simon Mowbray, Acting Vice Principal, Castledearg High School
 Martin Haughey, Co-ordinator, Derg Mourne Learning Community
 Alison Smyth, EF Development Officer, WELB CASS

[1] As a result of analysis carried out in Autumn 2009 the curriculum offered to pupils due to complete their studies in June 2011 was broadened to enable pupils to complete a BTEC Certificate as an alternative to Occupational Studies where their academic profile suggested that this would be a more appropriate pathway. BTECs were offered in the priority skills and STEM areas of Construction, Engineering, Hospitality, Children's Care, Learning and Development and Agriculture, which is of particular relevance to the local economy.

PISA 2009 Results - Department of Education



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Your Ref: 075/10/1/01

26 January 2011

Dear John

Thank you for your letter of 10 December 2010.

Officials have noted the request and would be willing to give a presentation on the results of PISA 2009 for Committee Members.

As requested, ahead of the presentation, please find attached a written briefing paper for Members' information.

Yours sincerely

JOHN LEONARD
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer



Department of Education - Briefing Paper

Introduction

1. This paper provides briefing for the Education Committee on the results of PISA 2009, ahead of the oral presentation that the Committee has requested take place in the coming weeks.

The PISA Survey

2. PISA is organised by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and is a survey of the educational achievement of 15-year-olds in reading, maths and science.

Pupils are assessed on their competence to address real life challenges involving reading, mathematics and science.

3. The survey takes place every three years and the most recent survey was carried out in 2009 (the first was in 2000, with further rounds in 2003 and 2006). In each round, there is a main focus on one subject area, with the other two as minor domains. In 2009, reading was the major area of focus, with maths and science as minor areas (reading was previously the main subject in PISA 2000. In 2003, the main subject was maths and in 2006, science).

4. A total of 65 countries participated in PISA 2009 (compared to 57 in 2006), of which 33 are OECD member countries. Strict quality standards are applied at all stages of the PISA survey to ensure equivalence in translation and adaptation of instruments, sampling procedures and survey administration in all participating countries.

PISA in the north of Ireland

5. The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) was appointed to run the survey here (and in England and Wales, and also for Scotland, which participated separately). A total of 87 schools and 2,197 pupils from the north of Ireland participated.

Headline Results

6. The overall results show that the performance of our 15 year olds in reading and maths is not significantly different from the OECD average. Performance in science is significantly above the OECD average. However, our performance in all three areas lags behind that of the highest performing systems and we continue to have a significant body of underachievement. The attached graphs illustrate how our performance compares to that of other participating countries and economies in reading, maths and science.

7. The Department's Research Briefing (RB3/2010, attached) provides a summary of the key findings in Reading, Maths and Science. The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) has also published a report on the achievement of 15 year olds in the north of Ireland in PISA 2009 and a copy is attached for Members' information. Additionally, the Department for Education and Skills in the south has produced a helpful document that includes comparisons of performance on a north/south basis that members might also provide helpful.

Implications of the PISA Results

8. From a policy perspective, PISA provides an important indication (and one that is not possible purely through using internal measures such as Key Stage or GCSE outcomes) of the standards our pupils achieve in the core areas of Reading, Maths and Science compared with those of pupils in other countries. This measure is particularly important in a context where we are working to prepare young people to take their place in a global economy and where we are also working, including via the Executive sub-group on the Economy, to develop the north's ability to compete economically in an international marketplace.

9. The Minister has repeatedly made clear that she wants to see the north becoming a world class system, looking to the performance of top performing countries and learning from best practice internationally to drive up standards and ensure we achieve good – and equitable - outcomes for all our young people.

10. PISA allows us to identify factors such as the gap in performance between our highest and lowest achievers and between girls and boys and to consider the characteristics of those

countries which combine high performance with a high degree of equity in terms of pupil attainment. The information we gain from participation in the PISA Survey is therefore key in helping to inform policy development and implementation to ensure that every child can succeed to her or his full potential.

11. The Department is analysing the PISA findings in detail to identify any key trends and factors contributing to our PISA scores. We will also be looking at the top performing countries and economies to identify the lessons we can learn.

12. Officials will be happy to provide an update on any emerging findings during the presentation to Members and, in preparing for that briefing, would be interested to receive any specific queries Members may have on the results.

Department of Education

January 2011

PISA

2009:

*Achievement of
15-year-olds in
Northern Ireland*

Jenny Bradshaw, Robert Ager,
Bethan Burge, and Rebecca Wheeler
of the
National Foundation for
Educational Research



Full Report

The Full Report entitled 'PISA 2009: Achievement of 15-year-olds in Northern Ireland' is available at <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/pisa>

Department of Education

Research Briefing

ISSN 1366-803X

RB 3/2010 December 2010

PISA 2009: Achievement of 15-year-olds in Northern Ireland

Key Findings

- The 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results provide international benchmarks in reading, mathematics and science literacy.
- Reading was a major subject in PISA 2009 which means that all pupils reading literacy skills were assessed. This was the first time reading was repeated as a main domain since 2000. In reading, NI's pupils achieved a mean score of 499, which was not statistically significantly different to the OECD mean of 493.
- Nine countries significantly outperformed NI in terms of reading. 16 countries performed at a similar level and 39 countries performed significantly below.
- In terms of the difference between low and high achieving pupils, 14 countries have a larger spread between pupil scores. In all participating countries, girls significantly outperformed boys.
- Mathematics was a minor domain subject in 2009. The mean score of 492 is not significantly different to the OECD average of 496. 12 countries had significantly higher scores while a further 12 were similar to NI. Thirty-two countries mean scores were significantly lower.
- NI has a similar pattern to the OECD in terms of the difference between high and low achieving pupils. Boys significantly outperformed girls in mathematics.
- Science was a minor domain subject in PISA 2009. Pupils achieved a mean score of 511, which is, statistically, significantly above the OECD average of 501. Ten countries outperformed NI, while the mean scores for a further 12 countries were not significantly different. The remaining 42 countries mean scores were significantly lower.

There was a wide spread in attainment between the lowest and highest scoring pupils in science. There was no statistically significant difference between boys and girls scores.

Introduction

1. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a survey of educational achievement organised by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). PISA focuses on the ability of 15 year old pupils to use their knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges. PISA 2009 also reports on school and pupil questionnaires to describe school and pupil attitudes.

2. The survey is carried out on a three-year cycle, with each cycle focusing on one of three areas of 'literacy', which refers to the capacity of pupils to apply knowledge and skills in the three subject areas reading, mathematics and science.

3. 65 countries participated in the fourth cycle in 2009, including all 33 OECD countries and 25 of the 27 EU member states. 22 of the EU member states are also members of the OECD. Note that an additional 9 countries participated in a second round of the 2009 assessment.

Literacy in PISA 2009

4. The literacy concept is central in each of the PISA cycles. The assessment focuses on one key literacy concept during each cycle, reading in 2009, while science and mathematics are two minor subjects for this cycle. The 2009 cycle was the second time that reading had been a major subject, the first being in 2000. Since 2000, the reading profile and the way people read has changed. PISA 2009 has extended the reading topics assessment to reflect these changes, including the prevalence of digital texts.

5. Literacy focuses on what pupils have learned and whether they are able to extrapolate and apply their learning in a real-life setting and solve problems in a variety of situations. Literacy is measured as a continuum and not in terms of pupils possessing it or not. The development of literacy takes place inside and outside the formal space of a classroom. For more information on Literacy see "PISA 2009 Assessment Framework - Key Competencies in Reading, Mathematics and Science" on www.oecd.pisa.org.

6. Proficiency level 2 is regarded as the baseline level, at which pupils begin to demonstrate the reading skills that will enable them to participate effectively and productively in life and society. Pupils who do not reach Level 2 have difficulties locating basic information that meets several conditions, making comparisons or contrasts around a single feature, working out what a well-defined part of a text means when the information is not prominent, or making connections between the text and outside knowledge by drawing on personal experience and attitudes.

Findings

7. Note: In the following text and tables, the comparison group comprises those countries who meet at least one of the following criteria (and non-OECD member names are shown in italics):

- OECD member
- EU member (shown with an asterisk after name)
- Achieved a mean score of at least 430

8. Outcomes for NI are derived from the international analysis carried out at 'sub-national' level (i.e. for the constituent countries within the UK) by the NFER as well as from additional analysis conducted using the international dataset.

Reading

Achievement in relation to other countries

9. Reading was the major subject for the 2009 PISA study. NI pupils achieved a mean of 499 for reading, this was not significantly different from the OECD average. It is also not significantly different from England, Scotland or the Republic of Ireland averages of 495,500 and 496 respectively. It was significantly above Wales' reading score of 476.

10. As the tables below show, 9 countries have mean scores that are significantly higher than NI, of which 6 are OECD members^[1]. Of the nine countries with mean scores in reading that are significantly higher, two of them are English speaking (New Zealand and Australia) and one has a substantial number of English speakers (Canada).

11. One EU country (Finland) outperformed NI while the performance of a further 10 EU countries was not significantly different. Thirteen EU countries have reading literacy scores significantly below NI..

Table 1 Country scores for Reading (significance differences)

Mean scores significantly above NI		Mean scores not significantly different from NI		Mean scores significantly below NI	
Country	Score	Country	Score	Country	Score
Shanghai China	556	Netherlands*	508	Portugal*	489
Korea	539	Belgium*	506	Macao-China	487
Finland*	536	Norway	503	Italy*	486
Hong Kong China	533	Estonia*	501	Latvia*	484
Singapore	526	Switzerland	501	Slovenia*	483
Canada	524	Poland*	500	Greece*	483
New Zealand	521	Iceland	500	Spain*	481
Japan	520	United States	500	Czech Republic*	478
Australia	515	Scotland	500	Slovak Republic*	477
		Liechtenstein	499	Wales	476
		Northern Ireland	499	Croatia	476
		Sweden*	497	Israel	474
		Germany*	497	Luxembourg*	472
		Republic of Ireland*	496	Austria*	470
		France*	496	Lithuania*	468
		Chinese Taipei	495	Turkey	464
		Denmark*	495	Dubai (UAE)	459
		England	495	Russian Federation	459
		United Kingdom	494	Chile	449
		Hungary*	494	Bulgaria*	429
				Mexico	425
				Romania*	424

Distribution of performance in reading

12. Reading literacy assesses three competencies of reading - 'access and retrieve', 'integrate and interpret' and 'reflect and evaluate'- to investigate pupils' proficiency levels in each process

13. NI's highest score was attained in the reflect and evaluate competency (504). In access and retrieve and integrate and interpret NI scored 499 and 497 respectively. In all three competency areas, pupils here score close to the overall reading mean of 499. A similar level of variance was seen in several other countries

14 The score at the 5th percentile is that achieved by the lowest scoring five per cent of pupils. The score at the 95th percentile is that which was exceeded by the highest scoring top five per cent of pupils. The difference between the highest and lowest attainers (at the 5th and 95th percentiles) is a better measure of the spread of scores for comparing countries than using the lowest and highest pupils. Such a comparison may be affected by a small number of pupils in a country with unusually high or low scores. In NI, the mean score at the 5th percentile was 336 in reading, while for those at the 95th percentile it was 651. This is a difference of 315 points difference, making the difference between the 5th and 95th percentiles here larger than in England, Scotland and Wales. Compared with the highest-scoring countries NI has a relatively long tail of underachievement. However, 14 comparison group countries exceeded this spread of attainment. The difference for the OECD countries was 305 scale points.

15 NI has pupils represented at all proficiency levels. 17.5 percent of the pupils did not achieve level 2 proficiency in reading, this is lower than the OECD average of 18.8 percent. Overall, 21 countries had fewer pupils at this level. For example, in Canada only 10.3 percent of the pupils have a maximum attainment equivalent to level 1 and below while in Finland the figure was 8.1 percent.

16. In NI, 30.9 percent achieve scores of level 4 and above, while the OECD average is 28.3 percent. In Shanghai-China, more than half (54.1%) of the pupils achieve level 4 and above.

Gender differences

17. In reading girls outperform boys by a statistically significant margin in NI. Boys attain a mean score of 485 and girls attain a mean score of 513. This picture is repeated throughout the survey countries, with girls outperforming boys in every country in reading. The gap here is smaller than in the OECD average, 29 versus 39 points. It was also one of the lowest among the comparison countries, with only Chile, the Netherlands, United States, Mexico and Belgium having a smaller difference. The gender gap in the different reading competency areas is evenly distributed, with the largest gap of 35 points in the access and retrieve reading competency.

Mathematics

Achievement in relation to other countries

18. Maths was a minor domain in 2009. This means that approximately 70% of pupils were assessed in this subject and the questions did not cover the subject as fully as in reading (the major domain).

19. PISA defines mathematical literacy as an individual's capacity to formulate, employ and interpret mathematics in a variety of contexts. In the PISA assessment, mathematical literacy is demonstrated in pupils' ability to analyse, reason and communicate effectively as they pose, solve and interpret mathematical problems that involve quantitative, spatial, probabilistic or other mathematical concepts.

20. Pupils here achieved a mean score of 492 which is not statistically significantly different to the OECD mean score of 496. The NI score was not statistically significantly different to those in

England (493), Scotland (499) or Republic of Ireland (487). The mean score for Wales was however, significantly lower.

21. Internationally, 20 countries significantly outperform NI while a further 34 have scores that are statistically significantly below. Table 2 shows that 7 EU members have scores that are statistically significant above NI. 10 have similar scores and 7 have scores that are significantly lower.

Table 2 Country scores in Mathematics (significance differences)

Mean scores significantly above NI		Mean scores not significantly different from NI		Mean scores significantly below NI	
Country	Score	Country	Score	Country	Score
Shanghai-China	600	Scotland	499	Spain*	483
Singapore	562	Norway	498	Italy*	483
Hong Kong-China	555	France*	497	Latvia*	482
Korea	546	Slovak Republic*	497	Lithuania	477
Chinese Taipei	543	Austria*	496	Wales	472
Finland*	541	Poland*	495	Russian Federation	468
Liechtenstein	536	United Kingdom	494	Greece*	466
Switzerland	534	Sweden*	494	Croatia	460
Japan	529	Czech Republic*	493	Dubai (UAE)	453
Canada	527	England	493	Israel	447
Netherlands*	526	Northern Ireland	492	Turkey	445
Macao-China	525	Hungary*	490	Bulgaria*	428
New Zealand	519	Luxembourg*	489	Romania*	427
Belgium*	515	United States	487	Chile	421
Australia	514	Ireland*	487	Mexico	419
Germany*	513	Portugal*	487		
Estonia*	512				
Iceland	507				
Denmark*	503				
Slovenia*	501				

Non-OECD members are in Italics.

* Marks EU member states

Distribution of performance in mathematics

22. The mean score for the 5th percentile is 348 in NI while the 95th percentile score is 637. This gives NI a gap of 289 score points which is lower than the OECD average of 300 score points and similar to the difference found in the Republic of Ireland (280). 25 countries have lower differences in maths. Among the countries are 7 OECD countries and 6 EU members.

23. In NI 21.4 percent of the pupils have attainment of level 1 or below. This is similar to the OECD average of 22 percent. 25 countries have a lower score. Shanghai-China, Finland and Korea respectively score 4.8, 7.8 and 8.1 percent in the lowest two categories.

24. The attainment of pupils in NI at proficiency level 4 and above is 29.2 percent. 27 countries have a higher proportion of their pupils achieving scores in the top 3 proficiency levels. East Asian partners feature strongly as the highest achieving countries in maths. They occupy the top 5 places with Shanghai-China (71.2), Singapore (58.4), Hong Kong-China (56.0), Chinese Taipei (51.9) and Korea (50.8) all seeing over half of their pupils achieving proficiency level of at level 4 and above.

Gender differences

25. In NI boys mean scores are 501 and girls mean scores are 484. This difference of 17 score points is statistically significant, which is in line with England, Scotland and Wales. This is the first time that PISA has reported a statistically significant difference between boys and girls mean scores in maths. In the Republic of Ireland boys score 8 points higher; however, this score is not statistically significant. In 34 countries the difference is statistically significant in favour of boys and in five countries scores are statistically significant in favour of girls.

Science

Achievement in relation to other countries

26. Science was a minor domain in 2009. This means that approximately 70% of pupils were assessed in this subject and the questions did not cover the subject as fully as in reading (the major domain).

27. PISA defines science literacy as an individual's scientific knowledge, and use of that knowledge, to identify questions, acquire new knowledge, explain scientific phenomena and draw evidence-based conclusions about science-related issues; their understanding of the characteristic features of science as a form of human knowledge and enquiry; their awareness of how science and technology shape our material, intellectual and cultural environments; and their willingness to engage in science-related issues, and with the ideas of science, as a reflective citizen.

28. NI's pupils achieved a mean score of 511, statistically significantly above the OECD average of 501. Ten countries have scores that are statistically significantly above NI. Six of these countries are OECD members and only two countries are EU members (Finland and Estonia). Twelve countries have scores with no statistical difference, three of which (Chinese Taipei, Liechtenstein and Macao-China) are not OECD members. Seven are EU members: Netherlands, Germany, Slovenia, Poland, Republic of Ireland, Belgium and Hungary. Of the countries with a mean score statistically below NI nineteen are OECD members and sixteen are EU members.

Table 3 Country scores for Science (significance differences)

Mean scores significantly above NI		Mean scores not significantly different from NI		Mean scores significantly below NI	
Country	Score	Country	Score	Country	Score
Shanghai-China	575	Netherlands*	522	Hungary*	503
Finland*	554	Chinese Taipei	520	United States	502
Hong Kong-China	549	Germany*	520	Czech Republic*	500
Singapore	542	Liechtenstein	520	Norway	500
Japan	539	Switzerland	517	Denmark*	499
Korea	538	England	515	France*	498
New Zealand	532	Scotland	514	Iceland	496
Canada	529	United Kingdom	514	Wales	496
Estonia*	528	Slovenia*	512	Sweden*	495
Australia	527	Macao-China	511	Austria*	494
		Northern Ireland	511	Latvia*	494
		Poland*	508	Portugal*	493
		Ireland*	508	Lithuania*	491
		Belgium*	507	Slovak Republic*	490
				Italy*	489
				Spain*	488
				Croatia	486
				Luxembourg*	484
				Russian Federation	478
				Greece*	470
				Dubai (UAE)	466
				Israel	455
				Turkey	454
				Chile	447
				Serbia	443
				Bulgaria*	439
				Romania*	428
				Mexico	416

Distribution of performance in science

29. NI's mean score at the 5th percentile is 341 and 676 at the 95th percentile, a difference of 335 points. This difference is larger than the OECD average (308 scale points) and represents

the 12th largest gap between the 5th and 95th percentiles. The OECD countries with larger gaps are New Zealand, Israel, Luxembourg, Belgium and France.

30. In NI, 16.7 percent attain a maximum proficiency level below PISA level 2. This is slightly below the OECD average of 18 percent. 25 countries have a lower percentage of pupils who do not attain level 2 or higher scores. Among these countries are 16 OECD members and the following EU member states: Finland, Estonia, Poland, Netherlands, Hungary, Latvia, Slovenia, Germany, Ireland, Portugal and Denmark.

31. A third of the pupils in NI (33.3 percent) attain scores of a minimum of level 4 proficiency. This is above the OECD average of 29 percent. 16 countries achieve higher numbers of pupils who attain level 4 or higher in science. Shanghai has the highest level 4 attainments with 60.3 percent of its pupils attaining at least a level 4 proficiency, with Finland (49.9), Hong Kong (48.9) and Japan (46.4) following.

Gender differences

32. In NI, there was no significant difference between the mean scores of boys and girls. Internationally, in 21 countries there is a statistical significance in the scores favouring girls. In 11 countries there is a statistical significance favouring boys. Over the 4 rounds of PISA, there has been no statistically significant difference found in the mean scores of boys in girls in Science.

Pupils and School Attitudinal Surveys

School attitudes

33. This section draws on responses to school and student questionnaires to describe aspects of school management, organisation and climate, assessment practice and school resources.

34. Principals report high levels of responsibility for most aspects of management of their schools, with considerable responsibility for school governance. In NI, a higher proportion of principals reported responsibility in most management areas than the OECD average.

35. Principals in NI reported pupil related issues that hindered learning less often than their OECD counterparts. 19 per cent of principals reported disruption of classes by students, compared to the OECD average of 40 per cent. Below OECD averages were also reported on student lacking respect for teachers (7% and 24%) and students skipping classes (10% and 33%). Principals also reported below the OECD average on teacher-related issues that hinder learning in school.

36. In response to the question 'is your school's capacity to provide instruction hindered by any of the following issues, in relation to staffing?' a lack of other support personnel was most frequently mentioned (17%). In terms of resources, 42 per cent of the principals reported a shortage or inadequacy of computers as a hindrance to the school's capacity to provide instruction. A shortage of instructional materials such as school books was the least likely to be a hindrance in the provision of instruction (11%).

37. Teachers reported on the use of student coursework/projects/homework to assess pupils. In NI 75% reported they used this method of assessment at least once a month. Teacher-developed tests were also frequently used as an assessment tool (56%). 100% of schools use assessments to inform parents about their child's progress and 99% of schools use assessments to monitor the school's progress from year to year.

38. Pupils were on the whole very positive about the teachers at their school with 87% of pupils reporting that they get along well with most of their teachers. They were less positive on the teachers really listening to what they had to say (71%). Pupils felt that school had prepared them well for the future with 92% reporting that school had taught them things which could be useful in a job.

Pupil attitudes to reading

39. The pupil questionnaire focused on pupils reading activities and their attitudes towards reading. In NI, 28 per cent of the pupils enjoy reading and spend over 30 minutes a day reading for enjoyment. 43 percent of the pupils reported that they do not read for enjoyment, which is higher than the OECD average of 37%. This is also reflected in the 45 per cent of pupils who report that they only read when they have to. Significantly, those who have no enjoyment in reading have a mean reading score of 466 and those who read 30 minutes or less, have a mean of 507. The mean score increases with the length of time spent reading with an increase of a further 37 score points for those who read between 30-60 minutes a day and a further 8 score points for those who read between 1 and 2 hours per day.

40. In comparison to the OECD a higher proportion of pupils in NI reported reading newspapers in the past month (61% and 68% respectively), while only 7 per cent of pupils have read a comic over the past month. Pupils were less likely than their OECD counterpart to borrow books from the library with 60% of pupils reporting they never borrowed books to read for pleasure and 52% never borrow books for school work. The OECD figures for pupils who did not do these activities were 48% and 36% respectively. Pupils in NI reported a high level of activity in online communication with almost 4 out of 5 pupils reporting that they chatted online at least several times a week. Only 17 per cent of pupils reported being involved in online group discussions or forums, compared to 51 per cent in the OECD.

Notes to Editors

Sample and Data

Locally, the survey was carried out by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). Pupils sat the two-hour assessment in November 2009 under test conditions, following the standardised procedures implemented by all countries. A proportion of the questions used in the 2-hour test were ones used in previous rounds. This continuity between rounds provides a measure of change.

Pupils also completed a questionnaire to provide information on their economic and social backgrounds, study habits, and attitudes to reading. Principals in the participating schools completed a school questionnaire to provide information on the school's structure, organisation and climate, pupil intake, teacher body, instruction, curriculum and assessment, as well as school's policies and practices.

PISA covers pupils who are aged between 15 years 3 months and 16 years 2 months at the time of the assessment and who have completed at least six years of formal schooling, regardless of the type of institution in which they are enrolled, whether they are in full-time or part-time education. The fifteen year olds who took part in Northern Ireland were mainly in Year 12.

The PISA study has strict sampling requirements regarding both the participation rate which is acceptable and the replacement of schools which decline to take part. The international response rate for the United Kingdom is calculated based on the results for England, Wales, NI and Scotland, with weighting according to the population in each country as well as school size. An

NFER analysis of the characteristics of responding and non-responding schools in NI, England and Wales showed no significant differences and it was accepted by the PISA referee.

The school response rate of 87% for the UK combined sample fell slightly short of the participation requirement (since England participation rate fell short, NFER was asked to provide additional information on characteristics on a potential bias as a result of school non-participation). The school response rate here was 88.8 per cent and the pupil response rate was 86 per cent, with 2197 pupils participating.

The mean score for each scale was set to 500 among OECD countries, with each country contributing equally to the average. The reading literacy scale was set to 500 in its first year as a major topic in 2000. Similarly the mathematics scale was set to 500 in 2003 and science was set to 500 in 2006. As with any repeated measurement that uses samples it should be expected that the mean varies slightly from year to year without necessarily indicating any real change in the global level of skills. This year the OECD average for reading is 493, that for mathematics is 496 and for science 501.

A single scale of proficiency is applied to each subject area, in which each question is associated with a particular point on the scale that indicates its difficulty, and each pupil's performance is associated with a particular point on the same scale that indicates his or her estimated proficiency. The relative difficulty of tasks in a test is estimated by considering the proportion of test takers who answer each question correctly. The relative proficiency of pupils taking a particular test can be estimated by considering the proportion of test questions they answer correctly. A single continuous scale shows the relationship between the difficulty of questions and the proficiency of pupils.

Pupils are not asked every question prepared for the PISA test, during the 2-hour assessment. Instead, statistical analysis is applied to estimate the likelihood they are able to answer questions they have not actually been presented with.

Proficiency

PISA estimates the relative proficiency levels of pupils taking a particular test by considering the proportion of test questions they answer correctly. A single continuous scale shows the relationship between the difficulty of questions and the proficiency of pupils. By constructing a scale that shows the difficulty of each question, it is possible to locate the level of reading literacy that the question represents. By showing the proficiency of each pupil on the same scale, it is possible to describe the level of reading literacy that the pupil possesses. For PISA 2009, the range of difficulty of tasks allows for the description of seven levels of proficiency: Level 1b is the lowest described level, then Level 1a, Level 2, Level 3 and so on up to Level 6. Pupils achieving level 3 are expected to successfully complete questions at level 2 and below.

Full Report

The full report entitled "PISA 2009: Achievement of 15-year-olds in Northern Ireland" by Bradshaw, J., Ager, R., Burge, B. and Wheater, R., is available at <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/pisa>

Copies of the full report are available on a print-on-demand basis by writing to: Publications Unit, NFER, The Mere, Upton Park, Slough, Berks., SL1 2DQ. Email: book.sales@nfer.ac.uk Tel: 01753 637002. There is an administration charge of £20 plus postage and packing for a single copy, with a 10% discount for bulk orders of 10 copies or more.

This paper is a summary of the research report and as such any views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Department of Education.

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[1] Non-OECD members are in Italics.

Department of Education

PISA 2009
INFORMATION NOTE
7 December 2010

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1 What is PISA?

- The OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an international survey of the achievement of 15-year-old students in reading literacy, mathematical literacy and scientific literacy. PISA assessments have taken place in 2000, 2003, 2006 and, most recently, in 2009.

1.2 Release of PISA 2009 results

- The outcomes of the 2009 cycle and the contents of this information note are under strict embargo until Tuesday, 7 December 2010 at 11.00am Paris time (i.e. 10.00am Irish time).

1.3 How is PISA administered?

- PISA is implemented by the OECD which has a contract with a consortium of research bodies that carry out the research on its behalf. The PISA Consortium is led by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). In 2009, the PISA assessments were administered in 65 education systems, representing over 80% of the world's economy (34 OECD member countries' territories¹ and 31 other partner countries).
- In each cycle (or round) of PISA one of the skills (reading, mathematics or science) is designated as a "major domain". Greater emphasis is placed on the testing of that domain in that cycle. In comparing performance over time, the OECD compares each domain to when it was last a major domain. In the report on PISA 2009, the comparisons are made as follows: outcomes in reading in 2009 are compared to those in 2000 (i.e. 2000 vs 2009), mathematics on the basis of 2003 vs 2009 and science on the basis of 2006 vs 2009.
- One of the most widely reported aspects of PISA is the average (or "mean") scores achieved by students in a country in reading, mathematics and science. These are ranked in the PISA report to produce tables of countries' performance. The PISA report also categorises country averages as "above the OECD mean (average)," or "at the OECD mean", or "below the OECD mean;" i.e. country averages are compared to the average score for all OECD countries (rather than to the average for all participating countries). The basis on which countries are designated as being above, at or below the OECD mean takes into account error, or uncertainty, arising from sampling and measurement error (i.e. samples rather than populations of students take the assessment and each student attempts only a subset of the test questions).

¹ This figure includes one accession candidate, Estonia.

1.4 Who takes PISA?

- PISA is based on a random sample of 15-year old students in each of the participating countries. In Ireland, 144 schools took part, representing 88.4% of the schools selected. After refusals and absences were taken into account, 3,937 students completed the assessment giving a weighted student response rate of 83.8%. Of the students who participated in Ireland, 59.1% were in Third Year, 24.0% were in Transition Year, 14.4% in Fifth Year and 2.4% in Second Year.

2. WHAT WERE THE RESULTS FOR STUDENTS IN IRELAND IN PISA 2009?

2.1 Reading

- Irish students' performance in reading places Ireland among the "average performing" countries in this domain. Ireland achieved a mean score on the combined reading scale of 495.6, which is not significantly different from the OECD mean of 493.4.²
- Ireland's rank, based on its mean score, is 17th out of 34 OECD countries and 21st out of 65 OECD and partner countries. Allowing for measurement and sampling error, Ireland's rank ranges from 12th to 22nd among OECD countries and from 15th to 27th among all participating countries.

Selected countries above the OECD average in reading literacy	Selected countries at the OECD average in reading literacy	Selected countries below the OECD average in reading literacy
Finland	Ireland	Austria
Canada	United States	Spain
Australia	Germany	Greece
New Zealand	France	Italy
Netherlands	United Kingdom	Luxembourg
Japan	Hungary	Czech Republic
Poland		Israel

- Just over 17% of students in Ireland (compared to 18.8% on average across OECD countries) are low-achieving in reading. These students have a reading proficiency level at or below Level 1a, which is considered to be below the basic level needed to participate effectively in society and in future learning. This means that over one in six students in Ireland is estimated to have poor reading skills. Ireland does slightly better on this measure than the UK or Germany, but considerably worse than countries such as Finland and Canada.

² When reading was first tested as a major domain in PISA 2000, the mean (average) achievement score for the OECD was set at 500 (and the standard deviation at 100). By 2009, the mean score for reading across the OECD was 493.4. This means that across the OECD, the mean student achievement score was slightly lower in 2009 than it had been in 2000. (The mean score of 500 was set for mathematics in 2003 when mathematics was a major domain and similarly for science in 2005).

- Ireland has about the same proportion of highly skilled readers, or students at or above Level 5, as is found on average across OECD countries (7% versus 7.6%, respectively).
- Ireland has a similar percentage of low achieving students as Northern Ireland, (17.2% versus 17.5%) but a somewhat lower percentage of high-achieving students (7% versus 9.3%). The mean score for Northern Ireland (499.4) is higher than but not significantly different from the mean score for Ireland.
- In Ireland, females achieved a mean score (515.4), which is significantly higher than the mean score for males (476.3). The difference between males and females in Ireland is the same as the difference among OECD countries on average (39 points).
- Almost a quarter of male students (23.2%) in Ireland achieved an average score which is considered to be below the level of literacy needed to participate effectively in society and future learning (at or below Level 1a). Only 11.3 % of females in Ireland fell into this group.
- Ireland's performance in reading has dropped 31 points since 2000: this means that Ireland has dropped from among the "above average" performing countries in reading to among the "average performing" countries. Further information about this decline will be found in Section 4 and in the Appendix.

2.2 Mathematics

- The performance of Irish students in Mathematics places Ireland among the "below average" performing countries in this domain. In mathematics Ireland achieved a mean score 487.1 which is significantly below the OECD average of 495.7, albeit by just 8.6 score points.
- Ireland's ranking in mathematics is 26th out of 34 OECD countries and 32nd out of 65 participating countries. Allowing for measurement and sampling error, Ireland's rank is between 22nd and 29th among OECD countries and 28th and 35th among all countries.

Selected countries above the OECD average in mathematical literacy	Selected countries at the OECD average in mathematical literacy	Selected countries below the OECD average in mathematical literacy
Finland	Austria	United States
Canada	Norway	Ireland
Australia	Poland	Greece
New Zealand	France	Italy
Netherlands	United Kingdom	Luxembourg
Shanghai-China	Sweden	Spain
Singapore	Czech Republic	Israel

- Ireland has a slightly smaller proportion of students in the lowest performing category in mathematics than the average of OECD countries. The proportion of students at/below Level 1 in Ireland (20.8%) is slightly less than on average across OECD countries (22.0%) and is similar to that in the United Kingdom (20.2%) and Poland (20.5%), both of which achieved an overall mean score not significantly different from the OECD average.
- However, Ireland has significantly fewer students at the higher proficiency levels (at/below Level 5) than the OECD average (6.7% compared to 12.7%) and also in comparison to United Kingdom (9.8%) and Poland (10.4%).
- The mean score for Northern Ireland (492.2) is not significantly different to the mean score for Ireland.
- Ireland and Northern Ireland have similar proportions of low-achieving students in mathematics but there is a greater proportion of higher-performing students in Northern Ireland than in Ireland. The proportion of low-achieving students in Northern Ireland (21.4%) is similar to the corresponding percentage for Ireland (20.8%) and on average across OECD countries. However, there are proportionally more high-achieving students in Northern Ireland (10.3%) than in Ireland (6.7%).
- In Ireland, males (490.9) outperform females (483.3) on mathematical literacy, but the difference is not significant.
- The proportion of low-achieving males (20.8%) and females (21%) are slightly lower than the corresponding OECD averages (20.9% and 23.1%).
- Ireland's mean mathematics score has dropped 16 points, from 502.8 in 2003 to 487.1 in 2009. This means that Ireland has dropped from among the "average performing" countries in Mathematics to among the "below average" performing countries. The majority of this decline (14 of the 16 points) has occurred between 2006 and 2009. Ireland's rank has dropped from 20th to 28th among countries that participated in both cycles. This decline is discussed further in Section 4 and in the Appendix.

2.3 Science

- Ireland remains among the "above average" performing countries in Science. Ireland's mean score for Science in 2009 is 508.0, which is significantly higher than the OECD average of 500.8.
- The mean score for Ireland is 14th highest of the 34 OECD countries and 20th highest of the 65 participating countries. Allowing for measurement and sampling error, Ireland's true rank is between 11th and 17th among OECD countries and between 16th and 23rd among all countries.
- In terms of overall rank, Ireland has climbed two places from 20th to 18th among the 57 countries that participated in both the 2006 and 2009 cycles of PISA.

- Students in Northern Ireland achieved a mean score (511.4) that is significantly above the OECD average but is not significantly different to the mean score for Ireland.
- The percentage of students in Ireland scoring at or below Level 1 on science in Ireland (15.2%) is somewhat lower than on average across the OECD (18.0%), while the percentage at or above Level 5 (8.7%) is similar to the OECD average (8.5%).
- Since 2006, there has been no change in average science achievement in Ireland. Furthermore, there has been no change in the percentages of students at or below Level 1 or at or above Level 5. In both 2006 and 2009 gender differences in science achievement are small and not statistically significant in Ireland.

Selected countries above the OECD average in scientific literacy	Selected countries at the OECD average in scientific literacy	Selected countries below the OECD average in scientific literacy
Finland	United States	Sweden
Canada	Norway	Austria
Australia	Denmark	Portugal
New Zealand	France	Italy
Ireland	Hungary	Spain
Shanghai-China	Czech Republic	Luxembourg
Singapore		Greece
United Kingdom		Israel

3. WHAT FACTORS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH ACHIEVEMENT?

A number of factors are found to be associated with student performance on the PISA tests. Analysing these factors can help us to understand how the achievement of students could be improved. This section focuses on reading achievement, although the relationship with the characteristics considered are similar in the case of both mathematics and science.

3.1 Reading for enjoyment

- Reading for enjoyment has a positive relationship with reading achievement.
- 42% of students in Ireland reported that they never engaged in reading for enjoyment (compared to 37% on average across OECD countries), while almost 16% (15.8%) reported reading for enjoyment for more than one hour a day. The proportion of such students in Japan and Belgium (countries that have significantly higher reading scores than Ireland) is about the same as in Ireland.
- In Northern Ireland, 43.3% of students report that they do not read for enjoyment – about the same as in Ireland.
- The mean score of students who read for enjoyment for more than one hour per day was 93 points higher than that of students who did not read for enjoyment.

Males (48%) were more strongly represented in the group of students who did not read for enjoyment than females (33%), and this group was larger in 2009 (41.9%) than in 2000 (33.4%). Other countries also had a significant increase in the percentage of students not reading for enjoyment: in Finland, for example, this increased from 22.4% in 2000 to 33% in 2009.

- If we examine the reading achievement scores of the students that stated that they did not read for enjoyment, we find that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds had an average score of 431.4 while those from higher socio-economic backgrounds had an average score of 498. This means that socio-economic background mediates, at least to some extent, the association between frequency of reading and reading achievement.

3.2 Socio-economic status

- Socio-economic status is strongly related to reading achievement.
- A measure of socioeconomic status, the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS)³, was associated with reading performance, as students in Ireland in the top third of the ESCS distribution had an average reading score that was 76 points higher than students in the bottom third.
- ESCS accounts for a smaller proportion of the variation (spread) in reading performance among students in Ireland (12.9%) than on average between students across OECD countries (14.1%). However, this difference is not statistically significant.

3.3 Having large numbers of books at home

- Having large numbers of books at home has a positive relationship with reading achievement.
- On a measure of home educational climate (number of books in the home), students with 0-10 books had a mean score that was 115 points lower than students with over 500 books.
- In Ireland, 6.4% of variation in reading achievement in PISA 2009 is explained by books in the home after accounting for all other factors. This is consistent with earlier research using previous PISA data that confirmed that the relationship between reading achievement and books in the home holds, even when school and home socio-economic status are controlled for.

³ ESCS is composed of a set of six inter-related measures of different aspects of student socio-economic background: occupational status of parents, educational level of parents, number of books in the home, family wealth (material possessions), home educational resources, and cultural possessions at home.

- While there was a small increase in student-level ESCS between 2000 and 2009 (i.e. Irish students were somewhat better off) there was no change in home educational resources.

3.4 Speaking the language of the test at home

- Speaking the language of the test at home is positively related to achievement.
- Both Irish-born ('native') students (91.7%, of all students, mean = 501.9) and non-Irish-born ('migrant') students who spoke English or Irish at home (4.5%, 499.7) had significantly higher mean reading scores than migrant students who spoke other languages at home (3.5%, 442.7).
- Both native students (91.7%, mean = 501.9) and second-generation migrant students (1.4%, 508.2) had higher mean reading scores than first-generation migrants (6.8%, 485.7). The respective OECD averages of these groups are 499, 468 and 449, which indicates that the achievement difference between first-generation and other students is smaller in Ireland than on average across the OECD.

3.5 In dual-parent families

- In Ireland, 15.7% students were in single-parent families, which is similar to the OECD average of 16.9%. Students in Ireland from dual-parent families had a mean reading score 25 points higher than students from single-parent families and this difference is somewhat higher than the OECD average of 18 score points.
- The disparity in performance may in part be explained by student socio-economic status; however, students in lone-parent families remain at a significant disadvantage of 13 score points in Ireland when socio-economic status is controlled for when compared to 5 points on average across OECD countries.

3.6 Access and use of ICT – a complex picture

- Although students in Ireland had relatively high levels of access to ICT resources at home, and average levels at school compared to students in other OECD countries, they tended to under-use those resources in both locations, compared to students in other OECD countries. For example, 92.5% reported that they never posted their work on a school website, while 75.2% reported that they never used email at school.
- Students in Ireland had a mean score on a scale of self-confidence in performing higher-level ICT tasks that was one-tenth of a standard deviation below the OECD average.
- Interestingly, students with high levels of ICT usage at school and students with low levels of ICT usage in school had lower reading scores than students who had average levels of ICT usage in school. In other words, students who either under-

used or used ICT extensively in school did less well in reading than students who had average levels of ICT usage.

3.7 School characteristics

- School-level variables associated with reading achievement included school average socio-economic status (ESCS, with higher-ESCS schools doing better), and school sector/gender composition (with girls' secondary schools outperforming all other school types).
- The average score difference for reading between students in the top and bottom thirds of the school average ESCS distribution is 72 points.
- Students in all-girls' secondary schools had a mean reading score (531) that ranged between 27 and 65 points higher than students in boys' secondary, mixed secondary, community/comprehensive and vocational schools.
- However achievement differences across different school types are related to differences in their socioeconomic composition.

4. DECLINES IN READING AND MATHEMATICS

This section summarises the issues regarding the declines in students' scores in reading and mathematics that are reported in PISA 2009. The Appendix provides greater detail about each of the factors that may be involved.

4.1 How great are the declines in reading and maths test scores?

- The PISA 2009 achievement scores in reading and mathematics for students in Ireland show significant declines when compared to scores in previous rounds of PISA.
- The fall in reading (31 score points) is the highest fall experienced by any country, while the fall in mathematics (16 score points) is the second largest fall of any country.
- Irish students' ranking in reading has fallen from 5th in the PISA tables in 2000 to 17th in 2009 among the 39 countries that participated in both PISA 2000 and 2009.
- The performance of students in reading in Ireland declined uniformly across all ability levels and so cannot be attributed to one particular group, such as very high or very low achievers doing poorly.
- The ranking of Irish students in mathematics fell from 20th in 2003 to 26th in 2009 among the 40 countries that participated in both PISA 2003 and 2009.
- The decline in mathematics was fairly uniform across the student range of ability, with a slightly more pronounced decline at the upper end of the achievement distribution.

4.2 What may have caused the declines in the test scores in reading and maths?

- The extent of the falls in the reading and maths scores of students in Ireland was unexpected. Few educational systems have ever experienced actual changes in educational standards of the size reported for Ireland by PISA 2009 in such a relatively short period of time.
- In order to better understand the declines in reading and mathematics scores, the Department of Education and Skills commissioned the Educational Research Centre, Drumcondra, Dublin and a team of international experts at Statistics Canada to examine the PISA 2009 results for Ireland in detail.
- The experts from Statistics Canada and the ERC attribute some of the declines to:
 - Changes in the student population in Ireland, such as greater numbers of students who do not speak English as their first language and more students with special educational needs taking the test
 - The success that schools have had in preventing early school leaving, meaning that more weaker-performing students are now sitting the tests
 - Some evidence of increased student disengagement from the tests evidenced in higher numbers of skipped questions
 - The chance inclusion of a number of very low-performing schools which were not found in previous PISA surveys.
- The experts from the Educational Research Centre have concluded that changes in the curriculum at primary level that occurred in the years following 1999 cannot explain the decline in performance on PISA reading literacy between 2000 and 2009.
- The experts from Statistics Canada and the Educational Research Centre have pointed to factors associated with the design and reporting of PISA that may have contributed to the decline in the scores of Irish students. Constructing a test that measures achievement accurately across many languages and cultures is a significant challenge; to do this so that reliable estimates of trends across periods of time may be established is an even greater challenge.
- The experts that have advised the Department point out that many assessment experts have written about weaknesses in PISA and that the OECD has attempted to address some but not all of these weaknesses. For example, the design of the test was changed between 2000 and 2003 and even small changes to the design can affect measurement properties of test items. Also, the number of reading questions used to establish trends is small, at just 26. Further, the measurement error to establish linkages across cycles may be somewhat underestimated.
- The experts at the Educational Research Centre (ERC) have concluded that "it is likely that issues about the construction of achievement scores and establishing links (trends) across cycles contributed to the low scores of students in Ireland in reading and mathematics" and that the techniques used by PISA "have overestimated the size of the decline [in achievement]." These

ERC experts summarise the arguments by saying that PISA is good at identifying whether or not a change in achievement has occurred but does less well at establishing the extent of the change. The OECD does not accept these criticisms but has accepted that "performance changes (in PISA) are associated with a fairly large standard error."

4.3 Why have test scores declined in reading and maths but not in science?

- During the decade covered by the PISA tests, science was introduced as a subject in primary schools in 2003-04 and a revised Junior Certificate Science curriculum was introduced at post-primary level. Both curricula were supported by intensive in-service programmes and equipment grants to schools. These changes seem to have counteracted the effect of changes in the student population that may have otherwise lowered performance in science.

4.4 Do these declines in test scores mean that standards in reading and maths have declined in Ireland?

- Both Statistics Canada and the ERC have cautioned the Department of Education and Skills against reading too much into a single set of PISA outcomes. Both have also pointed out that *performance (or achievement) on a test is not the same as a student's actual proficiency*. Statistics Canada have noted that student performance in Ireland on the PISA tests has been consistently decreasing over time. They also state that "this may or may not be the result of declining student proficiency, but it is important to consider alternate explanations."
- The experts have advised that it is difficult to be certain that there is an underlying real decline in standards over time without further evidence. The OECD has commented that "performance changes (in PISA) are associated with a fairly large standard error." Other available evidence shows stable standards over time in literacy and maths in Irish schools (for example, national assessments in reading and mathematics in primary schools, performance of Irish students on international tests such as ICCS and stable outcomes in the State examinations⁴), so it is not possible to conclude definitively that standards in literacy and numeracy have fallen in Ireland. Certainly, it is highly unlikely that a decline in standards of the extent suggested by PISA has actually occurred.
- However, it would be unwise to ignore the possibility that there may have been some decline in actual standards in literacy and numeracy. The draft national plan to improve literacy and numeracy in schools, *Better Literacy and Numeracy for Children and Young People*, published in November 2010, sets out national targets and a range of significant measures to improve literacy and numeracy in early childhood education and in primary and post-primary schools. These measures include fundamental changes to teacher education, the curriculum in schools and

⁴ ICCS is the International Civic and Citizenship Education (ICCS) Study which ranked second-year students in Ireland 7th out of 36 participating countries. Further details of all of the evidence regarding the decline may be found in Appendix A and Appendix B.

radical improvements in the assessment and reporting of student progress at student, school and national level.

APPENDIX A

EVIDENCE REGARDING TRENDS IN LITERACY AND NUMERACY IN IRELAND

Evidence other than PISA 2009 suggests that literacy and numeracy standards are stable in Ireland.

- There is no evidence from national assessments of English reading or mathematics that the performance of primary-level students in Ireland has declined to a significant degree in recent years. In the case of reading, no significant changes in average performance at fifth class level have been recorded since 1980.
- An analysis of a small but representative number of reference examination scripts for English and Mathematics for Junior Certificate at sample points in the period 1999 to 2009 by the State Examinations Commission has found no evidence of a significant change in the standard of answering by students.
- Second-year students in Ireland's post-primary schools obtained a high literacy-related score in the recently published International Civic and Citizenship Education (ICCE) Study (ranking 7th out of 36 participating countries). Testing of students for this study was completed in post-primary schools in the month prior to that in which testing for PISA 2009 was carried out.
- Students in Ireland performed well in reading in all previous cycles of PISA (2000, 2003 and 2006).

APPENDIX B

FURTHER DETAILS REGARDING THE FACTORS THAT MAY HAVE AFFECTED READING AND MATHS SCORES IN IRELAND IN PISA 2009

Overview

- The PISA 2009 achievement scores in reading and mathematics for students in Ireland show significant declines when compared to scores in previous rounds of PISA.
- The fall in reading (31 score points) is the highest fall experienced by any country, while the fall in mathematics (16 score points) is the second largest fall of any country.

Reading

- The average reading score of students in Ireland dropped 31 score points between 2000 (when it was at 527) to 496 (495.6) in 2009. It should be noted that this decline includes a non-significant drop of 9 points between 2000 and 2006.
- Irish students' ranking in reading has fallen from 5th in the PISA tables in 2000 to 17th in 2009 among the 39 countries that participated in both PISA 2000 and 2009.
- The performance of students in reading in Ireland declined uniformly across all ability levels and so cannot be attributed to one particular group, such as very high or very low achievers doing poorly.
- The percentage of Irish students at or above Level 5 (higher performing) in reading declined from 14.2% in 2000 to 7% in 2009, meaning that the percentage of students at this level is not significantly different from the OECD average.
- The percentage of Irish students below level 2 (lower performing) in reading has increased from 11% in 2000 to 17.2% in 2009, meaning that Ireland has gone from being well below the OECD average at this level in 2000 to being not significantly different from it in 2009.
- Other countries that have experienced significant falls in reading between 2000 and 2009 include: Austria (-22 points), Sweden (-19 points), Australia (-14 points), and the Czech Republic (-13 points).

Mathematics

- The average maths score of students in Ireland dropped 16 score points between 2003 (when it was at 503) to 487 (487.1) in 2009.
- The ranking of Irish students in mathematics fell from 20th in 2003 to 26th in 2009 among the 40 countries that participated in both PISA 2003 and 2009.
- The decline in mathematics was fairly uniform across the student range of ability, with a slightly more pronounced decline at the upper end of the achievement distribution.

- The percentage of students in Ireland at or above Level 5 (higher performing) decreased from 11.4% in 2003 to 6.7% in 2009 and still remains significantly lower than the corresponding OECD average (12.7% in 2009).
- The percentage of students at or below Level 1 (lower performing) increased from 16.8% in 2003 to 22% in 2009 and is now not significantly different from the OECD average.
- Other countries with significant declines in mathematics between 2003 and 2009 include the Czech Republic (-24 points), Sweden (-15 points), France (-14 points), Belgium (-14 points) and the Netherlands (-12 points). Northern Ireland experienced a decline of 22.5 points.

B.1 Greater numbers of students not speaking language of test at home

- The proportion of students with an immigrant background who participated in PISA testing in Ireland rose from 2.3% in 2000 to 8.3% in 2009. The proportion of students who speak a language other than English/Irish rose from 0.9% in 2000 to 3.5% in 2009.
- In 2000, migrant students who spoke another language obtained a higher mean score than those who spoke English/Irish. However, in 2009, migrant students who spoke another language did significantly less well than speakers of English/Irish, reflecting changes in the size and composition of migrant groups between the two assessments.
- Overall, it is estimated that the greater numbers of migrants who do not speak English (or Irish) as a first language has made a small contribution to the overall decline in students' scores.

B.2 Students with special educational needs and fewer early school leavers

- Other demographic changes between 2000 and 2009 include an increase in the proportion of students with special needs taking the PISA tests (which is not possible to quantify precisely) and a decline in the percentage of early school leavers (from 2.1% to 1.5%). Both of these changes can be expected to have made some contribution to lower average scores in 2009 than in 2000.

B.3 Survey fatigue and student disengagement

- A factor that could have impacted on the way in which schools treated the PISA test administration in 2009 was survey fatigue. Post-primary schools were involved in three international studies in the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years which is unprecedented. For all three surveys, both a pilot and full-scale study were conducted. Given the limited pool of post-primary schools, some were selected for studies in both school years, and this may have induced survey fatigue, at least among school staff.

- At a more general level, students themselves may not have engaged with the 2009 PISA assessment to the same extent that their counterparts engaged with earlier assessments. However, while there is evidence of greater levels of skipping test items in 2009, it is not clear if this can be attributed to disengagement with the test, or a greater inability to attempt such items. The likelihood is that a combination of both factors affected the outcomes.

B.4 Eight very low-performing schools

- In all PISA cycles to date, Ireland fully met the sampling requirements and response rates established by the OECD. However, the 2009 sample was found to include eight low-performing schools – schools with average reading and mathematics achievement scores that were considerably lower than the lowest school mean scores in 2000.
- The presence of these schools contributed about a quarter of the decline in reading scores and also affected the maths scores on the tests.
- The presence of these schools in the 2009 sample could be attributed to random sampling fluctuation.
- The identity of the eight schools is not known to the Department of Education and Skills as schools in all countries participate in PISA on the understanding that schools and students may not be identified.

B.5 Distribution of students across second, third, transition or fifth year in school

- PISA is administered to 15-year old students. These may be in Second Year, Third Year, Transition Year or Fifth Year in a school. Because of the greater availability of Transition Year in schools in 2009 compared to 2000, the proportion in Transition Year has increased while the proportion in Fifth Year has declined.

	2 nd Year	3 rd Year	Transition Year	Fifth Year
2000	3.3%	62.0%	16.0%	18.6%
2009	2.4%	59.1%	24.0%	14.4%

- The ERC analysis has attempted to examine whether this significant shift in the school population had any impact on student achievement on the PISA test. Declines in performance were observed across all levels in both reading and mathematics in 2009. However, the smallest declines in both reading (29 points decline in average scores from 2000 to 2009) and mathematics (12.2 points decline in average scores) were observed in third year (the year in which students were focussed on taking their Junior Certificate examination). The largest declines in average reading scores occurred in Transition Year (43.1 points) and Fifth Year (49.7 points) while the largest decline in mathematics occurred in Transition Year (33.4 points).

- It is difficult to interpret these data definitively. For example, the declines in Transition Year in mathematics may be due to the lessened exposure of students to systematic teaching of this subject in Transition Year. (The draft national plan to improve literacy and numeracy in schools: *Better Literacy and Numeracy for Children and Young People* has proposed an increase the time devoted to Mathematics in Transition Year).
- The picture seems more complicated for reading achievement, with significant falls occurring for both Transition Year and Fifth Year. In 2000, only 16% of students, mainly from higher socio-economic status were in Transition Year while 19% of students with somewhat lower socio-economic status progressed to Fifth Year. In 2009, the proportion of students in Transition Year had increased to 24%. In contrast, the 14% of students in Fifth Year in 2009 were mainly from low SES backgrounds. This seems to account for the larger decline in performance occurring in Fifth Year than in Transition Year.
- Taken with the evidence that we have concerning student engagement with the test, it could be postulated that when students are in Third Year and are experiencing a tightly focussed, examination-influenced learning environment, they may perform better on formalised pencil and paper tests such as PISA. The fall-off in achievement in the years following the Junior Certificate examination may reflect a greater degree of disengagement with testing and/or with curriculum content. This could arise to a greater degree in the group of students who are awaiting their 16th birthday when they can legally leave the educational system.

B.6 Changes to the curriculum

- The majority of the 2009 PISA students would have experienced aspects of the revised English Primary School Curriculum published in 1999 and introduced in 2001-2002 and the revised mathematics curriculum introduced in 2002-2003.
- Results of the national assessments of reading and mathematics conducted in 1998/99 and 2004 did not show any change in performance. Students who were in Transition Year of Fifth Year in PISA 2009 (40% of the cohort, and the groups where the largest declines in PISA reading performance were noted) would have been among the cohort sampled for the 2004 national assessments of reading in fifth class in primary school. The ERC has stated that since the performance of these students at primary level did not change significantly from students tested over the preceding two decades, it seems unlikely that changes in curriculum implementation at primary level can explain the decline in performance on the PISA reading test between 2000 and 2009.
- Project Maths has been introduced into 24 pilot schools since September 2008 and was extended to all second-level schools in September 2010. Only 35 of the 3,937 students who participated in PISA 2009 had experienced Project Maths. Hence, since it involved such a small proportion of the PISA 2009 sample, the ERC has concluded that Project maths had no impact on the mathematics performance of Irish students in PISA 2009.

- The ERC has concluded that the introduction of science to the primary school curriculum in 2003-2004 and the implementation of the revised Junior Certificate science curriculum at post-primary level may have mitigated the effects of changes in demography and sampling that might otherwise have lowered performance in science in PISA 2009.

B.7 Weaknesses in how PISA establishes and reports trends in achievement

Analyses of PISA data by the Educational Research Centre and Statistics Canada have identified a number of factors associated with the design and reporting of PISA that may have contributed to the decline in the scores of Irish students.

Number of link items

- When participating in a PISA test, the student completes a large number of "questions" which statisticians call "test items". Some of the test items are identical in each cycle of PISA but many other items are not the same in each cycle. The identical items that are repeated in each cycle of PISA are called "link items" because they are used to link the cycles of PISA and calculate trends in achievement over time.
- The more link items that are used to calculate trends, the more accurate the reported trend is likely to be. The PISA reading test was the first to be designated as a major domain and uses relatively few link items to report the trends in reading (26 items in the case of PISA 2009). The OECD has implicitly accepted that the number of link items used in the reading test was too small as it used larger numbers of link items for mathematics (32 items) and science (49 items) when these tests came to be developed. The use of a small number of link items, especially in reading, means that comparisons and judgements about trends are based on a narrow evidence base.

How linkage over time is calculated

- PISA reports reading standards comparing 2009 and 2000 outcomes. However, the underpinning mathematics actually compares outcomes in 2009 to those of 2006, then compares those of 2006 to those in 2003 and finally the outcomes of 2003 back to those of 2000. A similar chain (2009 to 2006, 2006 to 2003) is used to establish the trend in mathematics. This is referred to as "chain linking".
- Some error occurs each time a linkage is made. There is no consensus among international assessment experts as to the estimation of the size of these errors. Statistics Canada argues that because the trend is established using a series of linkages, the error is compounded each time – hence there would be a large link error. The OECD rejects this argument but accepts that "performance changes (in PISA) are associated with a fairly large standard error." Acknowledging that a larger link error exists in the PISA data would mean that large differences in achievement would be less likely to be statistically significant and would somewhat reduce the reliability of the estimate of change in performance that the OECD reports in PISA.
- One implication of this is that the 11 score-point drop in reading literacy between 2000 and 2003 (which was not statistically significant) contributes to the 31-point decline observed between 2000 and 2009. In contrast, a decline of only 2

points between 2003 and 2006 has been carried forward into Ireland's mathematics score in 2009 (i.e., most of the decline occurred between 2006 and 2009). In 2012, when the reading link will be back to 2009 only, earlier declines in achievement (for which there is no obvious explanation) are unlikely to be taken into account.

Changes in the test booklets

- Changes in the assessment instruments (the test booklets and the items in them) such as changes in the reading test in 2003, when a decline in the performance of Irish students was first recorded, may have played a role. Even minor changes, such as in the location of items in a test, have been found in other studies to affect student scores.

Scaling

- The procedures used to convert students' raw scores (the number of questions or test items answered correctly) to scale scores may have disadvantaged Irish students, exaggerating the extent of the decline. Statistics Canada has shown that performance of Irish students on 65% of the individual 2009 reading items is better than would be expected on the basis of their PISA scores, and that this difference is more pronounced for new items than for link items.

Summary

- In summary, there is evidence that there are weaknesses in the assumptions underlying the methodology used to establish trend data in PISA from one cycle to another. This means that reporting of trends in PISA may be unstable and, at the very least, points to the need to treat PISA data with caution (without, of course, disregarding the results). Having said this, PISA is generally regarded of the most rigorous international assessment of its kind.



Mervyn Storey MLA
Chair of the Assembly Education Committee
NI Assembly
Parliament Buildings
Stormont

Dear Mervyn



16 November 2010

Firstly a word of thanks to the Committee for their good wishes in advance of my retirement in February of next year. In my several appearances in front of the Committee I have always found the members searching and robust in their questioning, but always courteous with me and the colleagues who have accompanied me.

On foot of the Committee hearing on Wednesday 10 November 2010, please find enclosed a copy of the ETI Report – 'An Evaluation of the Sure Start Programme for 2-Year-Olds (June 2010)'. Further copies of the report may be obtained via the ETI website <http://www.etni.gov.uk/index/surveys-evaluations/surveys-evaluations-pre-school-centre-and-nursery-school/surveys-evaluations-pre-school-centre-and-nursery-school-2010/an-evaluation-of-the-surestart-programme-for-2-year-olds.htm>.

I have also enclosed as Annex I, following a question at the Committee hearing from Trevor Lunn MLA, the GCSE statistics for pupil performance at grades A* - D, compared with the performance at A* - C.

Should you wish to discuss either of these topics further, ETI would be very happy to engage with the Committee or a sub-group of the Committee. You will be aware that it is the Department of Education's view that achievement at Grade C and above in English and mathematics at GCSE level, is taken to signify attainment of the relevant functionality.

With every good wish to you as Chair of this Committee and to the members for their important ongoing work in securing the best in education for our children and young people.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Stanley J Goudie".

STANLEY J GOUDIE

ANNEX 1

Percentage of Year 12 pupils in Northern Ireland Post-Primary Schools achieving A*-C and A*-D in English and mathematics, 2008/09

	YEAR 12 ENTRIES IN 2008	YEAR 12 ENTRIES IN 2009
English % A* - C	63.9	64.3
English % A* - D	79	79
Maths % A* - C	60.9	60.5
Maths % A* - D	73	75

Based on the total number of pupils in year 12 in the annual school census using Forvus/RM solutions dataset.



Department of
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www.deni.gov.uk

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Your Ref: 065/10/C/04

2 December 2010

Dear John

I refer to your correspondence of 26 November 2010 addressed to Stanley Goudie, Chief Inspector.

Please see attached the percentage of pupils, broken down by gender, who have attained 5+ GCSEs at grades A* - C, A* - D, A* - E over the last five years.

The further information you requested will follow in due course.

Yours sincerely

JOHN LEONARD
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

Percentage of Year 12 pupils achieving selected grades in English and mathematics by gender, 2005/06 - 2009/10

Gender	Indicator	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Female	maths A*-C	61.4	61.5	63.2	61.3	63.4
	English A*-C	71.0	71.5	72.2	71.4	73.1
	maths A*-D	73.5	73.7	75.1	74.9	76.4
	English A*-D	84.4	85.2	84.7	84.3	85.2
	maths A*-E	83.3	83.1	83.4	83.2	84.4
	English A*-E	90.1	90.4	89.7	90.0	90.4
Male	maths A*-C	54.5	55.8	58.6	59.7	59.7
	English A*-C	54.4	55.1	55.9	57.3	57.0
	maths A*-D	66.2	68.3	70.7	72.8	73.2
	English A*-D	71.3	72.0	72.6	73.8	73.7
	maths A*-E	77.1	78.1	79.8	80.9	81.4
	English A*-E	80.1	81.0	81.4	82.3	82.2
Total	maths A*-C	57.9	58.6	60.9	60.5	61.5
	English A*-C	62.6	63.2	63.9	64.3	65.0
	maths A*-D	69.8	71.0	72.8	73.8	74.8
	English A*-D	77.8	78.5	78.5	79.0	79.4
	maths A*-E	80.1	80.5	81.6	82.0	82.9
	English A*-E	85.0	85.6	85.4	86.1	86.2

Year 12 figure is taken from the NI school census

Source: Forvus/RM solutions database.

**GCSE Results - Department of Education -
31 January 2011**



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Your Ref: 065/10/C/04

31 January 2011

Dear John

I refer to your letter of 26 November 2010 to Stanley Goudie, Chief Inspector.

Following my letter of 2 December, which provided the information you requested on GCSE grades obtained by pupils in English and Maths, I am now writing to provide the information requested on how GCSE grades D and E compare with grade C in terms of pupils' capabilities in literacy and numeracy. I apologise for the delay in replying.

GCSE pass grades run from A* (very high performance) to G (very basic performance). Within each GCSE specification, grade descriptors are provided for the baseline grades of A, C and F: these give a general indication of the standards, in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills, necessary for students to achieve these grades. The other grades are calculated based on these reference grades. The descriptors are set out in the context of the subject.

The grade awarded is dependent upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives. Shortcomings in some aspects of the assessment may be balanced by better performance in others – for example, a candidate may perform better in the speaking/listening component of English as compared to the writing component. The subject grade will reflect an aggregation of the overall performance across components. Grades reflect a continuum of achievement and no particular point between grades, e.g. C and D, can be seen as a 'watershed' in performance terms.

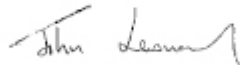


For most of 14 to 16 year olds literacy and numeracy skills are developed through the teaching of GCSE English and Mathematics. In the recent revision of these specifications (for first teaching from September 2010) detailed work was done to embed skills requirements in relation to functional literacy and numeracy. This means that achievement in GCSE English and Maths at grade C and above indicates performance at Level 2 in communication and application of number respectively. Grade D and below is aligned with Level 1 achievement.

In the main the Level 2 standard is characterised by a greater depth of understanding and the ability to work more independently. For example, in communication at Level 1 the requirement is to respond to information and follow explanations and instructions, whereas at Level 2 there is a requirement to listen and respond to extended information and follow detailed explanations and multi-step instructions.

There is a general recognition that if young people are to progress to higher education and/or employment, and hence live effective and fulfilling lives, they need to have achieved Level 2 skills. A portfolio of Level 2 qualifications is increasingly the minimum platform of skills required for employment. Indeed, Level 2 is the lowest level of attainment recognised by the Organisation for Economic Development for an individual to function effectively in society.

I trust this information is helpful but, should members feel it would be useful, officials from the Department and the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) would be happy to provide an oral briefing on this issue to the Committee.



JOHN LEONARD
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer



PHQ (NI) Qualification - ETI - 1 July 2010

CHIEF INSPECTOR
Stanley J Goudie



Mervyn Storey MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Education
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M. Storey
Dear Mr Storey

Thank you for your letter of 29 June 2010, to which you received a holding response dated 30 June 2010. Thank you also for your very positive comments regarding the Inspectorate's presentation to the Committee on Wednesday 23 June 2010 regarding successful post-primary schools serving disadvantaged communities.

In respect of the Professional Qualification for Headship Northern Ireland (PQHNI), the Inspectorate is currently inspecting the programme on foot of the Department's commitment in 'Every School a Good School: A Policy for School Improvement' to review leadership development programmes in Northern Ireland¹.

As a baseline for our inspection of the PQHNI programme, the Inspectorate published a report in December 2009 on the state of play with regard to leadership development, drawing on inspection evidence in the school years 2006/07 to 2008/09 inclusive. A copy of the report is enclosed; and a copy of our report on the PQHNI programme will be provided for the Committee once the work is done.

¹ Every School a Good School: A Policy for School Improvement is a child-centred policy which sets out a new approach to school improvement. It identifies goals for better leadership as one of the six priority areas for strategic action in order to bring about school improvement, to address underachievement and to raise standards.

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1 July 2010

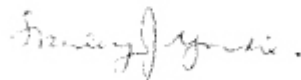
The PQHNI programme is (rightly) undergoing significant reform at the present time. While it is not compulsory for aspiring school principals to undertake the PQHNI, the reality is that many choose to do so. The intention is to ensure that those recruited to the programme are assessed initially as being more ready to assume leadership than may have been the case in the past. As part of the Inspectorate's presentation to the Committee on 23 June 2010, I indicated that a possible way forward might be to make it compulsory for a newly appointed principal to engage in the PHQNI programme, within 2 to 3 years of taking up post.

In terms of ensuring that those appointed to school principalship are effective leaders, I offer the following comments: (i) the need to ensure that the selection process is sufficiently rigorous and tests a range of skills appropriate for principalship; (ii) the need to revisit the salary differentials which exist between senior posts and principal positions; (iii) in terms of succession planning, the need to identify and encourage teachers who exhibit leadership potential early in their careers; and (iv) we need to ensure good quality leadership development opportunities for principals, once in post.

In relation to the revised version of 'Together Towards Improvement' a copy will go to the Committee in advance of the planned launch of the materials in August, as part of the Regional Training Unit's Summer School programme. A copy of 'The Reflective Teacher' is enclosed.

A copy of the Department of Education's guidance on School Development Planning (currently under review) is also enclosed, along with a recent ETI evaluation of School Development Planning in Northern Ireland. Should you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

I wish you and the other members of the Committee a restful Summer break.



STANLEY J GOUDIE

PHQ (NI) Qualification RTU - 30 September 2010

**Statistics
PQH (NI) Gender Statistics for the past 5 years**

	Male	Female
Application(s) to PQH(NI)	39%	61%
Intake	38.2%	61.8%
Completed	37.2%	62.8%

New First Time Headship Statistics for 2005-10:

Primary: 238 new first time heads of which 44% have PQH (NI).

Post-Primary 95 new first time heads of which 54% have PQH(NI)

Overall, 48% of those who have acquired Headships for the first time in N.Ireland over the last 5 years had the PQH (NI) qualification. Of these 54% were female and 46% male.

**PHQ (NI) Qualification - Department of Education -
14 October 2010**



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Your Ref: 033/10/C/08

14 October 2010

Dear John

Appointees to Headships not holding the PQH (NI) Qualification

I am responding to your letter dated 11 October 2010 which requested a breakdown by gender of appointees to Headships not holding the PQH (NI) qualification.

I can confirm that since 2005 some 176 first time heads have progressed to headship without PQH (NI). This represents 52% of all newly appointed heads. The gender breakdown for those who did not hold PQH (NI) at their time of appointment to headship is 35% male and 65% female.

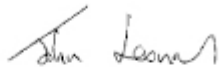
I should point out that the percentage of those succeeding to headship with PQH (NI) is growing year on year and conversely the numbers succeeding to headship without PQH (NI) is declining. In 2009/10 63% of all newly appointed first time heads held the PQH (NI) qualification. This means that only 37% did not hold the PQH (NI) qualification (compared with the 52% average figure for the last 5 years, provided above).

The figures contained in this response have been provided by the Regional Training Unit (RTU) which is responsible for the induction programme for all newly appointed heads.



I trust the Committee finds this information useful.

Yours sincerely



JOHN LEONARD
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer



Appendix 5

Assembly Research Papers

Contents

[Scoping a Possible Committee Inquiry into Successful Secondary Schools 12 May 2010](#)

[Free School Meal Entitlement as a Measure of Deprivation 30 November 2010](#)



Research and Library Service
Briefing Paper

12 May 2010

Jennifer Betts

Scoping a Possible Committee Inquiry into 'Successful Secondary Schools – which have succeeded in Raising Standards and/or Maintaining Good Standards in the face of Social and/or Economic Deprivation'

This briefing paper considers the use of Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME) as a proxy indicator for deprivation. It presents a brief outline of FSME as a measure of deprivation and possible alternatives, considering their relative strengths and weaknesses. It finds that while there are many limitations to using FSME as a measure of deprivation; there are also challenges associated with other potential measures.

Section 1: Introduction Section 4: Setting Targets in Schools

Section 2: Background Section 5: School Inspection

Section 3: Department Policy Section 6: Suggested terms of Reference

Annex A: Literature Review: Northern Ireland & Annex B: Literature Review: England

1. Introduction

This Briefing Paper is a scoping exercise to inform the Education Committee of a range of issues around educational attainment including:

- the policies the Department of Education ("the Department") has in place to improve levels of attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy in post-primary schools.
- the criteria for assessment by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) and the procedure that must be followed when a school is assessed as not performing to an acceptable standard.
- additional material for Members' reference is contained in Annexes to this paper. These include a literature review of research conducted in Northern Ireland and England;

policies to address educational attainment and examples of 'good practice'; and the criteria used by ETI when conducting a school inspection.

2. Background

A CBI report looked at the impact in the workplace of poor levels of literacy. Of employers surveyed, 72% expressed a major concern about the quality of written English, particularly in relation to spelling and grammar. This applied to graduates as well as school leavers[1].

A report by the National Literacy Trust (September 2008)[2] focused on existing research that established a relationship between literacy and five areas of life: economic status, aspirations, family life, health and civic/cultural engagement. The research shows that in addition to the socio-economic impact, low levels of literacy also affect life chances and lead to exclusion from participating fully in society[3].

Levels of literacy and numeracy are key measures of educational success yet there is no official definition of what constitutes a basic level of literacy. However, figures from the Department show that 4,500 children in Northern Ireland leave primary school without adequate literacy and numeracy skills. Almost half (47%) of young people are unable to attain a grade-C or above at GCSE level including English and maths, leading to underemployment and an increased risk of turning to crime[4].

Reports in 2006 from the Public Accounts Committee[5] and the Northern Ireland Audit Office[6] identified a failing of the Department to improve literacy and numeracy standards, particularly in the areas of strategic leadership and target setting. Particular areas of concern included the under-achievement of boys, significant differences between Protestant and Catholic children in socio-economically deprived areas at GCSE level in English and Maths and the extent of the gap between the best and poorest performing schools[7].

Their findings were endorsed by Research conducted in Northern Ireland on literacy and numeracy by Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC)[8] where it was reported that empirical evidence showed clusters of under performance, firstly in schools in Belfast and secondly in the controlled sector. However, PwC cautioned that care should be taken in drawing conclusions from these high-level observations as the factors that impact on attainment are complex and interact with each other[9].

3. Department Policy

The Department published Every School A Good School: A policy for School Improvement[10] in April 2009. This document is the Department's overall policy for school improvement in Northern Ireland and is based on a consultation exercise that ran from 21 January to 31 March 2008.

A separate consultation was launched that focused on literacy and numeracy; Every School a Good School: A strategy for raising achievement in literacy and numeracy[11] was launched on 23 June and ran until 30 November 2008. The Minister had established a Literacy and Numeracy Taskforce in February 2008 with a remit to finalise the revised literacy and numeracy strategy and ensure that it complimented the Department's overall school improvement policy[12]. Among the recommendations from the PwC research in Northern Ireland[13] had been the need for greater clarity about the role, scope and powers of the Literacy and Numeracy Taskforce. The Taskforce published its initial report[14] in February 2009, but the Department's finalised strategy for improving literacy and numeracy is still awaited[15].

The Taskforce identified the following key issues[16]:

- The need for a baseline database covering all schools to benchmark performance taking into account the context of the school and making it eventually possible for schools to set targets for individual pupils;
- A common data bank to identify 'good practice', allowing schools to work together in 'statistical pairs'[\[17\]](#);
- A need for the Department or the ESA to ensure that a 'literacy/numeracy thread' runs through all initiatives so that literacy and numeracy are seen as a common priority with training for school Governors emphasising its importance;
- Working in partnership with parents, community organisations and educational charities is potentially a huge area for development;
- Initial teacher training that ensures teachers have adequate literacy and numeracy training and are competent in data analysis;
- The introduction of the ESA is crucial to ensuring that literacy and numeracy is given priority and that there is consistency across all schools with monitoring of performance and challenges to under-performing schools; and
- More consideration should be given to 'targeted funding'.

The Minister stated in mid-March 2010, that:

The revised Literacy and Numeracy Strategy is currently being finalised and will be released shortly. It is important that we take the time to get this strategy right and to ensure that it flows from, and is connected to, wider work on school improvement and on assessment arrangements to support the revised curriculum[\[18\]](#).

In Assembly questions on attainment levels, the Minister identified inter-connected policies to address under-achievement in addition to the revised Literacy and Numeracy Strategy as; 'Every School a Good School', 'Transfer 2010', the 'SEN and Inclusion Review', ESA, the 'Early Years Strategy' and 'Achieving Belfast and Derry'. The Minister stated that these were all "aimed at improving outcomes for our young people and making sure they leave school with the literacy and numeracy skills they need"[\[19\]](#).

The Department's school improvement policy is centred on six key areas[\[20\]](#):

- (i) effective leadership and an ethos of aspiration and high achievement;
- (ii) high quality teaching and learning;
- (iii) tackling the barriers to learning that many young people face;
- (iv) embedding a culture of self-evaluation and self-assessment and of using performance and other information to effect improvement;
- (v) focusing clearly on support to help schools improve – with clarity about the place of more formal interventions where there is a risk that the quality of education offered in school is not as high as it should be; and
- (vi) increasing engagement between schools, parents and families, recognising the powerful influence they and local communities exercise on educational outcomes.

4. Setting Targets in Schools

The Department website instructs schools to set their own 'realistic but challenging targets'[21] in line with their School Development Plan[22]. Targets are based on the individual school's current performance trends, their plans for improvement and the following range of factors:

- Trends in performance by the school over previous years;
- The prior attainment of each year group;
- The context within which the school is operating and how it compares to schools in similar circumstances;
- The priorities set in the School Development Plan.

General benchmarking data is sent to schools each year to allow them to compare their performance with other schools in similar circumstances. Similar circumstances refer to enrolment bands and proportions of pupils with free school meal entitlement (FSME).

The most recent School Development Planning and Target Setting circular[23] was issued to schools in June 2009. The circular's annex contains the Public Service Agreement (PSA) performance targets that the Department are legally obliged to set as part of their financial settlement for 2008 – 2011. Current performance for 2007/08 and a baseline from 2005/06 examination results are included for 5+ GCSE at A*-C including English and maths for all pupils and for FMSE pupils only.

The Department's policy document lists the characteristics of a successful school as having child-centred provision, high quality teaching and learning, effective leadership and being connected to its local community[24]. These are the key characteristics the Department states will be used during school inspections and by ESA in determining support services required to help schools to raise standards.

The Committee may find it useful to ask the Department to break down the statistics to show GCSE attainment levels in non-selective secondary schools and maintained comprehensive (all ability) schools separately? PwC research[25] found that at KS2 English and Maths, proportionately four times as many controlled schools compared to maintained schools are underperforming.

5. School Inspections

Standard school inspections in post-primary schools focus on the quality of:

- Leadership and management at all levels;
- The provision for pastoral care and child protection;
- The overall educational provision, particularly in the identified subjects/ areas; and
- The school's self-evaluation process[26].

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) has found considerable variations in practice both between and within schools. However, based on observed practice in schools, indicators have been identified in practice and provision that lead to outcomes that have been assessed as either 'good' or 'not good enough'.

Indicators rated as (A) 'good' or as (B) 'not good enough' are grouped under three inter-related headings:

- a) the ethos of the school;
- b) the quality of teaching and learning;
- c) the quality of management[27].

6. Suggested Terms of Reference

The Committee may wish to look at the following issues during a Committee Inquiry:

- The role and importance of effective leadership in successful secondary schools
- Differences in attainment levels between secondary schools in different sectors;
- How parental involvement is encouraged in better performing secondary schools;
- Teaching methods in successful secondary schools;
- Leadership and ethos in successful secondary schools
- How the Department has incorporated recommendations of the Literacy and Numeracy Taskforce and PwC Reports in recent policies.

Literature Review

A study surveying existing research and analysing data for England has reported that evidence suggests a school's performance contributes to as little as 14% of the variation in pupils' attainment. The key influencing factor was found to be family background and household income[28].

Annex A - Research and Policy in Northern Ireland

Two reports from the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee (PAC)[29] and the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO)[30] highlighting the fact that 20% of children in Northern Ireland left primary school without achieving an appropriate level of performance in literacy and numeracy. Furthermore, just under 50% of pupils fail to reach grades A – C in English and Maths at GCSE. Particular areas of concern were:

- The under-achievement of boys;
- The significant differences between Protestant and Catholic children in socio-economically deprived areas at GCSE English and maths and in comparison to their peers in Glasgow; and
- The extent of the gap between the poorest and best performing schools.

The Chief Inspector's Report 2006 - 2008[31] highlighted the findings of the PAC and independent research commissioned by DENI that protestant children, particularly boys, are significantly under-achieving in non-selective post-primary schools when compared to their Catholic counterparts in socially deprived areas.

In 2008 Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC) published reports on the findings of two pieces of research commissioned by DENI. The first reported on literacy and numeracy levels in Northern Ireland[32] and the second identified examples of good practice in other jurisdictions where the circumstances are similar, or worse than in Belfast[33].

The PwC report[34] included the following outcomes from a cluster of under-performing schools in Belfast based on FSM entitlement:

- At KS2 English and Maths, proportionately four times as many controlled as maintained schools were under-performing; 11% compared to 3% in English and 8% compared to 2% in Maths;
- At KS3 English, almost 25% of maintained schools were classified as performing better than expected, compared to 2% of controlled schools. However, a larger proportion (8% compared to 2%) of maintained schools compared to controlled schools were under-performing;
- At GCSE English and Maths, 14% of controlled schools were underperforming compared to 4% of maintained schools; and
- Of maintained schools, 25% are performing better than would be expected at GCSE English and 20% at GCSE Maths, according to the definitions used, but there were no controlled schools in the over-performing schools.

Reasons identified by various studies for the underperformance in boys included[35]:

- Perceptions of literacy as 'female';
- Gender stereotyping on the part of teachers;
- A greater vulnerability of boys to poor teaching;
- A greater likelihood that boys may be less ready to begin formal schooling;
- A greater proportion of learning activities that require a prolonged attention span;
- Changing patterns of employment and higher expectations of girls;
- Peer group culture;
- The greater incidence of behavioural problems such as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) among boys; and
- A lack of male role models including fathers and male teachers.

Strategies adopted to counteract the under-performance of boys were:

- Individualised – target setting and mentoring;
- Pedagogical – since poor teaching has a greater impact on boys;
- Whole school – all teachers involved in literacy, effective use of data, school leadership and ethos, single sex grouping and parental involvement.
- System level – early intervention, professional development of teachers, the role of the inspectorate and the dissemination of 'best practice'[36].

It was concluded that boys from socio-economically deprived areas, visible minorities and boys with learning disabilities are most at risk of educational failure. Therefore, small pockets of under-achievement can skew the data for all pupils in Northern Ireland and for boys in particular. Nevertheless, attitudes to learning in certain communities and a lack of parental involvement are key issues and schools in deprived Protestant areas were thought to experience these difficulties.

Problems of under-achievement could not be addressed by schools alone. Therefore some schools had strategies for parental and community group involvement and there were lessons to

be learned from the maintained sector in terms of the 'critical support and challenge' provided to school leaders[37].

The main factors leading to the long tail of underachievement in Northern Ireland were identified by key stakeholders as:

- A lack of parental involvement in their children's education;
- A perceived lack of value placed on education in certain areas, particularly deprived protestant areas;
- A shortage of positive role models;
- The impact of 'The Troubles';
- A decline in the readiness for schooling of pupils entering primary schools in recent years (eg in terms of behaviour, linguistic development etc.);
- The lack of baseline data on young children, hindering early intervention in schools;
- The transition between pre-school and primary and between primary and post-primary schools; and
- A lack of strategic direction and consistency of approach at the system level.

PwC's comparative report on schools in British and Irish cities[38] raised concerns about Initial Teacher Training in literacy and numeracy, particularly among teachers for the post-primary sector. In comparative cities the most effective Continuing Professional Development was in areas where schools and staff were offered tailored support that included "modelling of lessons, opportunities to observe good practice, and assistance with lesson planning and assessment over an extended period of time"[39].

A research project carried out in Chicago achieved improvements in literacy through increasing the time spent on instruction for literacy, focusing on literacy and focusing on professional development.

Throughout PwC's study of successful schools in comparator cities, respondents emphasised that 'one size does not fit all' and that schools and local authorities that had shown success had cherry picked aspects of national strategies that best suited their circumstances. However, PwC found contradictory evidence in existing literature that a faithful adherence to the implementation of improvement initiatives was linked to successful outcomes. Their report therefore recommended further evaluation before any specific strategies would be implemented in Belfast[40].

The issue of context is raised by research findings in a paper suggesting that not only is educational attainment lower, but the quality of schools is also lower in disadvantaged areas[41]. The paper argues that the context of disadvantage impacts on the organisation and processes of schools with school managers adapting organisational processes to cope with the impacts of socio-economic deprivation in their area. However, they are constrained in their responses by limited and short term funding, a lack of evidence of good practice in specific contexts and a lack of flexibility in organisation design and curriculum. The reports author argues that school improvement in disadvantaged areas will not be achieved by generic measures, but by policies tailored to disadvantaged areas[42].

An ETI evaluation[43] of 34 primary and post-primary schools in November 2007 and January 2008 found important common characteristics in the most successful schools. These factors contribute to overcoming barriers to learning that the pupils have experienced and, more

importantly, the characteristics were found to be wholly or partly absent in the schools where pupils were continuing to underachieve.

Characteristics were seen to have a positive effect despite significant levels of social and economic deprivation and irrespective of whether the school was single gender or co-educational. The 'whole school' factors relating to literacy and numeracy that have been shown to improve standards are as follows:

- The pupils are active learners with open questions used to encourage thinking skills and high standards in talking and listening;
- Collaborative learning is promoted through independent, paired and group work;
- Learning is set in contexts that make it relevant, enjoyable and interesting;
- Strategies for formative assessment are well embedded;
- The needs of children who require additional help are met effectively;
- There are close links with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and class teacher leading to early identification of additional needs, effective monitoring of progress and a regular review of arrangements;
- The Principal and Senior Management Team have a strong vision that focuses on school improvement, particularly literacy and numeracy;
- There is a collegial approach to 'whole-school' monitoring, evaluation and review, including self-evaluation and self-improvement; and
- The School Development Plan is central to whole school improvement with priority given to literacy and numeracy[44].

PwC key recommendations

Key recommendations based on the PwC research conducted in Northern Ireland included the need for a more joined up approach across the Executive, Assembly and Committees to ensure that all departments and agencies are aware of the need to work towards improving literacy and numeracy attainment in Northern Ireland. The Assembly should also consider whether the budget available was sufficient to address the challenge of low attainment in literacy and numeracy.

The need for clarity and strong leadership was highlighted, particularly during a period of change within the Department and the ESA, to address some of the long standing issues that had been identified in the research. The Entitlement Framework[45] addresses the recommendation that the Department should consider ways of working between schools and removing barriers to collaboration.

The Department should consider the need for clearer and simplified performance management policies and support mechanisms to help head teachers to manage under-performing teachers. There should also be a review of the 'support and challenge' mechanisms for head teachers and a greater focus on the leadership of literacy and numeracy in the Professional Qualification for Headship. It was also recommended that there be a greater focus on literacy and numeracy in Initial Teacher Training and that the Department should phase in mandatory professional modules on literacy for all teachers from KS1.

The Department should also provide information on the effective use of data and its interpretation for head teachers. This would allow them to measure progress, with the possibility of value-added data, along with case studies of best practice in parental and community

involvement in schools. PwC also recommended that the Department ask the ESA to give urgent consideration to the supply and resourcing of educational psychologists and psychology support for schools.

Based on the evidence on how boys' attainment can be improved, PwC[46] concludes that a successful approach is likely to be based on initiatives delivered at an individual level. Table 1 below provides some examples of strategies.

Table 1: Individual level approaches to improve boys' performance.

Evidence on good practice from international literature	
Individual approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‡ Individual target-setting; and ‡ Mentoring (older boys, adults in school or wider community).
Pedagogical approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‡ Flexing style to meet needs of individual; ‡ Setting aims, objectives and targets, building on previous learning; ‡ Using a variety of activities, including practical work, use of ‡ ICT (including interactive whiteboards) and 'real situations'; ‡ Use of texts (fiction and non-fiction) that appeals to boys; and ‡ Positive and forward-looking feedback.
Whole-school approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‡ All teachers acting as literacy leaders; ‡ Roles and responsibilities of school leadership; ‡ Ethos of high expectations; ‡ The effective use of data; ‡ Single-sex groupings for some subjects; and ‡ Strategies for parental involvement.
System-wide approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‡ Early intervention; ‡ Professional development; ‡ The role of the inspectorate in disseminating best practice; and ‡ The dissemination of best practice.

Source: PwC

ETI Inspections

Table 2 below shows the six levels of reports that schools receive which they must then take action on, depending on the outcome.

Conclusions Used in a Report	Response and Follow-Up Activity
(1) In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided is outstanding.	Acknowledgement by the BoG/Management Committee of the inspection, the receipt and distribution of the report.
(2) In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is very good.	Acknowledgement by the BoG/Management Committee of the inspection, the receipt and distribution of the report.
(3) In the areas inspected the quality of education being provided is good. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. ETI will monitor the school's progress in these areas.	Acknowledgement by the BoG/Management Committee of the inspection, the receipt and distribution of the report. An action plan addressing the areas for improvement. The action plan will form the basis for discussions during the follow-up process.
(4) In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas	Acknowledgement by the BoGs/Management Committee of the inspection, the receipt and distribution of the report. Action plan forwarded

<p>for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in achievements and standards, learning and teaching, leadership and management that need to be addressed. ETI will monitor and report on progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12 – 24 month period.</p>	<p>to Inspection Services Branch within 30 days of receiving a letter from the DE's Standards and Improvement team detailing the follow-up action required. The Action Plan will form the basis for the follow –up interim visits and inspection.</p>
<p>(5) In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the organisation is inadequate; the areas for improvement significantly outweigh the strengths in the provision. The inspection has identified major areas for improvement in achievements and standards, learning and teaching. Leadership and management need to be addressed urgently if the organisation is to meet effectively the needs of all the learners. The Education and Training inspectorate will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12 – 18 month period.</p>	<p>Follow-up actions include: (1) an initial response from the BoG/Management Committee; and (2) the preparation of an Action Plan addressing the areas for improvement agreed with the ELB/ESA. The Action Plan will be the basis of the follow-up process of interim follow-up visits and inspections within 12 – 18 months. If a second follow-up inspection is required it will take place within 12 months.</p>
<p>(6) In the area inspected the quality of education provided by the school is unsatisfactory; the areas for improvement significantly outweigh the strengths in provision. The inspection has identified major areas for improvement in achievements and standards, learning and teaching, leadership and management which need to be addressed urgently if the organisation is to meet effectively the needs of all its learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12 – 18 month period.</p>	<p>Follow-up actions include: (1) an initial response from the BoG/Management Committee; and (2) the preparation of an Action Plan addressing the areas for improvement agreed with the ELB/ESA. The Action Plan will be the basis of the follow-up process of interim follow-up visits and inspections within 12 – 18 months. If a second follow-up inspection is required it will take place within 12 months.</p>

Source: ETI

Table 3 shows analysis of ETI reports carried out by PwC[47]. It highlights areas for improvement in schools that were judged as underperforming following inspection.

Table 3: PwC analysis of ETI reports on underperforming schools

Areas for improvement in underperforming schools: an analysis of ETI reports	
School leadership	; The need for more strategic management and stronger leadership; ; More rigorous whole-school monitoring and effective use of performance data; ; Improving communication within the school; and ; The development of middle management.

Teaching quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‡ Rigorous reflection on current classroom practice; ‡ Promoting the use of ICT across the curriculum; ‡ The need to increase the level of challenge for pupils; ‡ Teaching across the entire ability range using a broader variety teaching and learning strategies; ‡ Identification of the particular learning needs of individual pupils; ‡ Determining pupil understanding of what they have been taught; and ‡ Improved planning at individual teacher level.
Whole-school issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‡ Implementation and evaluation of strategies to improve behaviour; ‡ Increasing attendance rates; ‡ Strategies to improve literacy and numeracy across the curriculum; the development of vocational and occupational curricular programmes; ‡ Disseminating good practice in learning and teaching strategies; and ‡ A sharper focus on standards and outcomes.

Source: PwC

Future Proposed Actions

The Department's policy for school improvement^[48] sets out the procedure where a school has failed to improve, or has improved, but regressed over a two-year period following an unsatisfactory ETI inspection. In these circumstances DENI will meet with ESA, ETI and the school's Board of Governors and discuss alternative actions that will include:

- The restructuring of the governance, leadership and management within the school;
- Merging the school with a neighbouring school;
- Closing the school and re-opening after a period with a new management team – "fresh start"; or
- Closure of the school, with pupils transferring to other nearby schools

Annex B

Research and Policy in England

In a series of reports published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation on poverty and educational disadvantage, a note of caution about focusing only on socio-economic disadvantage was introduced. A study analysing existing research and analysing national data for England pointed out that although the majority of under-achievers are white British boys from disadvantaged backgrounds, many students from the same backgrounds succeed. "The girls come from the same families and mostly go to the same schools, but do much better."^[49]

While FSME was strongly linked with low achievement, this was found to apply more to white British pupils than other ethnic groups. Other indicators of disadvantage in the immediate area around a pupil's home that are statistically associated with low achievement were identified as:

- The neighbourhood unemployment rate;
- The percentage of single parent households; and
- The proportion of parents with low educational achievement^[50].

While the study found that schools do make a difference to outcomes, about 14% of the incidence of low achievement is attributable to school quality^[51]. The report found that many children made a good start at school, but fell behind at secondary school level. It was found that

those from disadvantaged backgrounds were likely to attend the worst performing schools and that where schools had the opportunity to select their pupils, it tended to be to the detriment of disadvantaged pupils. Where resources can make a difference, government programmes have been found to be successful including an agenda to give students more chance to participate in school management and practice. Charitable programmes such as the Prince's Trust and Foyer, both of which operate in NI, were found to be effective in helping teenagers with low educational achievement[52].

Research on the effects of socio-economic disadvantage commonly highlights the impact of parental involvement in the attainment levels of children. Research that focused specifically on this issue[53] found that parental involvement can have a lasting impact by signalling to a child whether their future attainment levels are valued.

A longitudinal study[54] of children born in Britain in 1958 found that in a sample of socially disadvantaged children raised in two parent families, parental involvement did matter, but depended on when both it and poverty are measured, the type of parental involvement and the gender of the parent. A father taking an interest in the child's education had the most impact on counteracting the effects of socio-economic disadvantage around the age of eleven. However the involvement of both parents was found to have the most impact on educational attainment around the age of sixteen. The highest overall impact on reducing the socio-economic effect on education was found to be the involvement of the father.

The Committee may wish to consider what implications these findings have for the conclusion from the PwC Report that protestant working-class boys in Northern Ireland are among the lowest achievers in literacy and numeracy.⁵⁵

[55]

In a study researching the link between poverty and literacy[56], two groups of 11 year olds were trained to interview children in their schools about aspects of literacy that were important to them. Two primary schools were involved, one in an area of socio-economic disadvantage and the other in an area of advantage. This allowed differences to emerge in the amount of support children were given at home.

Key research findings showed that children from affluent backgrounds showed confidence in their reading and writing skills that came from:

- Routine support for homework;
- Parental help and conversation;
- Favourable 'private' environments for reading and writing;
- Absence of distractions while doing homework; and
- Opportunities to talk about literacy.

Homework clubs are described as a possible 'lifeline' for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds which has implications for the Extended Schools programme with homework clubs being offered more widely. However, the report cautions that the Extended Schools programme must avoid being seen as a lengthening of the school day. In order for homework clubs to be effective, they need to offer adult expertise and reading opportunities that allow for 'private confidence building'[57].

An evaluation of the New Deal for Communities[58] (NDC) in England centred on interventions in educational attainment for NDCs. The evaluation showed that school-based interventions were

not the most effective means of improving attainment levels. It was found that where NDCs could add value was in supporting increased involvement of parents, particularly supporting learning in the home. Also NDCs should focus more resources on out of school activities as evidence suggests these are vital for children's learning.

Evidence in the report suggests that supporting school based interventions are not necessarily the most efficient way of improving the attainment levels of children in the area. Where a greater contribution can be made is in supporting increased and enhanced involvement of parents both in the school and at home and focussing resources on out of school activities. Funding for 'After Schools Club' projects administered by Playboard in NI ceased at the end of March 2010[59].

A review[60] of policy interventions in England suggested "that policy needs simultaneously to address a whole series of factors at different levels if it is to have any meaningful impact. It needs to have an overarching vision of how various interventions fit together and for what purposes."

The researchers concluded that the most fundamental issues facing educational policy-makers are that there are multiple factors implicated in the low attainment levels of socio-economically disadvantaged pupils. These are at the individual, immediate social and broader societal levels. Interventions need to address the full range of factors operating at all three levels.

Policies need to be coherent with policy makers developing theories of change for how interventions will work and carefully monitor their impact. From a social perspective, policies will be "ineffective if underlying inequalities reproduce these problems in other forms." [61]

Policy and Practice

The first in a series of documents from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DfCSF) 'Breaking the Link between disadvantage and low attainment: Everyone's Business' (March 2009)[62] discusses the findings that in England over the last decade the standard of educational attainment has risen. Interestingly, schools in the areas of highest deprivation have made the most significant improvements, measured using the proportion of children entitled to free school meals.

National policies the Government has put in place to support 'breaking the link' are set out in the Schools White Paper[63]. The reforms described in the White Paper include 'Pupil and Parent Guarantees' that outline changes to the curriculum, school partnerships, leadership and responsibilities. Most of the developments in the White Paper, it is claimed, will directly benefit FSM children. Pupil and Parent Guarantees are proposed to guarantee excellent personalised education that will include catch-up in primary schools; one-to-one tuition for any child behind at KS2 or at the start of secondary school; schools working in partnership through Accredited School Groups; and a revised accountability system that values schools with a wider set of pupil outcomes that includes narrowing the gap for FSM pupils[64].

The conclusion following an assessment of 'Breaking the Link' incentives after the first year is:

After prior attainment, poverty is the single strongest predictor of a child's school attainment. The gaps are still too large, but the evidence shows that they can be narrowed by practical action. Unless we continue to do so it will be almost impossible to improve national outcomes to world-class standards. Further progress towards breaking the link is essential for social cohesion and economic prosperity. And it is a clear moral imperative that these pupils should be supported so that they achieve their full potential[65].

An assessment of the 'Breaking the Link' interventions one year on[66], discusses the success to date of a project begun in 2008. The Extra Mile project involves 23 secondary schools that decided they would 'go the extra mile' for their most disadvantaged pupils to raise aspirations, boost attainment and involve them in their learning. At the end of the pilot year all 23 schools reported significant positive impacts in attendance, behaviour, aspirations and attainment of the target groups. Phase two of the project has expanded to include another 48 secondary schools, with a primary school version of the project being added to the pilot. The Extra Mile project has been introduced into National and City Challenge areas and it is intended that phase three will look at ways to disseminate effective practice through Inside Knowledge school-to-school learning visits.

Twelve outstanding secondary schools

The DfCSF paper cites the example of twelve secondary schools that have broken the link between deprivation and poor educational attainment. Discussing their success, it is pointed out that schools in areas of deprivation cannot succeed alone, but require, in addition to financial support, the support of the whole range of local children's services. In 72% of schools in England access to extended services are offered to families and all schools are expected to do so by 2010.

An Ofsted[67] evidence based report published in February 2009[68] examines the twelve secondary schools that have succeeded against the odds and been assessed as 'outstanding' in two or more Ofsted inspections. This is despite the fact that they serve disadvantaged communities. The report identifies how the schools achieved excellence; sustained excellence; and shared excellence with the purpose of provoking discussion among leaders and staff in other secondary schools.

The report points out that there is no 'quick fix' solution in raising standards in areas where the students are disadvantaged by their socio-economic and family backgrounds. The story began for these schools in the early nineties and their progression was achieved through consistently high standards and expectations.

Reasons cited for their success are:

- Excelling not just for periods of time, but for a high proportion of the time;
- Constantly proving that disadvantage does not have to be a barrier to learning, that English as an additional language can support academic success and that schools can be learning communities;
- Putting their students first, investing in their staff and nurturing their communities;
- Having strong values and high expectations and applying them consistently;
- Fulfilling individual potential by providing outstanding teaching, rich opportunities for learning and encouragement and support for each student;
- Being highly inclusive and having complete regard for the educational progress, personal development and well-being of every student;
- Having achievements that are highly reflective and carefully planned in order to implement strategies that serve the schools in meeting the many challenges they face;
- Operating with a high degree of internal consistency;
- Constantly looking for ways to improve further; and
- Outstanding and well-distributed leadership.

May 2010

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Research and Library Service
Briefing Paper

Free School Meal Entitlement as a Measure of Deprivation

This briefing paper considers the use of Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME) as a proxy indicator for deprivation. It presents a brief outline of FSME as a measure of deprivation and possible alternatives, considering their relative strengths and weaknesses. It finds that while there are many limitations to using FSME as a measure of deprivation; there are also challenges associated with other potential measures.

Key Points

- Family income can have an impact on children's attainment, with educational disadvantage linked to lower family income;
- Typically, levels of deprivation among schools and their pupils are inferred using data on children's entitlement to free school meals;
- Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME) is a proxy measure (rather than a direct measure) that is frequently used in educational research and policy;
- Advantages to using FSME in this way include that it is linked to the children in the school, is readily understood and available and is updated annually;
- However, there are concerns regarding the robustness of FSME as a measure of deprivation, including the following:
- Likely to under-report deprivation: many eligible parents choose not to apply and therefore will not be included in the statistics; in addition, families whose income is just above the threshold will not be included;
- Measures income only: it does not take account of other aspects of deprivation;
- Changing eligibility of individual children: the educational disadvantage of children who cease to be eligible for free school meals is not recognised;
- Alternatives to FSME as a measure of deprivation tend to be area-based in nature: this is an issue due to differences in socio-economic circumstances within areas, in addition to the fact that a school's intake is likely to include pupils from diverse areas;
- The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure and Census data provide a broader picture of deprivation; however they are area-based and not all measures are updated annually; and
- An "ever FSM" measure has been suggested; this would take account of the changing eligibility of individual children over time by including those who had been eligible in the past.

Executive summary

Introduction

Family income is known to be linked to children's educational attainment, with children from less well-off backgrounds, on average, less likely to achieve well at school than those from families with higher incomes.

Typically, levels of deprivation among schools are inferred using information on the proportion of children eligible for free school meals, as these are available to children from families with a low income, among other circumstances. Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME) is therefore used as a proxy, rather than a direct, indicator of deprivation. There are concerns about the robustness of FSME as a measure of deprivation. This briefing paper considers whether entitlement to free school meals is an appropriate indicator for deprivation in schools, and outlines possible alternatives.

Appropriateness of Free School Meal Entitlement as a measure of deprivation

Free school meals are available to children from families meeting certain eligibility criteria, for example if they receive particular benefit entitlements, or meet other criteria such as having a statement of educational need and requiring a special diet, or where a school believes a child may be in need. The maximum taxable income for FSME is currently £16,190.

FSME is a widely used proxy indicator for deprivation in Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales. The suggested strengths of FSME as a measure for deprivation include that it is:

- Linked to the children in the school;
- Readily understood;
- Readily available;
- Updated annually; and
- Income-based.

However, many authors state that FSME is not a fully robust indicator for deprivation, highlighting concerns around its validity as a proxy measure in this regard. There are a range of issues highlighted in the literature; these include:

- Reflects registered rather than actual eligibility: Eligible parents may choose not to apply for free school meals for their children, perhaps due to a perceived stigma, particular dietary requirements or the extent to which schools encourage parents to seek entitlement;
- Measures income only: FSME does not take account of other factors relating to deprivation;
- Changing criteria for FSME and changing eligibility of individual children: changing criteria results in difficulties in comparing data over long periods of time; in addition, individual children's eligibility may change over time, meaning that their educational disadvantage is no longer recognised when their eligibility ceases; and
- Families close to the eligibility threshold may experience similar disadvantage: children from families whose income is just above the threshold for FSME are not included when it is used as a proxy for deprivation, although they are likely to experience similar levels of deprivation to those who are entitled.

Alternative measures

Many alternative measures of deprivation relate to geographical areas, rather than to the individual children attending a school. This is an issue because a school's intake of pupils may come from an area different to that in which the school is situated (this is particularly the case at Post-Primary level), and due to the fact that there may be large socio-economic differences within an area that do not reflect the situation of individual pupils.

Alternative measures that could be considered include the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM), which provides information across a spectrum of deprivation (for example: income deprivation, employment deprivation and living environment), and census data. While these measures potentially provide a broader picture of deprivation, challenges include that they are area-based, and are not updated annually.

Another measure that has been suggested is an 'ever FSM' measure, which would address the issue of children's changing eligibility for free school meals over time by including children who had in the past been entitled to free meals in school.

Conclusion

The literature indicates that there are a number of challenges relating to the use of FSME as a proxy measure for deprivation. However, alternative indicators often take an area-based approach and therefore may not reflect the true socio-economic situation of individual pupils.

The Committee may wish to consider the use of FSME as a proxy measure for deprivation, in the absence of other, more robust, indicators. However, the Committee may wish to give consideration to the future introduction of an "ever FSM" measure that would include pupils who have been eligible for free school meals in the past. It could also consider the cross-referencing of FSME data with data from the Census and/ or the NIMDM in order to provide a broader picture of deprivation experienced by pupils.

1. Introduction

There is widespread recognition that family income can have an impact on children's educational outcomes, with children from less well-off backgrounds, on average, less likely to perform well at school than those from families with a higher income.^[1]

As a result of this correlation, educational research often seeks to take levels of deprivation among children into account. Levels of deprivation are typically inferred using children's entitlement to free school meals as a proxy indicator, as free school meals are available to children from families with low incomes or to children of asylum seekers, as well as to boarders at special schools and pupils with a statement of educational needs who require a special diet.

However, there are concerns regarding the appropriateness of using Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME) as a measure for levels of deprivation, with some commentators highlighting concerns relating to its robustness and validity. This briefing paper considers whether FSME is an appropriate measure of deprivation in schools and outlines possible alternatives.

2. Free School Meal Entitlement

The Department of Education currently provides an entitlement for free meals for school children from households with a low income, among others. Guidelines from the Department of Education outline the criteria for FSME; parents or pupils are entitled to free school meals if they meet any of the criteria outlined in the following table.

Table 1: Criteria for Free School Meal Entitlement

Pupil or their parent in receipt of benefits	Criteria unrelated to benefit entitlement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ; Income Support or Job Seeker's Allowance; ; Income-related Employment and Support Allowance; ; Child Tax Credit and is ineligible for the Working Tax Credit because they work less than 16 hours per week; and has annual taxable income not exceeding an amount as determined by the Department; or ; Guarantee element of State Pension Credit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ; The pupil has a statement of educational needs and is designated to require a special diet; ; Is a boarder at a special school; ; Is the child of an asylum seeker supported by the Home Office National Asylum Support Service; or ; If none of the above apply, but a school believes a child may be in need.

Source: Department of Education (2009) Arrangements for the provision of milk, meals and related facilities under the Provisions of Articles 58 and 59 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, as amended. Bangor: DE

The maximum taxable income for FSME is £16,190.^[2] The proportion of pupils in a school who are recorded as being eligible for free school meals provides a measure known as FSME for that school.

Children's entitlement to free school meals is widely used as a proxy indicator for family income in educational research, being used regularly by organisations across Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales to indicate levels of deprivation among a school's population of pupils.

3. Appropriateness of FSME as a measure of deprivation

Strengths of FSME

Some authors^[3] note that FSME has the advantage of reflecting the specific characteristics of individual pupils; being easily collected and widely understood. A correlation generally found between whether a pupil is registered as eligible for FSM and underachievement is also put forward as a reason for using FSME as a measure of deprivation.

A number of advantages to using FSME as an indicator have been identified; these include that as a measure it is:

- Linked to the children in the school;
- Readily understood;
- Readily available;
- Updated yearly; and
- Income-based.^[4]

However, some authors suggest that Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME) is used as a measure of deprivation due mainly to its availability on a school-by-school basis, rather than its robustness as a measure.^[5]

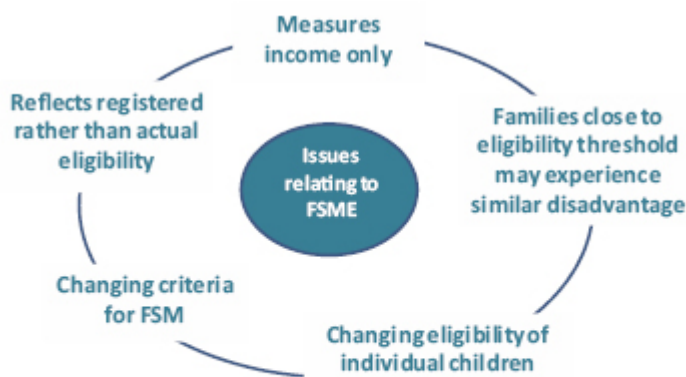
Challenges relating to FSME

Much of the literature indicates that FSME is not a fully robust measure of deprivation. The Centre for the Economics of Education conducted research^[6] into the validity of FSM status as an indicator for deprivation. It found that FSME 'does not always do a good job as a proxy for

the true socio-economic status of the child', noting that it is an imperfect proxy of low income or 'workless' families and of one-parenthood.

The key issues relating to its validity as a proxy indicator for deprivation are outlined in the following figure and explored in the following paragraphs.

Figure 1: Key issues regarding the use of FSME as a proxy measure for deprivation



Source: Adapted from Department for Education (2010) *Consultation on school funding 2011-12 Introducing a pupil premium*. London: DE; Kounali, D. et al. (2008) *The probity of free school meals as a proxy measure for disadvantage* Education Department, University of Bath; and Styles, B. (2008) 'Moving on from free school meals: national census data can describe the socio-economic background of the intake of each school in England' *Educational Research*, Vol. 50:1 pp 41-53

Measures income only

Some commentators have highlighted that FSME only takes account of a family's income, and not of other factors. For example, Croxford^[7] argues that FSME acts as an 'inconsistent' measure of poverty, suggesting that it does not measure the propensity for learning of children entering a school, or their skills and attainment. The article states that no single measure can take account of all variations in socio-economic circumstances between schools.

Another study asserts that it will always be difficult to measure disadvantaged populations through single, 'catch all,' indicators. It calls for better documentation of the data already collected, including documentation of how data is collected and used, as well as for more research validating the quality and scope of its use.^[8]

Reflects registered rather than actual eligibility

A key challenge with regard to using FSME as a proxy for deprivation is that many eligible parents may choose not to apply for free school meals for their children, perhaps due to a perceived stigma, particular dietary requirements or the extent to which schools and local authorities encourage parents to seek entitlement.^[9] A consultation report by the Department for Education notes that in England and Wales, 16% of pupils are eligible for FSM, which indicates lower levels of deprivation than suggested by other indicators.

Changing criteria for FSME and changing eligibility of individual children

A further issue relating to using FSME as a proxy for deprivation is the changing criteria for FSME, leading to potential difficulties in considering and comparing data over prolonged periods of time.^[10]

In addition, individual pupil's eligibility for free school meals may change over time. For example, one study found that there was substantial change in pupils' eligibility for free school meals over a four year period. Possible reasons for this include changing family structure, changes related to the home (usually linked to home ownership status) and the flexible labour market.^[11] This may mean that some children who have been eligible for free meals in the past are no longer included within FSME data, and that their disadvantage is no longer acknowledged.

Families close to the eligibility threshold may experience similar disadvantage

A further issue is that families with an income just above the threshold for FSME, while experiencing similar levels of disadvantage, are not included when FSME is taken as a proxy for deprivation.

For example, a study by Kounali et al.^[12] examined data from the National Pupil database in England in order to consider whether FSME is a valid indicator of poverty. It used three proxies for income: FSM, Working Tax Credits and Home Ownership to estimate whether FSM is an appropriate measure of deprivation. It found that 'FSM is both a coarse and error-prone instrument,' stating that the income cut-off will result in a significant proportion of low-income families with low capital assets being characterised as 'non-disadvantaged.'

It also found that children from 'non-disadvantaged' families close to the threshold had similar levels of attainment in maths as those who qualified for FSM, risking underestimation of the associated educational disadvantage. In summary, the study found that many schools will face greater levels of disadvantage than currently measured using FSM.

4. Alternative measures

Area-based measures

Many measures currently used to identify levels of deprivation take an area-based approach. However, the difficulty with this approach is that geographical areas do not necessarily reflect the true socio-economic characteristics of the school in question. For example, there may be large socio-economic differences within an area that do not reflect the situation of individual pupils. In addition, a school's intake area is often socio-economically different from the area in which it is located.^[13]

As such, area-based data is described as being useful only in cases where the school is situated in a fairly homogenous area and taking a representative selection of pupils from the area in which it is situated.^[14] This is particularly the case in the Post-Primary sector.

Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure

Multiple deprivation measures developed in 2005 were commissioned by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) and constructed by a team led by Professor Mike Noble at the University of Oxford, and as such, are often referred to as the Noble Measures. Government Departments recommended in 2009 that these measures be updated, resulting in the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) in 2010.

NIMDM is the official measure of spatial deprivation in Northern Ireland. It provides information on seven 'domains' or types of deprivation, as well as an overall multiple deprivation measure comprising a weighted combination of the seven domains. The seven domains and their weighting within the overall deprivation measure are outlined in the following table.^[15]

Table 2: Seven Deprivation Domains comprising the NIMDM

Deprivation Domain	Weighting
Income Deprivation	25%
Employment Deprivation	25%
Health Deprivation and Disability	15%
Education Skills and Training Deprivation	15%
Proximity to Services	10%
Living Environment	5%
Crime and Disorder	5%

Source: NISRA (2010) Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010 Belfast: NISRA

Within the Education Skills and Training Deprivation Domain, indicators include educational attainment (for example, Key Stage 2 Teacher Assessments and GCSE points score); absenteeism and proportions of school leavers who have not entered Higher or Further Education, Employment or Training. The 2005 measure was updated in 2010 to include indicators relating to children at primary school, and to include school leavers not entering employment, education or training, rather than simply those not entering education.^[16]

Entitlement to free school meals is not used as an indicator within the Education Skills and Training Domain, because children living in income deprived households will be included within the domain measuring income deprivation (which is intended solely to measure this type of deprivation). The Education, Skills and Training Domain, on the other hand, focuses on educational outcomes, and it is stated that children who receive free meals and do not perform well at school will be included in this way.^[17]

DfES guidance on deprivation measures considered the Index of Multiple Deprivation (2004) which has similar domains to the NIMDM. It states that the benefits of the Index include that it takes account of deprivation across a wide spectrum of factors and that it is based on considerable research and consultation. However, it notes that some of the deprivation measures are not particularly relevant to education, and that the focus is on adults and households so some deprivation may not be relevant to children (for example, pensioner poverty).^[18]

Further challenges to using NIMDM data or to cross-referencing it with FSME data (using postcodes from the annual school census) include that it is area-based, and that not all of the measures are updated annually. Nonetheless, the Department of Education has undertaken an analysis into the correlation between FSME and NIMDM for the purposes of validating FSM data; this found a strong correlation between the two measures.

Census data

One study^[19] advocates using national census data in conjunction with FSME in order to maximise the information available on pupils attending a school. The English Pupil-level Annual School Census (PLASC) contains postcodes for all pupils in schools in England, allowing census data to be matched to pupils and then aggregated to school level. This enables the provision of a socio-economic picture of either the immediate area in which a pupil lives or the intake of each school.

This approach provides a wide socio-economic spectrum of deprivation and relates to the area in which a child lives rather than the area in which the school is situated. However, the data still

does not relate directly to the pupil themselves and therefore may not reflect their true socio-economic circumstances. In addition, the study notes that data derived from the census should be used more cautiously towards the end of the census period.^[20]

Other measures

Another potential measure that has been suggested by the Department for Education in England and Wales is an "Ever" FSM measure. This indicator would take into account pupils who have been registered as eligible for FSM at any point in the previous three or six years. This measure would attempt to address the issue of individual pupil's changing eligibility, recognising that pupils do not lose their additional educational needs when they cease to be eligible for FSM. When this measure was considered, an analysis of the data found that the eligibility level would increase from 16% to 24%.^[21]

An article in the Times Educational Supplement highlighted calls from lower funded education authorities in England for a measure of deprivation based on classroom behaviour and parents' education. This is particularly due to the link between free school meals and funding for schools. The local authorities suggested that census data on parents' educational achievements and school records of pupils' behavioural or emotional problem correlate with deprivation and could be therefore used as an indicator.^[22]

However, little research has been carried out into the validity of classroom behaviour as a measure for deprivation. While some evidence links parents' educational attainment to children's outcomes, further research would be required on its robustness as a measure of deprivation and into the viability of collecting this data for all pupils.

FSME in the absence of other robust measures

Styles^[23] notes that despite limitations for FSM as a deprivation indicator, it nonetheless acts as a 'significant predictor of educational outcome measures when better measures of socio-economic status are unavailable.'

Conclusion

The evidence suggests that Free School Meal Entitlement has limitations as a proxy measure for deprivation, including under-reporting of deprivation, measuring income and not other factors, and the changing eligibility of individual pupils. However, alternative measures tend to take account of the areas in which a school is situated or in which a pupil lives, and therefore may not reflect the true socio-economic characteristics of the pupils attending a school.

The Committee may wish to consider the use of FSME as a proxy indicator for deprivation in the absence of more robust indicators. However, the Committee could give consideration to the future introduction of an "ever FSM" measure that would include pupils who have been eligible for free school meals in the past (over a specified period of time), in order to ensure that the disadvantage experienced by pupils who have been eligible previously is not overlooked. The Committee may also wish to consider the future cross-referencing of FSME data with data from the Census and/ or the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure to provide a broader picture of the deprivation experienced by pupils within schools.

[1] Blanden, J. and Gregg, P. (2004) Family Income and Educational Attainment: A Review of Approaches and Evidence for Britain London: Centre for the Economics of Education

[2] School Milk and Meals [online] Available at: http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/85-schools/5-schools_meals.htm

[3] Department for Education (2010) Consultation on school funding 2011-12 Introducing a pupil premium. London: Department for Education, Styles, B. (2008) 'Moving on from free school meals: national census data can describe the socio-economic background of the intake of each school in England' Educational Research, Vol. 50:1 pp 41-53

[4] DfES (2006) Indicators of Deprivation for Use in School Funding: September Draft of Notes for Authorities London: Department for Education and Skills

[5] Croxford, L. (2000) 'Is Free-Meal Entitlement a Valid Measure of School Intake Characteristics?' Educational Research and Evaluation Vol. 6, No. 4, pp. 317-335 and Kounali, D. et al. (2008) The probity of free school meals as a proxy measure for disadvantage Education Department, University of Bath

[6] Hobbs, G. and Vignoles, A. (2007) Is Free School Meal Status a Valid Proxy for Socio-Economic Status (in Schools Research)? London: Centre for the Economics of Education

[7] Croxford, L. (2000) 'Is Free-Meal Entitlement a Valid Measure of School Intake Characteristics?' Educational Research and Evaluation Vol. 6, No. 4, pp. 317-335

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[11] Kounali, D. et al. (2008) The probity of free school meals as a proxy measure for disadvantage Education Department, University of Bath

[12] Kounali, D. et al. (2008) The probity of free school meals as a proxy measure for disadvantage Education Department, University of Bath

[13] Styles, B. (2008) 'Moving on from free school meals: national census data can describe the socio-economic background of the intake of each school in England' Educational Research, Vol. 50:1 pp 41-53

[14] DfES (2006) Indicators of Deprivation for Use in School Funding: September Draft of Notes for Authorities London: Department for Education and Skills

[15] NISRA (2010) Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010 Belfast: NISRA

[16] NISRA (2010) Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010 Belfast: NISRA

[17] NISRA (2010) Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010 Belfast: NISRA

[18] DfES (2006) Indicators of Deprivation for Use in School Funding: September Draft of Notes for Authorities London: Department for Education and Skills

[19] Styles, B. (2008) 'Moving on from free school meals: national census data can describe the socio-economic background of the intake of each school in England' Educational Research, Vol. 50:1 pp 41-53

[20] Styles, B. (2008) 'Moving on from free school meals: national census data can describe the socio-economic background of the intake of each school in England' Educational Research, Vol. 50:1 pp 41-53

[21] Department for Education (2010) Consultation on school funding 2011-12 Introducing a pupil premium. London: Department for Education

[22] Call to ditch free school meals as deprivation gauge [online] Available at: <http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6010554>

[23] Styles, B. (2008) 'Moving on from free school meals: national census data can describe the socio-economic background of the intake of each school in England' Educational Research, Vol. 50:1 pp 41-53



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Caroline Perry

Value Added Measures

This briefing paper considers some of the tools used by schools for assessing the value they add to pupil outcomes. It finds that a range of tools is available that has the potential to support school improvement. However, the paper notes that it is not likely that the various tools in use can be related to InCAS in a manner that provides a system of continuous assessment for pupils due to differences in their design and use; and that value added findings for smaller schools should be treated with a degree of caution.

Key points

- It is well-known that the effective use of data can play an important role in addressing underachievement;
- Value added measures can take either the form of a 'Simple Value Added' approach, which measures pupil progress between different stages of education, and Contextual Value Added, which also takes into account out-of-school factors;

- A range of assessment tools is available to schools in Northern Ireland; these use mainly Simple Value Added measures;
- Examples of these include MidYIS, a tool not linked to the curriculum that measures pupils' aptitude and ability; and SOSCA, which provides curriculum-based assessments and acts as a measure of attainment midway through post-primary school;
- The various assessment tools (such as MidYIS and Yellis) are each used at different times and for varying purposes;
- It is therefore unlikely that they can relate to InCAS in a way that provides a continuous system of measuring pupils' progress;
- However, the different tools can complement each other to provide a range of information to support schools' teaching and learning;
- It is also important to note that when considering the effectiveness of smaller schools, the lower pupil numbers on which to base value added assessments mean that findings should be treated with a degree of caution; and
- While Contextual Value Added measures take account of a wider range of factors that can impact on attainment, there is a risk that they can mask underachievement.

Executive summary

Introduction

The effective use of data is known to be an important tool for school improvement. When used appropriately, it can help to inform school strategy, target interventions and monitor the effectiveness of policies and practices. Value added measures are generally based on a student's prior attainment and relative progress, and assess the additional value a school has added to pupil outcomes.

Value added measures used by schools

A range of commercial tools is available to post-primary schools to assess the value they add to pupil outcomes, and to help address underachievement. Some of the more frequently used tools are outlined in the following table.

Table 1: Examples of value-added tools used by schools

Tool	Ages	Key features of tool
MidYIS	11-16	‡ Assesses pupils' ability and potential: not related to the curriculum ‡ Value added can be reviewed in light of GCSE results
SOSCA	14-16	‡ Curriculum-based assessments in maths, science and reading ‡ Measure of attainment midway through post-primary school ‡ Value added measures in comparison to baseline data and future results
Yellis	14-16	‡ Not related to the curriculum (vocabulary, mathematics, non-verbal ability) ‡ Predictions of performance at GCSE ‡ Value added measures between Yellis and GCSE
ALIS	Post-16	‡ Baseline test measuring ability in mathematics, vocabulary and non-verbal ability ‡ Predictions of performance at A-level ‡ Value added measures from GCSE to A-level

Tool	Ages	Key features of tool
Assessment Manager	All	∣ Can provide detailed assessment information enabling pupil tracking for school-based analysis
Alps	Post-16	∣ Value added between GCSE and A-level ∣ Results available at student, school and departmental level
CVA	All	∣ Considers a range of contextual issues outside of the school's control as well as prior attainment ∣ Used in league tables in England although being phased out

All of these tools, with the exception of the Contextual Value Added approach that has been used in England, involve Simple Value Added measures. That is, they measure the progress made by a pupil between different stages of education, without taking into account out-of-school factors such as socio-economic background and gender.

The use of assessment tools

The various assessment tools used by schools are each used at different stages of children's education and for varying purposes; using different measurements. Therefore it is not likely that they can relate to InCAS in a way that provides a continuous system of measuring pupils' progress. However, schools can use the different assessment tools to provide them with a range of information to support their teaching and learning and in helping to address underachievement.

It is also important to note that when assessing the effectiveness of smaller schools, there are fewer pupils on which to base a judgement of the school's effectiveness. As such, the findings should be treated with some caution and should not be used for comparisons between schools. It has been suggested that considering value added measures over a longer period of time in smaller schools can increase the robustness of the data.

Conclusion

It is clear that value added tools can play an important role in identifying pupil progress and in improving educational outcomes for children and young people. However, it is not likely that the various tools in use can be related to InCAS in a manner that provides a system of continuous assessment for pupils due to differences in their design and use.

When assessing the effectiveness of smaller schools, analysis of value added measures should take into account lower pupil numbers, and the findings therefore should be treated with some caution or considered over a longer period of time. In addition, the evidence warns against an over-reliance on measures that take into account out-of-school factors, such as socio-economic background.

1. Introduction

There is widespread recognition of the importance of using data effectively in raising educational attainment. When used well, data can be used to assess pupil and school achievement and to target and evaluate interventions. However, there is evidence to suggest that the extent to which data are understood and used varies across schools.^[1]

There are different approaches to using data in schools to evaluate pupil and school performance; for example, GCSE and other examination results can be used to assess pupil

outcomes. Value added measures, however, go further to identify the value a school has added to pupil outcomes by allowing for the measurement of progress made by pupils.

2. Value added measures used by schools

While there is no system-wide approach to measuring value added, schools in Northern Ireland employ a number of different assessment tools to determine the value they add to pupil outcomes. These tools are used for internal assessments and are not intended for comparisons between schools or for transferring pupils between primary and post-primary phases. There are two main types of value added measures that can be used in schools.^[2]

- Simple Value Added: Progress made by an individual pupil, or group of pupils, between different stages of education; and
- Contextual Value Added: Such measures also take into account factors relating to the context of individual pupils when comparing the progress they have made.

Simple Value Added measures relate to pupils' prior attainment, and do not account for other factors, such as socio-economic background, that can have an impact on pupils' attainment. However, it is important to note that prior attainment has been found to have the greatest influence on differences in the attainment of individual pupils.^[3]

Contextual Value Added (CVA) measures include a multi-level analysis of a range of factors that can have an effect on educational outcomes such as socio-economic background and age. While proponents of CVA argue that such measures take into account factors that are outside of schools' control and therefore provide a more accurate picture of the value added by schools to pupil outcomes;^[4] others express concerns about the validity and robustness of such measures.^[5] In addition, there is likely to be a risk that over-reliance on CVA measures could mask true underachievement.^[6]

Simple Value Added tools and measures

Most of the systems available to schools are based on Simple Value Added measures. The following paragraphs consider some of the value added assessment systems available to schools.

MidYIS

MidYIS tests are available from the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) at Durham University. The tests are designed to be taken upon entry to post-primary school and are available in both computer-adaptive and paper-based formats. An optional follow-up assessment can be taken to provide further information on pupils' abilities.^[7]

The assessments aim to measure pupils' ability and aptitude for learning, as opposed to their achievement, helping teachers to consider what will be required to prepare them for Key Stage 3 and GCSEs. MidYIS tests include assessments of vocabulary, maths and non-verbal skills and contribute to an overall measure of ability that can predict subsequent achievement and identify pupils' strengths and areas for development. Attitudinal questionnaires are also available through this tool.^[8]

Value added feedback for individual subjects can be provided once pupils have taken GCSE examinations. These identify whether pupils have performed better than, the same as, or worse than expected given their MidYIS test score, in relation to the progress of other pupils of similar abilities.^[9]

SOSCA

Secondary On Screen Curriculum Assessments (SOSCA), a suite of curriculum-based adaptive assessments, is also provided by CEM at Durham University. It aims to measure pupil progress in Maths, Science and Reading at age 14 (Year 10).^[10] The assessments highlight students' attainment, and can provide value added information in relation to the lower part of post-primary school (using data from the MidYIS baseline test), and to GCSE results at a later date.^[11]

Yellis

Yellis, or the Year 11 Information System, is a value added monitoring system developed by CEM at Durham University. It aims to provide a wide range of performance indicators and attitudinal measures for students in the last two years of mandatory schooling, between the ages of 14 and 16.^[12]

A baseline test can be taken in Years 10 or 11, after which the results are sent to pupils' schools with detailed KS4 and GCSE predictions at a subject level.^[13] Teachers can then track the progress of pupils throughout Key Stage 4 and a value added analysis is provided at a later time, outlining the progress made by students in comparison to others participating in Yellis tests. Value added feedback is provided at the student, subject and school level with the data for each baseline cohort analysed separately.^[14]

ALIS

The Advanced Level Information System (ALIS) is another commercial assessment tool available from CEM. It provides predictive data and value added analysis for post-16 students by using both its own baseline tests and GCSE data as measures of ability.^[15]

This approach enables ALIS to provide predictive data and value added analyses specific to each student and each subject studied; and data can also be provided at a school level. The test is designed to measure ability rather than achievement. Attitudinal surveys can also be provided through ALIS.^[16]

Assessment Manager

Schools in Northern Ireland have access to SIMS.net, an integrated suite of Management Information Systems Tools aiming to provide the information schools need and to reduce their workload. It has the potential to provide a range of value added indicators relating to individual pupils, teachers and the school. However, research by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) in 2008 found that the take up and use of SIMS.net modules varies across schools.^[17]

Assessment Manager is one of the key modules within SIMS.net. This programme can provide detailed assessment information enabling the tracking of pupils of any age for school-based analysis. Research has suggested that around 50%-60% of post-primary schools and 15% of primary schools use Assessment Manager to a large extent.^[18]

Alps

Advanced Level Performance Systems (Alps) is a commercial system outlining the value added by schools between GCSE and A level. Its reports on A / AS level and BTEC qualifications provide a statistical analysis of a school's results in relation to a national benchmark, taking into account

prior attainment. The results can be broken down to school, departmental and individual student level.[\[19\]](#)

Contextual Value Added

Contextual Value Added measures (CVA) have been used in league tables in England in recent years. Value added scores for each school are based on the difference between predicted and observed attainment, using a multilevel model taking into account contextual factors, including:[\[20\]](#)

- Prior attainment;
- Deprivation;
- Special Educational Needs;
- Gender;
- Ethnicity;
- Age; and
- Language.

However, it should be noted that the Coalition Government is seeking to discontinue the use of CVA in school league tables due to concerns over the extent to which the measure is statistically robust and reliable.[\[21\]](#)

InCAS, other tools and the transfer of data

The Interactive Computerised Assessment System (InCAS) is the method used by the Department of Education to assess pupils in Years 4-7. It provides pupil assessments in reading and general maths (as well as other, optional assessments), and aims to help schools identify the strengths and areas for improvement of pupils. InCAS tests are not intended for comparison between pupils or for transfer from primary to post-primary, rather, they act simply as diagnostic support for pupils' learning.[\[22\]](#)

InCAS assessments are tailored to the ability of individual children, and generate an age-equivalent outcome in both reading and mathematics. This data is returned directly to schools and is not collected centrally. Schools are, however, required to inform parents of the results of the assessments.

The Department of Education encourages schools to make use of other assessment tools in addition to InCAS in order to help support school improvement.[\[23\]](#) With regard to whether other assessment tools can relate to InCAS, it is important to note that the various tools are used at different times and for different purposes, and use different indicators. As such, they are not likely to work with InCAS in a way that provides a continuous system of measuring pupils' progress. Nonetheless, the different assessments can complement each other in providing a range of information to support schools in their teaching and learning.[\[24\]](#)

In terms of the transfer of pupil assessment data between primary and post-primary schools, Regulation 9 of The Education (Pupil Records and Reporting) (Transitional) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 provides that "where a pupil ceases to be a pupil at a school and becomes a pupil at another school", there is a duty on the Board of Governors at the original school to arrange for the pupil's "formal record of the academic achievements, other skills and abilities and academic progress" to be transferred to the receiving school within 15 days.[\[25\]](#)

Questions around the use of value added measures

The robustness of value added data in small schools has been called into question. Where smaller numbers of pupils are considered, it is likely that less confidence can be placed on school-level value added results (as there is reduced evidence on which to base a judgement).[26] Tymms and Dean conclude that while value added information is important for school improvement, it should not be used to compare the performance of different schools.[27]

In their report School and pupil performance data[28] PwC recommends that value added measures should be introduced to schools to provide a more rounded picture of pupil performance. For smaller schools, it recommends that value added is recorded and considered over an extended period of time, potentially over three years, suggesting that this may support the identification of trends across groups of pupils.

3. Conclusion

A range of commercial tools for assessing value added is in use by schools to support them in improving pupil outcomes. The evidence suggests that considering value added measures can play an important role in identifying the contribution schools have made to pupil progress. However, the tools cannot necessarily be related to InCAS in a manner that provides a system of continuous assessment for pupils due to variations in their design and use.

In addition, it is important to note that value added findings at a school level should be treated with a degree of caution, particularly in smaller schools, and there should not be an over-reliance on CVA measures.

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[2] PwC (2008) School and pupil performance data Bangor: DE

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[4] PwC (2008) School and pupil performance data Bangor: DE

[5] Tymms, P., Dean, C. (2004) Value-Added in the Primary School League Tables NAHT

[6] PricewaterhouseCoopers (2008) School and pupil performance data Bangor: DE

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- [22] Department of Education (2010) Circular: InCAS
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- [24] Information from the Department of Education, 22nd February 2011
- [25] The Education (Pupil Records and Reporting) (Transitional) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 [online] Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2007/43/made>
- [26] DCSF (2007) A Technical Guide to Contextual Value Added 2007 Model
- [27] Tymms, P., Dean, C. (2004) Value-Added in the Primary School League Tables NAHT
- [28] PwC (2008) School and pupil performance data Bangor: DE

Appendix 6

List of Witnesses

Ashfield Boys' High School

Mr Andy MCMorran
Ms Jill Ashenhurst
Mr William McCullough

Association of Chief Executives of E&LBs

BELB - Mr David Cargo
NEELB - Mr Shane McCurdy
SELB - Mr Tony Murphy

SEELB - Mr Stanton Sloan
WELB - Mr Barry Mulholland

Ballycastle High School

Mr Ian Williamson
Mrs Carol Stewart
The Very Rev Dr A W G Brown
Mr Craig Whyte

Belfast Model School for Girls

Mr Jonny Graham
Ms Janice Clarke
Ms Jacqueline Weir

Castleberg High School

Mrs Anne Moore
Mr Simon Mowbray
Ms Daphne Watt
Ms Sandra Cashel

Coláiste Feirste

Mr Micheál Mac Giolla Ghunna
Mr Diarmuid Ua Bruadaire
Ms Emer mnic an Fhaili

Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS)

Mr Jim Clarke
Mr Terry Murphy
Mr Paul O'Doherty
Mr Sean Rafferty

Dean Maguirc College

Mr James Warnock
Ms Marie Quinn
Mr Adrain McGuckin
Mr Seamus Sheilds

Department of Education

Dr Robinson Davison
Mrs Katrina Godfrey
Dr Chris Hughes
Ms Karen McCullough
Ms Patricia Wyers
Mr Rodger McCune

Drumagh Integrated College

Mr Nigel Frith
Ms Nicola Gormley
Ms Geraldine McKenna
Mr Eric Bullick

Education Training Inspectorate (ETI)

Mr Stanley Goudie
Mrs Faustina Graham
Mr Peter Geoghegan

Regional Training Unit (RTU)

Dr Tom Hesketh

Oakgrove Integrated College

Mrs Jill Markham
Mr John Harkin

St Loise's Comprehensive

Mrs Carmel McCarton
Mrs Ita McVeigh
Mr John O'Rourke

St Pius X College

Monsignor C O Byrne
Mrs Mary White
Mrs Edwina Toner
Mr John Mulholland