



**Subject:**

**SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT POLICY  
'EVERY SCHOOL A GOOD SCHOOL'**

**Circular Number:  
2008/01**

**Date of Issue:  
21 January 2008**

**Audience:**

- Principals and Chairpersons of Boards of Governors of all grant-aided schools;
- Education and Library Boards;
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools;
- Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education;
- Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta;
- Association of Governing Bodies of Grammar Schools;
- Teachers' Unions.

**Summary of Contents:**

This Circular gives notice of the consultation arrangements for the proposals of a revised school improvement policy, entitled "Every School a Good School".

**Enquiries:**

Any enquiries about the contents of this Circular should be addressed to:

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**Governor Awareness  
Essential**

**Status of Contents:  
Information for schools**

**Related Documents:  
None**

**Superseded Documents:  
None**

**Expiry Date:  
N/A**

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## **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT POLICY – ‘EVERY SCHOOL A GOOD SCHOOL’**

1. This Circular is to advise schools and educational organisations of the consultation process for the Department’s proposals for a new school improvement policy as set out in a document entitled ‘Every School a Good School’.
2. The decision to revise current policy takes account of the need for a new approach to raise standards in a way that recognises good practice and tackles poor performance. The revised school improvement policy sets out the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities which will be clearly set out in the new Education Order due to come into effect on 1 April 2009.
3. The new policy, which has been developed in consultation with education partner bodies and principals and pupils from across Northern Ireland, places a strong emphasis on each school engaging in honest and rigorous self evaluation and using this to form the basis of school development planning and target setting. To ensure educational accountability, the document sets out for consultation some suggested quality indicators for use by all involved in the school improvement process. It is intended that these indicators will be used to provide an informed picture of a school’s performance alongside a range of contextual information. Schools graded 5 or 6 in an inspection will be subject to a formal process which will include support and advice to bring about sustained improvement.
4. Self evaluation will not be new to schools and effective schools are already using this to drive forward improvement. The proposed policy also recognises that effective school improvement depends on a number of issues such as school leadership at all levels; effective governance; support and challenge arrangements; inspection; continuous professional development; Initial Teacher Education (ITE); and parental and community confidence and support.
5. While the draft policy reflects evidence from here and elsewhere and many ideas contributed from schools themselves, it is important that we test with schools that thinking and the proposed direction of travel. Your views and ideas will therefore be very important in shaping the final policy.
6. Copies of the revised policy paper and a consultation response document can be found on the Department’s website, [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk). While the Department will accept hard copy responses to the consultation we would encourage responses by email. The consultation response document can be downloaded, completed and forwarded by email to [SchoolImprovementConsultation@deni.gov.uk](mailto:SchoolImprovementConsultation@deni.gov.uk). All responses should be forwarded to the Department by 31 March 2008.

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