

Every School A Good School

CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Name: _____

Organisation: _____

School Ref No: _____ (if applicable)

Contact Tel No: _____



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Education

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Consultation Point 1

Every School a Good School lists an acknowledged set of characteristics for successful schools as:

- an ethos which promotes equality of opportunity, high quality learning, a concern for individual pupils and respect for others;
- a broad and relevant curriculum provided for the pupils;
- a school culture of achievement, improvement and ambition – an unwavering expectation by teachers, pupils, parents and the wider community that all pupils can and will achieve to the very best of their ability;
- high quality leadership at all levels which provides clear and realistic direction based on a sound knowledge of and vision for the school, and makes effective use of financial and other resources;
- committed, enthusiastic and competent teachers who enjoy a positive relationship with their pupils and with other school-based staff and who are dedicated to improving learning;
- effective support and challenge from the Board of Governors for the process of improvement;
- rigorous self-evaluation leading to sustained self-improvement;
- a commitment by all to a planned programme for staff development which facilitates and supports improvement within the school;
- the use of available information and assessment and other data to focus on outcomes and promote improvement coupled with a willingness to work with and learn from others;
- direct involvement of pupils in the life and work of the school;

- good support systems developed and appropriate interventions adopted when required, not only by the support bodies, but also within the school itself; and
- a high level of parent and community involvement and support.

Do you agree that these represent the **key** characteristics of a successful school?

Strongly agree

Agree

Don't know

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Any other comments:

Consultation Point 2

The review of school improvement policy has identified the following as the key issues to be addressed:

1. the importance of clarity in relation to the roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities of the key players involved in the provision of education (including DE, ELBs/ESA, ETI and the principals and governors of individual schools) (see Chapter 5);
2. the fact that poor performance is not limited to schools which are non-selective i.e. school improvement is an issue for all schools (see Chapter 6);
3. the key importance of self-evaluation leading to sustained self-improvement (see Chapters 6 and 9);
4. the pivotal role of high quality leadership in bringing about and sustaining school improvement (see Chapter 7);
5. the clear link between high quality teaching and effective learning with associated issues for initial teacher education, induction and the early and continuing professional development of the teaching force (see Chapter 7);
6. the importance of a high level of parental and community support for, and involvement in, the life and work of the school and the need to raise aspirations and expectations in order to develop and maintain a positive engagement in learning (see Chapter 8);
7. the effective use of available information and assessment data to focus on the quality of outcomes and promote improvement (see Chapter 9);
8. the fact that good performance at the top is masking an unacceptably long tail of underachievement and poor performance by individual schools which is particularly affecting the chances of those young people who already are experiencing barriers to learning, including those with special educational needs;

9. the fact that SSP has worked for a number but not all of the participating schools. In general, success has been modest;
10. the fact that poor standards in literacy and numeracy and under-achievement by boys are problems; and
11. the key contribution of inspection to the promotion of improvement and its future role in this area.

Do you agree that the above are the key issues to be addressed? Are there any others?

Yes

No

List any other issues you would wish to see addressed:

Consultation Point 3

The key principles upon which the new school improvement policy will be based are:

- the interests of pupils rather than institutions are at the centre of the policy and the interventions;
- the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of key stakeholders are clear; and, in particular, the school, through its Board of Governors and Principal, is accountable for the standards achieved by its pupils;
- constructive challenge from within the school, the Board of Governors, the wider community and/or from ELB/ESA is an important dimension for effective school improvement;
- every school is capable of improvement;
- sustained improvement comes from within the school and is taken forward by high quality leadership;
- the improvement process is a collaborative responsibility: school leadership, teachers, other staff, pupils, parents, the wider community, the managing authority, the support bodies (including those providing sectoral support) and other schools and other service providers working together;
- improvement requires a renewed focus on the quality of teaching and learning and the use of assessment for learning in every classroom;
- success is acknowledged, celebrated and rewarded; underachievement is identified and addressed;
- schools identify and address early their own weaknesses through critical self evaluation and school development planning;
- the school makes effective use of data as an evidence base to help evaluate performance, identify areas for improvement, and assist with target-setting;

- inspection outcomes and the school's response to them are a critical element in the school improvement process; and
- all interventions require an exit strategy.

Do you agree with the **key** principles upon which the proposed policy for school improvement will be based?

Yes

No

Any other comments:

Consultation Point 4

The proposed roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for the new school improvement policy are set out in Chapter 5 of Every School a Good School.

Do you agree with the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities proposed for the new school improvement policy?

Yes

No

Any other comments:

Consultation Point 5

Chapter 6 of Every School a Good School, "Improvement: An issue for all schools", states that regular and robust self-evaluation and effective school development planning are fundamental to the new school improvement policy. The Department intends to take the following actions to facilitate this:

- initiate a review of guidance on self-evaluation and school development planning; and
- in advance of the establishment of ESA, work closely with Education and Library boards, RTU and other interests on the design and delivery of a training package and on ensuring that staff supporting schools in this activity also receive appropriate training.

Do you agree that these actions are appropriate and/or necessary? Are there any others?

Yes

No

Any other actions:

Consultation Point 6

Chapter 7 "Ensuring strong and effective leadership" advises that research confirms the pivotal role of leadership in successful schools. The Department intends to take the following action to improve leadership in schools:

- prepare a new handbook for School Governors which will include clear guidance on the role of governors in setting standards, monitoring performance and ensuring effective teaching and learning in the context of the revised curriculum;
- consider a review of the scope and content of the existing leadership and management programmes to ensure that they equip participants for principalship and management roles within schools;
- determine whether there should be a mandatory requirement for all new Principals to have a leadership and/or management qualification and, if so when; and
- work with the education support authorities to enhance the support mechanisms for new or recently appointed principals.

Do you agree that these actions are appropriate and/or necessary? Are there any others?

Yes

No

Any other actions:

Consultation Point 7

Chapter 8 "Involving parents and the community" states that it is essential that parents and the wider community play their part in supporting the work of the school, raising the aspirations and expectations of pupils and valuing education. The Department intends to take the following actions to effect improvement in this area:

- continue to encourage schools to extend their provision, taking account of the findings in the first two years of the programme and in light of resources available, and ensure that good practice is disseminated;
- ask the education support bodies to prepare resource materials for all schools to use in developing and maintaining links with parents and the community; and
- work closely with other Departments to ensure a co-ordinated response to needs at a local level.

Do you agree that these actions are appropriate and/or necessary? Are there any others?

Yes

No

Any other actions:

Consultation Point 8

Chapter 9 "Target setting and effective use of information" states that the effective use of data within and across schools is a key element of the school improvement process. The Department intends to take the following actions to improve the use of data in schools:

- identify a set of indicators to reflect the performance of schools of different types and the context within which schools are operating and keep these under review. Suggested quality indicators are listed on page 15;
- work with ESA and others, including schools, on the provision of a research and good practice website which will provide access by subject and/or thematic area;
- work with ESA on the development of effective information systems to support the process. The Department will monitor the outworking of the north of Ireland e-Schools Project to ensure that the associated Management Information System provides schools and ESA with a wide range of analytical information for reviewing provision in greater depth, and to support self-evaluation and target setting;
- work with ESA and RTU on training and support for schools in the use of data;
- develop a methodology for determining value-added; and
- once value added measures are available, ESA will be asked to introduce a reporting mechanism to show how schools perform against appropriate value-added benchmark targets.

Do you agree that these actions are appropriate and/or necessary? Are there any others?

Yes

No

Any other actions:

Consultation Point 9

Chapter 9 also advises of the Department's intention to develop a set of quality indicators for use by all involved in the school improvement process. These indicators will be used to provide an informed picture of a school's performance. In addition to these quality indicators, a range of contextual information will also be used. The indicators to be used will develop over time but will include quantitative and qualitative indicators.

Do you agree that there should be a common set of indicators of performance and context for each school?

Yes

No

Consultation Point 10

Every School a Good School suggests that the initial set of indicators should include:-

- performance in assessments and public examinations;
- breadth and balance of curriculum;
- the quality of the school development plan and, particularly, the targets for improvement;
- outcomes of inspection;
- the quality of the school's financial management;
- outcomes of staff, parent and student surveys;
- quality of accommodation;
- range and uptake of extra-curricular activities on offer;
- views of governors /parents/complaints against a school;
- any ongoing relationship difficulties within a school;
- any collaborative arrangements with other schools or colleges;
- pupil and staff attendance; and
- level of suspensions and expulsions.

Do you agree with the initial set of indicators for primary and post-primary schools? Are there any others?

Yes

No

Other indicators to be considered:

