University of Strathclyde

Department of Educational Studies

The Influence of Self Evaluation on School Effectiveness

James Duffy

In part fulfilment for the degree of Doctor of Education

2002

Acknowledgements

In completing this thesis, I should like to acknowledge the assistance and support of the following persons:

- Professor Jim McCall, my internal supervisor, who has provided detailed guidance, assistance and encouragement
- Molly Cumming for her assistance throughout the study
- all who took part in the research, completed questionnaires and agreed to be interviewed.
- East Renfrewshire Council Education Department
- my family who have supported me through many years of study
- my parents

Contents

Abstract

This thesis discusses the outcomes of four years of research. The main purpose was to determine the influence of self-evaluation on school effectiveness and investigate any relevant issues.

The qualitative research began with an extensive literature search to examine the body of knowledge which already existed and set the planned empirical work within the relevant theoretical context. This provided a stimulus for a set of research questions which helped express the intellectual puzzle. Data was gathered using a questionnaire which was completed by class teachers from the researcher's primary school and interviews which were administered initially to a group of primary head teachers from a small Scottish local authority. It became apparent that this sample was limiting so some Irish head teachers with an interest in self-evaluation and a group of educationalists from a variety of European countries were included. The results highlighted a number of links between self-evaluation and the features of effective schools and these have been fully explored in the dissertation.

The findings indicated that there was a perception by many that self-evaluation does have a significant influence on school effectiveness and the extent of this depends on factors such as leadership which affects the level of morale, ownership and commitment to change. Good leadership can help develop a positive climate of trust and professional respect. Effective schools are happy communities characterised by high expectations of

pupil achievement, ownership, reflection and a focus on the quality of learning and teaching. The research underlined the difficulties of measuring school effectiveness, the need for honesty and rigour when self-evaluating and the problems associated with insider research.

Participants tended to link performance indicators with development planning and target setting and considered that such indicators contributed to the management of change by providing a standard set of criteria within a helpful framework to give teachers control and a degree of autonomy. Although accountability should not be the main purpose, self-evaluation was perceived to provide a means of contributing to school effectiveness by making policies and practices public.

The thesis compares previous research with the views and experiences of practitioners and concludes with a series of recommendations arising from the study.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This introduction provides the rationale for undertaking the study and an outline of the intellectual puzzle. It briefly highlights some of the issues raised by self-evaluation and insider research which will be developed in the chapters which follow and lists the research questions that form the basis of the investigation.

This is a significant enquiry into the phenomenon of the influence of self-evaluation on school effectiveness. Self-evaluation is now used on a worldwide scale to improve educational provision but there is controversy over the benefits of involvement, the many factors which influence its success and the difficulties of measuring its effects. This paper will seek to probe the body of existing knowledge and research into self-evaluation and effectiveness, much of which is Scottish based. As comparisons are drawn some major themes will be developed and explored in an attempt to explain why so many educationalists are enthusiastic about self-evaluation while others remain unconvinced. As part of a systematic investigation to increase knowledge and understanding about the process of self review and identify some of the conditions considered necessary for successful self evaluation, existing theories, perspectives and hypotheses will be probed and tested against the practical experiences of a range of professionals. The methodology used to gather and analyse data will be discussed in some detail and conclusions drawn to help illuminate the occurrence.

It is difficult for qualitative researchers to remain neutral. The posture taken up is generally described as 'indwelling' because meaning does not simply come from the situation but emerges through the interaction of the observer with the observation, reading a text or situation by looking forwards and backwards [Scholes, 1989].

An awareness of the researcher's biographical details can enable the reader to speculate on any influence which personal experiences, position and values might have on the formation of opinions and the objectivity within a particular study. The context is the unique Scottish system in which schools are assisted by a network of local authority, Scottish Executive Education Department [SEED] and curriculum and examining bodies [MacBeath et al, 1995]. The researcher has been head teacher in two schools in which self-evaluation has been actively encouraged and is currently employed in a co-educational primary school which employs 30 staff for a roll of 350 pupils. Respondents included class teachers from the writer's school, head teacher colleagues from denominational primary schools in the same small local education authority, Irish educationalists and a small group from a range of European countries.

The design of the study, review of the literature, fieldwork and the analysis of results were carried out between August 1997 and May 2002. Research questions were designed to reflect some of the major concerns and stimulate discussion so that responses and opinions could be analysed. Initially, questionnaires were issued to volunteer staff in the researcher's school [appendix 1] and semi-structured interviews carried out with local head teachers [appendix 2] were timed to coincide with education authority initiatives

based on school self evaluation such as annual standards and quality reports, development plans and teacher appraisal. The interview schedule was adapted for use with some Irish colleagues [appendix 3] during a study trip to Dublin in Spring 2000 which helped broaden the range of respondents and provide additional comparative data. During year two an opportunity arose for the researcher to attend a major European conference and gather further responses using semi structured discussions.

A positive relationship between enquiry and learning, described as 'the language of critique' by Friere [1970] developed during this study as knowledge about current trends, practices and opinions regarding self-evaluation emerged. Friere described the translation of this knowledge into action for effective change as 'the language of possibility' and this was explored through, reflection, understanding and consideration of the information gathered.

A qualitative research style using a survey approach was selected as the most appropriate of the range of methods available and data was generated and analysed to strengthen the investigation from a literature review, semi-structured interviews informal group discussions, questionnaires and a small-scale case study. From the researcher's early background reading it was clear that there was some confusion and controversy surrounding the issues of school effectiveness and the role and purpose of self-evaluation and recurring themes began to emerge which helped to shape the following research questions.

From a review of existing School Effectiveness literature assess:

- the current state of knowledge regarding effectiveness?
- the role and purposes of evaluation and the particular issues associated with self-evaluation?
- the perceived impact of leadership and climate on effectiveness?

Based on a small-scale case study and survey what perceptions do teachers and head teachers have of:

- increased effectiveness through self-evaluation?
- the benefits of a framework for self-evaluation?

Since this is mainly a retrospective account based on research notes some details have been included and others omitted to provide an edited rather than literal report of what happened. The author shares the belief that a purely objective stance is unlikely due to the inevitable impact of norms and personal values on how we interpret events. Situations and data can take on a different meaning when viewed with the benefit of hindsight on completion of the research process. Consequently, any account of research should be taken as a version of the truth on the understanding that decisions have been taken to ensure that descriptions of the methods and processes remain coherent.

The main body of the research has been divided into three separate but inter linked sections. This introduction provides an overview and an outline of the main issues, the central section considers effectiveness in terms of evaluation, climate, leadership, and frameworks and the final part describes the methods used to trawl for information, an

analysis of the data gathered in the study and the conclusions drawn. A bibliography [appendix 4] follows and the appendices contain transcripts of interviews, questionnaires and additional information relating to the case study.

A small-scale case study based on the use of self-evaluation within development planning in the researcher's school is included. This is an integral component of school development plans and part of a purposeful and organised cycle of reviewing practice, target setting and evaluation which provides a mechanism for shared decision making, ownership, control and management of change. It is now a feature of many Scottish schools which some believe provides an invigorative and generative stimulus and a process by which opinions can be expressed leading to improvement [MacBeath et al, 1995]. The case study and survey enabled comparisons to be made with previous research and the opinions of real people working under the constraints and pressures of everyday life regarding self-evaluation and school effectiveness.

'Standards and Quality In Scottish Schools 1995-98' [SOEID, 1998] claims that there is significant evidence that all schools have benefited in some way from a process of judging their work through self-evaluation and this study aims to investigate the influence of this on effectiveness. Many agree with MacBeath, [1999 p1] that there is '*an emerging consensus and body of wisdom about what a healthy system of school evaluation should look like. Its primary goal is to help schools maintain and improve through critical self-reflection...to reinforce the foundations of self review and help schools to build more effectively on those foundations'.* This consensus would appear to

be manifested in a growing commitment towards change and improvement in the conditions for teaching and learning. There is considerable research evidence of positive outcomes where change has had the support of teachers whose involvement and participation has lead to empowerment [Stoll, 1991; MacBeath, Boyd, Rand and Bell, 1995; Clift, Nuttall and McCormick, 1987].

Self-evaluation remains controversial however. Some critics equate it with self-delusion and this will be explored more fully later in the thesis. Schratz' [1998] school improvement work described three dimensions of school evaluation and development: the internal/external aspect; the balance between support and pressure and the challenges associated with 'top-down' or 'bottom–up' evaluation. These are discussed throughout the study since the optimum blend is a key factor of a school's potential to grow or decline. The following sections will discuss these opposing standpoints and investigate various definitions, views and perspectives regarding 'School Effectiveness'.

Chapter 2: Effectiveness

This section begins with an overview of the historical growth of the effectiveness movement. It examines links between effectiveness and quality and the level to which definitions and manifestations of these concepts are open to subjective interpretation by various stakeholders. Attainment and achievement are influenced by a wide range of factors and cannot simply be assumed to be a product of schooling [Smith and Thomlinson, 1989] so, despite a general consensus that schools should be effective and that an effective school has certain characteristics, there is uncertainty over how to measure it [Plowden, 1967; Reynolds, 1976]. The chapter briefly considers effectiveness from an international perspective, describes some attempts to measure the value added by schools and discusses the Government's influence on the effectiveness debate.

Historical Growth

'Equality of Educational Opportunity' [Coleman, 1966] marked the beginning of the school effectiveness movement and was one of a number of reports highlighting major determinants of performance which were outwith schools' control. There was controversy over the effects of education with some asserting that schools were unimportant '*education cannot compensate for society'* [Bernstein, 1970 p.3] and concern about whether better schools could significantly reduce inequality of attainment. Some early observers were convinced that schools didn't matter much anyway and that heredity, good fortune and family background prior to formal schooling were more important determinants of success '*educational inequalities are rooted in the basic*

institutions of our economy, class sub-culture and social class biases in the operation of the school system itself' [Bowles, 1989 p.4; Coleman, 1966; Plowden, 1967; Jencks 1972]. The importance of parental support in explaining differences between schools was recognised at this time but the value of relationships, mutual respect and leadership were largely ignored.

However, much subsequent research has used comparative data to conclude that schools do make a difference, have considerable effects on progress over time and achieve varying results even when allowances are made for differences in intake [Cuttance, 1992]. External influences affect pupils' attitudes, beliefs and convictions but outcomes are not determined solely by academic and social backgrounds and certain characteristics such as ethos have a direct influence on schools' effectiveness [Rutter et al 1979; Reynolds et al 1976 and 1985; Gray and Willcox, 1983; Purkey and Smith, 1983; Mortimore et al 1988]. Schools are not isolated from the wider community and relationships between adults and children are affected by peer pressure, gender, the economic climate and even the influence of the Church [Fuerstein, Hoffman and Miller, 1980; Coleman, 1995].

Over the last four decades researchers have contributed to the identification of a range of factors which can be positively associated with school effectiveness. These include teachers' understanding of the process of teaching and learning as well as values and standards [Rutter, 1979]; leadership; qualifications of staff; the curriculum [SOEID, 1998]; climate; feedback; participative management [Smith and Thomlinson, 1989]; the

effects of pre-school education; the mother's level of education and teachers' expectations [Tizard and Hughes, 1984]. Riddell and Brown [1994] associated the acquisition of basic skills, an orderly and secure environment and frequent assessment of pupil progress with effectiveness while Mortimore's [1999] twelve elements included intellectually challenging teaching and parental involvement. MacBeath [1999] considers context, community, values, perspective, purpose, thinking and comparison as important and believes that the biggest challenge for schools is *how* to acquire the attributes of effectiveness rather than the identification of characteristics.

Defining The Effective School

The school effectiveness and school improvement movements are founded on the contention that schools can make a difference to how young people learn and that some are more successful in this than others [Rutter, 1979]. Much literature about effective schools is illuminative and based on the subjective and impressionistic witness of staff, pupils, parents and others rather than on quantified evidence. Effectiveness can be broadly viewed in terms of the effects of education of the whole person within society, the influence of schools on large social movements and the economic needs of the nation. Effective schools are not only influenced by what goes on inside but also by what happens outside through the social dynamic of the local environment and the wider political and economic influences. If they are to be defined in the widest context as places where pupils achieve better than average results, effective schools must have the capacity to stimulate, absorb and manage change with appropriate leadership and frequent evaluation to improve performance. School improvement should be a

systematic, sustained, collegial effort to change learning conditions and lead to the efficient and effective attainment of educational goals based on assumptions of how people should behave and how organisations work [Hopkins et al, 1991; Fullan, 1985]. Because many innovations are evolutionary and succeed by following the path of least resistance, continuity and incrementalism are essential so that new ideas can be added or previously unforeseen courses taken.

Quality

The clear association between quality and effectiveness is often articulated through mission statements and school aims which aspire to provide a quality service and meet the needs of every individual pupil as effectively as possible. Most schools translate these aims into development plans and measure performance against predetermined success criteria and performance indicators [Woods, 1994]. Like effectiveness, quality in education is difficult to define [Cuttance, 1992]. Describing it in terms of client and customer care would be very simple if interests always coincided but various groups have different viewpoints [Clift, Nuttall and McCormick 1987]. External signs of quality can be categorised in terms of outcomes, processes and inputs and these are especially interesting for particular groups of stakeholders. Outcomes include exam results, completion rates, school records, and attendance and employment statistics. Process quality deals with the interaction between teachers, students, administration, materials and technology whilst input can refer to the number of teachers trained, teacher pupil ratios, resources and general facilities. Bloom [1976] argued that schools should not despair about being held accountable for outcomes which were largely based on input

variables since these were beyond their control anyway. The input / output model is flawed since it is difficult to be objective about school quality but it continues to be used for National policy making and international comparison where matters of values and attitudes are excluded because they simply don't fit the model. As will be seen from the forthcoming 'Evaluation' and 'Self-Evaluation' sections, this researcher agrees that the challenge is for schools to develop their own indicators of quality and effectiveness to evaluate strengths and weaknesses and monitor targets for the future.

Quality is sometimes described as that 'something special' which fully develops pupils' potential. This extra dimension provided by some schools to make them outstanding is often translated as efficiency or the improvement of standards of attainment in terms of behaviour, creativity or critical thinking. 'Quality' referring simply to specific measures of prior attainment or background is a distortion of the term since much effectiveness research is underpinned by the development of personal and social skills, social equality and economic performance. Measuring the impact of class size or issues largely outwith the schools' control such as poverty, gender and English as a second language, remains problematic.

Perspectives

A culture of school improvement should nurture dialogue from all perspectives. Many observers consider that they are in a position to comment on effectiveness and quality but there are problems over what to measure and *how* to do it. In many ways it is easier to identify *ineffective* schools and judgement often arises through dissatisfaction with the

outcomes of education and debate and scepticism about the 'effects' of schools. International research recognises the importance of monitoring, curriculum, leadership, staff development, homework, celebrating success and parental involvement but, as this research will exemplify, there are different interpretations of effectiveness. The American press viewed 'teaching to the test' as a moulding of the curriculum to fit the needs of students whereas the Cockroft report [1982] argued that testing did not improve performance and that it should not be combined with teaching unless coupled with other strategies such as changes in methods.

There are many important issues for consideration when making such comparisons. These include equality of access to training, parental education and expectations, the reaction of schools to changes in the structure and stability of society, the effects of central control through a national curriculum, the pressure for more local decision making and the political, cultural and social climate in which schools operate.

A pupil's view may vary considerably from that of other stakeholders and parents are inclined to focus on the formal and intended aspects of a school rather than that experienced by pupils or teachers. SOEID [1988] describe an effective school as one where the pupils learn what is deemed appropriate based on their personal needs, preferences and capabilities, while Fullan [1985] defines it as one which demonstrates particular organisational and process variables related to leadership, goals, staff development and planning [Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore and Ouston, 1979; Purkey and Smith, 1983; Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis and Ecob, 1988].

Schools judge effectiveness through performance of individuals in tests, opportunities for residential experiences, community involvement, attendance rates, exam results etc. Within the writer's education authority results in standardised tests are considered important in terms of effectiveness but there are potential difficulties associated with this which will be discussed in the 'Evaluation' section. As dynamic institutions schools' effectiveness varies over time and is often reflected in their environmental appearance as well as the academic and social achievements of students or subject areas.

Good schools are more than just a collection of good teachers but the '*teacher effect*,' [MacBeath, 1999 p.151] is very important and is influenced by time management, resources, class size, experience, training and philosophy so it is appropriate that these become key issues for school improvement and disbursement of funding by Education Authorities. Success is not only indicated by qualifications and attainment but also by the development of confidence, responsibility, enterprise and high expectations [Boyd, 1997].

International Comparisons

Comparisons of the attainments of pupils in 12 countries by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement [1970 and 1981] placed Japan well ahead of England and Wales in Science and Maths [Prais, 1986] and parallels with West Germany, France and Japan by the National Curriculum Working Party [1989] pointed to a decline in standards which was reinforced when the Third International Mathematics

and Science Study [TIMSS, 1995] placed Scotland well down the performance league table.

There is an apparent failure of school curriculum changes to lead to improvements when judged by international standards. Although the use of school effectiveness methodology to compare the performance of nations is popular it can be based on unsupported suppositions and dependent on questionable indices. Comparisons must be fair, valid and reliable e.g. there is little evidence to connect performance at school level with economic performance at national level. Some differences with countries such as Japan [or even Ireland as will be seen from this research] may be cultural or arise as a result of practices such as the Singapore and Malaysian tradition of 'importing and exporting' pupils according to academic performance. Figures may also disguise a lack of development in areas which are difficult to quantify such as creativity or burnout amongst students.

Measuring Effectiveness

Experience over the last 30 years has underlined the need to be wary about claims about the paradigmatic school, the ideal form of leadership or the model approach to evaluation. Strengths need to be considered within a national, regional and local context and indeed, there may be no such thing as 'the effective school'. Diversity of good practice offers a challenge to inert ideas [Rolff, 1993] but the school improvement movement has also highlighted common principles which should underpin learning and teaching, school organisation and leadership.

There is considerable evidence that schools make a substantial difference in social and academic terms [Mortimore et al, 1988] but, although numerous lists of factors associated with good schools have been published, the simple identification of characteristics is of limited help since schools are not homogeneous entities and have 'differential effectiveness' [Sammons et al, 1995]. School effectiveness research consistently places the major effects at classroom level [Bosker and Scheerens, 1998] and studies of differential effectiveness have revealed significant differences amongst pupils attending the same school [Sammons et al, 1996], within individual classrooms [Coleman, 1995] and, in this researcher's experience, within classroom ability groups. Schools are seldom completely ineffective and even in seemingly successful establishments there can be differentials in achievement and a divisive school culture. Different subject departments can have varying degrees of success with the same pupils [Aitken and Longford, 1986; Cuttance, 1992] and the consistency of effectiveness fluctuates with time [Gray and Jesson, 1990]. Jencks [1972] agreed that improving effectiveness can lead to higher attainment but his concern that improving the standard of education in poorer schools did not significantly reduce individual inequalities is supported by evidence from the current Early Intervention programme in Scottish schools which benefits most pupils but particularly those who would already be considered advantaged.

Value Added

Analytic models have tended to be associated with a static conception of the timeless qualities of effective schools rather than describe any process of change.

'The value of school quality is however, more than can be measured by attainment in a few specific areas of pupil activity. A comprehensive value added framework might encompass measures related to numerous other aspects of schools' mission, processes and outcomes'. [Thomas, Sammons, Smees, 1994].

The concept of 'Value Added' is founded on the premise that though progress and improvement is expected as pupils mature, the most effective schools enrich achievement and add a *residual* value beyond expectations arising from a knowledge of prior attainment [Gray et al, 1997]. Much research into variations in school effectiveness has been done by the mental testing movement using highly valid, reliable and rigorous longitudinal tests and 'regression analysis' to compare outcomes and the 'value' added by schools [Aitkin and Longford, 1986; Goldstein, 1987; Smith and Thomlinson, 1989]. The mental capacities of individuals vary, but they tend to persist over time in adults and develop in a predictable way in children so these approaches are developed from pioneering improvements in statistical procedures using predictions and comparisons based on previous attainment rather than on family and social background.

The Improving Schools Effectiveness Project

The size of school differences alone cannot be taken as a direct indicator of the total effect of schooling and drawing parallels remains problematic. It is rarely possible to match more than a couple of characteristics for valid comparisons and other factors such as school management need to be considered.

The Improving Schools Effectiveness Project [ISEP] [SOEID, 1996] attempted to identify and evaluate different approaches to school improvement in terms of pupil achievement and motivation. It used a value added framework to gauge the impact of policy initiatives, and investigate any causal relationship between school processes and outcomes in Scottish schools [MacBeath and Mortimore, 1994]. The effects of teachers and departments were measured to see where the strongest associations of factors lay [MacBeath, 1999]. The ISEP tracked progress in pupils' cognitive attainment and attitudes over two years using a number of standardised tests at primary and secondary level. It checked links between effectiveness measures, improvement strategies and educational processes and provided qualitative methodology to assist with self-evaluation. This offered a working definition of school, department or subject effectiveness showing that progress in both of these outcomes varied significantly across schools and could be evaluated. Some factors outwith the control of the school such as socio-economic disadvantage and the effects of prior attainments in maths and reading on attainment were cross referenced with age, gender, mobility, pupil and teacher attitude, records of need, learning support and poverty indicators such as free school meal entitlement and clothing grants. The approach provided a better picture than raw unadjusted scores, highlighted some of the learning disabilities of schools and emphasised the benefits of feedback, support and challenge from a critical friend [MacBeath and Mortimore, 1994].

The ISEP researchers agreed that pressure alone would not change attitudes and practices in schools. Teachers needed convincing that value added measures which treated each

pupil as equally important were the best single indicators available. However, critics claimed:

- methods of equating the concept of value added with effectiveness were still relatively crude and limited to the measurement of a narrow range of attainments
- despite claims to the contrary, it was difficult for such indicators to measure added value in personal and social development, moral development, attitudes or capacity for lifelong learning
- education was not an <u>additive</u> process, there was a dynamic relationship between what pupils bring to school and what they take away so schools did not 'add value'
- 'effectiveness' was subjective and it is very difficult to measure 'added value' in any reliable quantifiable sense e.g. Mortimore's [1991 p.14] definition of an effective school as '*one in which pupils progress further than might be expected from consideration of its intake*' was useful since it is relatively specific but it excludes the fact that there are other ways of being effective
- the Scottish Exam Board produced relative rating performance indicators for every school in Scotland to compare students' exam results and identify effective departments but incentives to improve the effort by one subject may have a detrimental effect on another
- despite efforts to document the key variables, the notion of added value would always be partial and misleading without knowledge of the influence of home circumstances [MacBeath, Mearns and Smith, 1986]

The Influence of Government

Education is high on the political agenda and much guidance has come from Government and HMI in recent years regarding appropriate curricula, methodology and the benefits to be gained through ownership, shared goals and collaboration. Key principles for organisation are set out in Government publications such as *Achievement for All* [SOEID, 1996] which focuses on the development of conditions to motivate and ensure progression. These include the flexibility to meet academic, social and personal needs, an ethos which values the pupils' success, direct teaching, building on prior learning and attainment and high expectations. *Achieving Success in S1/S2* [SOEID, 1998] made further practical recommendations regarding transfer of information, assessment and a framework of realistic attainment targets while emphasising the benefits of strong leadership, accountability, high standards and the support of stakeholders.

Initiatives have included early intervention, improved nursery provision; focus on basic skills of literacy and numeracy, staff development, assessment and attempts to improve communication between sectors. The Scottish Executive has produced a wide range of advice on home school partnership, study support, business enterprise, leadership, self-evaluation, ethos, raising achievement, attendance and involvement in staff development and appraisal.

As the self-evaluation movement flourished, important Scottish reports emerged. These were influenced by the political view of education so the emphasis was firmly on accountability, value for money, quality, planning, the use of performance indicators and

the need for reliable evidence to support self evaluation to improve school effectiveness [*Managing Progress,* S.R.C., 1986; *Progress Through Self Evaluation*, S.R.C., 1988; *Effective Secondary Schools*, SOEID, 1988]. Surprisingly, at this time there was no reference to contemporary English research which questioned any link between self-evaluation and improved effectiveness and cast doubt on any relationship between accountability and improved learning.

The pressure to improve effectiveness continued. *Using Performance Indicators in Secondary Schools* [SOEID, 1992 a] and *Using Ethos indicators in Secondary School Self Evaluation* [SOEID, 1992b] shared inspection criteria with teachers whilst Development Planning [SOEID, 1991] was supported by *The Quality Process* [S.R.C., 1992] and *How Good is Our School?* [SOEID, 1996 and SEED, 2002]. *Effective Secondary Schools* [1988] and *Effective Primary Schools* [1989] attempted to put research issues into the hands of school managers and teachers and quantitative studies emerged to track school leaver destinations and links between attitudes, achievement, expectations, ability and ethos. This researcher believes that this focus has had a major impact in encouraging schools and authorities to improve provision by increasing awareness, developing necessary skills and providing comparative statistics. HMI and local inspections report publicly on the effectiveness of schools and the quality of the curriculum, management, leadership, ethos and attainment while recent legislation has called for ever-increasing consultation with stakeholders who are encouraged to take an active part in school life and become involved in activities such as the National Debate on Education [2002]. In the writer's education authority school handbooks carry

information which allows parents to check the national and standardised test performance of individual schools while, at the national level, statistics are gathered from inspections, surveys and reports such as the Assessment of Achievement programme so that comparisons can be made between local authorities and with other countries. Advocates of school effectiveness research are aware of the benefits of highlighting good practice, becoming involved in development planning and using evaluation instruments efficiently to develop a culture of self evaluation. Comparative studies at a local, national and international level have been used to discover how successful schools sustain themselves and ineffective ones begin to improve.

Critics accuse the school effectiveness movement as founded on conceptually unstable foundations and blind to socio-political contexts and curricular difficulties. They consider the focus on the school as an entity limiting and claim that lack of theoretical grounding as researchers leads to a reinvention of the obvious. However, from this study, it has become clear to the researcher that one of the main benefits has been the dialogue which has emerged to develop a common purpose to enhance the quality and rigour of school self-evaluation, satisfy the need for accountability and establish collegiality and interdependence.

Turner and Clift's [1985 p148] assertion that ' *The most effective means of improving the quality of the education provided by schools is to give them responsibility for reviewing their own performance and carrying out any reforms which seem necessary in consequence'* is supported by Henry's [1982] belief that responsible autonomy lies at

school rather than individual level and Schmucks' [1974 p.179] conviction that *'strategies of the future...should be based on collective personal development'*.

School development is a package deal [Holly, 1985] and efforts at improvement must encompass the school as a system of interacting parts to include staff and management development, strong leadership, collaborative team work and the creation of a broad, cohesive curriculum implemented skilfully at classroom level [Goodlad, 1987].

Schools make a difference but they cannot be expected to make all the difference and shoulder complete responsibility for society. Status based on performance figures can mask reality, nurture complacency and discourage pupils and teachers from constructive criticism. This is ineffective as a means of *enforcing* standards on teachers since, to be successful, plans for reform must be supported by a highly professional, confident, teaching force that is fully aware of the techniques, benefits and the limitations of self review. Improvement will only happen when schools are able to use tools diagnostically and formatively to systematically examine learning and teaching for themselves. Effective schools press for achievement, have visible and explicit values and ideologies, and constantly search for ways of evaluating performance. The next chapter takes a closer look at some of the ways in which schools carry out evaluation and the issues which must be considered.

Chapter 3: Evaluation

This chapter explores some of the purposes of evaluation and its association with accountability. It includes a discussion of strategies such as inspection, the use of standardised tests and performance indicators which were referred to in the previous section.

Evaluation is the systematic collection and interpretation of evidence leading to value judgements and action. The product is important but, as will be seen from the case study on school planning within this thesis, the *process* can be a catalyst for empowerment, responsibility and collaboration. This presents an opportunity to capitalise on the experience, expertise and enthusiasm of staff to improve openness and understanding of the difficulties faced by management. Tracking pupils' progress over time provides new insights, explanations and skills to improve learning and teaching. Evaluation must be as free of unanticipated side effects as possible so a wide variety of indicators must be used to crosscheck and make inferences about programmes, processes and outcomes.

Rogers and Badham [1992] saw two main purposes for evaluation - accountability to *prove* quality and development to *improve* it. By enabling verification of the decision making process, evaluation can provide feedback to project sponsors, local authorities or the government and proof to the public of rising standards which can further the *institutional* as well as the *educational* development of an organisation. Teachers constantly evaluate but there is a view that much of this tends to be idiosyncratic and

private rather than part of institutional policy. Raising awareness, accountability, maintaining and improving educational standards, value for money and enhancement of the quality of learning and teaching must be central to any evaluative exercise [Marland, 1987]. Evaluation can help justify and explain intentions, indicate how resources are being used and calm concerns by providing timely and relevant information for parents, teachers, local authorities and the general public. A public system lets society see how schools are doing and how they can improve, and including stakeholders in the process encourages the emergence of a school wide vision, contributes to understanding and enables the celebration of successes and strengths. Evaluation can improve the quality of information generated to help make management decisions and assure parents that a school is dedicated to meeting the needs of their children.

Despite these positive effects evaluation can also be a problematic and highly controversial issue. Low scores can have a negative effect on children's self esteem [Adelman and Alexander, 1982] and insensitive evaluation can leave teachers feeling vulnerable, mistrusted and ineffective. A common measure is the quality of experience given to pupils and how they are challenged but utility is dependent on evaluation being robust, objective and flexible enough to meet the needs of individual schools. Providing resources can never be enough to secure educational change [MacBeath, 1999] since improvement depends on the sympathies and energies of teachers, their commitment and level of responsibility.

Accountability

Accountability has moral, contractual and professional implications [East Sussex Accountability Project, 1979] and has been a feature of Scottish Education since Victorian times. During the 1970's Government and public dissatisfaction [Great Debate, 1976; 1977 Green Paper] forced many professions to take greater account of external views of efficiency and effectiveness. More testing of pupils and inspections of schools took place as bodies such as the Assessment of Performance Unit [APU] rose to prominence. Links between evaluation and accountability strengthened and it became apparent that there needed to be consensus about the purpose of schools before any rendering of account could occur.

From the 1980's accountability was viewed as a professional duty, a moral obligation, and a contractual responsibility to employers and political masters. Teacher based assessment, records of achievement and increased levels of budgetary control had caused their power to grow so a series of centralist policies to diminish this growth were initiated. Inspectorate Reports on individual schools were published [1983] and the School Boards [Scotland] Act and the Education [Scotland] Act [1988] reaffirmed parents' rights to be informed about the quality of education being delivered. Education authorities were given responsibility for making provision in accordance with parent's wishes and setting a professional, communal climate of partnership with schools. Statistical comparison of institutions became popular and central control by the Government increased due to strong consumer power and pressure for better information about the quality of education. However, little attention was paid to differing

circumstances, catchment areas or staffing profiles and there remained, '*the distinct risk of rewarding schools for the quality of the intakes they can attract rather than what they actually do for pupils'* [MacBeath, 1999 p6].

The public has a tendency to make judgements in a narrow sense based on the results of formal assessment but schools would argue that many other factors need to be considered and that authorities must be willing to adjust their views of effectiveness to changing conditions. The external environment is influential but schools must remain in control if innovation overload and dependency as opposed enterprise are to be avoided [Fullan, 1988].

The primary function of accountability is to raise standards so a major management task is to establish a climate where staff view evaluation positively. Within the writer's education authority the accountability process includes national and standardised testing, standard grade, higher and advanced higher examinations. Institutional and self-evaluation within a common framework forms the basis of standards and quality reports produced by each school, inspections by authority and HM personnel and school development plans which support authority and national priorities.

Inspections

Inspection is one the earliest external methods of monitoring and evaluating public education provision. Local education authorities in England and Wales were empowered

by the 1944 Education Act to inspect schools but scepticism remains regarding the independence of inspectors who provide a support and monitoring function.

Success is affected by the relationship between the evaluator and those being evaluated and these, in turn, are influenced by school leadership and climate. In the writer's authority the local inspectors' background knowledge, lack of management experience and skills are viewed with a degree of cynicism by head teachers. As in some English and Welsh LEA's the pattern of these local inspections was adjusted due to time constraints and support and inspection tended to be given to schools experiencing difficulty. This resulted in problems regarding perceptions, judgements, and methods of comparing the effectiveness of schools and concern whether schools which were largely unsupported by the education authority could maintain standards.

Criticisms are also levelled at other external evaluators such as HMI whose teaching experience may have been in another sector or who may be far removed from reality due to time away from teaching. Judgements are generally based on provision, the overall quality of work, pupils' responses, current performance compared with that of previous years and progress as benchmarked against other 'similar' schools. Comparing like with like can be problematic and the organisational frameworks for presenting the qualitative or quantitative data produced complex [Ribbins and Burridge, 1994]. Other hindering factors include human and material resources, time, restrictions on methodology, inadequate dissemination and discussion and the problems which can emerge when the findings challenge existing values, orthodoxies and interests.

Prior to the publication of inspections they tended to be a hidden form of evaluation and are still invariably viewed as an event rather than an integral part of school life. Since writing has traditionally been the domain of academics and educational researchers rather than inspectors, there was scant coverage in evaluation literature until recently.

The preference is for '*developing schools*' which ensure staff involvement in self-evaluation as a vehicle for growth [Holly, 1985]. However, the processes of inspection, institutional self-evaluation and teacher appraisal are clearly linked since a school being inspected will engage in self-evaluation with the inevitable consideration of staff performance and competence.

Standardised Tests

The validity of standardised tests is limited. There is potential for mismatching programme goals and instructional techniques and they can be inappropriate for particular groups of students [Herman and Winters, 1992]. In Scotland there a growing tendency for standardised test figures to be used by education authorities as a major sign of school effectiveness and quality. Tests are standardised against a cross section of the pupil population and it can be interesting and helpful for schools to compare how their pupils perform. If achievement of a particular grade is taken as an indicator of success however, teachers may be tempted to concentrate their efforts on borderline cases to the detriment of less able or very good students, while students who are differentiated by ability at a very early stage may perform according to that expectation. High achieving

pupils may get insufficient attention since they will pass anyway and the less able suffer because there is no time to spend on those unlikely to succeed. American experience of standardised testing was of cheating, teaching to tests and general disenchantment which even affected the numbers of graduates being attracted to teaching as a profession.

The writer's education authority uses data produced from a programme of standardised tests in English and Maths to measure *value added*. The difficulties of comparing results are compounded by an inclusion policy for special needs pupils which makes extremely ambitious targets for achievement of National Tests impossible to achieve and sustain and results in undue pressure on schools and disillusionment for teachers and parents. Testing provides a limited indication of school quality and a crude measure of performance which, if used exclusively, can provide a narrow view. Results are affected by pupil anxiety, absence, health, familiarity with the arrangements and format, the appropriateness of content and the quality of teaching. The procedures suffer from many weaknesses:

- tests are aligned with the English rather than the Scottish curriculum and administered within a time frame which could permit pupil coaching
- the methodology demands individual effort by the pupils who otherwise work mainly in ability groups with direct teaching, discussion, collaboration, choice and an element of risk taking encouraged
- procedures are open to abuse with subjective interpretations about the amount of help given and suspicions of dishonesty and unprofessional practice

- the tests often focus on basic skills of reading, writing, spelling and maths at the expense of higher order reasoning and typically ignore the multiplicity of academic, social and vocational goals which schools profess to address
- morale and the general climate of trust and support can suffer
- testing to compare schools is inappropriate and increased scores may signal high ability and improvement or simply teaching to the test and a narrowing of the curriculum [Cannell 1987]
- relative ratings to help compare the performance of different departments or subjects within the same institution can place departments in competition and improvement in one subject e.g. extra homework may improve the maths rating but reduce performance in another subject [Fitzgibbon, 1992]
- regardless of assurances that the tests were for internal use by schools the results have been published in a national newspaper

Despite these drawbacks standardised tests are increasingly being used to support the information from Scottish National Tests and to provide benchmarks from which added value is measured. This head teacher has found the results to be very helpful in supporting other measures of pupil progress, justifying inclusion of pupils in particular ability groups and for highlighting aspects of the core curriculum where a group or class is performing considerably better than another. Analysis of results has led to review of methodology, resourcing and pacing which has had a positive effect on the quality of learning and teaching. There is however a real danger that teaching to the test and dishonesty can arise where school or individual reputations are at stake.

Performance Indicators

The Education Act [1988] was dubbed the 'Parents' Charter' because it increased accountability surrounding parents' rights to know about the quality of education being delivered. Under the Act specific responsibilities were devolved to education authorities to monitor the quality of the education service. Over the last decade schools' self-evaluation to measure value added and effectiveness and set targets for improvement have complemented HMI's external evaluations. This 'quality culture' is based on common criteria for inspection with key features of effective schools used as performance indicators to assist with effective institutional self-review. Sizer, [1982] considers that the use of performance indicators can be problematic because:

- success depends on the quality and use of the indicators so their design has become one of the most onerous and demanding responsibilities placed on management
- gathering and analysing data takes time and expertise and will only improve the service if appropriate, reliable and valid information with which to judge institutional policy, performance and procedures is provided
- they must be bias free, quantifiable, economically feasible and institutionally acceptable
- there should be a distinction between effectiveness, efficiency and performance assessment - people make and implement decisions and no matter how appropriate and relevant the performance indicators, they will only be effective if the decision makers responses and actions are positive

- to monitor a system adequately and avoid making generalisations a large number of indicators may be necessary
- it must be made clear whether the percentage reported is of the whole year group or only of those presented

Performance indicators are not new, but procedures for systematically sharing information and making comparisons of schools are still at an early stage. As highlighted in chapter 1, there can be confusion between outcomes, which substantiate progress towards achieving objectives, and processes such as staffing FTE as signs of effectiveness. More confidentiality regarding outcomes could avoid the temptation for dishonesty since there can be a moral dilemma between integrity and reputation when reporting performance. Deming [1986] criticises managers who blame individuals for quality failure and favours a non-threatening, blame free method of data collection to pinpoint faults in systems rather than in people. Punitive surveillance systems are liable to become corrupted, whereas involving stakeholders can improve validity and credibility, increase the likelihood of findings influencing action and help build the consensus and common understanding which is vital for subsequent negotiation and decision making.

Indicators should be central to teaching and learning, cover significant parts of a school's activities economically and provide a means of reflecting competing educational priorities. They should permit meaningful comparisons over time and between schools and highlight changes in levels of performance [Gray and Jesson, 1990]. Academic

progress, pupil satisfaction, relationships with other pupils and staff are all easily measured but a fourth dimension 'moments of quality and excellence' in teaching and learning such as when a pupil shows particular concern for others or is first over the line on sports day is much more difficult to express as a performance indicator [Gray, 1990].

The desire to find the balance between internal and external evaluation is worldwide. Key priorities include the provision of time and resources with inspection continuing as part of a collaborative improvement strategy between schools and local authorities [MacBeath, 1999]. Schools need to develop their own indicators of quality for variables such as academic development, pupil satisfaction and pupil/teacher relationships so that strengths and weaknesses can be evaluated and progress towards targets monitored [Gray, 1990]. Real improvement demands a transformation of culture to assist the sustained and managed educational change. Schools may be well aware of research about key organisational characteristics, performance indicators, evaluation criteria and evidence for judging effectiveness but less informed about the process factors which can help them improve over time. These require a guiding and shared value system and consensus on aims, goals, expectations, rules and social order as well as a sense of community which nurtures collaborative planning and collegial relationships.

Clearly, evaluation can be problematic due to a lack of appreciation of the process of change [Fullan, 1985], the communication or utilisation of data produced [Holly et al, 1989] and conflicting definitions of effectiveness. Though some researchers favour

incrementalism and application of the criteria for success to schools, many agree that top-down evaluation has been unsuccessful in leading to positive change and that

'*...for schools to take responsibility for reviewing their practices and performance is the most effective and efficient way of bringing about school improvement on a national scale'.* [Clift, Neale and McCormick, 1987 p.190]. The need for schools to act as professional reflective, thinking, communities involved in a continuous cycle of collective self review [HMI, 1992] to assure their own quality and continuous development [Adelman and Alexander, 1982; SOEID, 1995] is discussed fully in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Self Evaluation

This chapter includes a discussion of some early approaches to self-evaluation and highlights some of the associated benefits and challenges. It examines some difficulties with making comparisons and explores the relationships between self-evaluation and learning and teaching, school planning and quality assurance.

Self-evaluation appears to be a democratic system of enquiry since participants can negotiate the focus and decide which data to collect and how to use the information. As a collegial, problem solving process this researcher finds that it provides valid information about effectiveness and leads to action for improvement and development. It offers a platform for critical dialogue about classroom practice and an alternative to external evaluation which redefines relationships whilst retaining teachers' professional autonomy [Simons, 1984] and control of curriculum change. Alvik, [1996] describes it as a culture of wondering which requires good leadership, minimum pressures and the necessary resources to promote collective self-reflection into the life of the school. Applied systematically, it can provide a deep insight into the interplay between conditions, processes and outcomes and direct further development.

For this head- teacher self–evaluation has provided a means of sharing control of change, judging collective endeavour to achieve specific purposes and reviewing management

tasks [Southworth, 1995]. It has encouraged teamwork, staff inclusion and ownership [Reid, Holly and Hopkins, 1987] and the collegiate responsibility, purpose and vision which has resulted from involvement has reduced isolationism, encouraged professional respect for colleagues and further developed evaluation skills [Goodchild and Holly, 1989].

Self–evaluation works best in healthy dynamic environments where morale is high, participants are confident of their own professionalism and there is support from other stakeholders. Motivation to become involved may arise from a shared philosophy of seeking constant improvement, comparisons of how one group of pupils' progress against another, or a measurement of the differences made by a new initiative, resource or approach. It is about collaborative enquiry, taking responsibility rather than apportioning blame and calls for an open approach with participants secure that the comments made in open discussion are treated with respect.

Early Approaches

As discussed in the Evaluation section, HMI continued to inspect schools and publish the results while performance in tests set by Government and education authorities led to comparisons through league tables. Improvement in the quality of education and accountability were inextricably linked but the publishing of exam results seemed inimical to the development of open self-evaluation. Such external pressure was counter productive and resulted in conflict of purpose and professional threat. Many researchers at this time argued that the best indicators of pupils' learning, welfare, motivation, and

communication emerged through a process of continual self-evaluation rather than external inspections [Nuttall, 1985]. There was a view that schools which self-evaluated to improve learning should be insulated from accountability demands. Too close an association between contractual accountability and self evaluation could lead to the *'impoverishment of the latter and an ineffective assertion of the former'* ...and.... *'The price paid for even trying to enforce contractual accountability by means of a scheme for SE will almost certainly be the destruction of the spirit of open minded enquiry essential for the successful institutional and professional development implied by moral and professional accountability'* [Clift, Neale and McCormick, 1987 p206-209].

Research material about self-evaluation is fairly limited - perhaps due as much to interpersonal, political and organisational factors as to methodology [Adelman and Alexander, 1982]. It became popular during the 1960's and 1970's due to its contribution to the growth of professional development and the *'teacher as the extended professional'* [Reid, K.Hopkins.D. and Holly, P. 1987 p.115]. As it rose to prominence to satisfy global demands for accountability, curriculum and staff development its significance and manifestations were many and varied [Clift, Nuttall and McCormick, 1987; Hopkins, 1990]. The focus moved from schools to individual teachers with a number of reports *SED* [1980], *Munn and Dunning*, [1977] *Pack* [1977] and *Warnock* [1978] providing a springboard for educational reform. Self-evaluation acknowledged teachers as the best judges of their own professional development and schools as the best environment in which to encourage and sustain growth. As a consequence in-service training became school rather than centre based and local authority approaches to self-evaluation emerged

in the form of policies, procedures and voluntary schemes such as ILEA's *Keeping the School Under Review* [1977]. Through self evaluation teachers became involved in setting aims and objectives, analysing and developing statements, reflecting on the performance of departments, examining curricula, time tabling, shadowing pupils etc. [McCormick and James, 1983].

Many contemporary commentators doubted the sincerity of the consultation and regarded self-evaluation as a time consuming activity which could obstruct planned reforms and have little impact. However, great benefits were gained through the exchange of views and the development of cohesion. The emphasis gradually began to move from accountability to teaching, learning, methodology and frameworks such as GRIDS [1984] were established to assist with whole staff approaches to managing change. As English local Authorities [ILEA, Oxfordshire etc.] came under Government pressure to set up self evaluation schemes similar models emerged in Scotland but many of these early attempts at self evaluation were unsuccessful in bringing about *'substantial and enduring changes'* [Clift, Nuttall and McCormick, 1987 p.200]. Some focused on the school rather than the individual to provide greater contractual accountability and resulted in a ritualistic and superficial response from participants [Turner and Clift, 1985]. Others were unsuccessful due to lack of familiarity with the methodology [Solihull, 1980] or an unwillingness to disseminate any information gathered beyond the school [James, 1982].

Throughout the early 1980's it was vainly hoped that participation in corporate review would help secure commitment. *School Based Review* [SBR] was designed by the

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD, 1982] as an attempt to make reflection more systematic and integrated into management procedures with outcomes fed directly into the functioning of the school. It was hoped that SBR would become an essential phase in any innovation and the involvement in the process would help improve schools.

Traditionally, powerful ideas and research-based strategies have had more effect on schools than high-tech mechanisation. Education is a people intensive service and change is dependent on attitudes and skills. Through self-evaluation staff can be empowered to develop confidence, understanding and ownership of the criteria by which schools are judged but there is an element of risk as expectations are raised, sensitive issues explored and negative feelings voiced. Schools are small communities constrained by time and resources and there may be a tension between ownership and collaboration and decision making which the head teacher could do more efficiently while the teachers get on with their job.

The organisational climate, leadership style, time available and the way in which self-evaluation is introduced contribute to its perception and effect. The expertise and experience of other professionals such as psychologists and scientists and the ever expanding literature on accelerated learning, neuro - linguistic programming etc. can help schools to acquire the necessary high expectations ideals and skills, '*providing an important and necessary complement to the insights of the internal stakeholders and school effectiveness researchers.*' [MacBeath, 1999 p20].

It would appear from some reports by local authorities that self-evaluation by teachers and schools has been widely accepted across the U.K. for some time [James, 1982; Elliot, 1980/ 81] and that self-evaluation is now well established in schools [SOEID, 1999]. However, this writer's observations that some local schools become involved at a very superficial level is supported by HMI and OfSTED when reporting on the effectiveness of self-evaluation as part of the inspection process for individual schools.

It is central to the development of effective schools [Sutton, 1994] and becoming involved can enhance autonomy and independence and render curriculum management and organisation more efficient and effective. This researcher agrees that self-evaluation can improve communication, establish a shared vision and engage support but its success depends on consideration, tact, open discussion and respect for individuality. Since evaluation is associated with judging worth, skills in analysis, interviewing, observation, teamwork and communication are important [Holly et al, 1987]. It is a powerful technique and a positive process which meets individual and collective needs but there are many other benefits. Self-evaluation is diagnostic [Reid, Hopkins and Holly, 1987], impacts learning and teaching and helps identify success and build on good practice [Holly et al, 1987]. As a catalyst for change linking staff, curriculum, collaboration and school development, it empowers those involved and can help increase client satisfaction, improve morale in the profession and contribute to the sense of ownership which is vital for effective change [SOEID, 1999; Fullan, 1982]. In addition self-evaluation:

- encourages participative and collegial leadership [Elliot, 1981]

- can increase productivity, focus on development, complement restructuring and review and meet the ever-increasing demands of stakeholders [Herman and Winters, 1992]
- helps market the school or probe stakeholders' opinions of the service provided and how it might be improved
- provides a process to make the policies and practices of schools more public and places authority for change with those who are most accountable for educational outcomes
- can protect the right to privacy since participants can retain anonymity

With a clearer understanding of the effects and benefits of self-evaluation and its management in different contexts, insights emerge about the best ways of organising and conducting it to improve quality. This researcher accepts that, due to their close involvement with their schools, teachers and pupils have an excellent understanding of quality and supports MacBeath's [1999] argument that sharing ideas and good practice on a collegial basis is much more effective than a system which relies on the routines of an external body to police its schools. Effective self-evaluation depends on the integrity of the process and this can be influenced by the audience and improved by the development of a standard set of criteria [Elliot, 198O]. This researcher is aware of the value of using a critical friend and the potential for education authorities, HMI and research networks to act as a sounding board and provide advice and information [Grace, 1998]. Discussions with a group of Irish head teachers as part of this research confirmed that contributions of a supportive, credible, critical friend had brought an additional element of objectivity and

experience to their task which they believed helped minimise self-justification and delusion. In the case-study on development planning which forms part of this research a representative of the local authority performs the function of critical friend.

Many issues need to be considered when establishing self-evaluation schemes including bias, subjectivity, threat, clarity of purpose and the challenges and benefits for schools. As previously discussed, there can be tensions between internal and external mechanisms. The stimulus to become involved in self-evaluation may arise from intrinsic professionalism, curiosity and concern for children or the extrinsic pressures of accountability and statutory responsibilities but self-evaluation driven solely by political motives *'unaccompanied by a genuine commitment to its educational value'* [MacBeath 1999 p106] will fail.

Evaluation is rarely prejudice free and HM Inspectors and this head teacher are aware of the advantages of securing the ideological high ground by showing the school in the best light [Coleman and Collinge, 1995]. Motivation for using self-evaluation may include preparation for external inspection, accountability, improvement of school management and structures, school planning, curriculum development and improvements to learning and teaching. Simons [1979] sees the evaluators' role as simply describing what is happening but the reality is that self evaluation in schools can lead to politically based recommendations for change by policy makers, the Government, the opposition or the press.

Challenges

Self-evaluation has its limitations. Simply gathering data will not lead to improvement and, in the experience of this researcher, self-review must remain closely linked to teaching and learning or teachers will not enter into it again. The findings must make sense and be dependable so validity, reliability and manageability are extremely important. It is best entered into voluntarily by staff committed to its success since where head teachers volunteer for self-evaluation, staff involvement may seem compulsory. Mandatory and totalitarian schemes can lead to subversion of the process and an account that is merely a response to pressure may be half hearted, distorted and defensive. In addition:

- it must be rigorous to refute accusations of an introspective and cosy approach
- staff may consider an account of the business of a school to be less important than the monitoring of policies and practices
- if it is compulsory and leads to a report there may be an implication that the external influence will render the evaluation more thorough and comprehensive
- commitment is influenced by the level of understanding of what is required, the exposure resulting from any written report and the extent to which the exercise is considered worthwhile or judgmental
- staff may feel uneasy, defensive and vulnerable about parents or pupils judging their skills, attitudes and competence
- schools can lack expertise in evaluation, and staff are often reluctant to embrace it

as an integral part of normal practice. This has implications for teacher-training institutions and staff development in Scottish schools. Head teachers need to

ensure that their management style and the climate in the school encourages open discussion and collaborative approaches.

- openly admitting to weaknesses and inefficiencies may not be considered to be in the school's interest so *external* matters for improvement may be highlighted in audits such as improvements to buildings, uptake of business placements etc. rather than teaching approaches or the curriculum

Purposes of Self Evaluation

Schools are very different so there are major issues surrounding generalisability, measuring the effects of context, and conflicting perceptions of the primary purpose of self-evaluation. It may help to enforce standards on staff but it is not immediately appealing in terms of cost effectiveness and requires a highly effective teaching force trained in the process of institutional review. Effective self-evaluation requires time, energy, resources and training and works best within a positive culture of collegiality, co-operation, communication and fraternity where professional development and self respect go hand in hand. Although this smacks of idealism, it is this researcher's experience that the more involved in self-evaluation a staff becomes the more likely it is that this culture will develop. It is important that change is seen to arise from involvement, that financial resources are used to provide staff cover and materials and that everyone is encouraged to become involved. Participants must be aware of the challenges associated with insider review and be willing to view aspects of school life through fresh eyes. Analysis is not easy - gathering evidence is time consuming and it is difficult to be objective when making judgements which involve colleagues - but the involvement of teachers in a

continuous cycle of collective self-review has enormous benefits. It makes the best use of contextual knowledge and examples of good practice and enables schools to develop their own indicators of quality and effectiveness to evaluate strengths and weaknesses and set targets for academic progress, pupil satisfaction and good relationships. Successful self-evaluation depends on the development of interpersonal and negotiating skills, good organisation, a leadership style which fosters teamwork and encourages a shared approach, and a clear understanding of the range of methodologies, which can be employed. It is vital that self-evaluation findings are acted on and that it becomes an established practice for institutional and professional development otherwise participants will become discouraged.

Some observers are of the opinion that evaluation is always delivered from biased origins [House, 1973] and that acceptance of the findings is dependent on the recipient's subjective position. The purpose certainly affects the outcome [Simons, 1984] and tension between improvement and rendering public account can detract from its success. It is essential that schools evaluate and improve their own educational and institutional practices and contribute to professional growth and development. However, dissatisfaction and concern about professional reputations may affect thoroughness if, despite assurances of confidentiality, staff see themselves as the subject of the evaluation rather than the evaluators. The routine monitoring which is an integral part of self-evaluation can help schools respond to accountability demands and complement external inspection but early studies highlighted feelings of threat and defensiveness by participants when it was used for this purpose. Self-evaluation carried out by the staff as

an audit but subsequently used to inform an inspection report signals accountability rather than development as the priority and this can be counter-productive, resulting in resentment and an unwillingness to become involved in an honest way in the future [Simons, 1981; 1987]. Ambiguity may cause teachers to be even more cautious and selective as witnessed by this researcher when a head teacher colleague voiced concern that the staff had 'turned against her' prior to external inspection because the existing self evaluation findings were to be utilised.

Developments often have educational and political roots e.g. with pay and contract negotiations accountability can develop from a concern for the curriculum to become an evaluation of the teacher. This causes some to decline to participate because they feel professionally threatened - particularly middle managers who see themselves as responsible for the way things are and therefore liable to criticism. Failing schools may be a reflection of an ineffective head teacher and staff in this situation may be enthusiastic about self-evaluation in order to expose problems.

Improving Learning and Teaching

There is continuing debate surrounding school effectiveness but the key test of school improvement and the main purpose for self evaluation is whether the investment in staff development and enhancing schools' culture results in improved learning and teaching.

Self-evaluation is at its most potent at classroom level. In the researcher's school teachers and pupils regularly review their own work and parents are encouraged to evaluate new resources, discuss procedures and changes and comment on the quality of

completed homework tasks. Investigating the quality of learning in this way provides an insight which can encourage parents to look at how learning in the home and community can be used to support that of the school and help pupils to analyse their own learning patterns.

'When young people begin to ask themselves the question 'how good a learner am I? the self-evaluation question comes full circle and the contribution of school effectiveness research is put to the test' [MacBeath et al, 1995 p791].

Many teachers are committed to critical reflection as the basis of professional development. In the researcher's school this self-review is complemented by an agreed programme of monitoring and evaluation by senior staff. Class teachers are involved in peer and self-evaluation with colleagues and constantly review their own performance to consider how a lesson might be delivered more successfully, a topic improved on and students' progress maximised. Structured self-evaluation of pupil's work, programmes of study, forward plans, course materials, policies, guidelines and staff development all contribute to improvements in learning and teaching.

School Planning

Self evaluation can be an important component of school planning to help clarify and achieve aims and objectives through corporate, collaborative effort to evolve policy and plans from the developing needs of the school community [Irish DES, 1999]. A case-study on school planning is included in chapter 10 of this thesis and highlights the

importance of a positive climate and full consultation regarding evaluation criteria and how the information collected will be used. Staff can feel threatened, '*where the parameters of the evaluation are not explicit under an agreed development plan, teachers may be uncertain about what precisely are the targets at which their school is aiming'* [Rogers and Badham, 1992 p.4]. Real change takes time [Mortimore, 1991] but development planning can present a means of supporting a school's educational philosophy, setting priorities and targets, reviewing progress and controlling direction and pace. Development plans make assumptions about the future which can be undermined by external factors so there is a need for contingency and flexibility [Jenkins, 1991]. From a practical stance, self evaluation can only succeed if the outcomes are worthwhile, limited in focus, light on data collection and make maximum use of available information to make best use of time, effort and resources.

Quality Assurance

Although Ball, [1987, p.154] claims that *'quality assurance and school improvement is everybody's business'* the writer's practical experience is that quality assurance is often associated with accountability and deemed by many to be the responsibility of school management, education authorities and HM inspectors.

Quality assurance is about maintaining and improving standards. With continuing curricular change, increased accountability and budgetary responsibility following the 1988 Education Act and the 2000 Education [Scotland] Act, the Government placed specific responsibilities on education authorities to effectively monitor schools.

Consequently, the Scottish Office promotes a 'quality culture' using HMI benchmark information and this is emphasis on *quality* is reinforced by the new quality indicators [HGIOS 2002] which will assist with the collection, publication and review of data and the identification/dissemination of good practice. Within this culture 'value-added' is measured using quantitative and qualitative approaches which give control, autonomy and ownership to teachers [Simons, 1984], provide access to an account of a school's work and a way of monitoring policies and practices and informing decision making. The evaluators' role should be to report issues impartially rather than recommend or pass judgement and the boundaries must be negotiated with an awareness of the target audience.

School leaders must develop a climate of confidentiality, trust and professional respect if self-evaluation is to be successful in improving objectivity, collegiality, communication, professional development, and egalitarianism [discussed more fully in a later section]. Some teachers lack the confidence to take part in participative decision making while others do not readily become involved. In the researcher's school this is overcome to some extent by encouraging less inexperienced staff to work with stage partners for forward planning, cross marking national test scripts and delivering environmental studies topics. Colleagues are encouraged to join committees to monitor budgetary matters, arrange social events and take part in working parties or focus groups at school, cluster and authority level. Open discussion, brainstorming, SWOT and force field analysis etc. are used regularly as a means of involving the whole staff in curriculum development and building up confidence. Ensuring that experiences of collaborative

approaches are good and that changes arise from involvement has helped embed self-evaluation firmly in the culture of the school.

Bruce [1999] recognised the strong public commitment of the Scottish Office to the concept of self-evaluation and the next section focuses on the benefits of developing a framework for this in order to maximise school effectiveness. 'How Good Is Our School' [1996, 2002] is included as one way of helping schools to assess strengths and weaknesses using the same performance indicators as HM Inspectors.

Chapter 5: Frameworks

Many researchers concur that it is helpful to have a framework for self-evaluation and this chapter begins by describing some early approaches. It goes on to discuss *How Good Is Our School* [1996 and 2002] which provides a structure for rigorous self-evaluation and collegial effort and is used in many Scottish schools. It is the basis for the Target Setting Initiative [SOEID, 1997] and has been adapted for an English context through *Schools Speak For Themselves* [MacBeath et al, 1996]. This section also includes a brief discussion about *Total quality Management* [Sallis, 1993].

External evaluation is important but it is debatable whether standards have risen in Scottish schools simply due to HM inspections or in other parts of the U.K. purely as a result of 'special measures' or Ofsted reports. The trend towards decentralisation, coupled with an emphasis on school focused development and increasing demands for accountability, have led to the adoption of schemes for self-evaluation across the U.K. and Europe [MacBeath et al, 1999].

Process frameworks using performance indictors are increasingly used to help schools audit, plan for change and provide structures to give shape and coherence to the development culture. The indicators of performance used must be sensible, able to be modified to meet the needs of individual establishments and build on the experience, vision and understanding of teachers to avoid deskilling and deprofessionalisation. As discussed earlier in this paper, measuring outcomes must be approached sensitively since

there can be a perception of reflecting on the quality of teaching and learning and therefore open to corruption [Cannell, 1987].

Early Approaches

Early LEA schemes included *Keeping the School Under Review* [ILEA, 1977], *GRIDS* [1984] and Hopkins and Bollen's matrix [Hopkins, 1991]. These were adapted by many local authorities as structured checklists which linked components in the self-evaluation process and offered a practical means of evaluating change and development. They generally involved a review to understand the organisational processes for effective management of change and emphasised the benefits of collaboration, democracy and systematic planning, through self-evaluation on the climate of the school [Friere, 1970; Fullan, 1985; Hopkins 1990].

How Good our School?

How Good is Our School? [SOEID, 1996, 2002] provides a coherent, consistent and flexible self-evaluation framework to help schools improve. With involvement, teachers' commitment to supporting developments increases and this is perhaps the most vital contribution that school effectiveness research can make [MacBeath, 1999]. *How Good is Our School?* has become a seminal and influential publication which is firmly embedded in the processes of development planning and appraisal to provide a means of introducing greater rigour in the form of quantitative and qualitative targets as set out in *Standards and quality in Scottish Schools* [SOEID 1996]. Strengths and areas for

improvement are compared with a wide range of indicators identified by the Scottish Executive and HMI as central to the interests of stakeholders.

Shared decision making is common practice in many Scottish primary schools and *How Good is Our School?* encourages collaborative planning and implementation within establishments and for those involved in supporting them. Improvement requires intense interaction, communication, positive pressure, support and new understandings so such collegiality [McCrone, 2000] in schools must be underpinned by clearly understood procedures [e.g. for brainstorming, respecting the opinions of others and resolving impasse]. There needs to be genuine concern for the individuals taking part and monitoring systems need to be evaluated constantly to ensure that indicators used maintain their reliability and contribute to the teaching and learning experience. *How Good is Our School?* has recently been updated [2002] with quality indicators. These reflect more accurately the requirements of new legislation such as the 'Standards In Scotland's Schools etc. Act' [2000] which placed an increased emphasis on consultation and introduced the National Improvement Framework.

Target Setting

Politically, '*self- evaluation sits uneasily with the new managerialism and with central demand for change'* [Bruce, 1999 p.402]. The Target Setting initiative [SOEID, 1998] was based on *How Good is Our School?* [1996] and used performance [now *quality*] indicators to focus on standards and improvement by comparing the national test results of establishments with similar characteristics. Progress was measured by the proportion

of pupils meeting the targets so these needed to be valid, reliable and manageable and the whole process depended on positive attitudes and climate. Although HMI and many informed professionals viewed this as a model of good practice, implementation in schools has been sporadic and there has been some dissent:

> *'Introducing the target setting framework will in fact divert energy and attention from the need to continue to explore the nature of genuine, lasting improvement in schools. A school which honestly and courageously assesses its strengths and weaknesses as recommended in 'How Good Is Our School' and then prepares an agenda for improvement has a real chance of success. There is an ironic, and hopefully unintended danger that the current nature and scale of central directives will put such improvement at risk.* [Bruce, 1999 p.403].

Raising Standards -Setting Targets [1998] rejected league tables because questionable comparisons were causing difficulties for school managers and staff. Teachers were becoming reluctant to participate in collegiate activities such as development planning. The league tables were replaced by simple and quantifiable targets with which to compare current levels of performance with similar establishments. However, this researcher is aware that, within the education authority, comparisons of the achievement of these targets are now becoming a source of tension.

Schools Speak For Themselves

A commission from The National Union of Teachers in England and Wales resulted in the publication of *Schools Speak For Themselves* [MacBeath et al, 1995], a national

framework for self-evaluation for England and Wales, which reflected the principles of the Scottish *How Good Is Our School* [SOEID, 1996, 2002]. It was based on

'...an overarching philosophy centred around value judgements about people, relationships, learning, organisations teaching and teachers; procedural guidelines; criteria or indicators...' [MacBeath, 1999 p.104].

The approach supported the need for evidence of progress, drawing on the collective wisdom of teachers, the work of social scientists and those involved in scientific research into how learning takes place.

This researcher agrees with MacBeath that much significant and lasting change is teacher led. Learning is a multifaceted social and emotional activity which thrives in a supportive, gregarious climate. Often the most effective learning is a combination of school and home experiences, which build on prior knowledge and understanding, enquiry, problem solving, active involvement, discovery and simply through pupils analysing and learning from mistakes through self-evaluation. The implications of this are that home/school partnerships need to be strengthened and the curriculum designed to capitalise on the benefits of interactive teaching methods and an appreciation of pupil learning styles.

Total Quality Management

'Total Quality Management' [Henry, 1982] presented a philosophy and methodology to assist schools in managing change. It was based on the view that quality is about doing ordinary things extraordinarily well and about customer <u>delight</u> rather than satisfaction.

As a coherent and integrated quality assurance system TQM strove for incremental improvement rather than giant quality leaps, *'it is about living, loving, passion, fighting, cherishing, nurturing, struggling, crying, laughing'* [Henry, 1982 p125]. Depending on powerful strategies to deal with a competitive climate it demanded strong leadership, motivation, empowerment and involvement of staff rather than hierarchical imposition. TQM was based on self and peer assessment, institutional self-review, negotiated evaluation of goals and recognition that motivation, expertise and enthusiasm rather than appraisal and inspection were the influences that assured quality. Following the Education Reform Act [1988], there was an upsurge of interest in monitoring the educational process through performance indicators [P.I.'s]. These were sometimes criticised as merely providing a rudimentary guide to the efficiency of a process, the quality of learning or the effectiveness of an institution in meeting its customers' needs. Those wanting to go beyond this are looking to approaches like TQM to improve standards of service. Although there is agreement that schools should deliver a quality education service there is a dilemma over what that actually means. As highlighted in chapter two and five, quality is a dynamic concept which can be difficult to define, measure and interpret - its presence is sometimes taken for granted but its absence obvious. In TQM quality can be absolute and equate with perfection or be employed as a relative concept by which the end product can be judged as up to standard and meet the needs and wants of the customer. Some quality assurance systems support the consistent production of a good product and its fitness for use but educational outcomes are different since they depend on a wide range of factors such as teacher skill, pupil interest and family support.

Undoubtedly, there are benefits in sharing management tasks and a participative and consultative management style is essential for self-evaluation to work. Using a framework like HGIOS can alleviate potential difficulties and help ensure that collaboration and consultation takes place. Wallace [1988] is among those who suggest that managerial roles and tasks should be shared and collaborative and consultative procedures put in place to facilitate good communication. Judging effectiveness is highly sensitive and many teachers are uncomfortable with bottom up *and* top-down approaches - with being evaluated and with evaluating and providing feedback. The need for training in self-evaluation was a recurring comment from the teachers' questionnaires [appendix 1b]. Any tensions over roles and autonomy must be minimised since they affect the climate of the school [Campbell, 1984]. To overcome these the researcher has involved staff in establishing an agreed policy which sets out an annual programme of classroom visits to monitor jotters, evaluate lessons, use of resources etc. The focus of the evaluation is pre-determined, based on the quality indicators from *How Good Is Our School?* and followed up with verbal and written feedback. The policy encourages self and peer-evaluation and this has helped to build trust and break down barriers.

Chapter 6: Climate

This section seeks to contribute to the hypothesis that there is a strong link between self evaluation and school effectiveness and that a positive climate is a recurring characteristic and indeed a prerequisite of effective and high achieving schools [Rutter, 1979; DES1977; Purkey and Smith, 1983; Mortimore et al 1988].

One of the dominant features of an effective school is that it values reflection with a view to improvement [Schon, 1983]. To gauge the contribution of self evaluation to school effectiveness it is necessary to concentrate on the process as well as the product so the school ethos must be one within which audit can be accepted as a fundamental professional characteristic of the effective school and teacher [SOED, 1992]. The positive climate essential to achieve optimum value and assist with the development of this process can only occur where there is teacher goodwill and high morale to enable self-evaluation to be carried out efficiently and effectively.

'Climate is all. Self-evaluation can only work when there is a climate for it and when the conditions are right' [MacBeath, 1999 p108].

The researcher agrees that characteristics of certain schools make a difference to pupil progress and is aware that many differences in outcome can be related to a school's culture and climate. This climate can be affected by concerted action to strive towards high expectations and recognition of the benefits of collaboration and partnership [Boyd 1997, SOEID, 1998]. In effective schools the climate sustains self-evaluation, reflection

and strong leadership and a high level of consensus regarding aims, goals, expectations, rules and social order supports the capacity to sustain and manage educational change. A sense of community nurtures collective planning and collegial relationships and they have the capacity to stimulate, absorb and manage change with the support of frequent evaluation to further improve performance.

Climate, ownership and a shared vision of a better future are key components of school effectiveness, and these are affected by the quality of procedures, management, teamwork, the contribution of stakeholders, the attitudes of staff and pupils and leadership at all levels. Effective schools are often characterised by a common purpose, interdependence and collegiality amongst pupils, staff and community, but achieving these ideals in a pluralistic society with ambitious plans for educational improvement can be difficult.

As an important aspect of the hidden curriculum, climate is often reflected in the organisation and specific objectives of establishments and affected by behaviour, values and atmosphere. Schools were traditionally characterised by formal relationships, loyalty to the head teacher and high consensus but demands placed on teachers due to increased managerialism in the 1970's have weakened this position considerably. Some researchers would claim that teaching, rather than climate, is the major influence on school effectiveness and that the more structured and reflective the teacher's approach, the more likely that students' academic performance will improve. It would be difficult to support claims that self-evaluation is the *single* most important factor and this

researcher supports the premise that reflection, organisation, effective teaching and learning and a positive climate are complementary rather than exclusive characteristics of effectiveness. In a positive climate good teaching is enhanced by the relationship between the pupil and teacher and better learning can take place. This success can be a catalyst for further improvement and higher expectations by students, parents and teachers which, in turn, can have an effect on the reputation of teachers and the school in the community, raise morale and bring about further benefits in the ethos or climate.

The trust, collaboration and agreed purposes and outcomes, which can be realised through self-evaluation, can have the effect of encouraging ownership and pride in a way that would not be possible with top-down approaches. If self-evaluation is to remain a key priority and central to any national approach to school improvement, the Government and local authorities must provide the stimulus and funding to encourage it and establish a 'bottom-up' evaluation culture at Council, school and classroom level. A 'learning school' [SEED, 2000] has high expectations of achievement; ownership of change; widely shared goals and values; effective communication; a focus on learning; effective leadership; real home school partnership and relationships based on respect.

If school improvement is the responsibility of the whole school community, expectations must be clear and the climate such that people are receptive to critical review and development at all levels. The ultimate sanction rests with the participants and the degree of co-operation by staff will determine the success of self-evaluation so it is crucial that action and positive benefits are seen to emerge from the process. Some years ago as a

newly appointed head teacher, this researcher experienced the difficulties of introducing self-evaluation in a small school in an extremely deprived area where the climate had become negative and resistant. The small staff had become insecure and overwhelmed by the pace of change - the new 5-14 programme was being introduced, the move to a new school building within five years had just been announced and there was further anxiety caused by the retiral of the previous head teacher and the appointment of her replacement. The process of breaking down barriers and building trust was a slow one. The existing building was old and in a state of disrepair so a first step was to improve the staff room, have a general clear out and approach the authority to have the school painted. A review of administrative and planning procedures and improvements to classroom organisation reduced some of the pressure. Confidence was boosted through a 5-14 staff development programme and ensuring that the teachers received as much praise and support as possible.

The staff helped identify priorities for school planning and this initial participation in self-review resulted in tangible improvements which encouraged further involvement. In a similar way to that described in the case study in chapter ten, this helped develop ownership and a shared vision of the benefits to be had from the many changes which were taking place. Personnel changes resulted in the appointment of two enthusiastic new teachers and visits to other establishments to see good practice and talk to colleagues were arranged. Gradually the climate changed and the staff became much more self-assured and positive.

Building and maintaining a positive climate is a fundamental task for leadership. Parents generally have faith in the school which their child attends, but the climate created by the media tends to be one of public dissatisfaction with education so it is important that schools promote a positive image for themselves and for the education service in order to improve perceptions.

Self-evaluation takes up a considerable amount of time and this can prove difficult for primary schools where many head teachers provide absence cover to the detriment of the management aspects of their work [Southworth, 1995]. Good management and budgetary procedures combined with clear remits to ensure that there is no misunderstanding of roles and responsibilities can help overcome this. The influence of leadership in creating the conditions for self-evaluation will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 7: Leadership

This chapter begins by describing some attributes associated with effective leaders. It goes on to discuss some of the functions and structures of leadership including the leadership role of the head teacher, links between leadership and management and the controversy surrounding the uniqueness of educational management. The section ends with a discussion of the benefits for leadership and effectiveness of developing a shared vision within a motivating, stress free environment.

Effective Leadership

Early constrained and superficial views about leadership tended to emphasise the need for formal authority to achieve goals. Definitions often focused on power and decision-making [Dubin, 1968] and checklists and theories outlining desirable traits were [and remain] popular [SEED, 2000]. Leaders directed and co-ordinated [Fiedler, 1967], were able to initiate structures to meet goals and objectives [Lipham, 1964] and guide staff towards their accomplishment [Stodgill, 1974]. Hargreaves [1991] used research evidence from Rutter [1979] and the DES [1986] to stress the importance of leadership and this continues to emerge as a key component of effective schools [SEED, 2000]. Within Scottish education there has traditionally been a strong emphasis on hierarchy and formal leadership with the effect leaders can become, '*far removed in their perceptions as well as their functions from the daily task of teaching pupils in classrooms and the ideals of 'partnership, co-operation, consensus and participation'* [Humes, 1986 p1000].

Gender, ability, social dynamics, relationships, social class and ethnic background influence pupil progress. The quality and style of leadership is affected by context - school size, the number of ancillary workers, relationships, teamwork - as well as the demands of the local authority and Government policy. It is also influenced by situations such as the age and design of the building, catchment area, curricular strengths and the experience of staff. However, some leaders appear to guide their schools more effectively than others in spite of difficulties. Effective schools are committed to constant improvement and continually test practices against principles and policy and effective leaders are the lynchpins of these schools [Mahoney, 1998]. In the researcher's experience the most effective leaders have 'people skills'. They tend to be skilled in negotiation, communication and compromise and strive to establish an explicit and guiding value system which can assist with the complexity, turbulence and demands of school life. High quality school leaders are not necessarily head teachers but they are the driving force in taking a school forward and involving other stakeholders.

For policy makers the components of an effective school are axiomatic and can help justify decisions. Good leaders understand needs and are actively involved in curriculum discussions, development of guidelines, methodology and training without exerting total control over the rest of the staff. They assert their leadership when appropriate and are sufficiently knowledgeable about classroom practice, the progress of individual pupils and the abilities of teaching staff. Effective leadership is associated with high expectations, positive home school partnerships, and environmental factors which cumulatively provide the conditions in which schools operate [Purkey and Smith, 1983;

Mortimore, 1988; Tizard, 1999]. Leaders often initiate structure by defining their own role, establishing clear patterns of organisation, communication and procedures and employing a variety of flexible approaches for different situations.

Describing school leadership is difficult and one explanation can overemphasise some aspects whilst underplaying others. It is perhaps helpful to consider the *dimensions* of leadership such as its functions and structures and the role of the head teacher.

Functions

Many American and British researchers consider leadership and management crucial to good organisation and communication and emphasise the importance of developing an atmosphere of trust, collaboration, shared responsibility and consultancy [Day, Whitaker & Johnstone, 1990]. There is broad agreement that the functions of leadership should include high expectations, a positive climate, a clear academic focus and mission, motivation and feedback [Renihan & Renihan 1984]. Management teams must be supportive and sensitive and head teachers should understand the needs of the school, have a clear purpose and direction and be visible, willing to listen, understanding, considerate and sympathetic.

Structures

Interpretations and structures of leadership vary across Europe and in some countries there is no obvious leader. This researcher is aware that it is difficult to make comparisons regarding leadership functions due to differing support systems and the

strong influence of culture and politics. The Swiss have a lead teacher who takes on minor administrative tasks. In Holland head teachers have responsibility for a cluster of schools but Dutch school effectiveness research does not include leadership as a significant factor and dependence on the head teacher is frowned upon. Denmark has a flat promoted structure and a democratic tradition of taking turns at being in charge but leaders are managers and have little influence on teaching or methodology. During this research a Spanish head teacher respondent expressed concern that having been voted in as head by the rest of the staff he had merely gained temporary unpaid responsibility and an increased chance of litigation against him.

The Head teacher as Leader

Purposeful leadership has been a recurring feature in the many lists of skills and qualities characteristically associated with effective schools and since the 1970's there has been a great deal of research into the role of the primary head teacher [Sammons et al, 1997; Mortimore et al, 1988; Rutter, 1979; DES, 1977; Purkey and Smith, 1983]. The expectations of a diverse group of parents governors, school board, local authority staff, HMI etc. are sometimes conflicting and difficult to satisfy and there are many constraints and pressures on head teachers. Self evaluation demands a participatory management style and a climate which encourages shared decision making [Nuttall, 1985] so educational leadership should not *solely* be equated with headship [Grace, 2001].

Purposeful leadership is about managing people so that they give their best [SOEID, 1989] and is considered by Ofsted to be one the key factors in improvement and success.

It should not be monopolised or hierarchical [Murgatroyd and Gray et al, 1984] and technical, human, educational, symbolic and cultural forces must be widely dispersed for excellence to be attained [Sergiovani, 1984]. Reviewing effectiveness is a major task and the leader's commitment to change ultimately determines the direction and pace of innovation.

Effective head teachers are enthusiastic, inspirational, committed and care passionately about the school, its members and its reputation, often 'managing by walking about' to promote their values and ideals at every opportunity [Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991; Brighouse and Woods, 1999]. They articulate the guiding beliefs and philosophy of their schools and the fascination which they hold for their establishments. The feeling of ownership and support by staff seems to help them to be better leaders [Coulson, 1986; Southworth, 1995].

It is difficult to be expert in all of the dimensions of leadership and deal with the unexpected but good head teacher leaders need to combine long-term considerations with more immediate priorities and have the ability to tackle a high intensity of tasks with frequent interruptions. The management structure is flat and because the head and promoted members are often the only people with non contact time, the leadership and management role regularly has to be abandoned for tasks such as absence cover, releasing teachers and meeting visitors. Since intentions are regularly overtaken by unplanned, unexpected or urgent situations [Southworth, 1985] a systematic approach to management can be difficult [Clerkin, 1985]. Improvement depends on good leadership,

and perceptive professional development and, as one of the few people released from classroom duties in a primary school, the head is well placed to coordinate informal self-review.

Participation

Modern perspectives have generally been concerned with analysing what happens when decisions are made and people try to make sense of their work and there is a growing acceptance that leadership is too complex a challenge to be restricted to those few with formal authority [Holly and Southworth, 1989]. A school's mission is contingent on staff involvement and commitment, participation and collaboration so there are powerful reasons for the decentralisation of decision making and distributed leadership [Alexander 1984; Campbell 1985; Thomas 1987]. Head teachers must encourage consultation, teamwork and participation to orchestrate leadership within the school and community [Southworth, 1995], taking the role of 'first among equals' at times and participant / collaborator when appropriate.

Teachers in effective schools are involved in planning and developing curricular guidelines and consulted on important matters such as spending and school policy [Nias et al, 1989]. In this researcher's school a participative management structure enables teachers and senior staff to take responsibility for particular areas of the curriculum and staff representatives share management decisions about spending, the school plan and other priorities. There is awareness of the parameters of decision-making, the difference between participation and consultation, and how consensus may be less achievable than

getting the consent of the majority. Within this shared approach to leadership the management team's role in supporting developments is affected by the head teacher's priorities and influences [Mortimore et al, 1988; ILEA, 1986] and their relationship is important as a model of collaboration for other staff to emulate. Shared perspectives regarding philosophy, mission, priorities and principles can help ensure optimum use of combined management skills to contribute to the organisation's health and resilience.

School Management

'*Leadership and management are not the same'* [Morrison 2001 pp392] but they remain closely related concepts [Hoyle, 1972; SEED, 2000] and are essential if attainment and standards are to be raised, organisation improved, progress monitored and teachers' skills developed. Management style is the result of a complex interaction of school culture, power, authority and relationships [McCrone, 2000] and '*is the biggest single factor in making quality improvements in school'* [Day, Whitaker & Johnstone, 1990 p2].

Although schools experience periods of stability followed by sudden change, much research is focused on management styles associated with maintaining effective schools rather than the transformation of a poor school into a good one. The notion of a strong relationship between style and effectiveness is attractive to school leaders [Mortimore, 1988, Nias, 1980] but despite the current emphasis on collegiality many schools still display elements of bureaucratic, rational and political management models.

There is some evidence to suggest that collegiality operates at a superficial level due to difficulties with salary structures, delegation, curriculum planning, and time given to carry out management activities [Bornett 1980, Rushby and Richards 1982, ILEA 1986].

School management is much more than efficient day-to-day administration [HMI, 2000]. Because school managers must be trained in comprehensive and inclusive ways, [Grace, 2000] education authorities have a monitoring, improving and supporting role to provide resources and training and facilitate networking. Training for effective monitoring, delegation, teamwork and communication were built into management training for head teachers by the Scottish Office Education Department in the 1990's. The Scottish Qualification For Headship [1997] and the National Qualification for Head teachers expressed leadership and management in terms of competences '*to judge wisely; decide appropriately; frame and solve problems; seek and use information; think strategically, show political insight'* [Casteel et al., 1997 p 47/48].

However, with such an approach there is a danger of conformity rather than creativity and the production of safe, dull, conventional head teachers or superb management technicians bereft of vision for staff, students or the organisation. Educational management studies are important but the moral, ethical and spiritual responsibilities highlighted by Critical Leadership Studies must also be considered [Grace, 2000]. Continuing to achieve a high standard, encouraging satisfying relationships and providing opportunities for students to learn in an ever-changing social and political environment is a skilled management task.

Educational Management

There is considerable debate about the extent to which management of educational institutions differs from the management of other organisations. Some simply view schools as alternative settings for the application of generic principles which are just as relevant to educational establishments as they are to industrial and commercial organisations. Relating the four classic functions of management: finance, production, marketing and personnel to school organisation they dismiss the idea that education requires separate treatment. Greenfield, [1989] however, argues that in schools it is individuals rather than organisations who set goals and that it is wrong to assume that similar dynamics exist. This researcher agrees with Bush, [1989] that it is inappropriate to introduce industrial techniques and that educational management is sufficiently distinctive to merit separate training provision. Assessing, defining and measuring personal development and relationships within a collegial environment is a more uncertain process than the maximising of profit by a hierarchy represented by a board or senior management.

Vision

Successful leadership is dependent on personal attributes, the ability to meet specific educational objectives and a less precise cluster of understandings, beliefs and attitudes [Nias et al 1989]. Outstanding leaders articulate an energising vision which needs to be supported, sustained, nourished and reinforced by all in the school community. Underpinned by a well-developed management expertise, the vision guides learning and teaching, policies, priorities, plans and procedures [Bennis and Nanus, 1985; HMI, 2000].

Research has consistently emphasised the importance of accomplishing tasks and building relationships among people in a process in which definitions of social order are found acceptable, implemented and re-negotiated [Hosking, 1988]. Potential leaders need to be developed [Beare, Caldwell, and Millikan, 1989] so that they can communicate this vision, empower people to innovate and create and plan the change process itself [Morgan 1988; Miles, 1987]. These are critical management competencies but there can be a tension between such empowerment and the flexibility needed to lead a school effectively. Communal leadership depends on an awareness of strengths and weaknesses and systems to encourage teambuilding through imagination, reflection, assessment, networking and negotiation [Duignan, 1988]. A primary head teacher must communicate this vision to the stakeholders - to influence others and be influenced by them.

Motivation

McCormick and James, [1983] characterise leaders as perceptive professional developers concerned with improving the curriculum and motivating staff, system maintainers, who preserve the existing order, keep up high standards and don't take risks for fear of the consequences and the basically inadequate.

Some view leadership as an innate, enduring attribute which motivates and influences [Fiedler, Chemers and Mahar, 1977] or 'situational' and changing with needs. 'Transforming' leaders build trust and ensure commitment to values by communicating their vision through collaboration and shared decision-making. They have a people and

a task focus which motivates staff to be more effective and behave in a particular way in return for benefits such as pay, security and promotion [Saal and Knight, 1988].

Motivation depends on clear goals, good networks of interpersonal relations and high quality decision-making processes. It can be improved through regular feedback and appreciation, ownership, shared decision making, improved job specifications and teamwork and hindered by role conflict, ambiguity, situation or personality. The leader's role is to mould the social influences to induce maximum 'followership' and performance, irrespective of formal position so success depends on knowledge, experience and negotiation skills to help reconcile competing goals [political management model]. Appraisal can be a motivating and confidence building experience which provides training as part of a lifelong process but if targets are described exclusively in relation to the school plan, the education service and systematic management rather than professional fulfilment for teachers within a learning culture, the needs of the organisation can compete with those of the individual.

Many other factors affect motivation such as the link between occupational stress and defective leadership or gender issues and the marginalisation of women leaders but, unfortunately, these cannot be fully explored within the scope of this thesis.

Chapter 8: Methodology

This section explores a range of approaches that were available to investigate the influence of self-evaluation on school effectiveness. It includes a justification of the chosen methodology and research style, discussion of issues such as reliability and validity and some of the difficulties associated with insider research.

Choosing The Methodology

Research design is a skilled activity requiring critical and creative thinking. Choosing a suitable methodology to investigate the influence of self-evaluation on school effectiveness required clarity of purpose, an understanding of the kinds of evidence needed and the skills required for data generation/collection and analysis. Initially, a review of existing research and literature helped identify key issues, crucial questions, and gaps in current knowledge and provided a basis for new findings, theories and principals which would shape the approach taken. Emerging themes were refined to improve and illuminate existing theories, express the intellectual puzzle and determine the best method of answering the research questions as outlined in chapter 1.

From a review of existing School Effectiveness literature assess what is:

- the current state of knowledge regarding effectiveness?
- the role and purposes of evaluation and the particular issues associated with self-evaluation?
- the perceived impact of leadership and climate on effectiveness?

Based on a small-scale case study and survey what perceptions do teachers and head teachers have of:

- increased effectiveness through self-evaluation?
- the benefits of a framework for self-evaluation?

Experimental or action research styles were inappropriate for the scale and purposes of the enquiry and the resources available and, though initially appealing, an ethnographic study was impractical due to time constraints and the level of participant observation involved [Cohen and Mannion, 1980; Goetz and Le Compte, 1984]. A survey presented the best way to solve this intellectual puzzle and the research would be improved by rich data about the activities and beliefs of participants within an educational context. The advantages offered by a survey approach greatly outweighed any potential disadvantages and enabled the researcher to:

- collect usable, comparable information
- employ quantitative or qualitative methods [Wilson, 1977]
- gather information to support the study using questionnaires, interviews, a documentary review, and observations
- focus on empirical data as well as theory
- investigate the views of a sufficiently wide range of respondents within the constraints of the study
- determine prevailing conditions and trends
- check validity and reliability

- identify reasons for particular social patterns
- emphasise fact and answer what? when? how? questions
- make adjustments as the research progressed

Interviews

There were sound ontological and epistemological reasons for using interviews to gather research information. Sharing the political features of real life and gathering information from participants in a controlled transactional manner was satisfying for the researcher and respondents, allowed an element of control and ownership and provided data which could be checked for validity and reliability by further discussion [Frankfort-Nachmias et al, 1996]. The semi-structured schedule offered a simple, flexible, adaptable and straightforward means of exploring the issues raised by the research questions, responding to contextual and situational issues and probing experiences, opinions and ideas [Wragg, 1981; Denscombe, 1998].

Such loosely structured and varied interviews were demanding for the researcher and provided many opportunities for inaccuracy, bias, subjectivity etc. but the dialogue enabled the varying perspectives to be represented more fully than rigidly standardised questions would have done. Being active and reflexive and aware of the mood of the interviews, questions were adapted and responses elicited in coherent and relevant ways using the research questions as a point of reference. The Irish head teachers had less experience of being involved in self-evaluation so for these interviews the breadth of issues discussed and the depth of responses varied and this was difficult for the

interviewer as some were determined to control the agenda by steering discussions into areas they were more comfortable with.

From a practical point of view the success of the interviews depended on:

- focused research questions
- social interaction skills, talking, listening, noting details, verbal and non- verbal cues, body language, recording, note taking etc.
- clarifying the nature, scope purpose and audience of the investigation
- assurances of anonymity and confidentiality
- attentiveness, sensitivity and tolerance
- avoidance of antagonising, upsetting or embarrassing questions
- prompting, probing, seeking clarification, checking for accuracy of interpretation

Insider Research

The researcher was aware that respondents might have had concerns that their professionalism or competence was being tested. Meeting interviewees in their own schools was time consuming but less threatening and gave the researcher an opportunity to gauge the ethos of the establishments visited. Initial plans to remain neutral and noncommittal proved impractical and the researcher broke with convention by participating in the discussions and believed that these were improved by this interaction. Some participants were colleagues so a relationship already existed but there was a danger that these may have felt obliged or of bias on the part of the researcher . The writer had the contextual advantage of knowing the politics of the school and the education authority very well and tried to minimise the effects of his own position, prejudices and preferences to provide fair and balanced interviews.

The Questionnaire

A further fifteen teacher colleagues were invited to complete a questionnaire based on the key areas identified by the research questions. The writer was aware of potential methodological problems associated with using volunteers e.g. lack of anonymity within a small group, replies influenced by relationships, professional reputations at stake, expertise being judged and difficulties over conclusions which are drawn regarding those who do not volunteer. Although there can be drawbacks to using questionnaires [Munn & Drever, 1990] their use strengthened the study by providing an appropriate, quick, economical, accurate and reliable means of gathering useful information to complement data gathered from other sources [Denscombe, 1993; Silverman, 1985]. By presenting a range of questions requiring varied depths of reply the researcher hoped to maintain the respondents' interest. The relatively small sample was quite in keeping with the nature of qualitative investigation and the climate in the school was open enough to allow for honest answers. There was no pressure to provide the 'correct' answer and all of the respondents were given full information about the purpose of the research and reassurances regarding its integrity. There was a high return rate with responses seemingly relatively free of contamination by 'interpersonal factors'. The excellent response rate signalled support for the researcher and was regarded as an indication of the effectiveness and appropriateness of the instrument. By getting out into the field the investigation benefited from a breadth of opinions at a particular time beyond those which could have been gleaned from tables, percentages and generalisations [Bastiani, 1987]. The questions established interpretations of the terms 'effectiveness' and 'self-evaluation' and were chosen to reflect some of the main themes being investigated such

as purpose, climate, leadership, rigour and the use of a framework like *How Good Is Our School?* [SOEID, 1996]. They were also designed to probe the experiences of 'chalk-face' respondents as self-evaluators and the value which they placed on it in terns of empowerment, reliability and validity, involving stakeholders and improving learning and teaching.

The Case Study

A Case Study presented an economical way to *'put flesh on the bones'* [Bell, 1987 p.6] of the survey, and provide further data by focusing on teachers involved in practical self-evaluation [see Case Study Chapter 10].

Literature Review

Government documents, journals, press reports, records and existing research helped to support and challenge evidence and ideas emerging from the questionnaires and interviews. These were checked for validity and reliability, furnished an account of how the major issues were historically regarded and provided valuable perspectives and vicarious experience for the researcher.

Research Styles

'Qualitative' and 'quantitative' are not necessarily mutually exclusive styles [Bell, 1987]. Any distinction may be associated more with the treatment of the data than with the research methods themselves and both often feature in a well-rounded investigation. For this study quantitative research was less appropriate and a qualitative methodology, with

emergent researcher involvement and discovery as the investigation moved forward presented the best way of investigating the research questions [Maykut and Morehouse, 1994].

Qualitative insights are descriptive and by 'indwelling' i.e. drawing on creative and critical skills [Scholes, 1989] can describe events as they unfold and establish the meaning that these might have for the participants. The distinctive characteristic lies with the collection, analysis *and refining* of data during the process through reflection [Denscombe, 1998] as understandings and patterns of behaviour are interpreted and tested as part of ongoing theory rather than statistical analysis [Glaser and Strauss, 1968]. This qualitative research was open to discovering new explanations rather than restricting scope and vision to whether a hypothesis based on existing theories had got it right.

The qualitative approach had the advantage that data and analysis were grounded in reality and provided richness and detail through an in-depth treatment of the research questions. Generalisability was difficult and inconsistencies, contradictions, ambiguities and alternative explanations caused frustration at times.

Validity

Validity, and reliability are as relevant to qualitative research as to any other approach. This investigation was based on face validity and focused on the sense made by the findings, the consistency of information gathered from different participants and how the conclusions would relate to current literature and existing knowledge and do justice to the

complexity of the phenomenon. From the outset there was acknowledgement that this interpretation was tentative and cautious and that the validity was bound up with the identity, background and beliefs of the researcher. Though a literature search and questionnaire might be expected to yield similar information no matter who organised them the reality was that previous research is interpreted in the light of current thinking and responses are affected by the educational climate so timing is crucial. Throughout the exercise alternative explanations were explored rather than accepting the one that fitted first and the methods triangulated to ensure consistency. As the study progressed some information was given back to the informants to help them identify with the research account.

Reliability

Reliability is concerned with the dependability of the measuring instruments [Kirk and Miller, 1986; Silverman, 1993; Miles and Huberman, 1994]. Ideally, research instruments should be as neutral in their effect as possible but the same interview schedule carried out by a different researcher can yield different results and conclusions due to the influence of 'self' in the interpretations. With this type of investigation it is legitimate that different conclusions may be drawn from the same methods due to the interpretative skills of the researcher [Maykut and Morehouse, 1994:34; Denscombe, 1998]. The level of reliability of the research was based on the aims and basic premises and detailed notes of decision making helped providing 'an audit trail' to describe the

process and conclusions [Lincoln and Guba, 1985]. The research is reliable since it was based on the 'four phase model' - intervention, discovery, interpretation and explanation [Kirk and Miller, 1986].

Qualitative researchers must be wary of misinterpretation of data. The methods used to gather it can be seen as threatening so care was taken to fully explain the purposes, scope and format of the interviews and questionnaires. At times, though the method to be used to collect evidence was clear, there was some uncertainty over which precise evidence to collect so the research questions were a constant point of reference. The researcher was aware that the most readily available or easily collected data is not always central to the educational enterprise and information collected for one purpose may not be valid for another.

Coding

Context is integral to this type of research but coding and categorising of field notes can decontextualise them so that that the meaning is lost or transformed. It is time-consuming and there can be over simplification in identifying themes or developing generalisations and a pressure to underplay or discard data that does not fit.

Initially, coding seemed inappropriate for this investigation since many of the questions were open-ended, however, at the analysis stage, the researcher realised its benefits for unitising and organising the information. Data was categorised from the transcripts [see p.83] and adjusted as patterns and processes, similarities and differences were

identified [Miles and Huberman, 1994:9]. Serial numbers were used to identify and distinguish one reply from another, ensure confidentiality and a degree of anonymity.

Emerging themes included aspects of evaluation and self-evaluation, best value, climate, school effectiveness and leadership. There were interesting side issues about the growth of private schools in Dublin, the role of the Irish Inspectorate and attitudes towards parental involvement and pupil choice within second level Irish schools but these had to be ignored for the time being because they were outwith the constraints of this study.

Sampling

The idea of a representative sample can be misleading. With random sampling confidence about information gathered can be proportional to the size of the study. A large sample with a diverse range of respondents could provide useful comparative data to strengthen evidence and perhaps even claim to reflect the views of all teachers but this would be far beyond the scope of this research. This investigation simply sought to apply a set of research questions to a relatively small group of respondents, gain some insight into their views and experiences of self evaluation and make comparisons with those of other researchers. It was a systematic approach based on a manageable and relevant sample [Edwards et al, 1994] and, typical of a qualitative investigation, the focus changed as the study progressed.

Selection of participants at the start of the research to reflect the developing nature of the study proved difficult. Initially the involvement of an 'opportunity' sample from a

relatively small number of participants seemed sufficient. Since self-evaluation was encouraged in the local authority, five head teachers were invited to become involved. The staff in the researcher's school had considerable experience of self-evaluation and a group of fifteen class teachers helped broaden the sample, provide another perspective and widen the scope.

As the investigation progressed new interests and paths emerged but it became clear that this initial sample was too small and similar to provide enough useful data [Denscombe, 1998]. This evolving characteristic is typical of a qualitative study as opposed to a conventional research practice. Further sampling was carried out with fellow delegates attending a European conference in England in 1999 and a research grant funded a visit to Dublin in March 2000 specifically to investigate 'The Influence of Self Evaluation on School Effectiveness' with a small pilot group of head teachers and educationalists who were introducing self evaluation to their own schools.

Although this addition to the sample was constrained by practical issues of time and cost, the availability and willingness of the delegates, and the goodwill of the Irish Authorities it added to the research by providing very useful comparative data. The Europeans were a disparate group whose individual interpretations of self-evaluation differed a great deal. It became clear that, with the exception of the youngest and least experienced teacher from Northern Ireland, they had little practical experience of a structured approach. This was interesting since several came from Denmark and Holland where, from the literature,

the researcher understood that there was considerable interest and involvement by schools in self-evaluation [MacBeath, 1999].

The Irish group had taken part in an international pilot scheme but although each of the schools visited had produced a glossy brochure to describe their involvement, the self-evaluation had tended to be an event rather than the introduction of a process which would become an integral part of school life. The head teachers were generally enthusiastic but as I was shown around schools I had the impression that few others had been involved. School management in the schools visited tended to be hierarchical, there was little liaison with other establishments since they were often competing for pupils and the structure of the school day and absence of in-service time and centralised budgeting made it difficult for teachers and schools to work together. However, despite these cultural and organisational differences, statistics show that the Irish and European schools appear to be very effective.

As the research progressed, confidence about the sufficiency of the sampling size and the accuracy of the findings was reinforced since additional data generated often had the effect of supporting the analysis rather than adding anything different. The views of a whole primary school staff were represented as one stratified unit, the head teachers of denominational primary schools in a small authority in another and a third group consisted of the Irish educationalists. Since the Europeans had very little experience of self-evaluation, their comments have been included only where appropriate.

Transcription

With qualitative research transcribing interviews is not simply an 'add on' task but an essential element which brings the researcher close to the data. There were elements of Glaser and Strauss's 'grounded theory' pragmatic approach to the analysis of this qualitative data. The interviews were transcribed literally but then analysed, interpreted and reflected upon with the result that theories grounded in empirical research emerged and developed as the process deepened the researcher's knowledge of the phenomena [Strauss, 1987]. Verifying the data, considering non-verbal signals etc. was a substantial and time-consuming part of the process and field notes and tape recordings helped recontextualise the information and ensure that the intonation, emphasis and accents which can contribute so much to meaning were fully considered.

Rules can constrain the efforts of social researchers [Strauss and Carbin 1990] so this data was organised to make sense and produce recognisable and relevant explanations rather than simply presented as found. Scripts were annotated, lines numbered and punctuation added to make them easier to follow. Accuracy could have been checked by sending the transcripts back to the respondents but this seemed unnecessary. The focus, design and samples used were adjusted to produce modest localised explanations based on immediate evidence rather than grand theories. Interview and questionnaire data was triangulated with documentary evidence to improve validity, reliability, accuracy and relevance. These approaches were further strengthened by the literature search and the results confirmed the belief that qualitative methods of research had been the correct choice. Participants were generally fairly relaxed and willing to talk about their

experiences and a considerable volume of information emerged including a number of additional themes and issues which could be considered for further investigation at a later date.

Having discussed the issues surrounding the choice of methodology the next section describes fully the practical arrangements and results of the research.

Chapter 9: Analysis of Questionnaires, responses and Interviews

Content analysis [Webber, 1990] was used to help organise the substantive content of the responses with a range of categories selected to display the variety and character of the replies. This technique derives from quantitative methods but has value for qualitative research by providing a means of arranging individual responses to make judgements about latent meaning. The writer accepts that subjectivity and differences in levels of skill and experience can render definitive categorisation difficult and that when statements are classified in this way there can be problems with conveying the essential character.

By a process of highlighting and assigning statements made by the respondents a list of categories emerged viz. 'Performance', 'Pupils, 'Teachers', 'Whole School Issues', 'Targets', 'Head Teacher/Leader', 'Change/Initiatives', 'Parents', 'Extra Curricular', 'Support', 'Learning and Teaching', 'Ethos', 'Curriculum' and 'Communication/ Teamwork'. The responses could have been presented according to these categories or clustered around the Research Questions but for maximum clarity each transcript was taken in turn and the replies from individual respondents analysed and interpreted under the individual question headings. Where appropriate these have been discussed under the heading 'Generality' and accompanied by a commentary from the researcher to provide further information or compare the responses with other research data. Where subsequent questions elicited a similar response these have been grouped together e.g [3] and [4]. Direct quotes from participants have been included in italics to support

comments. In some cases questions were targeted at particular groups only but where a similar question has been used with the interviewees from Europe and Ireland and/or the local head teachers these responses have also been included.

1] How would you define school effectiveness?

Teachers' Questionnaire

In responding to this initial question several teachers described effectiveness in terms of the degree to which the needs of every child could be met while a number associated it with performance and the ability to meet targets. Effective schools were characterised as happy, well-organised places where leaders ensured that communication and learning and teaching were of a high standard.

European Interview

The replies from the group interview supported several of the issues raised above. Effectiveness was very often seen as good performance in any type of tests used nationally to compare pupil progress [e.g. the 11+ in Northern Ireland] and in general was defined in terms of how pupil needs were being met.

Interviews with Local Head teachers

The head teachers also discussed effectiveness in terms of targets, ethos, the need for a safe and happy environment, meeting pupils' needs and enabling them to achieve their potential. In addition there was an emphasis on the importance of schools as a focal point for the community and the responsibility of schools in meeting their needs.

Generality

The responses indicated that this relatively small group of teachers defined effectiveness largely in terms of the outcomes for pupils, the school as a whole and the successful achievement of targets. All of the groups emphasised the need for pupils to be happy. Effectiveness was defined in terms of pupils, teachers and performance with more than half of the replies including the meeting of targets as a defining characteristic. Some emphasised the benefits of extra-curricular activities, the need for a positive ethos and the head teacher's influence.

The range of responses reflects the subjectivity surrounding the concept of effectiveness and the variety of factors that can be associated with it. Although the above responses were most common some individuals included performance in a wider context than the achievement of targets.

Category Omissions

Within this small sample it was interesting to note some categories that were omitted or seldom mentioned. Only one response included teachers or the head teacher within the definition and none referred to the importance of parents or curriculum in terms of defining effectiveness. Learning and teaching, the management of change and communication/teamwork were each only mentioned by one respondent. Only one of the head teachers mentioned targets in reply to this question and none highlighted the benefits of working in teams. Class size is often quoted as a major influence on

effectiveness but has not figured in this small-scale research. Interestingly reflection, self-evaluation and 'value added' were not mentioned at this stage.

Commentary

The range of answers given by the teachers to the first question reflects the spirit of *Effective Secondary Schools* [SOEID, 1988] in terms of pupils learning what is considered appropriate to the limit of their capabilities and needs and preferences. This principle is fundamental to the agreed aims of the school in which these respondents are employed and which emphasise the desire for continuous quality and improvement to meet the needs of every individual pupil as effectively as possible. These aims and the school Mission Statement have been formulated as a collegial exercise by the staff who were interviewed. They are incorporated into the school development plan and progress is subsequently measured against predetermined success criteria and performance indicators.

The target setting and school planning initiatives are politically driven so it is no surprise to find these mentioned directly in four of the responses. The Government's aim is to improve standards and raise achievement and local authorities support this by establishing targets and competition between schools and encouraging a strong sense of accountability towards stakeholders. Resources are always at a premium and schools and education authorities have become increasingly aware of the need to be effective. This implies a strong professional responsibility from teachers to provide a quality service. From previous discussions the writer is aware that some of the staff interviewed

support the view that setting targets does not necessarily lead to a rise in standards but are agreed that failure to reach them can result in pressure and disillusionment.

The belief that school effectiveness may be dependent to some extent on the level of 'communication, policies and procedures' echoes the findings of researchers such as MacBeath [1999], while Rutter [1979] would agree with those who explicitly stressed the benefits of a positive ethos, a happy and motivated staff and extra curricular activities.

The importance of leadership is a recurring issue in discussions about school effectiveness [Brighouse and Woods, 1999] and the literature continually emphasises the effects of an outstanding head teacher. Some particular organisational and process variables related to leadership, goal setting, staff development and planning were covered by the responses to this first question.

Not surprisingly the responses from such a group indicate that the quality of learning and teaching is viewed as very important. The effectiveness of teachers is influenced by factors such as time, resources and class size and these should be key issues for school improvement within authorities and for Government and other funding. Other important issues like staff development, the influence of parents, homework, and methodology are cited later in the interviews.

The replies to this and subsequent questions reflect much of the documentation and research evidence, which has emerged in Scotland throughout the 1990's. This supports

the notion of the 'learning school' characterised by high expectations of achievement; ownership of change; a positive climate; sense of community; focus on learning and teaching and strong leadership. The importance of pedagogy, methodology, resources, high expectations and targets to support high achievement emerge as recurring themes throughout the replies [Boyd 1995, SOEID 1993]. Mortimore's [1991] definition of an effective school as '*one in which pupils progress further than might be expected from consideration of its intake'* [MacBeath, 1999 p14]' is quite specific but respondents in this study have emphasised that there are many ways of being effective.

2] Which features would indicate to you that a school seemed to be effective?

Teachers' Questionnaires

Several issues such as communication, performance, attainment, teaching and learning and an ethos conducive to improving pupils' and teachers' happiness, morale and motivation were raised by the first question and reiterated here by respondents. There was an emphasis on the need for teamwork, partnership, commitment and collaboration amongst all staff in schools and an awareness of the need for parental support. Provision and consideration for those with special needs was important and one respondent valued comments by staff and visitors as an indicator of effectiveness. Another emphasised the importance of the role of the head teacher, the need for leaders to have the confidence of the staff and to be fully aware of the challenges and difficulties faced by the school.

European Interviews

The European interviewees also associated effectiveness with efficiency. Happy and contented staff and a community spirit within a safe, secure environment exemplified this. None of the respondents highlighted school leadership as significant but this could be because of their very different cultural and professional backgrounds. One respondent was the head of a German school and an Italian worked in two primary schools led by the same secondary head teacher as part of a cluster of five schools. A third was a Spanish teacher who had been voted on as head teacher but was not happy with the degree of personal responsibility and liability, which this brought with very little monetary reward and the fourth participant was a newly qualified teacher from Northern Ireland.

Interviews with Local Head teachers

There was agreement over the importance of positive ethos. A school should be a happy place where pupils liked to come and were eager to learn. There was good teaching and resources and a team approach where pupils, staff and parents worked in partnership. There were comments about indicators of performance and the effects of competition and league tables. High standards and results were important and an effective school reached its targets and rewarded students for academic success. Schools must be seen to have good results over a wide range of tests and measurements but must also consider their pastoral responsibility for those students who would never achieve high scores. It was very important that pupils were happy and that the achievements of less academic pupils were recognised.

Interpretations of effectiveness could be subjective. Effectiveness was about 'doing things right' but it was sometimes easier to recognise when things were not going well. One respondent considered a school to be effective when it was able to carry out what it intended and planned, another measured it through parental satisfaction and attainment. It could be seen in the confidence, knowledge and skills displayed by pupils moving from primary to secondary education.

Generality

Again, the effects on pupils' learning were highlighted as a sign of effectiveness. There was a clear emphasis on performance, targets, the curriculum and pupil support.

Teaching and the effects of staff attitudes and pupil and parent confidence came through in the head teacher interviews as important indicators of effectiveness. In this small scale enquiry 75% highlighted the importance of a positive ethos as expressed in terms of *'happy pupils'... 'safe environment'... 'staff morale'... 'atmosphere'... 'contentment'*. The benefits of partnership were expressed with reference to *'the wider community working in harmony'... 'keen to work together'... 'inter-personal collaboration'.... 'parental support'* and *'communication'*.

Only two respondents commented on the head teacher's influence on effectiveness. The implementation of change was perhaps implied in the role of the head teacher but only one directly highlighted '*taking on new initiatives'*. Support was important for a third of

the replies and the head teacher interviewees in particular were conscious of potential difficulties caused by competition and measuring success.

Category Omissions

There was no mention of extra-curricular activities as a sign of effectiveness from the Teachers' Questionnaires nor was there direct reference to participative management, ownership, empowerment etc. as would be expected from the findings of Smith and Thomlinson [1989] although it could possibly be argued that this was implicit in ethos. Effectiveness literature continually emphasises the effects of outstanding head teachers – described by Brighouse [1989] as perceptive professional developers - but only the least experienced member of supply staff included the head teacher as a feature of an effective school.

Commentary

It would be expected that ethos would be important to primary school staff who deal with young and often vulnerable pupils and British and American studies [Mortimore, 1988] support this, *'Climate is all - self evaluation can only work when there is a climate for it and when the conditions are right'* [MacBeath, 1999 p108].

The importance placed on parental views, comments and support echoes the sentiments of *Parents as Partners* [SOEID, 1997]. Recognition of the influence of the wider community and visiting staff reinforced the awareness in many schools of the importance of image and a customer focus.

Many researchers consider a positive climate to be one of the important factors characterising effective and high achieving schools [Rutter, 1979; Purkey and Smith, 1983; and Mortimore, 1988]. Many differences in outcome can be related to a school's culture or climate and this can be altered by the efforts of the staff. A positive, energising and rejuvenating climate is the starting point for growth so establishing a *'climate conducive to growth'* [DES 1977] within the context of a 'learning school' [MacBeath and Mortimore, 2000] with the support of all partners is a major task for school leaders.

Effectiveness is a relative and variable phenomenon. Although many observers consider that they are in a position to make judgements about the features of effectiveness, subjectivity renders this even more problematic. This subjectivity is often reflected in public perception and this is demonstrated in the wide range of answers from the school staff and head teachers. Much of the research into parental and pupil views of effective schools place extra-curricular activities in a prominent position but this particular group of respondents did not seem to rate these as important. Subjectivity was very evident at a recent meeting in the writer's school for parents of children with special needs. They placed great emphasis on the effects of ethos and judged the effectiveness of education provision to a large extent in terms of wheelchair access, the ratio of adults to children and the experience and qualifications of staff. The tone of the meeting exemplified the view held by some that attempts to judge the effects of changes and improvements in schools are often founded on dissatisfaction with the outcomes of education and that

parental priorities depend on circumstance. In this instance effectiveness was being viewed in terms of the effects of education of the whole person within society rather than economic needs or exam passes. Respondents' comments supported the belief that schools make a significant difference to pupil progress and that some schools are more effective than others in helping pupils to progress in social as well as academic terms. The point had already been made by one head teacher that *'sometimes it is easier to recognise when things are not going well'* thus echoing the sentiments expressed in the 'Effectiveness' chapter.

Inequality of access, parental education and expectations and the reaction of schools to changes in the structure and stability of society are major issues which support the premise from *Effective Secondary Schools* [SOEID, 1988] that account must be taken of pupils' personal needs and preferences so that they learn to the limit of their capabilities.

3] What is your understanding of the term 'self evaluation'?

4] Has self-evaluation been useful to you as a member of staff?

Teachers' Questionnaires

Responses from individuals within the various groups highlighted the benefits of providing the opportunity for discussions with colleagues in order to review current practice and reflect and report on outcomes. Self-evaluation was linked with improvement by most staff. It provided a way of taking a closer look, identifying and monitoring curriculum content and methodology and highlighting areas for development: *'what am I teaching? how well am I teaching it? how can I improve?'*.

Some teachers associated self-evaluation with measuring their own effectiveness and ability to meet pupils' needs while others recognised the potential for a whole school approach to identifying areas of strength and weakness to guide school development.

This group emphasised the benefits of collaborative effort for learning and teaching and unanimously agreed that self-evaluation was a useful means of reflecting on their work. This could be done in an informal way by examining forward plans, reviewing classroom approaches but several made the connection with Review and Development [appraisal] and the advantages of focusing on specific areas and setting realistic targets over a set period to improve teaching and learning. They were positive about self-evaluation as a means of monitoring, reviewing and reflecting to identify strengths and weaknesses and initiate change.

European Interviews

Initially there was some confusion over the term 'self evaluation' and the discussion revealed that the respondents enthusiastically agreed that teachers must reflect on their own performance in order to improve. It was useful to members of staff but with the exception of the Northern Ireland respondent who linked it with appraisal, the experience was of an unstructured and informal approach.

Interviews with Local Head teachers

The group immediately made the connection with the framework 'How Good Is Our School' [HGIOS, 1996; 2002] which has been vigorously promoted within the education authority. HGIOS was welcomed since it provided as a reference point for judging effectiveness, a structure to assist school planning and a focus for staff development and evaluation. Although the head teachers were generally enthusiastic about HGIOS one reply stressed the need for sensitivity when reviewing issues such as teaching approaches and the potential difficulties in reaching staff agreement over some matters *'... some teachers are very set in their ways and don't want to change'*.

There was recognition that self-evaluation could be time consuming but also that it presented an opportunity of involving stakeholders, gauging perceptions and providing explanations of difficulties such as why parental support for a project had not been forthcoming.

Generality

School staff responded to this question mainly in terms of benefits for learning and teaching and its usefulness for teachers. Self-evaluation could provide an opportunity for reflection and result in gains for individuals and the school as a whole. It was not surprising that Review and Development featured since most staff are currently involved in this and there is a direct association with target setting. Several replies such as '*...work on areas of weakness*', '*...focus on specific areas over a set period'* were categorised under the 'Targets' heading.

Head teacher's linked self-evaluation with the Government document, 'How Good Is Our School'. This was to be expected since it is used as a structure in all schools in this particular education authority.

Category Omissions

Though it was not discussed specifically the writer considers that curriculum was implicit from the comments. The replies to these questions did not mention pupils but staff may have considered that this was covered by reference to learning and teaching. Self-evaluation was viewed by several as an opportunity for their views to be considered and performance improved. A common desire for client satisfaction and ownership for school improvement emerged reinforcing the conviction that quality school evaluation and improvement depends on involvement, a common purpose and high morale.

Some researchers would argue that teaching rather than self evaluation is the major influence on school effectiveness and that the more structured and reflective the teacher's approach is the more likely that students' academic performance will improve. From the answers given by this small group of teachers it is clear that these are considered complementary rather than exclusive. Priority needs to be given to establishing simple methods of self-review so that greater responsibility and control is given over to schools and teachers. Successful self-evaluation depends on collaboration rather than apportioning blame and there is an important partnership role for schools in supporting learning, exchanging ideas with others and spreading good practice in self-evaluation and

planning. As stakeholders, teachers need to be involved in the critical discussion of the criteria for judgement and work together on the subsequent improvement planning to support learning and teaching. This involvement will have a positive effect on climate, which in turn will encourage growth and ensure that the time spent is worthwhile.

For questions 5-8 the teachers' replies to each separate question are provided while the responses from the local head teachers and Irish respondents have been taken together as an overall view.

5] How often do you use self-evaluation?

All respondents used self-evaluation. The majority were involved on a regular basis or from time to time and one teacher said that it was used occasionally.

Commentary

The teachers' replies to question 5 were surprising. The group agreed that they used self evaluation but one only 'occasionally' and 6 others 'from time to time'. This does not tie with the researcher's impression that the members of this particular staff self-evaluate regularly – an observation also made by HMI on a recent inspection. Perhaps the confusion is in the definition of self-evaluation or from an impression that the question was seeking information about it only in the formal setting of review and development, school planning etc.

Questions 6 and 7 were intended as part of the teachers' questionnaire only but training was also discussed to some degree in the interviews.

6] How necessary do you consider training in self-evaluation to be?

Time management *'to squeeze everything in'* was highlighted as a training issue. Centre-based training caused disruption to pupils' learning and there could be difficulties associated with practising what has been learned back in the context of the trainees' own schools. Frustration caused by too many anecdotes led some to favour school-based in-service with the outcomes shared with other schools to enable good practice to be spread.

A number of respondents believed that good teachers self -evaluate automatically but training would be helpful and there was always room for improvement. This would help to identify areas for development, sharpen the focus and raise awareness of the steps to be taken to improve individual and corporate performance.

Others, including a very newly qualified teacher, believed training to be essential so that all areas were considered. The point was made that people are inclined to be self critical and judge themselves harshly but formal mechanisms enabled reasonable comparisons to be made using the same criteria as HMI and anyone else involved in judging the performance of schools.

Commentary

This provided a clear message from teaching staff about the need for training which was reinforced by the European interviews. There is a wide range of experience within the staff of this school. Some have been teaching for over 20 years whilst others are supply teachers in their probationary period who have been encouraged to be reflective throughout their own higher education.

The quality of training and the mode of delivery are touched on through reference to courses attended externally on an individual and whole staff approach. There has been a lot of training undertaken by staff in this school and within this authority in recent times and the comment about disruption to learning is a very real one for teachers and head teachers. If children are regularly taught by supply teachers there can also be dissatisfaction from parents so it is important that the benefits of teacher in-service are clearly explained.

7] **How have you used self-evaluation?**

The majority of those surveyed had used self-evaluation as an integral part of Review and Development [appraisal]. This was closely followed by reflection on the practice of teaching and school planning. Three respondents replied that they would make use of self -evaluation to develop the curriculum.

Commentary

In the researcher's view, the replies here were a more accurate reflection of the practice in the school. Self-evaluation involved teachers, had a considerable influence on learning and teaching but was less associated with change and pupils. One respondent made explicit reference to teamwork and nine replies placed self-evaluation in a whole school context. Although self-evaluation had a bearing on 'performance' and 'targets', 'parents', 'head teachers' and 'ethos' were not included at this stage.

8] How Does Self-Evaluation Influence School Decision Making?

Teachers' Questionnaires

Teachers agreed that it helped them have a significant effect on the curriculum and decision-making. Two said that self-evaluation influenced school management whilst pupil performance, self esteem and teaching methods were each mentioned by one participant.

Commentary

The answers given to question 8 were as the researcher might have expected. The school staff has been involved in the setting of priorities for the curriculum and were therefore accustomed to taking part in school decision making for considerable time. These findings support Clift [1987] and the Governments *Targeting Excellence-Modernising Scotland's Schools* [SEED, 1999] proposition that the best way of improving standards and quality in education is to make schools responsible for the review of their own performance and the initiation of any necessary reforms. Opportunities for teachers to

become evaluators rather than always having their own performance judged can provide the ownership[Fullan,1982], collaboration and collegiality necessary for effective change.

European Interview

Questions 5-8 were largely inappropriate for some of this group since they were not involved in self-evaluation in a structured way. One interviewee, who had experienced it as part of a recently introduced appraisal scheme, was very enthusiastic about the benefits of regular use of self-evaluation and the professional satisfaction which involvement had brought. He was honest enough to admit that as a relatively new teacher working with a recently appointed head teacher he was very willing to take part in such new initiatives as appraisal but many colleagues still viewed the process with suspicion.

Interviews with Local Head teachers

Training was considered vital if skills were to be developed. Where staff was interested making the service provided better and improving their own practice there was no doubt that self-evaluation would have a positive influence on the curriculum, management and decision-making and many other important aspects of school life.

Generality

Through self-evaluation, democratic ownership of educational practice and change has resulted in an acceptance of responsibility for improving the quality of teaching and learning [Hopkins, 1991]. The students in the school in which the teacher respondents are employed have been encouraged to evaluate their own and other pupils' efforts and

this has had positive effects in terms of motivation, performance and work rate. The answers to this question have reinforced previous emphases on methodology but the writer was surprised that only two had considered that self-evaluation helped them to influence school management.

Overall, the replies given in response to questions 5-8 were as might have been expected from staff who have been involved in self-evaluation for some time. It underpins much of the school's development and since several teachers have undertaken post-graduate training in recent years they have been encouraged to become more reflective practitioners. To some extent the answers given reflect the current school development plan priorities of methodology, monitoring and whole school audit.

Commentary

The replies would generally appear to be in agreement with Elliot [1981] who saw accountability and ensuring that teachers were able to influence curricular change as major purposes for self-evaluation. The responses support the view held by many researchers of self-evaluation as a collegial problem solving process... *'the organic approach to school development in which ownership is invested in the staff group.'* [Reid, Hopkins and Holly, 1990 p200]. Self evaluation is described by Holly and Southworth, [1980] as *' the necessary linkage... the life blood of the developing school'* and as *'the most effective and efficient way of bringing about improvement'* by Clift, Nuttall and McCormick [1987 p190].

Increasing demands for accountability and the statutory responsibilities which are central to the development of effective schools can be met through self-evaluation. It provides a means of making the policies and practices of schools more public whilst retaining teachers' professional autonomy [Simons, 1984]. By developing stakeholders' vision and purpose, evaluation skills are sharpened, isolationism minimised and the quality of teaching and learning improved. This can help generate commitment, ownership, collaborative enquiry and participative learning. It is a positive means of institutional self-development that provides a document of self-accountability through which policies and practices can be monitored to inform decision-making. For successful self-evaluation schools need to strive for validity and reliability balanced with manageability and this will be developed in a later question.

Many factors influence the success of self-evaluation and contribute to the perception of the process and its effectiveness. These include the organisational climate of the institution and the style with which it is led, the time allocated to self-evaluation, the development of necessary skills and, importantly, the way in which self-review is introduced.

Commitment is also influenced by the degree of understanding of what is required, the level of exposure, the purpose and perceived value of the exercise and the perception of any element of professional threat. In the researcher's experience some staff lack confidence in taking part in participative decision making whilst others, perhaps due to previous experiences, do not readily become involved.

There is no doubt that school leaders must develop a climate of trust and professional respect if self evaluation is to be successful so that the good experience and progress arising from involvement by staff can lead to a further enhancement of climate and the self evaluation becomes embedded in the culture of the school. The maintenance and improvement of educational standards, accountability, value for money and maximising of the quality of the learning and teaching process are central to the purpose of any evaluative exercise. School level evaluation provides parents, teachers, local authorities and the general public with relevant information in a timely manner to help calm concerns, reinforce a school wide vision and provide a framework for including stakeholders in the improvement process. It is also a mechanism for informing all involved of school successes and strengths thus building morale, support and mutual understanding. In reality, although inspection, institutional self evaluation, teacher appraisal etc. are often discussed as separate, they can be interconnected since a school being inspected will engage in some institutional self-evaluation and staff performance and competence will inevitably be judged.

The product versus the process view of evaluation must be considered. Obviously it is important that there is an outcome but, in the experience of this researcher, the *process* of evaluation is crucial as it involves empowerment, responsibility, collaboration of staff and results in a shared understanding of the difficulties faced by management as well as an opportunity for using the experience expertise and enthusiasm of the staff group.

Becoming involved in school developments increases ownership and commitment and is a powerful way of building a positive atmosphere.

9] How valid is self -evaluation?

For the purposes of this discussion validity was interpreted as the degree to which a tool measures what it sets out to.

Teachers' Questionnaires

The replies indicated that self-evaluation was considered valid by most and the point was made more than once that if it was not valid then it was mere self-delusion. A number of replies were very positive. When staff were involved, perhaps through school planning or review and development, it made some individuals feel empowered and appreciated. It was vital for professional growth and validity was increased when self-evaluation was applied to agreed targets e.g. improving oral maths, a new language resource or classroom organisation. The results of self-evaluation were very useful as a basis of discussion, but validity depended on honesty and purpose, and had to be supported by evidence e.g. assessments/ samples of children's work.

Training, as discussed in an earlier question, would help make it more efficient. Since difficulties arose when people judged their own efforts harshly or were reluctant to reveal weaknesses to senior staff. Self-evaluation could be overly subjective, poor skills affected validity and there had to be a clear focus.

One respondent made the point that this was only one of a range of tools which can be used to improve effectiveness and may not necessarily be valid for every single aspect of teaching – several others supported this by making the point that validity varied according to variables such as audience purpose and timing.

Irish Interviews

There was a tendency for some members of this sample to compare self-evaluation with inspection and accountability and a general view that self-evaluation was valid. A recent involvement in a European conference had confirmed this for some. One head teacher described it as common sense and believed that it could be *'the right kind of tool to improve schools'*. It sometimes brought unexpected results but provided a means of involving the staff to support and reinforce the views of inspectors, parents and others from *'outside the school'*. Another head teacher expressed the opinion that, despite considerable Trade Union opposition, schools would become more involved in self-evaluation.

Interviews with Local Head teachers

This group had been using self-evaluation for some time and generally considered it to be *'very valid and very worthwhile'*. In one school 'self-evaluation' had been instigated as part of an inspection by the local authority using the *How Good is Our School?* framework. Although some teachers had been hesitant to be come involved initially it enabled them to become involved in planning for changes and improvements *'the staff can decide what comes next'* and *'we have seen in this school that it can work'*.

Even where a critical friend was involved there could be a potential for bias and doubts about neutrality. Self–evaluation had to be honest and the more experienced schools became with it the more effective it might become. One head teacher declared '*we are very hard on ourselves and don't take time to enjoy the successes'*. Schools had to become adept at *'blowing their own trumpet'* but there had to be evidence to back up claims.

Generality

The groups were generally positive about the validity. It was accepted that self-evaluation is a powerful technique but it had limitations and schools needed to be aware of the importance of validity, reliability and manageability. Ideally, research instruments should be as neutral in their effect as possible but the difficulties of insider research are explored more fully in the initial chapters of this thesis.

Staff members were convinced that self-evaluation was valid, particularly when supported by evidence from another source. This contradicts the view discussed in Chapter 4 that it is an inferior and subjective strategy and that teachers tend to have a pessimistic view of their work. The research supported the evidence from the literature search that validity is affected by concerns about revealing weaknesses, suitability for purpose, audience and the use to which the results may be put. It emphasised the need for honesty and structure and the emphasis on targets has continued in the various responses to this question.

Validity is reflected in the consistency of the data gathered from different participants, the support for these findings from current literature and the degree to which the conclusions support existing knowledge.

Two teacher respondents left this question blank, perhaps because they considered that the question was badly worded or the concept is not easy to understand.

The comments by the Irish head teachers were interesting. Tension between improvement and rendering account can cause confusion and ambiguity. Self-evaluation takes time, energy and resources and there is the danger that a close association with contractual accountability will be counter-productive. Some critics claim that professional threat arising from impending external evaluation or from teachers' skills, attitudes and competence being evaluated by stakeholders can distort the judgemental criteria.

10] 'Reliability' is the extent to which a procedure produces the same response under similar conditions. How 'reliable' do you consider self-evaluation to be? [Would you expect to get the same results if you used self-evaluation at a different time?]

Teachers' Questionnaires

The success of self-evaluation and willingness to become involved depended on skills, relationships, confidence, the climate in the school and the use made of the information gathered. A number believed that reliability was increased when performance indicators

were put in place and applied to specific targets while others felt that the more experienced they became with self evaluation the more reliable it had become.

Some thought it improbable that self-evaluation at a different time would yield the same results. As with validity, reliability was affected by a variety of influences such as purpose, audience and honesty. Sharing experiences and practice was easier in some situations e.g. methodology where there are clear guidelines than in others where teachers might feel exposed to professional criticism by colleagues. With collegial approaches reliability was affected when staff were influenced by those who were more confident or vocal or where respondents considered they lacked knowledge or information.

Irish Interviews

The Irish representatives endorsed some of the sentiments above. Reliability was dependent on sincerity and honesty *'if you fudge the truth then you are only fooling yourself and wasting time'*. Self-evaluation was at an early stage and was viewed with suspicion and scepticism by some *'the staff aren't used to being asked their opinions... we are not really used to a culture of being asked to examine our own practice'*. Teachers often lacked confidence in the value of their contributions and feared *'an ulterior motive'*.

One respondent criticised the dual role of the Inspectorate in Ireland of judge and adviser to the same school. Under the present system objectivity was difficult but self-evaluation provided an opportunity to raise professional esteem and place the responsibility for managing change back with schools.

Interviews with Local Head teachers

This sample generally considered self-evaluation to be very reliable. Often the issues identified were the same ones that the head teacher would have highlighted but one commented *'...sometimes the teachers have focused on an aspect which I had not been fully aware of'*. The success of self-evaluation depended on a positive ethos [described as '*mood'* by one] but it could also contribute greatly to improving the climate in a school since involvement could improve the effectiveness of the self-review and raise esteem, provide a sense of ownership and encourage teamwork and commitment to the achievement of priorities. For one staff the reliability of self-evaluation was demonstrated when the conclusions arising from it were confirmed by a local inspection.

These respondents also had some reservations. One head teacher admitted that staff could be suspicious of the motives behind self-evaluation and was of the opinion that younger staff were often more open to discussing their practice with others. Reliability depended on the professionalism and objectivity of those who contributed.

Generality

One definition of reliability is concerned with the dependability of the measuring instruments [Kirk et al, 1987] and is determined by whether other researchers using the same instruments at a different time would find the same results as this current investigation. As with question 9 there was an immediate association with targets and inspection and the use of performance indicators was considered to make the process more reliable. It was acknowledged that the results of self-evaluation vary with time,

particular influences and the experience of participants and this would tie with research which associates the degree of reliability of any research with the aims and basic premises of the investigation. The researcher found the response about the difficulties of institutional self-evaluation interesting. One respondent was quite comfortable with personal reflection but finds that larger group activities can be problematic and affected by personality, confidence and ethos. Involvement may also be influenced by the reputation and experience of colleagues who may not want to 'lose face' or contradict powerful colleagues.

Is it generalisable?

This follow-up question was put to the Irish interviewees and Local Head teachers only.

Irish interviewees

Generalisability would be affected by honesty and relationships. Opinions were divided, *'the way we do self evaluation in this school could work in another similar sized school but perhaps not in a large second level'* contrasted with *'I don't think the results from this school would be the same as those in another. In fact they certainly wouldn't'.*

Many factors such as the size of the staff, the sector and attitudes influenced the success of self-evaluation and made it difficult to generalise. Every school was different so the results of self-evaluation would not necessarily be the same and outcomes could differ even when self-evaluation was repeated in the same school and with the same participants.

Interviews with Local Head teachers

These confirmed that it would be difficult to generalise and that results would be different from one school to another depending on the personnel involved, skills, honesty and timing. Many schools are pursuing the same goals and shared criteria are useful but self-evaluation and interpretation of data are very subjective.

11] To what extent are School Effectiveness and Self-Evaluation connected?

Teachers' Questionnaires

Respondents considered that there was a very close connection *'...an important link in procedures to improve school effectiveness'* though one remarked that some good schools did not seem to use it. Self-evaluation increased individual and collective effectiveness and respondents referred to it in terms of the school plan and appraisal. *How Good is Our School?* was considered to provide a helpful structure to enable staff to measure their own performance, prioritise professional development and set targets for improving teaching and learning.

The ability to exchange ideas and share practice with colleagues would improve with practice to increase ownership and raises awareness. However, Self-evaluation was not the only way to bring about improvement and its efficacy depended on the use made of the information gathered.

Irish Interviews

The first interviewee believed that self-evaluation had made the school more effective, *'more open and more of a team'*. The ability to self evaluate would improve with practice but it was not the only way to identify school priorities. Using Personal and Social Education as an example the head teacher made the point that whole school evaluation had not always raised the issues which she would have expected in a deprived area. Change was very difficult to bring about in Irish schools. The schools did not have budgetary control and there were no in-service days or times when the teachers remained beyond the school day so arrangements for whole school staff development could not be made. To improve effectiveness, self-evaluation had to lead to action but there was a cultural barrier which often prevented people from celebrating success, '*there is virtue in modesty.'*

Interviews with Local Head teachers

These head teachers agreed that there was a strong relationship based on clear goals and participation with the result that,' *the self evaluation process is becoming embedded in our school culture'* through development planning and review and development. It was well established as a means of prioritising and managing change in three of these schools and they were benefiting from involvement in the process of audit, setting priorities, time scales, establishing responsibilities and success criteria. Self-evaluation provided a forum for discussion and a clear focus for development, which was enhanced by the use of 'How Good is Our School?'.

Generality

There was a very positive response to this question. Staff appreciated the opportunities for working together on whole school developments to improve learning and teaching and often teamwork and communication were improved. The head teachers saw benefits for school management through being able to prioritise, plan and monitor change. Echoing the comment made by the Irish head teacher above there was a view that in Scottish schools there can be cultural difficulties with publicising success. With collegial and democratic approaches, unexpected issues raised during self-evaluation presented a challenge to leadership and could be frustrating.

Question 12 was put to the teachers only.

12] Do you consider that your school is more effective through the use of self-evaluation?

Teachers' Questionnaires

The number of short replies indicated that this question could have been structured more effectively. However, supported by comments made by the local head teachers in relation to the previous question, all staff agreed that self-evaluation improved effectiveness. Some respondents referred to review and development, school planning and training as important purposes for self-evaluation and stressed the benefits of working together rather than as a collection of individuals. With agreed aims and objectives directed towards meeting the present and future needs of pupils, school planning helped ensure quality in teaching and learning throughout the school. It also

gave attention to those areas considered essential for effectiveness. This supported James's [1982] and Elliot's [1980, 1981] belief that a culture which values reflection with a view to improvement was a dominant feature of an effective school. It endorsed the view that self-evaluation has been widely accepted and occurred at the level of the teacher as researcher or 'extended professional' [Hoyle, 1986] and also at the level of the school itself.

The overwhelming message from these replies was that school self-evaluation enabled a school to take more control of its curriculum and organisation and plan its future more effectively and independently. This bolstered the argument that evaluation and change depended on the commitment and goodwill of teachers and could only succeed if they were given the major responsibility.

13] Is self-evaluation rigorous enough to help bring about school improvement?

Teachers' Questionnaires

Several respondents considered that action taken following self-evaluation *would* result in improvement and the benefits in terms of ownership and involvement in curriculum change and policy-making were again highlighted. Others made the point that a *range* of measures such as target setting had to be used as appropriate. Further training, experience and consistency in the approach to self-evaluation would improve thoroughness, but rigour also depended on attitudes, organisation, honesty and clarity of purpose.

It was important that the views of stakeholders such as HMI, parents, pupils and school staff were taken into account with regard to school improvement. One teacher believed that this could improve objectivity *'I find that I am much harder on my own performance than I think others would be - I miss out the good bits and sometimes only see the faults'* another commented, *'It is good to get the opinion of others and working in an open plan area is good for this since there are lots of adults around'* and a third said that *'it would be hard to evaluate a lesson very positively when you know that someone else saw it and might have a different opinion'.*

European Interviews

Most of these respondents had not been involved in *structured* self-evaluation and were inclined to consider external inspection a more rigorous approach.

Irish Interviews

The head teachers associated the rigour with attitudes, the value placed on self-evaluation by staff and colleagues and the action taken as a result *' it is back to what you do with the information you have once you gather it'.* To ensure rigour, time had to be made for self-evaluation and it had to be well structured, benefit the pupils and provide an opportunity for head teachers to gain from the experience of others. Self-evaluation was considered less threatening than external inspection. Honesty was essential and although stakeholders had different perspectives *'...anything which gets the staff of a school working together must be worthwhile'.*

Interviews with Local Head teachers

Properly managed, self–evaluation was rigorous enough to bring improvement. It helped schools prioritise and manage change and one new head teacher had found this particularly helpful. Ensuring rigour was the responsibility of school leadership and self-evaluation benefited from the structure provided by *How Good is Our School*? The more familiar schools were with self-evaluation the more effective it would become.

Commentary

There was a mixed response to this question with the teacher respondents split. There seemed to be agreement among the teachers that the rigour could be improved whereas the head teachers appeared fairly content with the existing Scottish Office structure and accepted the responsibility for ensuring rigour. The Irish respondents re-emphasised the need for honesty and the effects of staff attitudes. This researcher agrees with the view which has been expressed several times during this research that regular involvement and consistency can improve the process and that self-evaluation which is not honest is a waste of time. One respondent replied that there was a need for targets. Since target setting is often regarded as an imposed Government initiative it is not universally popular but he may have been linking target setting with the very familiar school planning process. The benefits of participative management, empowerment and the advantages of a collegiate approach [McCrone, 2000] came through in one of the responses. As a democratic and collegial approach [Hopkins, 1990] self-evaluation should be as open to external scrutiny as other, more traditional evaluative approaches. It was regarded by the respondents as an integral aspect of management and teaching which could result in

meaningful outcomes, shared responsibility and satisfaction whilst stimulating action for improvement and development. By involving every member of the school community it provides an alternative to external evaluation which has the potential to impact the development of the institution considerably.

14] What influence does it [self –evaluation] have on your teaching?

This question was put to teachers only

Group dynamics led some to favour individual and stage rather than a whole school self-evaluation. It involved reflection and the discussion generated by a structured approach could help build confidence, make better use of resources and share good practice. Staff demonstrated the influence on teaching by referring to specific involvement in reviews of homework, methodology, arrangements for assessment etc. It made planning and organisation more efficient and improved effectiveness by helping staff focus on ways to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

15] What effect does it have on your pupils' learning?

Teachers' Questionnaires

Since they were closely connected, sharing and improving teaching approaches would have an effect on learning. Self-evaluation helped teachers to meet pupils' varied needs, learn from mistakes and analyse outcomes and pupils and parents were involved in self-evaluation of homework tasks etc. Strategies such as development planning and appraisal involved audits and reflection and were regarded as teacher learning.

Irish Interviews

'*Everything that happens in a school influences teaching and learning'*. Self-evaluation had to have a big effect on pupils' learning or it was not worthwhile. Schools and departments had to work together since collaboration had helped teachers to have ownership and pool ideas to improve learning and teaching the use of resources, methodology and communication. One head teacher, with limited experience of self-evaluation, felt that there was a dilemma with accountability and finding the time-between having the responsibility for running the school and asking others to share it *'that's what we [head teachers] get paid for'*.

Interviews with Local Head teachers

There was unanimous agreement that self-evaluation affected learning and teaching. The replies affirmed that it was *'the best way to improve a school'... 'a major influence'.... 'everything we do in a school must affect teaching and learning mustn't it?'... 'If self evaluation didn't influence learning and teaching we wouldn't be doing it'*.

Generality

Q14 and 15 Teaching and Learning

There was a very positive response regarding the influence of self-evaluation on learning and teaching. The majority of those surveyed were convinced that becoming involved brought benefits for pupils and for teachers. It provided the opportunity for reflection, improved performance, and encouraged teamwork but it also raised difficult issues for some regarding subjectivity and integrity. Discussion with the Irish head teachers

revealed that collaboration within the schools visited was unusual and that departments did not usually work with one another. The researcher was even more surprised to learn that there was no history of schools working together and sharing good practice because they were in fact in competition for students.

16] Is personal self-evaluation the same as institutional [school] evaluation?

Teachers' Questionnaires

Although there were links, the majority of the teacher group viewed these as essentially different – *'one aims at self-improvement and the other at whole school change'.*

Institutional self-evaluation implied working together on policies and procedures and was affected by commitment, the climate of the school, leadership and attitudes. It was formally recorded and could be used to review the curriculum, involve staff in school planning. One teacher felt that performance indicators were more appropriate at this level.

Personal self-evaluation established individual strengths and development needs, was less formal and only involved one person rather than a whole school change. One respondent considered that it was more demanding and probed deeper. Some did see a connection, *'one influences the other'...the goals are the same but the approaches could be vastly different'.*

Irish Interviews

There was a tendency for some to interpret institutional self-evaluation as testing… *'self evaluation has more to do with esteem than testing would in the past'... 'institutional evaluation has to do mainly with testing pupils and using the results'*. The group voiced many concerns about whole school evaluation. As highlighted the previous 'Generality' encouraging discussion about practice could be problematic and setting targets at this level was complex due to the wide range of different viewpoints, characteristics and priorities. Some head teachers lacked experience in policy making, staff were not used to being involved and working as a team and the structure of the school year in Ireland made it difficult to find time to work together '*…I'm not sure that true self evaluation is possible in a second level school context'*.

Personal self-evaluation was easier *'as head teachers we evaluate ourselves all the time'*. As with the previous group above self-evaluation was seen as less formal when carried out on an individual rather than an institutional basis *'more based on opinions than anything you can put your finger on'... 'using the answers to build up a picture'*.

Interviews with Local Head teachers

The respondents discussed similarities. Self-evaluation was often based on *How Good Is Our School?* frequently targeted teaching methods and was the basis of school planning and Review and Development. The respondents echoed observations by the other groups that institutional self-evaluation was public whereas self-evaluation was often more personal. Although there were instances when school priorities could match personal

aims it could be difficult to get people to agree and those involved were often very critical and inconsistent *'too hard on ourselves in some areas and might not see our weaknesses in others'*.

One respondent made the point discussed in chapter 4 that it could be easier to pass judgement on the organisation than on personal shortcomings. There was a need for honesty but awareness of audience could affect the integrity of the exercise.

Generality

The respondents seem to regard institutional evaluation as less rigorous than individual self-evaluation and expressed the view that personal self-evaluation was more concerned with teaching and learning, '*deeper*' and more demanding. Institutional self evaluation was '*far more formal*' and for it to be successful there had to be improvement in learning and teaching, school organisation and management. There was a difference in terms of aims and implications between the evaluation of an institution and that of an individual.

Commentary

This research supported the view that a healthy self -evaluation system enabled its participants to maintain and improve standards through critical self- reflection. Individual and institutional evaluation were linked but educational change required both collaboration and ownership [Fullan, 1982]. Institutional self-evaluation satisfied accountability demands as well as changing and improving education.

17] When planning self-evaluation who would you involve?

The questionnaires and interviews revealed that the majority of respondents would involve other teachers in self-evaluation and some would include pupils. The emphasis on collaboration and teamwork in the replies supports early Schools Council curriculum development projects where the school was seen as the focus of activity and teachers the main facilitators of change.

18] What effect, if any, does school leadership have on the success of:

a] personal self-evaluation?

b] a whole school approach?

Teachers' Questionnaires

The teachers were clearly of the opinion that leadership made a major contribution to the success of self-evaluation. It could be more important in the whole school context but leadership had a significant influence on both personal and whole-school evaluation and one remarked, *'I look to the leadership for guidance and as a benchmark'*. Self-evaluation improved effectiveness and the leader's role was to encourage the development of individual skills, strengths, teamwork and collegial approaches. Good leaders accepted responsibility and ensured that people would work together well to maintain standards and meet targets.

Irish Interviews

The difficulty of allocating time to carry out self-evaluation was raised again *'there are no in-service days, planned activity times or times when pupils are not in school and the staff are'*. Leaders needed to encourage planning and teamwork but these interviewees highlighted particular difficulties caused by low morale, lack of management training, little time for staff development, large numbers of student suspensions, and head teachers who had a substantial teaching commitment.

One head teacher described it as *'finding the balance between a happy staff and students who are happy and achieving success'*.

Some of the answers given supported the view given by one respondent that *'leaders need to initiate structure by defining their own role, establishing clear patterns of organisation, communication and methods of procedure and providing a model for the group.'*

Local Head Teachers

Good leadership was essential for the success of self-evaluation. It was important that priority was given to training and practice so that staff and head teacher confidence could be raised. By concentrating on institutional self-evaluation individual skills would be enhanced and future efforts would become more effective. The head teachers had been involved in collective self-evaluation for many purposes such as school planning, target setting and audit prior to changes in the curriculum or policy. It was more difficult for leaders to assist with personal self-evaluation unless there was a vehicle for it such as

review and development but there was also a general feeling that despite claims made in HMI and Government documents, most teachers did review their own performance regularly. One respondent felt that personal self-evaluation was for individual teachers and the leader would not usually be involved.

Not all comments were positive. Head teachers needed to be trained in self-evaluation and time management was difficult. There were problems with ensuring that everyone had their say and difficulties for the head teacher if one school decided through self-evaluation to take a completely different approach to the other authority establishments.

Commentary

Effective Primary Schools [1989] and other school effectiveness research placed a high value on purposeful leadership and managing people so that they gave their best. HMI and OfSTED suggest that it is the key factor in improvement and success but the view that leadership is a considerable challenge and more than one person can realistically hope to manage [Holly and Southworth, 1989] was supported by a number of respondents. It is most likely to be effective where it is shared amongst pupils, teachers, other staff and members of the community with the head teacher orchestrating the other leaders in the school [Southworth, 1995].

The responses supported Hargreaves [1995] persuasive account of the growth of the school effectiveness movement and its impact on school management and education authorities in Scotland. Using evidence from Rutter [1979] and *Effective Secondary*

Schools [1988] he underlined the importance of leadership and identified common features exhibited by good leaders such as monitoring, delegation, teamwork and communication.

The respondents highlighted the need for training. Outstanding leadership invariably emerged as a feature of outstanding schools and the development of potential leaders had to be a priority [Beare, Caldwell, and Millikan, 1989]. Strong leaders had a vision for their schools that was shared by all in the school community and shaped the programme of learning and teaching, policies, priorities, plans and procedures. The replies tied with previous research: Dubin [1968] described leadership as the exercise of authority and the making of decisions; with Fiedler [1967] the leader was the individual given the task of directing and co-ordinating whilst Lipham [1964] and Stodgill [1974] related the role to influencing the achievement of goals and objectives.

If leadership is a process in which definitions of social order are found acceptable, implemented and renegotiated [Hosking, 1988] then leaders need to be especially influential. Research has consistently revealed the importance of accomplishing tasks and the concern for relationships among people was emphasised in several of these replies. The data emphasised the importance of staff development, supporting the view that good leadership and perceptive professional development go hand in hand with self-evaluation to lead to improvement. Through self-evaluation the capacity to manage ongoing change can be redefined, leadership can be more participative and collegial [Hopkins, 1990] and the relationship with education authorities improved. Education

authorities have a monitoring role and can assist schools to become more effective by providing resources, facilitating networking and providing training for staff.

Questions 19-21 were included in the questionnaires only.

19] How would you ensure that a self-evaluation activity was successful?

Seven respondents would carry out regular checks during the exercise and six would use an external consultant or colleague as a critical friend.

20] What are the main reasons for using self-evaluation?

Self-evaluation was mainly for self and school improvement and for the purposes of accountability.

21] Does the climate of the school affect the success of self-evaluation?

Where morale was high constructive criticism was considered to be non-threatening. A positive climate was important to boost confidence and combat apathy and was affected by the quality of the catchment area, pupils' backgrounds, parental support etc. The right climate also facilitated the discussion of sensitive issues.

Generality

There were 4 non-responses to this question. All of those who did reply underlined the importance of climate thus supporting research findings regarding characteristics of effective and high achieving schools [Rutter, 1979; DES, 1977; Purkey and Smith, 1983; Mortimore et al 1988]. The writer wholeheartedly agrees that there is a need to establish a

positive climate in order to achieve the optimum value from self-evaluation. The positive reaction to the question supported the belief by many commentators that quality school evaluation and improvement can only take place where there is teacher goodwill and high morale.

Commentary

There is evidence to support claims that characteristics of certain schools can make a difference to pupil progress and many differences in outcome can be related to a schools culture or climate. Climate can be altered by concerted staff action to strive for high expectations in which the benefits of collaboration and partnership are recognised [Boyd, 1995; SOEID, 1998].

A positive, energising climate rather than directives and autocracy can provide starting points for growth. Much research into self evaluation and effectiveness emphasises the importance of the head teacher in setting this climate but it is the right and responsibility of all partners to help establish the conditions in which self-evaluation can flourish. Self-evaluation should be set in a developmental context, improve teaching and learning and provide better information for parents.

22] What is your understanding of the term 'added value'?

Teachers' Questionnaires

The replies included *'a rise in standards after a period of time taking into account a variety of factors'... 'a good deal...' ' influence on a child's academic and personal and*

social development'. Some discussed added value in terms of standardised tests, improved standards, motivation, attitude and self-esteem, while one described it as *'the quality change that takes place in a school once development needs are identified'*. Two of the teacher respondents admitted to being unfamiliar with the term .

Irish Interviews

In an area of serious poverty value was added by caring for the pupils' physical and spiritual well being and making things *' a little bit better'*. In another it was through extra-curricular activities and incentives to improve attendance and the care taken of the environment. Some private schools were providing added value by guaranteeing exam passes and this was affecting the numbers attending state schools and statistics for exam success. State schools were often losing those students and parents with the highest expectations.

Interviews With Local Head teachers

Added value was currently a local Council initiative and there had to be a starting point such as a baseline test to evidence improvement. In educational terms, claims for added value often derived from the results of authority-led standardised tests and National Tests as well as internal assessment results. The value-added by the school was difficult to quantify since a range of factors influenced attainment.

Improvements could also be demonstrated through intrinsic gains such as security, happiness and well-being. One interviewee described it as *'the benefit for a child or*

community of being associated with the school'. The replies confirmed the problems of measuring 'added value' in any reliable quantifiable sense but, despite the difficulties associated with measurement, it was important to show parents, HMI and the local authority that schools were adding value.

23] How can it be measured in a primary school?

Teachers' Questionnaire

Added value would be measured by monitoring changes to ensure they are working. This could involve tracking benchmark and National Test results, but also by the dedication of teaching staff, ethos or success in areas like the expressive arts.

Irish Interviews

Value-added was a subjective concept but the data provided was useful for management to monitor the quality of learning and teaching and compare exam success on a local and National basis. It was measured in a variety of ways - e.g. by tracking exam results, using standardised tests, reports by the Irish Inspectorate every 6 years, statistics regarding movement of pupils from the state to the private sector and leaver destinations. Nationally there was much interest in education but, with a strong economy luring some students away from schools and colleges, retention rates could be an indicator of added-value so head teachers had to be aware of the importance of actively encouraging attendance. In addition to comparisons of exam success, value-added could be seen through the provision of extra-curricular activities, the sense of community generated by the school and parental and Church links.

Interviews with Local Head teachers

Awards such as 'Investors In People' and the reputation of the school in the community were important. Added value was also measured using of performance indicators, analysis of National, standardised, and baseline tests, and reports and action plans which followed inspection.

Generality

Some teachers were unfamiliar with the term, only one respondent highlighted the relevance of added value to pupils, teachers or head teacher and this question generated fewer comments from the teachers' group than others had.

It was interesting that personal, social and aesthetic development and ethos were highlighted since some researchers claim that measures of value added are relatively crude, limited to the measurement of a narrow range of attainments and unhelpful for measuring personal and social development, moral development, attitudes or capacity for lifelong learning.

However, 'added value' was mainly viewed in terms attainment and test performance. The emphasis on providing evidence of 'added-value' within one education authority was apparent from two of the groups and throughout this research a seemingly positive attitude regarding exam results and testing has emerged. The imposition of standardised tests as a key measure of educational quality and effective schools is regarded with scepticism by many as a crude measure of performance and a narrow view of educational

quality. Some educationalists fear an overemphasis on achieving pass marks for pupils closest to the average performance to the detriment of the more able and that those in lower attainment groups may perform according to expectations.

The Irish replies reflected the changing social and economic situation - availability of unskilled work, the growth of private schools, the effects of drugs abuse and the high media and public interest in education.

Commentary

The concept rests on the assumption that schools add 'value' to the achievement of their pupils and some cynicism arose from the local head teachers' interviews. The school in which some of this research was based performed very well in annual standardised tests but improving a previously high performance can be much more difficult than starting with a low score so current crude methods of measuring showed it as having added little value. As discussed in the section on Evaluation, when the results of tests are used for comparison of schools and professional reputations are at stake there can be corruption resulting in teaching to the test, concentrating on borderline pupils and a narrowing of the curriculum to include only those aspects likely to be tested.

To provide evidence of school performance an efficient system of evaluation needs to feature external and internal input. Value Added is based on the principle of a baseline from which growth in cognitive and non-cognitive, attitudinal outcomes are measured

over a period of time. As pupils mature their attainment levels may rise above expectations based on prior attainment indicating residual value added by the school.

Added value is a controversial concept. Since value added indicators treat each pupil as equally important some would argue that they are probably the best measures available. The most effective schools may well be those in which pupil progress exceeds expectations but a comprehensive value added framework would have to be extremely wide ranging and there is still debate over whether better schools can significantly reduce inequality of attainment between individuals.

24] How appropriate are performance indicators for judging school effectiveness?

Teachers' Questionnaires

Teachers considered performance indicators very important for judging effectiveness, providing benchmarks and highlighting needs but they had to be supported by evidence. They were useful for accountability purposes and provided a focus and a guide for heads, senior staff and teachers. Some staff agreed that other measures were also important and cautioned against *'getting lost on endless lists of performance indicators'* since *'figures and statistics can be misleading'.*

Irish Interviews

One respondent was very positive regarding recent experience of using indicators. Information gathered had provided a basis for discussion about performance at school and classroom level. Self-evaluation had enabled some comparison with other

establishments and this was unusual. It resulted in the construction of the school's own performance indicators for homework and attendance. Another believed that the inspectorate lacked credibility and that their role was incongruous with moves to devolve increasing management responsibility to schools.

Interviews with Local Head teachers

Performance indicators were very appropriate and their value increased with practice. It was helpful to be able to use what is considered to be good practice for comparison. They provided *'something to measure a school's performance against'* and common criteria with which to analyse areas like curriculum, leadership and management – particularly in the context of school planning.

It was helpful that the number of performance indicators included in *How Good is Our School?* had been reduced to 33 but there seemed to be a move to increase these again.

25] Are there any areas for which you find them [performance indicators] particularly useful?

Teachers' Questionnaires

Teachers listed learning, teaching and delivery of the curriculum, preparation for HM Inspection, interviews, promoting positive behaviour, and maintaining the school ethos.

Irish Interviews

Self-evaluation was new to these head teachers. The data gathered confirmed what one school already knew and that parents, pupils and teachers had similar priorities. Another

claimed commitment to the principle of self-evaluation but did not have the time to become involved, seek opinions etc. One head teacher took the opportunity to discuss the new role for self-review in the secondary sector and internal versus external evaluation.

Interviews with Local Head teachers

Performance indicators were used often for a wide variety of purposes. Self-evaluation could be inappropriate for everyday decision making because it was time consuming and was more difficult to measure the effects of personal and social development than to track progress in a discrete subject area. It was valuable for many aspects of school life such as curriculum, school management, ethos, and leadership. They were easy to apply quantitatively for aspects such as attendance. There could be difficulty with seeing the relevance of performance indicators initially when looking at an issue like bullying but with experience it became clear that there were issues for management, leadership, ethos etc. arising from most situations.

Generality

There are far-reaching implications surrounding the gathering of quantitative evidence through testing and qualitative approaches using performance indicators as an aid to self-evaluation.

In general the groups were in favour of performance indicators as *'necessary for accountability'*. Teachers had to be aware of the drawbacks as well as the perceived

benefits and take care that the statistics were not misleading. Improvements reported could be illusory so it was essential to evaluate monitoring systems constantly to ensure that the indicators remained reliable and continued to improve the teaching and learning experience. Decisions had to be taken over which outcomes to monitor in order to provide information on performance. These need to be those which schools were able to influence to bring about improvement.

Commentary

At the time of writing, procedures for systematically sharing information about schools are still at an early stage and few authorities have sophisticated methods in place already for judging the performance of their schools against one another. There is a need to consider outcomes as well as processes. Gray and Jesson [1990] list some basic principles for the construction of performance indicators.

They should:

- be about schools' performance
- be few in number
- reflect competing educational priorities
- be central to the process of teaching and learning
- be capable of being assessed
- allow meaningful comparisons over time and between schools
- allow schools to be seen to have changed their level of performance
- cover significant parts of a schools activities

26] Is a structure such as that provided by *How Good Is Our School?* helpful in carrying out self-evaluation?

This question only applied to the Scottish respondents.

Teachers' Questionnaire

The group welcomed the structure provided by these guidelines. It provided exemplars and indicators of good practice, which enabled schools to focus on specific areas, stimulated discussion and highlighted successes. One teacher found it more helpful on a whole school rather than an individual level.

Interviews with Local Head teachers

How Good Is Our School? was useful and could be cross-referenced with other publications. It was helpful that the approach for auditing and setting priorities was the same across the education authority.

This question was followed up with the local head teachers by,'Which areas have you covered to date with a 'Standards and Quality Report?'

One school had been inspected and had therefore covered all 7 areas listed in How Good Is Our School? Others were integrating a few areas each session with the aim of covering all seven over a three-year period and one school had not yet produced a report.

A further probe asked the teachers and head teachers if they had self-evaluated prior to the publication of *How Good is Our School?*

The responses varied. The teacher respondents were part of a school staff that used *How Good Is Our School?* regularly and very readily agreed on the importance of a structure.

A new head teacher had limited experience but the school had used self-evaluation to an extent prior to his appointment. Another had used it but not in any systematic way whilst the others had self-evaluated before *How Good is Our School? 'I have always tried to be reflective but would consider that the document helps me by providing a structure, a common language and a tool for audit'.*

27] 'Self evaluation is really self-delusion'. To what extent would you agree/disagree with this statement?

The respondents had already discussed the need for honesty and integrity in their responses to some of the other questions so it is unnecessary to rehearse these at this stage.

Some local head teachers added to their earlier remarks. They agreed that there was potential for self-delusion particularly where there was little consultation. However, appropriate training and effective leadership to improve performance, highlight strengths and be aware of areas for development could improve this. As long as we attend to our weaknesses we can turn them into strengths but self-evaluation had to be based on honesty and clear criteria. There had to be evidence and triangulating with other measures could strengthen the reliability of results. The replies indicated that respondents favoured regular checks and were open to the use of a critical friend.

Chapter 10: Case Study

Background to the Case Study

This case study is based on the school planning process within a 350 pupil denominational primary school within one of Scotland's smallest education authorities. It provides an example of the practical application of self-evaluation to assist with school planning and makes some inevitable links with standards and quality reports and review and development [appraisal]. The authority in which the school operates is committed to inclusive education and its expectations for attainment are reflected in very high targets for national testing. The school is in an aspiring middle class area and is popular with parents with approximately 25% of pupils attending due to placing requests. The teaching staff, of 15.5 [Fte] and support staff of 17, have been involved in development planning, review and development and producing standards and quality reports for a number of years.

Legislation

The *Standard In Scotland's Schools etc. Act* [2000] required Scottish ministers and education authorities to endeavour to improve the quality of school education. It placed a duty for Parliament to set national priorities for education, report progress annually and consult with parents, school staff and pupils. Education authorities and schools must base their development plans on these national priorities, report on implementation and consult with stakeholders. Within the framework for improvement created by the Act, the published national priorities give direction to the education system. Our school plan indicates the level of consultation undertaken [appendix4] and provides the authority with

useful information for arranging its own planning, finance, allocation of resources and provision of staff development.

Schools publish an annual standards and quality report on the implementation of the plan to provide authorities with a regularly updated overview of the school's perception of its performance and development needs. This can be a useful starting point for external audit [ref. Evaluation chapter] and focusing on the seven areas of HGIOS over a three year period is the basis of an integrated framework of strategic and operational planning at authority and school level which takes full account of national and local priorities. The authority's function in the process of development planning is important for accountability purposes but also enables education department personnel to adopt a supporting role as critical friend to guide and approve plans and support subsequent developments.

School Development Planning

From chapter 4 it is clear that self-evaluation can contribute to good planning [SEED, 2001] at national, authority, and school, class and individual pupil level. This head teacher believes that effective planning promotes better learning and teaching, improves attainment, helps monitor and manage change, enables timescales, priorities and targets to be set and leads to efficient budgeting and resource provision.

Throughout this thesis the importance of consultation has been stressed to ensure that stakeholders' views can be taken into account. The main focus is the programme for

improvement, but the development plan must be an *agreed* statement of the school's forward commitment to educational and financial objectives and balance maintenance and development opportunities. As well as targeting agreed priority areas, an assurance is made to the staff of this school that the addition of major projects will require consultation, negotiation and agreement. In our recent inspection HMI viewed the development plan as integral to the process of self-evaluation and a key management tool.

School planning is an ongoing process which helps this school enhance quality and manage change. There is no universally applicable prescription for successful development planning but from the results of the questionnaires and interviews it is clear that *How Good is Our School?* as outlined in the 'Frameworks' section provides a very useful structure which helps us to plan improvements based on clear aims, audit and action.

Aims

A concise and focused set of aims [appendix 5] enables our school and community to be clear about long-term goals and sense of direction. These are well-defined, reflect our core purposes and values, take account of national and authority guidelines and include the views of stakeholders. Education authority and school aims are complementary and are based on a common educational philosophy to improve standards of attainment and the quality of the learning experiences for all pupils. The aims set out our shared vision and values, articulate our strategic intent and form the starting point for school policies.

They were initially formulated following extensive consultation with stakeholders and are reviewed and adjusted as necessary each year to take account of changing contexts as part of the school planning process. These agreed aims are prominently positioned on the first page of the development plan, publicised in the school handbook, displayed in public areas of the school and referred to regularly through newsletters, assemblies etc.

Audit

Audit is not a single or periodic event but a process through which particular strengths and areas for development have been identified by the whole staff [appendix 5 and teachers' questionnaires] to form a development and maintenance agenda. The process has been almost as important as the product since involving the staff in collaborative effort has had a very positive effect on climate which, as discussed in chapter 6, influences not only school effectiveness but the success of further self-evaluation. By working together to establish curricular and school priorities the staff of this combined open plan/ traditional school have been able to share insights, skills, experiences and talents. Being involved in this way has improved morale, communication and teamwork, broken down barriers and established trust [appendix 1b Q14]. The audit is based on discussion, questionnaires, brainstorming and uses materials from HGIOS [1996; 2002] [appendix 5].

The evidence generated in this way enables this school to report in a collegiate way on standards and quality [appendix 6] to:

- ensure that the school planning has a direct and measurable impact on the quality of education and the achievement of pupils
- take appropriate action for improvement
- monitor progress in implementing action plans
- provide an annual concise evaluative account of performance
- generate evidence which can be briefly summarised in the audit section of the development plan, identify priorities for action and form the basis of more detailed standards and quality reports

Practical Arrangements

A meeting of all school staff takes place during the month of May to discuss progress in meeting the targets set in the previous action plan. This is a simple process where promoted staff or a working group lead by highlighting the areas which have been overtaken successfully [appendix 5], discuss the success criteria used and how effective the monitoring and evaluation procedures have been. Evidence of progress for each target is examined and contributions towards the achievement of priorities acknowledged. The audit process continues with a brainstorming session during which all suggestions for new priorities are listed after which each individual member of staff completes the checklist/audit from HGIOS [appendix 5].

A further meeting provides an opportunity for the head teacher to present a summary of the priorities identified using the brainstorm and the results of the HGIOS audit to all staff. These issues are discussed in pairs then larger groups and following debate and discussion future strategic priorities, targets and tasks for the new action plan are agreed. During the process the role of critical friend, which the Irish interviewees identified as being particularly helpful [appendix 3], is taken on by a Quality Development Officer who assists with presenting the plan in the format required by the local authority. Following final consultation with parents' representatives on the school board the completed plan is forwarded to the director of education for approval [appendix 8].

Because all staff have been involved in the process of school planning they have ownership of the priorities identified for improvement. The school benefits from their expertise and experience and this consultation and collaboration helps build morale, confidence, teamwork and commitment. As highlighted in chapters 6 and 7, the extent to which this is successful depends on the quality of leadership and the ethos of the school.

Action Planning

Following the audit the next stage is to prioritise the areas for action. This is operational planning which identifies a specific annual programme of improvement [appendix 7a]. It focuses on each priority in turn to specify targets, tasks, resource implications, remits, time frames, success criteria, monitoring and evaluation procedures, and budgetary implications.

At this operational level, maintenance and development targets must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed [SMART] and plans must be easy to follow. Appendix 7 clearly states the criteria for judging success and provides specific details of how each of our identified priorities will be implemented over the coming year. The plan is flexible enough to enable the school to balance large and small projects and respond to changes in circumstances.

Review and Development

Arrangements to meet any training requirements are specified since the school plan also forms the basis of each staff member's annual Staff Development and Review [SD&R] meeting. Like school planning, this begins with self-evaluation of progress made before agreeing new targets, success criteria etc. with the reviewer. Staff report that this is a very positive experience which opens lines of communication and this head teacher views it as an excellent opportunity to encourage personnel and recognise their successes.

Improvement Issues

The existing arrangements for School Development Planning and the related SD&R have had very positive outcomes. The procedures are constantly reviewed and the school staff recently participated in a brainstorming session to identify the following improvements/issues:

Aims

- these have been established as a collegial effort and involve a range of stakeholders but they need to be reviewed more regularly

- staff involved in reviewing aims move on to other posts and new staff may not have ownership or necessarily agree
- some new and temporary staff were unfamiliar with the school's aims
- the aims need to have a higher profile
- they were 'woolly' and not specific enough

Targets

- must be SMART
- appropriate in terms of number and size
- there can be a sense of lack of ownership if targets are simply handed down from the authority
- targets for national testing were unrealistic
- there were too many targets from the Government and local authority
- more effective monitoring and tracking procedures are needed to ensure that targets have been met
- the time scale for reviewing past performance and setting new targets was tight

Action

- personnel with responsibility for aspects of the plan should be identified by name
- audit can be time consuming and it can be difficult to move from identifying priorities to ensuring that action is taken
- the present planning cycle is based on the academic year but anticipating budgetary implications would be easier if matched to the financial year

- success criteria needs to be very specific
- better communication is needed to ensure that adequate dissemination of information takes place
- the criteria for being invited to join working parties was not always clear
- more involvement in school planning for pupils in the light of recent legislation

Review and Development

- there needs to be better use of time for preparation
- communication skills were very important since professional development discussions or interviews depend on the relationship between those involved
- management needs to meet the challenge of reviewing the performance of an ever increasing number of assistants and teachers
- reviews were not always carried out when arranged
- reviewers need to ensure that where lists of competences or performance indicators are used as statements of what an effective teacher or manager might do these are used with an awareness of the local context
- there must be a balance between targets which support school plan priorities and those which meet personal needs
- the use of a critical friend can be useful but intervention should be positive and self esteem maintained

Chapter 11 Conclusions And Implications

This study was designed to investigate a current issue: the influence of self-evaluation on school effectiveness. In conclusion I will now draw the major themes together and explore the implications of my findings for schools.

The dissertation set out to investigate the body of existing knowledge and research which links self-evaluation with effectiveness, identify and develop some of the main issues and explain why this remains a controversial phenomenon. Particular difficulties associated with measuring the effects of self-evaluation were considered in the light of existing theories, perspectives and hypotheses and compared with the practical experiences and views of a range of professionals. It is important to note that the influence of self-evaluation on school effectiveness has been investigated from a primary school perspective. The experience of self-evaluation is different in primary schools due to management structures, leadership styles, staff numbers, relationships, climate etc. The study has helped increase knowledge and understanding about the process of self-review and highlighted some conditions considered necessary for successful self-evaluation.

Structure

The thesis has three main sections: an introduction outlining the scope of the investigation and listing the research questions; a review of existing literature on school effectiveness, evaluation and self evaluation which focused particularly on the effects of climate, leadership and frameworks; and a methodology section which justified the

choice of questionnaires and interviews to gather empirical data arising through fieldwork which is discussed in detail in chapter 9.

A case study on development planning [Ch.10] was used as an example of the practical use of self-evaluation by a group of teachers within a particular primary school. The author agrees with Ball [1994] that quality assurance is a shared responsibility and that it must be '*collegial rather than hierarchical and about prevention from the inside rather than a cure from the outside'* [MacBeath, 1999 p154].

Sample

Although the researcher tried to be as objective as possible throughout the administration and analysis of the interviews and questionnaires, the study exemplified many of the difficulties typically associated with insider research [pp77/78]. The initial focus on a group of teachers and head teachers employed in the same education authority as the writer proved too narrow, so to broaden the sample and provide further illumination, colleagues from various parts of Europe and the Republic of Ireland were also interviewed.

As an 'opportunity sample' these respondents were not considered representative of the general population or even of the teaching force. The fifteen teachers who completed questionnaires taught in the same primary school as the researcher. The same small education authority employed the Scottish primary head teachers where collegiality and the use of self-evaluation in order to improve effectiveness have been vigorously

promoted and this may account for the similarity of some of the responses. Most had also studied at the same teacher training institution during the 1970's and 1980's and this would inevitably influence attitudes and philosophy. To some extent the Irish head teachers had been 'hand picked' by their Education Department to take part in this research. They had already shown an interest in self-evaluation by attending a European conference to promote it and subsequently involved their own schools in a pilot project. The European group were head teachers and class teachers from various countries. Cultural and organisational barriers with the Irish and other European representatives made it necessary to adapt the interview schedule significantly and this made comparisons difficult at times. The choice of respondents added a great deal of value to the study by providing a balance of experiences and viewpoints. Through discussion, the researcher gathered a good deal of information about educational practices in other nations but, at times, a value judgement had to be made as to whether this informed the research questions and warranted inclusion.

Research Questions

The study was based on the following research questions [p 4]:

From a review of existing School Effectiveness literature assess :

- the current state of knowledge regarding effectiveness?
- the role and purposes of evaluation and the particular issues associated with self-evaluation?
- the perceived impact of leadership and climate on effectiveness?

Based on a small-scale case study and survey what perceptions do teachers and head teachers have of:

- increased effectiveness through self-evaluation?
- the benefits of a framework for self-evaluation?

Investigating these questions raised some fundamental issues about choice of methodology, analysis of data and strategies to improve dependability, reliability and validity [pp 75-81]. Research design and methodology are often the result of a compromise between an ideal set of approaches and the practical difficulties which are so characteristic of research in a real life situation. It is not feasible therefore to make a claim that the outcomes of this research provides definitive evidence which can be generalised on a national basis but rather that they serve to illuminate the intellectual puzzle set out by the research questions.

Methods

From the range of methods available a qualitative research style using a survey approach was selected. Data was generated by a literature review, semi-structured interviews with head teachers and questionnaires which were distributed to staff in the researcher's school. The responses provided information which could be compared with existing research and, during analysis, the author was mindful of Adelman's [1982] warning about exaggerated claims based on limited evidence.

The approach had its limitations: surveys are demanding in terms of time and effort and it can be difficult to judge the integrity of responses. The potential weaknesses of questionnaires and interviews are outlined in Chapter 8 but any disadvantages were largely outweighed because they enabled the key issues to be explored economically and to some depth. The methodology was strengthened by triangulating the instruments to provide scope for interaction and the interviewer was thus able to adapt questions, probe further and become involved in discussion and debate as necessary. This was a successful piece of research since valuable evidence was collected from data, which had been coded and organised to make sense [p82] rather than conform to any set structure [Strauss, 1990]. Dependability was determined by the validity and reliability of the research methods and although the results were clearly affected by purpose and audience, participants considered that self-evaluation had a considerable influence on school effectiveness.

There was no doubt the respondents agreed that effectiveness was influenced by a combination of factors and this would support the view that Mortimore's [1991] description of a place where students' progress beyond expectations was not as simple as it might have seemed. Defining and recognising school effectiveness remains a contentious and highly subjective issue which can be viewed from many perspectives [pp 11/12]. There is a growing tendency to link it with performance and *meeting*, rather than simply setting, targets and an increasing recognition of the benefits of employing rigorous self-evaluation strategies to measure effectiveness and support evidence from external tests of attainment.

The data gathered strongly supported the research findings of Mortimore [1991] and others indicating that the respondents involved in this study perceived a strong link between the use of self-evaluation and increasing school effectiveness. From the responses it would seem that there is a lot of self-evaluation going on, particularly in a Scottish context. The quality of teaching and learning and clear commitment to meeting the needs of every child emerged as a fundamental component of an effective school. There was a tendency to link this with development planning and the use of performance indicators and broad agreement that, in an effective school, improvements were best realised within a safe and happy environment.

The research sought to investigate the perceived impact of leadership and climate on effectiveness. Although some observers would argue that teaching was the major influence, the responses indicated that climate was also a significant factor for these respondents. Schools had to be effective for all students, aspire to keeping parents and pupils happy and maintain teacher morale through a high level of support and motivation. In the spirit of recent Government documents and the concept of the 'Learning School', many participants agreed with Hargreaves' [1995] and MacBeath's [1999] assertion that culture, ownership, reflection and vision were vital for school effectiveness and that high expectations, a sense of community and strong leadership were major determinants of a positive climate [pp122/123]. The progress arising from the involvement of staff can lead to further improvements in the climate and embed self-evaluation firmly in its culture.

The study reflected the growing commitment by educators towards the process of change and improvement in teaching and learning and supported Alvik's [1996] contention that self-evaluation requires good leadership to develop a climate of trust and professional respect. This research supported the contention that school leadership has changed and that, as a consequence, self-evaluation demands a participatory management style to devolve decision-making [Nuttall, 1985] and a flexible leadership style to nurture the appropriate school culture. The replies reinforced the view held by Sammons, Mortimore, and HMI that leadership and management are constant factors in effectiveness research and that the head teacher needs to be an effective leader to establish a shared vision, teamwork and positive attitudes. The researcher agrees that head teachers and leaders contribute to the success of a school and recognises the enthusiasm, commitment and passion which many head teachers display for a school, its members and its reputation [Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991]. They should encourage an atmosphere of trust, collaboration and shared responsibility and initiate structure by defining their own role and providing a model for the group within a clear pattern of organisation, communication, effective whole school approaches and procedures. Good school leaders often have high expectations, values and ideals [Brighouse and Woods, 1999], a clear academic focus and mission and provide positive motivational strategies and feedback [e.g. Renihan & Renihan, 1984].

The McCrone Committee findings [2000] support the findings of this research regarding the necessity for training and recommended the establishment of a professional, well-

motivated teaching force involved in continuous professional development [CPD] to improve or acquire skills. This supported the philosophy underpinning *Improving Our Schools* [SEED, 2000], and will inevitably have a major impact on present arrangements for self-evaluation and collaborative planning and implementation. To improve the quality of learning and teaching, self evaluation must be honest and highlight areas of strength and weakness and the replies indicated agreement that the more self evaluation was used on an individual and a whole school basis, the more it contributed to structuring review and reflection of practice and bringing about change. Stoll [1991] rightly attributes the success of self evaluation schemes to the level of teacher support for them and, as can be seen from the Case Study in the researcher's own school, the empowerment realised through participation has itself been a catalyst for change [p 147] and the outcomes have been positive [MacBeath et al, 1996]. School effectiveness research and policy makers often concentrate on management issues and broad generalisations but this research has emphasised that there is a real need to involve those with responsibility for effecting improvement. There seems to be a tendency to base school effectiveness strategies on a 'top-down', management model focusing at school level and emphasising formal organisation. However, the classroom is the place where the greatest variation in pupils' achievements occurs and the quality of teaching and learning is at the heart of school effectiveness so this is where change must begin. A 'bottom-up' as well as 'top down' approach is essential so that classroom practitioners can reflect and develop their own thinking otherwise the search for improvement may well be pointless [Riddell, Brown and Duffield, 1998].

As well as probing for evidence of increased effectiveness through self-evaluation this enquiry surveyed opinions regarding the appropriateness of using performance indicators to judge schools [p138]. The transcripts showed that these were generally viewed as 'scaffolding' which supported the process, helped monitor standards and reflected '*an emerging consensus and body of wisdom about what a healthy system of school evaluation should look like.... to help schools maintain and improve through critical self-reflection'* [MacBeath, 1999 p1]. Replies supported Simons' [1984] view that quantitative and qualitative evidence arising from the use of performance indicators gave teachers control, respected their autonomy and provided a means of making the policies and practices of schools more public. HMI and Scottish Office indicators provided a useful and structured approach and a standard set of criteria to help ensure rigour in judging performance. Towards the end of the research period the HGIOS performance indicators were updated to quality indicators and this subtle change reinforced the emphasis placed on quality within this study.

Self-evaluation was considered to be a most effective way of improving quality [Clift, 1987], improving collegiality and participative management [Hopkins et al, 1989] and most respondents rejected any association with self-delusion. Although there is a tendency for some researchers to describe the process as tedious, ritualistic and futile these respondents were in agreement that schools benefited from becoming involved [SOEID, 1999]. They were very positive about the benefits and asserted that it presented a means by which school effectiveness could be improved. As an integral component of school planning and decision making within an organised cycle of audit, target setting

and evaluation it could encourage shared ownership and control through participative management of change. It was acknowledged that self-evaluation often worked best where there was a high degree of anonymity, confidentiality and ownership and that outside pressure could be counterproductive [Simons 1981; 1987]. Where accountability was the main purpose for self-evaluation there could be a sense of professional threat but the advice provided by *How Good is Our School?* [p 52] was appreciated by the Scottish group as providing a cyclical structure of review for appraisal, target setting and development planning [SOEID 1996]. Those surveyed agreed that there were benefits associated with using a framework for self-evaluation. In the case study, development planning was supported by using the performance indicators from *How Good is Our School?* and during the research there were many positive comments from respondents regarding the benefits arising from a structure which can help identify strengths and areas for development and encourage collaboration.

Although the school effectiveness movement has been active for a long time, research has often failed to show clearly how any link between features of effective schools, whole school processes and learning outcomes might be explained [Sammons et al, 1996, Fitz-Gibbon, 1996, Scheerens & Bosker 1998]. However, in spite of several limiting factors in the empirical research it was successful in establishing that there is a perception by some head teachers and teachers that self-evaluation has a significant influence on school effectiveness and that the degree of this influence depends on variables such as climate and leadership. The literature review and analysis of the data taken together raised many important issues which now form the basis of the following recommendations.

Good leadership is essential for effective schools. This should:

- be shared to improve morale, increase ownership and share expertise
- provide guidance, time, and encourage a climate of trust and professional respect
- ensure a safe, happy, learning environment and a positive ethos
- ensure rigour in self-evaluation activities
- be a major component in management training for head teachers

Self-evaluation has a positive influence on school effectiveness. It is essential that:

- Stakeholders are encouraged to take part
- training is provided to improve confidence and make self-evaluation more effective
- it leads to improved learning and teaching
- it is honest and purposeful
- frameworks such as HGIOS are used to maximum effect

School climate has a major impact on effectiveness. Opportunities must be taken to:

- encourage teamwork, collaboration and participation
- develop skills, relationships and confidence
- improve communication and organisation and publicise success
- develop staff
- involve parents
- use time and resources well
- make best use of performance indicators and examples of good practice

Bibliography

Adelman, A.K. & Alexander, R.J. (1982). *The Self- Evaluating Institution,* London: Methuen.

Aitkin, M. and Longford, N.T. (1986). Statistical Modelling Issues in School Effectiveness Studies, *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society,* A 149 pp 1-43 also A 144 no.1.

Alexander, R. (1984). *Primary Teaching,* London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston 190 B page 187.

Alkin, M. (1975). Evaluation: Who Needs It? Who Cares?, *Studies In Educational Evaluation, pp201-212.*

Alvik, T. (1996). *Self Evaluation: A Whole School Approach:* CIDREE *Collaborative project, Self Evaluation in School Development,* Dundee: SCCC

Ball, S.J. (1987). *The Micropolitics of the School,* London: Methuen.

Ball, S.J. (1994). *Comprehensive Schooling Effectiveness and Control:An Analysis of Educational Discourses* in MacBeath, J. *Schools Must Speak For Themselves,* London:Routledge.

Bastiani, J. (1987). *Parents and Teachers, Perspectives on Home School Relationships.* Windsor: NFER Nelson.

Beare, H., Caldwell, B. and Milliken, R. (1989). *Creating an Excellent School,* London: Routledge.

Becher, T., and Maclure, S. (1978). *Accountability in Education,* Windsor: NFER

Bell, J., Bush, T., Fox, A., Goodey, J. Goulding, S. (1984). *Conducting Small Scale Investigations In Educational Management:* London: Harper and Row.

Bell, J. (1987). *Doing Your Research Project,* Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Bennis,C. and Nanus, B. (1985) *Leaders*, New York: Harper and Row.

Bernstein, B. (1970) 'A Critique of the Concept of Compensatory Education', in Rubinstein and Stoneman [eds]

Bloom, B. (1976) *Human Characteristics and School Learning*, New York: McGraw-Hill

Bollen, R. (1987). *Improving the Quality of Schooling,* Lessons from the OECD, International School Improvement Project, In Hopkins, D. (Ed), Cambridge: Falmer Press.

Bornett, C. (1980). Staffing in middle schools: 'the roots and routes of hierarchy' in Hargreaves, A. & Tickle, L.,(eds) *Middle Schools*, London: Harper and Row.

Boscher,R., Sheerens,J. *Foundational Studies and School Effectiveness* in MacBeath, J. [1999] *Schools Must Speak For Themselves*, London:Routledge.

Bowles, G. (1989). *Effective Local Management of Schools*, British Educational Management and Administration Society, Essex: Longman.

Boyd, B. (1995). *Towards A Climate Of Achievement,* University of Strathclyde, Glasgow: QIE Training Unit.

Boyd, B. (1997). *Creating An Ethos Of Achievement,* University of Strathclyde, Glasgow: QIE Training Unit.

Brighouse, T. and Woods, D. (1999). *How To Improve Your School,* London: Routledge.

Burgess, R.G. (1988). *Conversations With A Purpose*: *The Ethnographic Interview in Ed Research* : JAI Press.

Bush,T. (1989). *Managing Educational Theory and Practice,* Milton Keynes:O.U. Press.

Callaghan, J. (1976). Towards a National Debate: reprinted in *Education 22* pp332-333.

Campbell, P. (1987). School Development Plans: *report for Suffolk Education Authority and Cambridge Institute of Education.*

Campbell, R.J. (1984). In-School Development: The Role Of the Curriculum Post-holder: *School Organisation*, 4,(4)345-57.

Campbell, R.J. (1985). *Developing The Primary School Curriculum,* London: Holt Rinehart and Winston.

Cannell, J. J. (1987). *Performance Indictors: Some Lessons From America,* New York: Wiley.

Casteel, V. et al (1997). *A Framework for Leadership and Management Development in Scottish Schools*: University of Strathclyde: QIE Training Unit.

Clerkin, C. (1985). What Do Primary School Heads Actually Do All Day? *School Organisation* 5,4, PP 287-300.

Clift, P., Nutall, D.L. and McCormick, R. (1987). *Studies In School Self Evaluation,* East Sussex: The Falmer Press.

Cockroft,W.H. (1982) *Mathematics Counts: Report of the Committee of Enquiry Into the Learning of Mathematics in Schools,* London: HMSO

Cohen, L. and Mannion, L. (1980). *Research Methods In Education,* London: Routledge.

Cohen, M.D. and March J.G. (1986*) Leadership and Ambiguity- The American College President,* Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Coleman, J.S., Campbell, E., Hobson, C., McPartland, J., Mood, A., Weinfield, F. and York, R. (1966). *Equality of Educational Opportunity,* Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Coleman, P. and Collinge, J. (1995). An Inside Out Approach To School Improvement, Leeuwarden: *8th annual congress for school effectiveness and school improvement*

Coleman, J.S. et al (1966). *Equality of Opportunity,* Washington: National Centre for Educational Statistics.

Coulson, A. (1986). The Managerial Work of Primary School Headteachers, Sheffield City Polytechnic, *Sheffield Papers In Educational Management.*

Cuttance, P. (1992). *School Effectiveness: Research Policies and Practice (Eds)* Reynolds, D., Cultance, P., London: Cassell.

Day, C. Whitaker, P. and Johnstone, D. (1990) *Managing Primary Schools In the 1990's* London:Chapman

DES, (1986). *Better Schools,* Evaluation and Appraisal Conference, London: HMSO.

DES, (1977). *A New Partnership For Our Schools,* Taylor Report, London: HMSO.

DES, (1977). *Ten Good Schools,* London: HMSO.

DES, (1972). *Teacher Education and Training* (James Report), London: HMSO.

Deming, W.E. (1986) *Out Of Crisis*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Denscombe, M., (1998). *The Good Research Guide,* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Denscombe, M. (1993). *Interviews, Accounts and Ethnographic Research on Teachers,* Driffield: Nafferton Books, In Hamersly (ed) *The Ethnography of Schooling, Methodical Issues,* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Dubin, R. (1968). *Human Relations in Administration,* Englewood Cliffs: NJ Prentice Hall.

Duignan, P.A. (1988). Reflective Management: The Key to Quality Leadership, Bradford: MCB University Press, *International Journal of Educational Management*, Vol.2 no.2 pp3-12.

Edwards, A. and Talbot, R. (1994). *The Hard Pressed Researcher: A Research Handbook For The Caring Professions,* London: Longman.

Elliot, J. (1980). *SRCC Cambridge Accountability Project*, London: McIntyre.

Elliot, J. (1981). *A Framework for Self Evaluation in Schools,* Action Research, Mimeograph, Cambridge Institute of Education.

Fiedler, F.E. (1967). *A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness,* New York: McGraw Hill.

Fiedler, F.E., Chemers, M.M. and Mahar, L. (1977). *Improving Leadership Effectiveness: The Leader Match Concept,* New York: Wiley.

Fitzgibbon, C. (1992). *Performance Indicators and Exam Results,* London: Cassell.

Fitzgibbon, C. Taylor, C. (1996). *Monitoring Education; Indicators Quality and Effectiveness,* London: Cassell.

Frankfort-Nachmias et al (1996). *Research Methods in the Social Sciences,* London: Arnold.

Friere, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* New York: Seabury Press.

Fuerstein, R., Hoffman, R.,Y., Miller, M.A. and Miller, R., (1980). *Instrumental Enrichment:An Intervention Programme For Cognitive Modifyability,* Baltimore: University Park Press.

Fullan, M. (1982). *Successful School Improvement: The Implementation Perspective and Beyond,* Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Fullan, M. (1985). Change Processes and Strategies at the Local Level, *The Elementary School Journal,* 85(3), 391-421.

Fullan, M. (1988). *What's Worth Fighting For In The Principalship?* Toronto: Ontario Public School Teacher's Federation.

Fullan, M. (1982). *The Meaning of Educational Change,* Columbia: New York Teacher's College.

Glaser, B., and Strauss, A. (1968). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies For Qualitative Research,* Chicago: Aldine.

Goetz, J.P. and Le Compte, M.D. (1984). *Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research,* Academic Press.

Goldstein, H. (1987). *Multiple Models in Educational And Social Research,* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Goodchild, S. & Holly, P. (1989). *Management For Change: The Garth Hill Experience,*Cambridge: Falmer Press.

Goodlad, J.I. (ed) (1987). *The Ecology Of School Renewal,* Chicago: University Of Chicago Press.

Gray, J. & Jesson, D. (1990). The Negotiation and Construction of Performance Indicators, *Evaluation and Research In Education vol.4.*

Gray, H.L. (1987). Gender Considerations in School Management, Abingdon: Carfax Publishing Company *School Organisation*, vol.7 No.3 pp297-302.

Gray, J. (1990). The Quality of Schooling, Frameworks For Judgement, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, in Managing The Effective School by Margaret Preedy.

Gray, J. and Wilcox, B. (1983). et al *Reconstructions of Secondary Education,* London: RKP

Greenfield, T.B. (1989) in *Management in Education:Theory and Practice*, Buckingham, O.U Press.

Hargreaves, D. (1995). School Culture, School Effectiveness And School Improvement, *School Effectiveness and School Improvement.* 6:23-46.

Hargreaves, D., Hopkins, D. (1991). *The Empowered School, The Management and Practice of Development Planning,* London: Cassell.

Haywood, L. & Wragg, E.C. (1982). *Evaluating The Literature* Rediguide 2, Nottingham: University of Nottingham School of Education.

Henry, T. in Sallis, E. (1982). *Total Quality Management,* London: Kogan Page.

Herman, J.L. & Winters, L. (1992). *Tracking Your Schools Success,* London: Corwin.

Holly, P. (1985). *The Developing School,* TRIST/CIE working paper. Cambridge CIE

Holly, P. (1986). *The Teachers' Guide,* CIE/TRIST Working Paper Cambridge CIE

Holly,P. (1987) in Reid, K., Hopkins, D. & Holly, P. *Towards The Effective School,* Oxford: Blackwell

Holly, P.& Southworth, G. (1989). *The Developing School,* Cambridge: Falmer Press.

Hopkins, D. (1991). Changing School Culture Through Development Planning, Chapter 6 in Riddell, S. and Brown, S. (eds) *School Effectiveness Research. Its Messages For School Improvement,* SOEID, Edinburgh: HMSO.

Hopkins, D. (1990). The International School Improvement Project (ISIP) And Effective Schooling. Towards A Synthesis. *School Organisation*, Vol. 10 Nos 2 + 3, P179-193.

Hosking, D.M. (1988). 'Organizing, Leadership and Skillful *Process' Journal of Management Studies, 25(2) March* pp137-66.

House, E. (1973). *School Evaluation: The Politics and Process,* San Francisco: McCutchan Publishing Corporation.

Hoyle, E. (1972). Problems Of Curriculum Innovation, Milton Keynes: Open University Press. in Reid, K., Hopkins, D. & Holly, P. (1987).*Towards The Effective School,* Oxford: Blackwell.

Hoyle, E. (1986). *The Politics Of School Management,* London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Humes, W. (1986). *The Leadership Class In Scottish Education,* Edinburgh: Donald.

ILEA (1985). *Improving Primary Schools: A Report,* London: ILEA.

ILEA (1977). *Keeping The School Under Review,* London: ILEA.

ILEA (1986). *The Junior School Report,* London: Inner London Research and Statistics Branch, (Summary of main report).

Jacobsen, L., MacBeath, J., Meuret, D., Schratz, M. (1998). Evaluating Quality in 101 Schools, San Diego: Paper presented at the *American Educational Research Association.*

James, M. (1982). *A First Review and Register of School and College Initiated Self Evaluation Activities in the U.K.,* Milton Keynes: Open University.

Jencks, C. (1972). *Inequality, A Reassessment Of The Effects of Family and Schooling In America,* New York: Basic Books.

Jenkins, (1991). *Getting It Right,* London: Blackwell.

Kirk, J. and Miller,M. (1986). *Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research,* Beverly Hills: Sage.

Lincoln, Y. and Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic Enquiry,* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Lipham, J. (1964). Leadership and Administration, University of Chicago Press in E.E. Griffiths (ed) *Behavioural Science and Educational Administration.*

MacBeath, J., Boyd, B., Rand, J. and Bell, S. (1995). *Schools Speak For Themselves, Towards a Framework for Self Evaluation,* University of Strathclyde, Quality in Education Training Unit.

MacBeath, J. and Mearns, D., Smith, M. (1986). *Home From School, Jordanhill* College Of Education: JCE.

MacBeath, J. and Mortimore, P. (1994). Improving School Effectiveness, *British Educational Research Association,* Oxford.

MacBeath, J. (1999). *Schools Must Speak For Themselves: The Case For School Self Evaluation,* London: Routledge.

MacBeath, J. (1988) *Personal and Social Education* in Scottish Education [eds] Bryce, T.G.K. and Humes, W. M., Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

McCormick, R. and James, M. (1983). *Curriculum Evaluation In Schools,* London: Croom Helm.

McCormick, R. et al (1982). *Calling Education to Account,* London: Heinemann, Open University Press.

McCrone. G, (2000) *A Teaching Profession For The 21st Century,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

Marland, (1987). *Teacher Appraisal in Practice in an Oxfordshire Primary School,* London: Heinemann.

Maycut, P. and Morehouse, R. (1994). *Beginning Qualitative Research, A Philosophical and Practical Guide,* London: Falmer.

Miles, M.B. (1987*) Practical Guidelines for School Administrators: How to Get There,* Paper presented at *American Educational Research Association* Annual Meeting.

Miles, M.B. & Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis,* California: Sage.

Morgan, G. (1988). *Riding the Waves of Change,* San Francisco: Jooey-Bass.

Mortimore, P. et al (1999). *Key Factors for Effective Junior Schooling,* Somerset:Open Books.

Mortimore, P. (1991). School Effectiveness Research, Which Way at the Crossroads? *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 2 3 : 213-29.

Mortimore, P., Sammons, P., Stoll, L., Lewis, D. & Ecob, R. (1988). *School Matters, The Junior Years,* Somerset: Open Books.

Munn, P., Drever, E. (1990). *Using Questionnaires In Small Scale Research,* Edinburgh: Pindar.

Murgatroyd, S. & Gray, H.L. (1984). *Leadership and the Effective School, New Directions in Educational Leadership,* Lewes: Falmer Press (edited by P. Harling pp39-50).

Nias, J., Southwood, G., Yeemans, R., (1989). *Staff Relationships In The Primary School; A Study Of Organisational Cultures,* London: Cassell.

Nias J. (1980). Leadership Styles and Job Satisfaction in Primary Schools, London: Harper and Row In T. Bush et al '*Approaches to School Management'.*

Nutall, D. (1985). *School Self Evaluation Accountability with a Human Face; Report On A Schools Council Conference,* Stoke: Newford Hall.

Plowden, (1967). *Children And Their Primary Schools,* London: HMSO.

Plowden Report, (1967). *A Language For Life,* London: HMSO.

Prais, S.J. (1986). Educating for Productivity: Comparisons of Japanese and English Schooling and Vocational Preparation, *Compare*, Q6 *PP. 121-147.*

Purkey, S.C. & Smith, M.S. (1983). Effective Schools, A Review In *Elementary School Journal* 83, 4, pp427-452.

Reid, K., Hopkins, D. & Holly, P. (1987).*Towards The Effective School,* Oxford: Blackwell.

Renihan, F.I. & Renihan P.J. (1984). Effective Schools, Effective Administration and Effective Leadership, *The Canadian Administrator*, Vol.24 No.3.

Reynolds, D. (1985). *Studying School Effectiveness,* Lewes: Falmer Press.

Reynolds, D. Jones, D. & St. Leger, S. (1976). Schools Do Make A Difference, *New Society* 37, 721, 223-5.

Reynolds, D. (1976). *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, A Review of the British Literature,* Lewes: Falmer Press.

Reynolds, D. (1982). The Search For Effective Schools, *School Organisation vol. 2 no.3 pp215*-37.

Reynolds, D. (1976). *The Delinquent School,* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Wood, P. (ed).

Ribbins, P. & Burridge, E. (1994). School Development, Improving Education, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, vol.38 no.4 pp204-23. Cassell.

Riddell, S. and Brown, S. (1994). (Eds) *Special Educational Needs Policy In The 1990's: Warnock In The Market Place,* London: Routledge.

Rogers, G. & Badham, L. (1992) *Evaluation In Schools: Getting Started on Training and Implementation*, London: Routledge.

Rolff, H.G. (1993). *Changing The School Culture,*London: Cassell.

Rushby, T. & Richards, C. (1982). Staff Development In Primary Schools, *Educational Management and Administration 10 (3), 223-31.*

Rutter, M. Maugham, B., Mortimore, P., Ouston, J. with Smith, A., (1979). *Fifteen Thousand Hours,* London: Open Books.

Saal, F.E. & Knight, P.A. (1988). *Industrial/Organisational Psychology, Science and Practice,* California: Brooks/Cole Publishing.

Sallis, E. (1993). *Total Quality Management,* London: Kogan Page.

Sammons, P., Thomas, S. Mortimore, P. (1997). *Forging Links; Effective Schools And Effective Departments,* London: Chapman.

Sammons, P., Hillman, J., & Mortimore, P. (1995). *Key Characteristics Of Effective Schools,* London: OFSTED.

Sammons, P. (1996). Complexities in the Judgement of School Effectiveness, *Educational Research and Evaluation.* 2 (2) P113-149.

Sammons, P. Thomas, S., Mortimore, P. (1996). Do Schools Perform Consistently Across Outcomes And Areas? In Gray et al (Eds) *Merging Traditions; The Future of Research on School Effectiveness and School Improvement,* London: Cassell.

Scheerens, J., Bosker, R. (1998). *The Foundations Of Educational Effectiveness,* London: Cassell.

Schmuck, R.A. and P.A. (1974) *A Humanistic Psychology of Education Making the School Everybody's House* in Reid, K., Hopkins, D.& Holly, P. *Towards The Effective School*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Scholes, R. (1989). *Protocols of Reading,* Yale: New Haven, CT.

Schon, D. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner, How Professionals Think In Action,* New York: Basic Books.

Schratz, M. & Loffler, U. (1998). *Die Lemende Schule,* Wenheim Beltz Verlag.

Sergiovanni, T.J. (1984). Leadership and Excellence in Schooling, *Educational Leadership,* February.

Silverman, D. (1985). *Qualitative Methodology and Sociology,* Aldershot: Gower.

Silverman, D. (1993). *Interpreting Qualitative Data, Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction,* Thousand Oaks CA: Sage:

Simons, H. (1984). *Ethical Principles In School Self Evaluation,* in Judith Bell, Tony Bush, Janey Goodey and Sandy Golding, London: Harper and Row.

Simons, H. (1979). Suggestions for a School Self-Evaluation Based on Democratic Principles in *C.R. Bulletin No3.*

Simons, H. (1987). *Getting To Know Schools In A Democracy,* Lewes: Falmer Press.

Simons, H. (1981). *Process Evaluation In Schools,* in Lacey, C. and Lawson, D. *'Issues in Accountability and Evaluation',* London: Methuen.

Simons, H. (1984). *Ethical Principles In School Self-Evaluation.*London: Sage.

Sizer, J. (1982). *Performance Indicators For Institutions of Higher Education,* in McCormick, R. et al. [eds] *Curriculum Evaluation in Schools*, London: Heinemann.

Smith, D.J. & Tomlinson, S. (1989). *Studying Schools and Their Effects,* London: Policy Studies Institute pp18-27.

SOED, (1992). *Performance Indicators in Primary School Self Evaluation,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOED, (1993). *The Education of Able Pupils p6-s2,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOEID, (1988). *Effective Secondary Schools,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOEID, (1989). *Effective Primary Schools,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOEID, (1992). *Ethos Indicators In Primary School Self Evaluation,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOEID, (1992). *Using Performance Indicators In Primary School Self Evaluation,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOEID, (1997). *Target Setting In Primary Schools,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOEID, (1996). *Standards and Quality In Scottish Schools,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOEID, (1988). *Standards and Quality In Scottish Schools,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOEID, (1988). *Achieving Success in S1 and S2,* Edinburgh:HMSO.

SOEID, (1998). *Parents as Partners, Enhancing The Role of Parents in School Education,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOEID, (1996). *Achievement For All,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOEID, (1995). *Improving Reading At The Early Stages,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOEID, (1996). *Improving Achievement In Scottish Schools,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOEID, (1996). *Improving School Effectiveness Project,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOEID, (1997). *Improving Mathematics 5-14,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOEID,(1997). *Raising The Standard, Evaluation As illumination*, Centre For Research in the Educational Sciences, Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOEID,(1997). *Improving Achievement In Scottish Schools,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOEID, (1993). *The Education of Able Pupils,* Edinburgh: Scottish Network for Able Pupils. Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOEID,(1998). *Setting Targets - Raising Standards in Schools,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOEID, [1996). *How Good Is Our School? Self Evaluation Using Performance Indicators,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOEID, (1993). *The Scottish Improving Effectiveness Project,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOEID,(1997). *Raising The Standard,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOEID,(1998). *Achieving Success In S1/2,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOEID,(1997). *Improving Reading At The Early Stages,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOEID,(1995). *The Heart of The Matter,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SOEID, (1995). *Towards A Climate of Achievement,* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SEED, (2000). Improving Our Schools; A Consultation Paper On National Priorities For School Education In Scotland; Edinburgh: HMSO.

Southworth, G. (1995) *Looking Into Primary Headship: A Research Based Interpretation,* London: Falmer Press.

Southworth, G. (1985). The Headteacher as Supply Teacher, *Education* 1 March: *189.*

Stodgill, R.M. (1974). *Handbook Of Leadership,* New York: The Free Press.

Stoll, (1991). *School Self Evaluation; Another Boring Exercise Or An Opportunity for Growth?* Ch.5 In Riddell, S. and Brown, S., *School Effectiveness Research; Its Message For School Improvement,* SOEID: Edinburgh Press.

Strauss, A.L. & Carbin, J. (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research,* Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques, Newbury Park C.A: Sage.

Sutton, R. (1994). *School Self Review,* Salford: R.S. Publications.

Tesch, R. (1990). *Qualitative Research: Analysis Types and Software Tools,* New York: Falmer.

Thomas, N. (1987). 'Team Spirit' *Child Education,* January, pp 10-11.

Tizard,B. (1999). Learning Disability Review, *Pavillion Publishing* V4

Tizard,B. and Hughes, M. [1984] *Young Children Learning*, London:Fontana

Turner, G. & Clift, P.S. (1985). Teachers Perceptions Of A Voluntary L.E.A. Scheme for School Self Evaluation, London: Falmer *Educational Research, 27,2.*

Turner, G. and Clift, P.S. (1995). *Towards Quality Assurance In Scottish Schools; A Progress Report,* Edinburgh: HMI Unit.

Verma, G. & Beard, R. (1981). *What is Educational Research?* London: Aldershot Gower Publishing.

Wallace, M. (1988). Towards a Collegiate Approach to Curriculum Management in Primary and Middle Schools, Carfax Publishing Company, *School Organisation, Vol.8 no.1.*

Webber, R.P. (1990). *Basic Content Analysis,* Newbury Park: Sage.

Wilson, S. (1977). *The Use Of Ethnographic Techniques In Ethnographic Research, Review od Educational Research,* 47, 245-265.

Woods, D. (1994). *School Review And Inspection,* London: Kogan Page.

Wragg, E.C. (1981). *Conducting and Analysing Interviews,* Rediguide No. 11, Nottingham: Nottingham University Press.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 [a]

Self-Evaluation Questionnaire for Teaching Staff

The sole purpose of the questionnaire is to provide me with data for my thesis. The information is confidential and will not be shared with anyone other than my personal supervisor.

If you are happy to assist, the completed response should be returned to the box in the staff room for collection by Monday 12th June.

There is no need to identify yourself since individual respondents or the school will not be mentioned by name.

1] How would you define school effectiveness?

_____

_____

2] Which features would indicate to you that a school seemed effective?

_____

_____

3] What is your understanding of the term 'self-evaluation'?

_____

4] Has self-evaluation been useful to you as a member of staff?

_____

_____

5] How often do you use self-evaluation? [tick appropriate box]
on a regular basis
from time to time
occasionally
seldom
never
other _____

6] How necessary do you consider training in self-evaluation to be?

_____

_____

7] How have you used self-evaluation? [tick appropriate boxes]
School planning

curriculum development
review and development
in practice as a teacher
other_____

8] In general, does self-evaluation help teachers to influence:
the curriculum?
school management?
school decision-making?
other? _____

9] 'Validity' is concerned with the degree to which a tool measures what it is supposed to measure [e.g. if you check your delivery of an area of the curriculum]. How valid is self-evaluation?

_____

_____

10] 'Reliability' is the extent to which a procedure produces the same response under similar conditions. How 'reliable' do you consider self-evaluation to be? [Would you expect to get the same results if you self-evaluated at a different time?]

_____

_____

11] To what extent is school effectiveness and self-evaluation connected?

_____

_____

12] Do you consider that your school is more effective through the use of self-evaluation?

_____

_____

13] Is self-evaluation rigorous enough to help bring about school improvement?

_____

_____

14] What influence does it have on your teaching?

_____

_____

15] What effect does it have on your pupils' learning?

16] Is personal self-evaluation the same as institutional [school] evaluation?

17] When planning self-evaluation who would you involve? [tick app. boxes]
yourself
teaching colleagues
pupils
parents
education authority personnel
the head teacher
other_____

18] What effect, if any, does school leadership have an effect on the success of
a] personal self-evaluation?
b] a whole school approach?

19] How would you determine the success of a self-evaluation activity?
regular checks during the exercise
a check at the end
use an external consultant/colleague
other_____

20] What are the main reasons for using self-evaluation?
accountability
Self-improvement
school improvement
ownership of changes
enhancement of the teachers' role
other _____

21] Does the climate of the school affect the success of self-evaluation?

22] What is your understanding of the term 'added value'?

23] How can it be measured in a primary school?

24] How appropriate are performance indicators for judging school effectiveness?

25] Are there any areas for which you find them particularly useful?

26] Is a structure such as that provided by 'How Good Is Our School?' helpful in carrying out self-evaluation?

27] 'Self-evaluation is really self-delusion'. To what extent would you agree/disagree with this statement?

Thank you for taking the time to answer the above questions.

Jim Duffy

Appendix 1[b]

Transcript of self-Evaluation Questionnaire for Teaching Staff. Please note that the 'bullets' refer to individual responses and that not all respondents replied to every question.

The questionnaire was designed to probe views of some of the major themes arising from the literature regarding self-evaluation such as leadership, climate, validity and reliability and its effect on learning and teaching. The writer considered it important to establish that there was a common understanding of concepts such as effectiveness and value added [Q 1 and 22] and also to gauge the level of practical experience in self-evaluation [Q 7,17 etc.]. To maintain the respondents' interest the questions were to elicit replies of varying lengths and depth.

1] How would you define school effectiveness?

- A school is effective in so far as it meets the needs of every child within that school.
- Meeting targets on school plan. Taking on board new initiatives and implementing them effectively. Reaching set targets.
- How well children are performing in relation to target setting and the ethos of the school.
- Pupil and teacher performance under leadership of head and senior management team - how well a school is performing.
- A school is meeting the needs of all pupils, performing well in attainment at national and local standards and providing good extra- curricular activities.
- How happy/motivated the staff are.
- To what extent school achieves the targets set [e.g. school development plan].
- The provision of high quality education to all pupils.

- A school is effective in so far as it meets the needs of every child within that school.
- By the quality of learning and teaching.
- A school which is well organised with clear policies and procedures and good communication between staff.

2] Which features would indicate to you that a school seemed effective?

- Ethos, attainment targets being met, needs of all children catered for.
- School, pupils, parents and wider community working in harmony, taking on board new initiatives, providing a first class education, providing a safe, happy environment for pupils and staff.
- Morale of staff and pupils / performance of pupils/ standards of teaching / inter-personal collaboration / co-operation between teaching and non teaching members of staff. Providing for all aspects of school life for children with special educational needs.
- As Q 1.
- National / benchmark test results, positive comments by parents/ supply teachers/ visiting staff. Happy pupils.
- Happy, busy, high achieving pupils taught by committed, contented staff using quality resources.

- The curriculum/the atmosphere among staff and pupils/ ethos/test results/the support for pupils/ the resources, communication [line manager down to unpromoted staff].
- The role of the head teacher is in my opinion the No. 1 feature of how effective a school is - by this I mean does the head teacher have the confidence and respect from the staff. Is he/she aware of any difficulties and challenges that are facing the school and going to do something about them?
- High attainment of pupils.
- Well-motivated pupils.
- Parental approval.
- as above. Also a calm, positive ethos where children are happy and well cared for.
- no reply.

3] What is your understanding of the term 'self-evaluation'?

- Review practice, discuss with colleagues, reflect on outcomes, report.
- 'Taking a closer look' and looking at areas which could be improved - always trying to make things better.
- What am I teaching? How well am I teaching it? How can I improve?
- Monitoring my own teaching methods, identifying areas for development to improve learning.

- Monitoring my delivery of the curriculum and assessing pupils' needs in the light of my ability to meet their needs.
- Identifying areas of weakness as a whole school.
- To self evaluate is to look at your methods of teaching and see how you can improve on them.
- How good are my teaching and my effectiveness as a teacher.
- Monitoring own progress - formally through review and development, informally through monitoring own day-to-day performance.

4] Has self-evaluation been useful to you as a member of staff?

- Yes
- It has enabled me to look at my own teaching and work on areas of weakness as well as strengths.
- Yes
- Yes review and development helps to focus on specific areas over a set period to further improve teaching and learning.
- Takes 2 forms
- a] formal [e.g. review and development]
- b] informal [looking at forward plan to see what has been taught/still to be taught - more importantly, how teaching could be improved.
- Yes, helps me to focus on a particular area and see where I am, what I have to do and how to set realistic targets.

- Yes, I think that regularly reviewing my approach to a class helps to improve my teaching.
- Guides school development.
- When I was at another school I began the review and development programme but I left that school while at the initial stages of that programme.
- Yes.
- Yes

5] How often do you use self-evaluation? [tick appropriate box]

on a regular basis [6]

from time to time [6]

occasionally [1]

seldom [0]

never [0]

other __ [0]_____

6] How necessary do you consider training in self-evaluation to be?

- very necessary, without training we could be focusing on the wrong things. There could be a better way which we would be unaware of.

- very necessary - we can always improve our performance as an individual and a school.
- It is something a good teacher should do automatically but training would be helpful.
- Guidance on areas to focus on can be helpful, as can steps to improve.
- very important. Human nature dictates that most of us will be very critical and we don't always evaluate ourselves fairly.
- Not vital but it would be useful.
- Essential, especially to someone like myself who has so much to learn about primary teaching [new teacher].
- Helpful. It would help ensure that I was evaluating [to the] same criteria as HMI would use.
- It's essential. It is important that we are measuring in a similar way so that reasonable comparisons are being made. In my last school we didn't use formal mechanisms for self-evaluation and because of this some areas were missed out.
- No matter how well you think you are doing something there are always ways in which the approaches can be improved. One of the benefits of training is that the good practice from some schools can be shared with others.
- no reply
- Training is all very well but being away from your class to attend courses can cause disruption to pupils learning and because everyone's situation is different it can be difficult to practise what you learn back at your own school. Is so difficult to get the time to squeeze everything in.

- The best training for this kind of thing takes place in your own school with the staff which you are going to be working with. Some of our best in-service has been done in this way and the results can be shared with other schools so that we can all benefit. Sometimes when training takes place away from school people spend the day providing anecdotes and this is really frustrating.

7] **How have you used self-evaluation?** [tick appropriate boxes]

School planning [6]

curriculum development [3]

review and development [8]

in practice as a teacher [7]

other__ [0]_____

8] **In general, does self-evaluation help teachers to influence**:

the curriculum? [7]

school management? [2]

school decision-making? [6]

other? ___pupil performance and self-esteem, teaching methods_____

9] **'Validity' is concerned with the degree to which a tool measures what it is supposed to measure [e.g. if you check your delivery of an area of the curriculum].**

How valid is self-evaluation?

- Very valid if applied to agreed targets

- absolutely essential to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are being delivered equally. It is valid if it is 'functional' - serving a purpose.
- Very valid.
- no reply
- no reply
- Very, however I think people judge their own work negatively therefore there needs to be other indicators of evaluation on a personal basis.
- It is valid if you do not want to stand still in your own professional development but grow and move on.
- Self-evaluation is subjective and poor skills in self-evaluation would affect validity
- It would need to be supported by evidence e.g. assessments/ samples of children's work.
- If it is not valid then you are only fooling yourself. Self-evaluation is probably not valid for every single aspect of teaching and its validity may be higher on one occasion than another - this would be affected by the audience for the evaluation and also the purpose. I've been on staff development where we began by self evaluating and then sharing our judgements with the strangers around the room. I don't think that this type of evaluation is as valid as the kind that you do in order to improve a maths lesson or make the daily programme of work more effective.
- Its validity is affected by the use it will be put to. I've found it useful for improving the teaching of oral maths and organising my classroom routines. I think that the involvement in school planning and review and development makes

me feel involved and appreciated as a staff member. I think it measures what is intended as long as we are careful about its use and this is why there has to be training. I used it to see how the new language resource was working but the impact was as much to do with the way I delivered it and organised the pupils as the resource itself.

- Yes, it is valid as long as we know that the results are used to provide a baseline for discussion. I was reluctant at first to be too honest with the self-evaluation part of review. I didn't want to reveal weaknesses to senior staff.
- If it is not valid then it's our fault. We need to make sure that self-evaluation is the correct tool to use and that we use the information which arises. It's got to be focused.

10] 'Reliability' is the extent to which a procedure produces the same response under similar conditions. How 'reliable' do you consider self-evaluation to be? [Would you expect to get the same results if you used self-evaluation at a different time?]

- Reliable when applied to specific targets
- Not necessarily because the success of self-evaluation depends so much on the climate and atmosphere of the school. When things are going well we are often very willing to become involved but if we are frustrated by pupils, management or colleagues then we may not - think reliability is affected by relationships. It must depend on the skill of the user and that brings us back to training.

- Teaching experience has an influential part in the reliability factor. There is never a correct time - it should be part of our everyday teaching.
- It depends on who you are self evaluating for. I would be less critical of my performance if I was sharing the results and discussing strengths and weaknesses.
- You would expect to get similar results but a variety of influences can vary responses.
- No response
- I would not expect the same results at a different time. All sorts of factors affect this and there would be different results at different times of a school session
- Fairly reliable when using performance indicators.
- The reliability depends on the changes that the teacher puts in place once they have self-evaluated.
- A teacher with experience would be more reliable with self-evaluation but it could vary from individual to individual. It must have a lot to do with self-confidence.
- Generally, yes.
- I think the reliability improves the more you self evaluate. In the early days I wasn't entirely sure of what I was doing but now I have a clear idea of what is involved and how important it is to be honest - there is no point in kidding ourselves!
- It can be pretty unreliable. The kind of self-evaluation we do at the start of a development e.g. looking at how we teach phonics or spelling is O.K. There are guidelines to tell us how we should be teaching these and if you deviate from the guidelines at times it would seem to be quite acceptable. I don't mind sharing

experiences like this. I do find it difficult sometimes when we look at some thing together - say the progress of the school plan. Sometimes I am not sure what progress has been made and I am reluctant to become involved in discussions but some people have something to say about everything and it looks as though we are all in agreement as a result of self evaluation when it is not the case. Reliable in some cases but not in others.

11] To what extent is school effectiveness and self-evaluation connected?

- Self evaluation informs the school plan which should increase effectiveness
- If we self evaluate often we should become more effective as an individual and a staff.
- There is a very close connection. I think that since I have become more comfortable with self-evaluation have become a much more effective teacher and with a whole staff involvement the initiatives undertaken have been more successful.
- If staff do not evaluate how well they are performing then this will influence the overall effectiveness of the school.
- S.E. can involve highlighting areas for professional development and setting targets for achieving this thus improving teaching and learning therefore improve achievements throughout a school.
- Closely connected. Self-evaluation promotes better teaching and therefore the effectiveness of the school should improve.

- I think a school can be effective without self evaluation and I know of very good schools where self evaluation doesn't seem to feature but it certainly makes me feel as if I have a say in where the school is going. It has provided me with a means of exchanging ideas and sharing practice with colleagues. I've benefited and I hope that they have too. I particularly enjoyed being in the maths working party where we self evaluated and shared issues with other local schools.
- self-evaluation provides the awareness for development planning which points the way forward. While the priorities from the plan are being developed it's a way of checking on progress.
- It will depend on what your own performance indicators are. What are you evaluating against? - your own or an established [say Council led] criteria.
- It's an important link in procedures to improve school effectiveness. It is just one of the ways of improving things. It would be dangerous to use only self-evaluation, you still need someone else to confirm your feelings.
- Self-evaluation should enhance teachers' effectiveness and, if given support, influence school effectiveness.
- Self-evaluation and school effectiveness are connected. If we don't look at our practice every now and again we could become stale. Of course the easy bit might be the self-evaluation - the harder bit might be doing something about it.
- An effective school would be expected to self evaluate especially for the very important things such as the school plan. I found it really difficult to do at the time of my first review and development [appraisal] but it becomes easier with practice. *How good is our school?* is helpful and gives a structure.

12] Do you consider that your school is more effective through the use of self-evaluation?

- Yes
- Yes, I do consider the school to be more effective as staff take on board new initiatives as well as developing their needs.
- Yes
- Review and development helps me to become more effective in certain areas of the curriculum also evaluating the school plan helps to highlight success in areas and areas for development.
- I do [for the reasons given in Q11]
- Much more effective. I feel as if I am more in control of what's happening.
- It's hard to say really. There have been so many new initiatives that it is difficult to know what has caused improvement.
- Yes
- Totally.
- There used to be little involvement in policymaking, resourcing and changes to routine but now we are often asked our opinion and I think that this is good for the staff of a school.
- Yes.
- Yes. e.g. staff training occurring as a result of self-evaluation improves effectiveness.
- Appraisal and school planning rely very heavily on self-evaluation and these things make a school much more effective.

13] Is self-evaluation rigorous enough to help bring about school improvement?

- No, other measures are needed – targets.
- It should be. However, perhaps self-evaluating more often as a staff would improve the school even further. You get better at it the more involved you are.
- In a minor way. It isn't enough on its own. The improvement comes as a result of the action taken.
- Much of my self- evaluation is informal and personal, related to my day-to-day teaching. A more formal, consistent approach would bring about further improvement.
- It's like anything else, it depends on how it is organised and the attitudes of staff. Some of the activities which we have used self-evaluation for were carried out very rigorously e.g. the review of oral maths activities whereas at other times there hasn't seemed to be a clear outcome.
- It can help to improve schools but would have to be used alongside other things. It is only one of a range of ways of seeing where we are. The pupils tell us whether lessons are good, we can see if the resources suit and parents are quick to complain if they are not happy. HMI is also there to judge whether we are effective or not.
- Yes
- Yes, if carried out properly and if you are honest in your self - evaluation. Without honesty it is a waste of time.

- Not on its own.
- yes
- People can criticise it by saying that since you are evaluating yourself you can pretend that everything is great. I find that I am much harder on my own performance than I think others would be - I miss out the good bits and sometimes only see the faults. It is good to get the opinion of others and working in an open plan area is good for this since there are lots of adults around - it would be hard to evaluate say a lesson very positively when you know that someone else saw it and might have a different opinion.
- I think that we are more effective since we started to use self-evaluation. There has been much more involvement in changing the curriculum and school policies and I think that this is a very good thing. It must be particularly welcome for young teachers since they can feel that their opinions matter and also hear that us oldies don't have all the answers.

14] What influence does it have on your teaching?

- Makes me more reflective. I've made a number of changes to how I teach following self-evaluation. I find it useful to self evaluate in stage groups since we are all on the same wavelength. If the whole staff group is involved we can go at tangents at times and some staff members take over.

- My teaching approach as well as methods used can be improved. Sometimes I've been pleased to find that the approaches I have taken are very similar to those used by other staff. It is good to be able to discuss your concerns with colleagues.
- It helps determine my next steps in teaching.
- I can change the methodology completely if I feel one approach proved to be unsuccessful i.e. children did not respond or learn as I hoped. I think it's important to have some kind of structure to follow - without this there is a danger of missing the obvious. *How Good Is Our School?* is very helpful for some self-evaluation but it can be vague.
- It helps me to be more focused and have more specific aims.
- Yes
- It will make me more effective. The teaching will improve and the learning will be better. I try to self evaluate as often as I can and often record my thoughts on the forward plan to inform the next planning cycle.
- It is the constant influence on improving the quality of my teaching.
- It encourages me to continue to seek more effective approaches to teaching/ organising class.
- The discussion arising from whole school self evaluation can lead to a sharing of good practice, better use of resources and information about what happens at other stages in the school. I particularly liked the discussions about positive behaviour strategies and reward systems and put some of the ideas into my own practice immediately. Sometimes when you listen to the approaches taken by

others you might decide that your own way is better and that's good for confidence building.

- Being involved in self-evaluation has had quite a big effect on my teaching. In an open plan base I can see others teaching very easily, review my own practice and make adjustments as necessary. It's more difficult to know whether this affects learning but I'm sure that it must.
- My teaching has definitely improved. When we looked at the new mental maths packages and shared our teaching strategies I learned a lot and changed my approaches based on a lot of what others were doing. The pupils really responded and when we had the University consultants to look at our teaching of maths they were very positive about what they saw. Had we not self-evaluated we would not have been convinced that we needed to change and we could not have had the sharing of practice.
- no response

15] What effect does it have on your pupils' learning?

- Helps meet their varied needs. When you evaluate a lesson you can learn from any mistakes or anything that didn't work as planned. The teaching and learning is very closely connected so improvements in methodology, approaches, and discipline should have an effect on learning.
- Pupils should benefit 100% - sharing teaching approaches must surely enhance pupils learning. We use self-evaluation of homework tasks and the pupils are

quite honest. The parents also get a chance to record their judgement of how the task has been carried out in terms of effort, accuracy etc.

- If you do not self evaluate sufficiently then you may be teaching inappropriately or ineffectively and the children will not achieve their potential.
- Improves learning as methodology improves. The self-evaluation of the arrangements for National Testing led to agreed marking criteria and improved pacing of the whole maths and language curriculum.
- It should improve pupils learning.
- They benefit from the improvements which occur as a result of self-evaluation. Self-evaluation is the basis of the development plan which lays out the priorities for the year and also an integral part of review and development. The staff development involved is teacher learning.
- The pupils will benefit if, as a result of my self-evaluation, I improve my own skills as a teacher.
- Pupils' learning activities and experiences will be changed or amended due to my personal self-evaluation.
- Hopefully, by influencing teaching methodology it improves pupil learning.
- Pupil learning is affected by the curriculum, how it is delivered and the quality of the resources used for that delivery - these are all areas where self evaluation can be useful in order to audit the present situation before planning and implementing changes.

- Pupil learning is affected by *everything* that happens in a school. I think that the learning is much improved since we looked at resources, methodology for reading and maths and whole school assessment.

16] Is personal self-evaluation the same as institutional [school] evaluation?

- No, you could have personal self-evaluation at a school which is not doing well but for institutional self-evaluation needs people working together. It very much depends on the atmosphere of the school.
- The two can be connected - without one you can't have the other - one influences the other.
- No, they are different institutional self evaluation happens in the way schools look at reviewing school plans or changing an area of the curriculum. Self-evaluation is usually carried out by one person and can be more informal.
- No, personal Self-evaluation affects *my* classroom teaching and learning. School self evaluation incorporates a much wider spectrum and is generally more formal.
- No. Personal evaluation would not always even be written down, while institutional evaluation is far more formal with things being written down/recorded.
- No
- No because they are on a different level. I believe personal self-evaluation requires you to go a bit deeper and to be more demanding of yourself. With

institutional evaluation the focus is on something which is done as a school or a group.

- Broadly the goals are the same but the approaches could be vastly different. One aims at self-improvement and the other at whole school change.
- School evaluation should enhance policies and procedures. Self-evaluation is linked but different as it should take account of individual differences [e.g. strengths and development needs].
- Institutional evaluation is affected by the attitudes of staff, the level of commitment, teamwork and the leadership of the school to ensure that staff working in teams remain on task.
- The performance indicators can be used for self-evaluation or for institutional evaluation. Most of the exemplars are based on performance at institutional level.
- No, it is quite different. If you are evaluating your own teaching then you can be very honest but when it is a group effort you need to be aware of the feelings of others. It is helpful at times to get the perspective of other teachers.

17] When planning self-evaluation who would you involve? [tick app. boxes]

yourself [9]

teaching colleagues [8]

pupils [4]

parents [2]

education authority personnel [1]

the head teacher [8]

other_____[responses included network support, psychologist, professional review and development]

18] What effect, if any, does school leadership have on the success of:

a] personal self-evaluation?

b] a whole school approach?

- Leaders can ensure that they encourage the development of strengths and these should be valued.
- Strong leadership is needed to ensure that we don't get sidetracked - to get us back to the point. It can't be easy to keep people in check especially if the issue being discussed is one you feel strongly about.
- Personal self-evaluation must be connected to school leadership. As an individual I want the school to be effective. The school leader needs to provide opportunities for teamwork so that whole school approaches can be taken.
- School leadership should be supportive and encouraging and this will help to get people working individually and as a staff.
- It takes good leadership to implement changes that may be identified in either case. A good leader will support self-evaluation and encourage people to work together.
- A leader can encourage personal self-evaluation but leadership is more important in a whole school situation. The leaders' role can be to initiate the discussion and

ensure that time is made available. Most importantly the leader can make sure that something happens as a result of all the discussion.

- Management accept ultimate responsibility to ensure a whole school approach under the leadership of head - working together.
- Vital effect, because leadership must make the whole school aware of standards.
- SMT can invite staff to comment/collaborate in setting targets for the whole school to allow everyone to know the direction the school should be going.
- A huge effect. School leadership which promotes the benefits of self-evaluation will have very successful evaluation both on a personal and a whole school approach
- Crucial. I believe that teachers look to the leadership for guidance and as a benchmark upon which they set their own goals and targets.
- Good leadership can encourage and enhance teacher skills and self-evaluation as a valid tool for improving effectiveness.
- Yes. e.g. staff training occurring as a result of self-evaluation improves effectiveness.

19] How would you determine the success of a self-evaluation activity?

regular checks during the exercise [7]

a check at the end [2]

use an external consultant/colleague [6]

other_____

20] What are the main reasons for using self-evaluation?

accountability [6]

self -improvement [8]

school improvement [8]

ownership of changes [3]

enhancement of the teachers' role [2]

other ____ [0]_____

21] Does the climate of the school affect the success of self-evaluation?

- Very much. A positive climate would give confidence to staff to self evaluate.
- Does play a part - obviously the area, backgrounds of children, parental support/teacher support adds to the success of self-evaluation.
- Yes, if there is poor morale and negative school ethos then people can be reluctant to self evaluate because they do not feel their opinions are valued and they feel a sense of apathy.
- Yes, the ethos of a school helps to promote the idea of 'areas for development' as opposed to 'where we fail' therefore it appears less threatening and more of a positive activity.
- If the climate is negative then self-evaluation just doesn't happen. You need to feel that everyone is contributing but it is still not easy to be honest, particularly if you feel out of your depth.

- Yes, very much so. The climate needs to be one where you can feel safe to give your opinions. You need to be careful though that sensitive issues are treated well. Group discussion suits me but not everyone takes part at times.
- Yes. It plays a part in how people perceive the success of self- evaluation.
- Yes, as teachers we must see criticism as constructive.
- High/low morale could influence one's perception of performance.

22] What is your understanding of the term 'added value'?

- A rise in standards over a period of time taking into account a variety of factors.
- The term 'added value' could mean a 'good deal' or 'excellence'.
- The influence you have on a child's academic and personal and social development.
- unsure
- What is added to a child's knowledge/education over a specific time [e.g. from benchmark test in p.3 to benchmark test in p5 - how has that child's knowledge been 'added to'?
- Benefits arising from improved standards of attainment - motivation, attitude, self esteem.
- Added value is the quality change that takes place in a school once development needs are identified.
- Local authority initiative. I am not sure about this one.
- Not familiar with this term.

23] How can it be measured in a primary school?

- Compare national test results - same sample of children with previous results - tracking.
- It can be measured on results [tests]
- dedicated teaching staff
- Testing, school ethos.
- No response
- baseline tests/benchmark tests/ National tests.
- Testing, testing, testing!!! Perhaps through expressive arts.
- If the changes made are actually working and if they are not. What further changes need to be made?
- Unsure
- No response

24] How appropriate are performance indicators for judging school effectiveness?

- Very, but there must be evidence.
- Very appropriate - it enables heads, SMT, teaching staff to determine how effective the school is.
- Vitally important.
- Give a school something to aim towards.
- They are important but not the whole issue. Other things have to be taken into account about how effective a school is.

- I find the performance indicators give a good indication of the school's needs.
- They are a solid benchmark and in theory a level playing field upon which people can judge how they are doing.
- We shouldn't run the risk of getting lost on endless lists of performance indicators. They have to be a real measure of how well the school thinks it is doing. What I really mean is that figures and statistics can be misleading.
- Performance indicators are good guides for judging school effectiveness.
- Appropriate. Necessary for accountability.

25] Are there any areas for which you find them particularly useful?

- I find them useful to improve my own performance in my teaching and delivery of the curriculum.
- No response
- No response
- Possible HMI visit, interviews, promoting positive behaviour, school ethos.
- Learning and teaching.
- For learning and teaching
- -

26] Is a structure such as that provided by 'How Good Is Our School' helpful in carrying out self-evaluation?

- Yes. Clear exemplars of 1-4 ratings needed.
- Very much - the structure enables self-evaluation to be carried out accordingly.
- Yes because it gives you good indicators of good practice in teaching.
- Helps to focus on specific areas and highlight successes. Stimulates discussion in school approach/policy.
- Yes, very helpful. It helps to look at it and say 'am I doing this?' [If not, how can I change?]
- Yes.
- The curriculum support for pupils and attainment.
- Yes as it sets out specific guidelines and performance indicators around which we [the school] can set out their own stated criteria.
- Yes
- The document [HGIOS] would need to be more readily accessible for individual self-evaluation. It is helpful for a whole school approach.

27] 'Self evaluation is really self-delusion'. To what extent would you agree/disagree with this statement?

- We can always improve on our present performance and be aware of our weaknesses. As long as we attend to our weaknesses we can turn them into strengths.
- There is a potential for self-delusion. Appropriate training and effective leadership could prevent this.

- Disagree, self-evaluation highlights strengths and identifies areas for development.
- A bit of both. It would be very easy to say that everything is o.k. - especially if you wanted the person to get a good view of the school but I think that the longer you are involved in self-evaluation the more honest you become.
- You could, of course, tell yourself that your teaching was great but this is the benefit of working with others. It is not so easy to claim that something is right when there are witnesses who might not agree.
- Disagree if evidence is available and other measures are used.
- If self-evaluation is conducted honestly then I do not agree - however it can be a vehicle for self-delusion.
- I would disagree. If self-evaluation is done positively and for positive reasons, then it can only benefit the person.
- If self-evaluation takes place without consultation and advice from others [preferably with more experience than ourselves] it can lead to self-delusion. We need to self evaluate within a context and with others.
- Measured against defined criteria avoids self-delusion.
- Disagree

Appendix 2

Transcripts of interviews with local head teachers.

The interview schedule used in appendix 2 and 3 [Irish interviews]was based on the questionnaire used with teaching staff [appendix I]. Using similar questions allowed comparisons to be drawn between the experiences and opinions of those involved in teaching pupils and those who manage schools. The data arising from the interviews enriched the research because it allowed a level of interaction and discussion around the issues raised which would not have been possible if using questionnaires alone. The researcher was thus able to probe further, develop themes and test hypotheses.

Interview with head teacher 1

How would you define effectiveness in a school context?

A happy place where everyone can get on with their work - the parents are happy with the service and the pupils are benefiting.

How would you define a school?

A school is really just a building. It is the people in it, which make a difference.

Which features would indicate effectiveness in a school?

A school is effective when it is managing to carry out what it intended. Each school has a plan of where it is going - a school plan...not necessarily the school development plan but a less formal understanding of the direction the school is going in.

What do you understand by self-evaluation?

Well, I suppose you mean using 'How good is our school'. We use it often for the school plan and also as a source of reference. Self-evaluation is just what it says - looking at what you are doing and evaluating its worth. We evaluate all the time in this school, but I suppose most schools do.

Is self-evaluation valid?

I think so. We have made great strides forward since we started to use it. The teachers were a bit hesitant at first...what do you mean by valid? Yes, it is a good way of seeing where you are at a given point and from there the staff can decide what comes next.

Is it reliable?

It certainly seems to be. We had a local inspection and our self-evaluation was taken as a starting point... we were pleased to see that the report was positive and that our own evaluation had actually been spot on. That made us feel that it had been worthwhile.

Is it generalisable?

What do you mean by that? Probably not - what happens in one school wouldn't necessarily work in another. It is difficult to generalise about anything really.... things change all the time.

To what extent is school effectiveness and self-evaluation interconnected?

Definitely connected a great deal. Through self evaluation we can prioritise and manage change... we can't do everything at once and the plan which comes as a result of self evaluation makes it very clear not only what we have to do but who will do it and when it will be done. As a new head teacher I find this very valuable.... I also appreciate the help which discussing problems brings... I get worried because I can't know everything.

Is self-evaluation rigorous enough to help bring about school improvement?

It has done so in this school for me. We have worked together to improve many things within this school since I came and self-evaluation has provided us with the starting point. We've looked at how the children learn best. We also recently looked at the teaching of spelling because our pupils were not doing so well in that area - we self evaluated to see what we were doing and where things might be going wrong or we could improve.

Does it influence learning and teaching?

There is no doubt. We have had learning and teaching as specific priorities but then it also comes into nearly everything that is done - the new maths approaches, delivery of Environmental studies etc. The work on the spelling and other areas like problem solving. Let's face it - everything we do in a school must affect teaching and learning mustn't it?

Is personal self-evaluation the same as institutional evaluation?

Personal self-evaluation is for yourself - it isn't usually public. It's quite a difficult question. I suppose that institutional self evaluation involves us in discussing how we teach and what we teach but isn't always as self-critical as personal evaluation might be. In institutional self-evaluation we are aware of the audience - usually our superiors or bosses. After all I am not going to 'shoot myself in the foot' by declaring all my weaknesses at the same time. Real self-evaluation has to be honest to be worthwhile but

that is not always easy. I haven't really thought of there being a difference but I suppose you're right ... it's not the same.

What effect does school leadership have on the success of:

a] personal self-evaluation?

b] a whole school approach?

It is really important for both but perhaps more at the whole school level. The leader must make sure that everyone gets a chance to participate so there is a certain amount of control needed. Self-evaluation with a big group can be difficult and there should be more in-service about how to organise the tasks and the time. I have a few members of staff who are very confident and tend to take over the discussions. The better we become as a group the easier self-evaluation will become for individuals. We use self-evaluation for many reasons but the most recent was the updating of the maths policy. It worked very well but took a long time to complete and this could be a problem for me as we have many other areas to see to.

What is your understanding of added value?

The benefit for a child or community of being associated with the school. Added value can be measured - tests, results etc. but it can also be the things it is difficult to be specific about e.g. the 'feel good factor' - the relief for parents that their child is safe and happy.

There is an awful lot of talk about added value in the authority just now with nonsense like the value of having the council workers empty bins more often... added value is really very hard to measure... think of the value for a pupil of being with a good teacher for a year and what a difference that can make.

Are performance indicators appropriate for judging school effectiveness?

I think that they are highly appropriate and they have certainly come at the right time for me. I use P.I.'s all the time and discuss them with the staff - they give us a common agenda and starting point. The teachers understand the indicators well and I find myself going back to them often as a guide. I like lists which I can tick off to compare how we are doing so I find the performance indicators useful.

Are there any areas for which you find them highly appropriate?

Certainly for the curriculum, school management, and ethos - most aspects I think. We're a small school and it can be helpful to compare ourselves with others.... performance indicators help us to do this.

Which areas do you find them inappropriate for?

None that spring to mind.... we're using them a lot at present.

Do you find How Good Is Our School? helpful in structuring self-evaluation?

Yes. For all the reasons I've just said.

Did you self evaluate prior to the publication of this document? [How Good Is Our School?]

I have only been a head teacher for a short time - prior to this I am aware that the school made some use of them but not to any great extent. We didn't use it in my last school but I think it would have been useful. I know that we are being encouraged to use it and I think it's a good thing.

Which areas have you covered to date with a 'Standards and Quality Report?'

Because we have been inspected we have really covered all areas although if we hadn't had the inspection we would have been working through the sections like the other schools seem to be doing. I think it's a good idea to take a few sections each year and cover them well. We'd really felt that when the inspectors came we were more confident.

Interview with head teacher 2

How would you define effectiveness in a school context?

Effectiveness is difficult to describe in some ways. I suppose we are effective if we are keeping parents satisfied and children are attaining well. We are effective when we are doing things right but it is not always easy to know when this is happening - sometimes it is easier to recognise when things are not going well. People are more likely to complain when things are right than to praise a school when things are going well.

Which features would indicate effectiveness in a school?

A school is basically a building where teaching takes place in a fairly formal way and a good one is defined by happy children, good resources, good results, good attendance. Effectiveness might mean different things to different people ... some parents just want their child to be happy while others are anxious that he or she succeeds in everything. I know that in England the schools are competing against one another to show they are effective but the league tables don't seem to have reached us yet.

What do you understand by self-evaluation?

Using *How good is our school?* in order to find out how we are doing. We've tried it several times now. We have had some success but it is very difficult to get people to agree ... some teachers are very set in their ways and don't want to change We self evaluated in order to look at some aspects of school organisation and that seemed quite successful but when we tried to look at teaching maths it was more difficult - people clammed up.

Is self-evaluation valid?

Yes. We have seen in this school that it can work. Our self-evaluation was partly done for us since we had a local inspection which used the bullet points from *How Good Is Our School?* to measure our performance. This was a great help to us but I don't know that I would call it self-evaluation since it was done to us by someone else. It might have been more effective if we had been using *How Good Is Our School?* in a more structured way before being inspected.

Is it reliable?

I think so. Some staff take it more seriously than others. Some are a bit suspicious of the purpose. I think in this school the younger teachers are more open to discussing their practice.

Is it Generalisable?

I'm not sure. I don't think so because the results I would get would be different from yours or those from another school.

To what extent is school effectiveness and self-evaluation interconnected?

Probably closely. I would say that we have improved since we used self-evaluation or should I say since we were evaluated through the local inspection. I think that as we use self-evaluation we will get used to it and the school will benefit. Although we have not used self-evaluation an awful lot I think we are effective.

Did you find that having self-evaluated to some extent you were in a stronger position when the local inspection happened?

Yes. We were able to see the areas needing improved and the results of our limited self-evaluation were reinforced by the inspection. We had already identified some of the priorities which the inspectors picked up on. I think in general that it is good to have the criteria which are used for an external visit so that you can apply it yourself.

Is self-evaluation rigorous enough to help bring about school improvement?

I think so we have certainly started to improve but that may be to do with the action plan given to us by the Authority following the local inspection. It's hard to say what the effect might have been if we didn't have the inspection. It largely depends on the attitudes of the staff...if they are prepared to take self-evaluation seriously then it should help. We have been given a clear action plan and we will be held accountable for its successful completion... I suppose the way to do this will be to use self-evaluation more.

Does it influence learning and teaching?

I expect so - some of our targets were directed at learning and teaching and we discussed how we could improve. It remains to be seen how much of an effect it will have.

What effect does school leadership have on the success of:

A] personal self-evaluation?

B] a whole school approach?

Leadership is very important. I think it is more relevant at the whole school level since personal self-evaluation is a more private issue. Although our experience has been limited I can see that the self-evaluation process has to be managed so that skills can be developed and results acted on.

Is personal self-evaluation the same as institutional evaluation?

It is done in a similar way. The same resource is used as a basis so I think it must be the same. I suppose the individual self evaluation may throw up areas for development for an individual and he/she may not want to be self critical whereas it is easier to highlight weaknesses in the organisation...less personal. I think that is what happened with us - it was easier to discuss the shortcomings of school organisation.

What is your understanding of added value?

That we take a child, teach that child and there should be a measurable improvement. The concept seems simple but in reality it might be difficult to measure how much has been taken in by the pupil. It would be difficult to know if a lack of improvement was due to poor teaching or poor learning.

How can it be measured in a primary school?

Performance indicators, standardised tests, National tests, baseline assessment. Some of these things are new to us but I think I am beginning to see the reason behind some of these new ideas from the authority - you can't measure something if you don't have the tools - the test results give you these.

How do you measure added value?

Well we have the tests and the Authorities analysis of the results. We are aware that parents have a view of the school and hope that this is a positive view. We will be able to measure our success using the action plan which has been prepared for us following the inspection.

Performance Indicators

Are performance indicators appropriate for judging school effectiveness?

I think that they are. We are fairly new to using performance indicators but I think I can see the benefit of having something to measure a schools performance against.

Are there any areas for which you find them highly appropriate / inappropriate?

Seem to be appropriate for most things.

I can't think of any areas they would be inappropriate for but I don't consider I have a lot of experience.

Do you find How Good Is Our School helpful in structuring self-evaluation?

That is what we used as a structure. I found it useful that the audit led you to priorities and then a school set out its plan for meeting these.

Did you self evaluate prior to the publication of this document?

Not in any systematic way. We have always had new things to take on such as new resources, 5-14 etc. These had to be planned, but not in the present manner.

Which areas have you covered to date with a 'Standards and Quality Report'

As yet we haven't been involved in this. I suppose the results of the local inspection is our Standards and Quality report and that next time around we will make one up to highlight our progress through the action plan.

Interview with head teacher 3

How would you define effectiveness in a school context?

A good school, a happy school, a school which is achieving a lot with a good staff and pupils eager to learn

How would you define a school?

More than bricks and mortar - a place the community identifies with and hopefully is proud of. A school is at the heart of the community.

Which features would indicate effectiveness in a school?

The results of tests and exams, parents' views, good teaching, good resources, ethos, high standards for all. In an effective school the pupils and staff are happy and keen to work together.

What do you understand by self-evaluation?

Mainly based on *How Good Is Our School?* - a structure provided by a document to help head teachers analyse effectiveness. We have been using this approach for some time with a great deal of success. It forms the basis of much of our staff development efforts.

Is self-evaluation valid?

I believe it is. I've always been involved in self-evaluation even since the time of the white Strathclyde document. It gives us a tool for looking at how we are doing and planning changes and improvements. I think it is very valid and very worthwhile.

Is it reliable?

Very reliable. Often the issues, which are identified by staff, are the same ones, which I as head teacher would have highlighted - the difference is that the staff are behind you and have ownership of the priorities. They feel that their voice is heard and that they are valued. Sometimes the teachers have focused on an aspect which I had not been fully aware of and they can be keen to take on priorities and help to manage them. I think self-evaluation is a very good thing for a school. It depends on the ethos and atmosphere in a school if it is to work but strangely it can also help to build a very positive atmosphere and sense of teamwork. It has helped me a great deal.

Is it generalisable?

No, I don't think that you can generalise about self-evaluation. It is a very subjective thing - my priorities may be different from someone else's and my interpretation of information gathered might also be different.

To what extent is school effectiveness and self-evaluation interconnected?

There is a strong relationship. A school needs to have clear goals and everyone involved needs to work together to achieve these. Self-evaluation establishes the priorities and involves the staff. It is very much an integral part of school life - teachers have always

self-evaluated in some way but now it is part of development planning, review and development. Much of what we do at school benefits from a pattern of audit, setting priorities, time scales, establishing responsibilities and success criteria so I believe that the self evaluation process is becoming embedded in our school culture.

Is self-evaluation rigorous enough to help bring about school improvement?

This is our responsibility as head teachers. We need to ensure rigour otherwise it is a waste of time. We have seen the benefits of it in this school but, like most things, it has to be properly managed.

Does it influence learning and teaching?

If it doesn't then we shouldn't be doing it. Yes, I believe that it is a major influence in improving the quality of learning and teaching. In my experience it's the best way to improve a school.

Is personal self-evaluation the same as institutional evaluation?

Not really - they are connected and in this school our first step is to self evaluate. We use self-evaluation as the basis of the school plan - it must be honest and thorough and there is no good pretending that things are rosy if they are not. We may be reluctant though to be too hard on ourselves in some areas and might not see our weaknesses in others. Teachers may for example feel that the relationship with parents is good and not prioritise this - the parental perspective of home school links may be less positive. On the other hand it may be that we are really very hard on ourselves - not giving enough credit for success.

What effect does school leadership have on the success of:

A] personal self-evaluation?

B] a whole school approach?

It has a large effect. The head teacher must ensure that every opportunity to become involved in is taken by staff. We do this through school planning, target setting, review and curriculum development. Head teachers must also ensure that there is adequate staff development within school so that we can all become more efficient. The teachers' personal self-evaluation is their own business but it does affect the success of the school.

What is your understanding of added value?

What can be shown by statistics based on results of school, authority and National tests - proof of improvement which backs up ongoing internal assessment.

How can it be measured in a primary school?

Through National tests, standardised tests, baseline, inspection [local or HMI] We have recently been awarded 'Investors In People' and I consider this is also recognition of added value.

How do you measure added value?

I suppose it's got to do with how we are progressing with the school plan.... how the results are for our school and compared with other schools ... how the pupils score in

standardised tests compared to the last time they sat these.... what people say about our school.

Are performance indicators appropriate for judging school effectiveness?

Very appropriate and a great help for looking at the curriculum, leadership/management etc. We have used them often in looking at how the school is progressing in terms of the school plan.

Are there any areas for which you find them highly appropriate / inappropriate?

As I said we have used them very often for a wide variety of purposes. I wouldn't use self-evaluation for everyday decision making because it is time consuming but for other aspects of school life like looking at the curriculum it is very useful.

Do you find How Good Is Our School? helpful in structuring self-evaluation?

It is good and it is useful but I would tend to cross reference with other publications. I do think that it is useful within an authority that the basis of self-evaluation is the same.

Did you self evaluate prior to the publication of this document?

Always - I have always tried to be reflective but would consider that the document helps me by providing a structure, a common language and a tool for audit.

Which areas have you covered to date with a 'Standards and Quality Report?

'Three areas - curriculum, resources and school planning. By the end of this session we will have looked at 3 more.

Interview with head teacher 4

How would you define effectiveness in a school context?

It's not very easy to define but an effective school is where the pupils are happy and achieving success, staff work well together as a team and parents work in partnership. An effective school is one where pupils are encouraged to do their best and where they are rewarded. Effectiveness involves more than the academic side though - a school can be effective for a group of pupils who don' t necessarily pass exams and tests... for some children learning is difficult.

Nowadays an effective school might be seen as one which is achieving its targets but it is important that pupils are happy.

How would you define* a *school?

A school is a building but it is much more. it is a place where there is a community with a clear purpose, where people rely on one another. We've moved from one building to another and the change has been quite dramatic. If the school was just a building we would have lost our identity but we didn't - we took the character and warmth from the old building with all its history and brought it with us.

Which features would indicate effectiveness in a school?

Obviously there are indicators of performance and these are very high on our agenda just now. Schools must be seen to have good results over a wide range of tests and measurements. Effectiveness is not only that though - there are some pupils who will never achieve high scores and we need to look after their needs as well.

An effective school must consider the pastoral role for pupils and also remember that the adults in the building also have needs - it is a real community.

Happy parents is a sign of an effective school but that can be difficult to achieve - sometimes you notice the ones who are unhappy more than the majority.

The best sign of effectiveness is the pupils which we send to the high school each year - their confidence and knowledge and skills all reflect well on themselves and their primary schools- except for the odd one that is. With the best will in the world it is difficult to be effective all of the time - I think we need to accept that.

What do you understand by self-evaluation?

I think self - evaluation is about a staff or a head teacher looking at the work carried out in a school and judging how things could be improved... looking at the work of the school and finding ways to make it better.. involving as many people as possible to get their view. It could also involve others - perhaps the parents - finding out what they think and matching this with our own perception - I know that we've done this several times and its been time consuming but worthwhile. I'm sometimes surprised when some of the things we expect parent to support us in don't happen.... if we are self-evaluating we might find that there has been a reason for this.

Is self-evaluation valid?

Do you mean is it a good thing to do? Oh I certainly think so. We have always self-evaluated in schools.... looked at what we have been doing and finding ways of

improving. It's something which is part and parcel of being a teacher or headteacher...sometimes I think we are very hard on ourselves and don't take time to enjoy the successes. We need to be careful that we have evidence for what we say though - no good saying that there is nothing wrong with an aspect of the school if we know that there is - we would only be wasting our time because HMI may well come along and tell us. There is sometimes that West of Scotland thing about not blowing your own trumpet - we need to be able to say that something has worked well.

Is it reliable?

It would be very easy to self evaluate and say that everything is wonderful but where would be the point. It is as reliable as those who contribute. If the self-evaluation is done honestly without fear then it should be reliable. No, I don't think the same result would be had on another occasion because self-evaluation has a lot to do with mood - the mood of the person using it and the mood of the staff if it is a whole school thing.

Is it generalisable?

If you mean would the results in my school be the same as others then, no. Our findings would depend on how well we carried out the evaluation, the staff who were involved, and the honesty. It would also change from year to year.

If you mean is there a general pattern which can be followed then, yes there is and I think a lot of schools are pursuing the same goals. It would be good if we could share some more and save reinventing wheels.

You can be effective without self evaluating but having been involved in formal self evaluation for several years now I would say that it gives a clear focus if you are using a document such as *How Good Is our School?*... you are less likely to miss an area out. If self-evaluation is done consistently and well it should be connected with school effectiveness. We need to keep looking to monitor progress, to check the implementation of a new programme or resources ... methodology.

Is self-evaluation rigorous enough to help bring about school improvement?

Yes, it should help but the real improvement is brought about by the staff working together to improve the areas highlighted. Without the goodwill self-evaluating wouldn't bring about change. It is the next step that makes the difference - what you do with the information once you have it - you can self evaluate all you like but if you don't act on the information then it has probably not been worthwhile.

Does it influence learning and teaching?

If self-evaluation didn't influence learning and teaching we wouldn't be doing it. There is very little that we do which doesn't have a direct effect on learning and teaching - the difficulty is often in measuring what the effect has been. We have looked closely at several areas of the curriculum - the teaching of maths and environmental studies and we have self-evaluated to find a starting point. It is interesting that in a big school there can be so many different approaches.

Is personal self-evaluation the same as institutional evaluation?

The school plan is drawn up by the whole staff following an audit. This means that the priorities for the school will probably reflect those of the individual some of the time but an individual may have other personal priorities. Self-evaluation is therefore not always the same as institutional evaluation. Even the self-evaluation for review and development is carried out with the school plan in mind. With your own self-evaluation there is no need for others to agree - I think we are probably very hard on ourselves. With school self evaluation we can be swayed by comments from others - almost pressured into agreeing to something we're not sure about - it is very difficult to get a whole staff to agree.

What effect does school leadership have on:

A] personal self-evaluation?

B] a whole school approach?

Good leadership made self-evaluation more effective. Leaders would be less involved with staff's personal self-evaluation than at the whole school level. There is a danger that through self-evaluation the school could take a different direction from other schools so training is important for all involved. The teachers review their own performance regularly but this is not always shared with others.

What is your understanding of added value?

I find it a difficult one and I get irritated by constant reference within the Authority to 'Best Value Regime' - it's not that I don't agree that we should provide a good service but just that it is all we seem to hear about.

Best value may be that a child starts school or comes to this school and we are able to say that we have added something. It involves being able to provide evidence of progress or gain. We need to have a starting point - a standardised test score - a baseline assessment etc. to use as a starting point. It doesn't seem to be enough now to tell parents that their child is doing well. We need evidence. We use ongoing and summative assessments, tests, samples of work etc. to show parents that we are adding value. We also have to show HMI and the Authority that we are achieving success we had our HMI visit a couple of years ago and that was largely positive, we have our targets and we will be measured against these as well. I hope we are giving best value but I'm not sure that there is an easy way to measure it.

Are performance indicators appropriate for judging school effectiveness?

Yes I think that they are and that they become more useful as we become more familiar with them. We certainly use them often and they are a reference point to see how we are doing. It's helpful now that we have a smaller number to focus on but there seems to be a move to increase these again. It is good to be able to look at what is considered to be good practice and compare it with what is happening here.

Which areas do you find them highly appropriate/ Inappropriate for?

It's more difficult to measure the effects of personal and social development than it is to track progress in, say, French. It is easier to use performance indicators with something which can be measured numerically e.g. attendance - if there is an improvement we can see the effect quite clearly.

Sometimes it is difficult to see the relevance immediately e.g. looking at bullying but then you see that there are elements of management, leadership, ethos etc. The more you use them the better you become.

Did you self evaluate prior to the publication of this document? [How Good Is Our School?]

Yes, through staff and management team meetings and observations and also loosely based on previous quality assurance documents. You've got to have something to compare practice with.

Which areas have you covered to date with a Standards and Quality Report?

Ethos, a number of curricular areas and aspects of learning and teaching. We've had a good look at spelling and the teaching of maths so that will go into the next one when we look at curriculum and methodology.

Appendix 3

Transcripts of Interviews with Irish Respondemts

'Evaluating Quality in School Education' involved 101 schools in 18 countries. The participants were committed to developing a common approach to school self-evaluation. A group of Irish head teachers who had attended this conference were interviewed as part of this research to provide further information and illuminate aspects of the influence of self-evaluation on school effectiveness.

The conference aimed to find a common framework which would encourage development and sharing of experiences in a genuine bottom-up / top-down way. Delegates saw three driving forces impacting on the success of the enterprise; the information society; internationalisation; and scientific and technological change. Other influences included the increasing demand for accountability and transparency which had been given fresh impetus as a result of international studies such as the OECD indicators and the Third International Mathematics and Science study [TIMMS] comparisons. Although OECD and TIMMS have had a significant effect on policy makers they fail to provide a qualitative or contextual view of how learning, growth and school improvement work in different contexts and cultures nor do they suggest what might be learned from different practices or how problematic issues in the lives of schools and classrooms might be more effectively addressed.

The head teachers of the participating schools were asked to investigate the reliability, relevance and usefulness of internal and external evaluation. Internal evaluation was

time consuming but considered more likely to improve teaching and management. There was a challenge to make self-evaluation more valid and reliable, so that it could become an integral part of a developmental school culture which might be viewed enthusiastically by staff. Those involved saw a need to engender a greater sense of accountability for the accomplishments of pupils and the performance of teachers.

Based on the hypothesis that schools could achieve an optimum balance between internal and external evaluation the conference tried to investigate the possibility of making the two more congruent [a difficult task since there is little evidence of what that optimum is despite 30 years of research into school effectiveness and improvement].

The strength of the project lay with balancing a common approach with respect for very different cultures and contexts. The process involved the construction of self-evaluation guidelines encompassing a range of methodologies, the appointment of a critical friend, networking workshops and seminars and a self-evaluation profile used as a baseline audit. Assessment included perspectives of school quality and improvement from teachers, students, parents and boards of management. The project lasted for a year during which a number of indicators were investigated using a variety of instruments to gather data. Some 80% of the schools involved replied that self-evaluation helped improve teaching, 84% said it improved management and 95% said it was 'valid'. The following interviews were carried out with some of the delegates who had attended this European conference. Their inclusion enabled comparisons to be made between the views of managers and teachers in a small Scottish Authority, committed to developing the use

of self-evaluation in its schools. The comparisons were all the more interesting since the respondents worked in a very different context, with a high level of autonomy and considerable competition for pupils. The management structure in the establishments visited was hierarchical and, although school developments were constrained by lack of time and provision for In-Service, pupil attainment and achievement was high.

Interview [A] was with a new head teacher - appointed October 1999

How would you define effectiveness in a school context?

Quality in teaching and learning, to me this is what it is all about - an effective school is one where the teaching and learning is high. Everything that happens in a school is somehow reflected in the teaching and learning or influenced by it. An example would be our ongoing focus on attendance - if we can't get the students to attend then it effects the teaching and learning.

Which features would indicate effectiveness in a school?

Efficiency - though it is possible to be efficient without being effective. Teaching being challenged by teachers themselves and to a certain extent, by others. Outward signs of effectiveness would include appearance, signs of activity, outward messages being passed on implicitly or explicitly. The types of discussion which take place within a school - if it is informed then that creates a good impression. Order, purposeful activity by pupils and a sense of teamwork would indicate effectiveness. The environment has a strong influence on effectiveness but a school can to some extent compensate for this as we try to do here.

What do you understand by self-evaluation?

The work carried out by an individual or whole school to look at present practice and improve the situation.

Is self-evaluation valid?

Yes, actually it is the only way to go. The inspectors' role is then to come in and confirm what we already know. We must have some way of measuring how we are doing if we are to improve. We cannot simply rely on the opinion of someone from outside the school or even a parent - people's views are important but if we have the staff angle then this is important too.

Is it reliable?

Yes. As teachers we often undervalue the contribution which we are able to make. The reliability depends on the sincerity and honesty of the people involved in the self-evaluation. If you fudge the truth then you are only fooling yourself and wasting time.

Is it generalisable?

I'm not sure. If you mean are the principles of self-evaluation or the process generalisable then yes I think that it can be.... but the results would certainly not be generalisable - they would depend on the things I've mentioned like honesty and also whether there was an open relationship in the school. I think that the way we do self evaluation in this school could work in another similar sized school but perhaps not in a large second level.

To what extent is school effectiveness and self-evaluation interconnected?

It needs to be a whole school priority e.g. in a whole school evaluation we identified language as a priority but PSE and Health were not raised as issues. I think that this was because the people in charge of these areas were confident but this is an area of dreadful deprivation, a quarter of the population is under 12 and there are a huge number of single parent families. There is a lack of childcare and a lack of supervision. Self-evaluation does not always highlight the areas you might expect but then it is not the only way to identify school priorities.

I think that we are a much more effective school due to our efforts to self evaluate. It has made us more open and more of a team.

Is self-evaluation rigorous enough to help bring about school improvement?

Yes. It is up to us as head teachers to ensure that it is carried out in an efficient manner. This is the difficult part - knowing how to structure it. The self-evaluation is to some extent just a part of the job; the next is what to do with the information. There needs to be follow-up so that the evaluation is seen to benefit the pupils. I'm a new head teacher and using self-evaluation is good for me to reflect on how I go about things but it is also a great help for me to gain from the experiences of others who know the area and the families.

Does it influence learning and teaching?

Absolutely. As I said earlier it really is the only way to go. In this area only 7% gain the leaving certificate at the end of their school career. The difficulty seems to begin to show

itself at around eight or nine years old - until that time standardised testing shows our pupils as being on par with others. Through self evaluation we have been able to pool ideas and have improved learning and teaching in many ways - we've looked at how we use resources and raised a lot of money for new books and materials, we've also looked at how we teach and how we relate to the pupils and their families. The parents often come to the school for help and I do sometimes feel like a social worker but it's part and parcel of the job in an area like this.

Is personal self-evaluation the same as institutional evaluation?

Self-evaluation has more to do with esteem than testing would in the past

What is your understanding of added value?

This is an area of serious poverty. We add value by caring for the pupils' physical and spiritual well-being. It is easy to dwell on the difficulties but there are many successes and many occasions where as a school we have made things a little bit better. I would consider that to be adding value.

How can it be measured in a primary school?

Our success is measured by what we see, from standardised tests and from regular visits from the inspector [every 6 years]. We can measure that the parents 'vote with their feet' and move to the private sector. We look at academic achievement through tests and also compare this with leaver destinations because this data is readily available to us.

How do <u>you</u> measure added value?

I am able to see the added value every day. The attendance figures are slowly rising but we fight a constant battle against poverty, drugs and alcohol in the community. There have been four parents who have died since Christmas - two suicides. The school is a focus for the community. It is the only stability that some of the students have. There is a big drugs and alcohol problem on the estate and it is easy for people to get drawn in. I think the school helps families to be able to cope.

Are performance indicators appropriate for judging school effectiveness?

Yes. In the pilot we used the information gathered as a basis for confidential discussions with staff regarding the performance of classes. We were able to look at how effective we were as a school. We looked at what we considered effectiveness to mean for us and then looked at what others had to say. Looking at the indicators we could compare ourselves and start to develop our own indicators. In this area we would be looking for small steps ... were concerned with exams and certificates but first of all we need to get the students in and persuade some parents to send the children regularly. We looked at homework and decided that for many it was an added burden so we try to make work at home as interesting as possible and we are getting a better response from most families.

Are there any areas for which you find them highly appropriate?

The data which we gathered [in the pilot study] confirmed what we already knew. The parents, pupils and teachers had largely very similar priorities. We are acutely aware of

the difficulties of losing some of our best pupils to the private sector where they are almost able to guarantee success in national exams.

Which areas have you covered to date with a Standards and Quality Report?

I am committed to the principle of self-evaluation and would be keen to administer a schedule to myself but I simply don't have the time. Self-evaluation is fairly new to us and there is no requirement for us to produce a report.

Interview B

This is the result of an interview with a head teacher/principal of a post primary school on the outskirts of Dublin. The head teacher had been new to his post at the time of the European Conference.

How would you define effectiveness in a school context?

A school where the results in exams were excellent and compared well with the rest of the country. Where the pupils were motivated and pleased to come. Where the staff were able to get on with the job.

Which features would indicate effectiveness in a school?

Efficiency, good structures, good teaching producing pupils who do well and go on to useful employment or university. The number of pupils attending, or leaving a school. The effectiveness is strongly influenced by the area which the school serves. The types of discussion which take place within a school - if it is informed then that creates a good impression. Order, purposeful activity by pupils and a sense of teamwork would indicate effectiveness.

What do you understand by self-evaluation?

The work carried out by an individual or whole school to look at present practice and improve the situation. A kind of self-inspection process where the positive strengths of a school ca be capitalised on and the weaker points identified. It's the kind of thing which many head teachers have been involved in for a long time.

Is self-evaluation valid?

I think it is and my trip to Europe confirmed this. It is important that we ask people what they think but we don't always get the reply we expect. Some of the people at the conference were already doing a lot - they were involving staff and sometimes even parents and children in the surveys. We are a long way from that. I was surprised that there were students and parents attending the conference. We didn't have the option of taking anyone else since the funding was for a limited number.

Is it reliable?

It's to early for me to say whether the information I get is reliable. The staff aren't used to being asked their opinions and frankly there is some suspicion. I'm not sure if the returns have been honest or if it is seen as a way to get at management. There may be a suspicion that management wants to find out what you really think for an ulterior motive. We are not really used to a culture of being asked to examine our own practice.

Is it generalisable?

I don't think the results from this school would be the same as those in another. In fact they certainly wouldn't. This is a very different type of school from the one you are going to this afternoon and the job in both schools is entirely different.

To what extent is school effectiveness and self-evaluation interconnected?

I think that there is a definite connection but there is a cultural barrier at present. It will only make a difference if the people are willing to take part honestly and if there are

results to show for the effort. If I ask the staff what they think of something and they tell me and then nothing is done about it then what is the point. We have limited funds and we don't run our own budget so change is not easy.

Is self-evaluation rigorous enough to help bring about school improvement?

Not on its own. There needs to be a willingness by staff to become involved at that level. There can't be an attitude of 'that's your job and this is mine'. Head teachers also need to believe in its value or there won't be time to do it.

Does it influence learning and teaching?

If it doesn't there is absolutely no point in getting involved in it at all. I took part in the pilot and although some people in other parts of Europe seemed very keen it wasn't something I had considered much before. The trouble is that as head teacher I'm still accountable for the running of this school and there can be a feeling of 'that's what you get paid for, why are you asking me?' The idea seems good but the practicalities are immense. There is, for example, the time commitment - when in a school like this do we get the time to discuss?

Is personal self-evaluation the same as institutional evaluation?

As head teachers we evaluate ourselves all the time - it may be informal but we do it. Institutional evaluation is different because you have a huge range of different viewpoints and characteristics. People have different priorities based on their experience and in some ways the subject they teach. It is difficult to get people in a school to open up

about their own practice. I'm not sure that true self-evaluation is possible in a second level school context.

What do you understand by the term 'Added Value'?

How can it be measured?

The value added data is used by management to let us see how we are doing against the national criteria in terms of academic achievement and within the school we can monitor the performance of the class. Added value comes from the results of exams but also pupil destination. Pupils who stay with us provide us with an affirmation that we are providing a good service. We look at the retention rates as an indicator of whether we are adding value. We lose a high proportion of pupils every year to the private schools who show their added value by demonstrating success through easily measured data - exam pass rates!

I use data to provide information about the quality of learning and teaching - this is information which stays with me - I don't show the results.

As a follow up to the pilot study I collected data from several sources such as the school itself and the community. The pupils have had strong opinions on things that we might say are unimportant e.g. the length of skirt which the girls are expected to wear as part of the school uniform. Parents let me know that they wanted music because the pupils were getting music at primary school and coming to this sector where there was none. Though

I didn't agree with the parents, I did put music on to the curriculum but made sure that it wasn't just about singing and banging drums - it's difficult and demanding.

How do <u>you</u> measure added value?

Through National exam results and looking for patterns. We tracked the exam performance at year 1,3 and final year to show present attainment and improvement. We can also measure through the degree of respect we get from parents. The value added concept means different things to different people. Education is very big with the media in Ireland - there isn't a version of the Times Educational Supplement - every newspaper is deeply interested in reporting educational matters. It is difficult for students to go to college when due to the booming economy there is a lot of work in the leisure, pub, hotel and building industries so students are lured away with the prospect of making money. It devalues education as the means to employment when you can get the job without the education.

Performance Indicators

The inspectors now have a role in the inspection of secondary schools but they are too far removed from the job to have credibility - it is very much a carrot and stick approach. The inspectorate needs skills but also empathy. In this school I have a whole department who are pregnant but I have to carry on as normal. There is a culture of devolution of responsibility to schools and the idea of the inspectors now having a say goes against that philosophy.

Is leadership Important?

Yes, I think that it is very important. In this school I have tried to develop a culture of planning and revisiting to check on success. Leadership is finding the balance between a happy staff and students who are happy and achieving success. I like to get into the staff room regularly but I am not there as much as I used to be. I believe in a hands on approach - if you are in the staff room you don't let problems build up - in a way you can anticipate trouble - its got to be a team effort and it is helpful if the head teacher is with the team as much as possible. Morale can be low - there were 60-70,000 suspensions from schools in this country last year you know.

Are performance indicators appropriate for judging school effectiveness?

Yes. In the pilot we used the information gathered as a basis for confidential discussions with staff regarding the performance of classes. There is a need for more self - evaluation but we need more training for prospective school managers. The self-evaluation should be checked and validated but this should be by a person of the head teacher's choice as a critical friend. It is very difficult to gather data on say, personal and social development but this is so important in this and in any school.

Which areas have you covered to date with a Standards and Quality Report?

School planning is new to our schools. When we were members of the project [European] we used questionnaires to gather views but we haven't done this since. It is a good idea but takes so much time. When I asked the pupils and parents what they thought I got the answer about the skirts and the music. The staff are generally not interested in the running of the school - that's my job and they think that I should get on with it rather than ask them what they think I should do.

Interview C

This interview took place with a very experienced primary head teacher who had been seconded as the National Coordinator for School Development Planning

The interview began with a great deal of information regarding the structure of education in Ireland.

How would you define effectiveness in a school context?

It's about very many things and I suppose leadership would have to come into it. It's about collaboration and everyone working together with a shared philosophy. An effective school is well managed and this means that there would have to be shared aims so that everyone is pulling in the right direction - the same direction, and, of course there has to be good learning taking place for the pupils.

The Education department views school effectiveness in the context of the whole school rather than the individuals within it. It reminds me of the moves towards Total Quality Management. The Departments way often takes the view that inspection is the best way of looking at things whereas schools are not always comfortable with inspection. Until recently the inspectorate did not get involved in inspecting secondary schools but that has changed very recently. The secondary schools are not very happy about this. They consider that there isn't a need and that the inspectors are not perhaps the best people to express an opinion. One of the problems is that the inspectors at present do not have much power to improve things if they do see scope. The secondary schools have a high degree of autonomy.

Which features would indicate effectiveness in a school?

There might be a general inspection report [not published in this country]. There would be a good use of time and this would be evident around the school. Some schools take half a day a term when the pupils stay home. A sign of effectiveness would be how this time is used, for example, is curriculum planning done on this day and what are the exam results like? A sign would perhaps be the involvement of the patron since many don't want to know about what is going on in school. Effective management would be an indicator and the pattern of the school roll would give an idea of how the school was able to attract pupils and keep them.

Other signs would be the involvement of the PTA in fund raising, the use of the per capita money. For 80% of schools the head teacher's job includes a large element of teaching as well as running the school. There is a move to try to give these head teachers more time for administration and management. Networks of principals don't usually feature because there is fairly intense competition for pupils so schools don't usually share good practice with each other. The effectiveness of a school is also influenced by the number of travelling children who bring extra funding to schools but also cause difficulties in terms of behaviour and gaps in learning through non-attendance at school.

What do you understand by self-evaluation?

The work carried out by an individual or whole school to look at present practice and improve the situation.

Is self-evaluation valid?

Self-evaluation is about common sense so it should be valid. Validity depends on whether it is the right kind of tool to use to improve schools. I think it probably can be. The present system of inspection is all about accountability but to my mind it is accountability versus development. There is a paradox in this feeling of accountability - but accountable to whom? The unions are largely refusing to have anything to do with self-evaluation. In the end it will probably come down to free choice and most successful schools will therefore take it on board.

Is it reliable?

I think it is to a certain extent, but it is also rather subjective, this is perhaps proved by the inspections, which occur here in Ireland every 6 years. The inspections are based on narrow criteria but self-evaluation provides a chance to raise professional esteem, to return to schools the right to say 'yes' or 'no'. One of the main difficulties of using the views of the inspectorate is that, having an advisory role they are partly responsible for the success of a school. If they inspect the school and say that it is not doing very well it may be a reflection on their own effectiveness. They are in fact judging their own efforts.

Is it generalisable?

I don't think the results from one school would be the same as those in another, nor would the findings as a result of self-evaluation be the same. There are so many factors

which influence its success like the size if the staff or the sector because the secondary sector is very different from the primary. It has a lot to do with staff attitudes and the level of cynicism. Because of these and probably many other factors it is impossible to generalise that self-evaluation is necessarily a good thing in itself. It is different for each school and, I would suggest, can be different each time it is used in the same school.

To what extent is school effectiveness and self-evaluation interconnected?

I think that there is a definite connection but there is a cultural barrier at present. It will only make a difference if the people are willing to take part honestly and if there are results to show for the effort. If I ask the staff what they think of something and they tell me and then nothing is done about it then what is the point. In this country we are reluctant to say that something is going very well. There is virtue in modesty. We have limited funds, and we don't run our own budget so change is not easy. Another difficulty is time. There is no system of staff development when pupils are not at school. We do not have the equivalent of INSET days so how can initiatives that involve the whole staff be taken forward?

Is self-evaluation rigorous enough to help bring about school improvement?

Self-evaluation is much less threatening. With outside inspection it is viewed as negative if something is wrong but with self-evaluation it is just something to be attended to. It then depends on the sense of urgency which the school feels regarding the issue and also I suppose, on other priorities. I think it would be likely that a school which has taken time to self evaluate would then do something about it.

Does it influence learning and teaching?

Yes. We get to see the school as a unit rather than as a series of classrooms with individual teachers teaching. The tendency is for teachers to be fairly autonomous. With self-evaluation, policies can be created as a result of collaboration amongst staff and this must improve the teaching.

Working together can be very good for helping teachers feel that they are part of a staff, that they belong and their contributions are worthwhile. I happen to believe that everything that happens in a school influences teaching and learning.

Is personal self-evaluation the same as institutional evaluation?

No, it is different. You can evaluate your own work fairly easily and set yourself targets for improvement that you are comfortable with but this is not so easy at a whole staff level. The difficulty at this point is that head teachers are often inexperienced in policymaking and staff have never been asked to contribute. There isn't a traditional sense of team. Another major drawback is the lack of time. There is no time built in to our system for development so self evaluation has to be carried out in the teachers own time or by the head sending the pupils home. We are lacking a structure to allow us to carry these things forward.

What Do You Understand by 'Added Value'?

This is what schools give over and above the expectations - going the 'extra mile'.

Added value is being provided by the new private schools that are guaranteeing excellent exam passes. The schools themselves get £2000 a year per pupil and the fees pay the rest. State schools are feeling an enormous pressure due to this. With the economic boom a lot of people have money to spare and are using it to send students to the private school just before the crucial exams - the pupils are getting the passes and this makes the schools more popular while the state schools are losing some of their best students and the kind of parents who will push their children on to achieve.

How can it be measured?

By the success achieved by the school in exams compared with neighbouring schools, the extra-curricular activities which are provided, the sense of community which the presence of the school can help generate, its links with the parents and the church. There are lots of ways.

Is leadership Important?

Good leadership is vital but we have the difficulties of an enormous number of teaching heads whose training for the job of running a school is minimal. We are trying to improve this situation now but it is a very slow process. It is easier in the secondary sector where the structures are not so tight but there is still a need for good quality staff development for school managers. The training would also need to be attractive to the

head teachers because they may not be inclined to undertake training anyway. We are facing a problem due to the structure of the school year and the lack of flexibility afforded to schools and head teachers. There is at present no official time in the school year when pupils are not in school and staff are. This presents enormous difficulties for self-evaluation but also for any kind of working together to develop the school.

Are Performance Indicators Used As Part Of Self Evaluation?

In my experience they have not been used formally to a great extent until now but we are beginning to see them start to be used by some schools. They are of course well used in industry and I think that it is only a matter of time before they are used in a more widespread way in schools. As a head teacher I certainly would have measured the performance of my school with the others around about me but it is difficult when you are not comparing like with like.

Interview D

This interview was carried out with two seconded secondary head teachers who were working on the 'Stay In School' Retention Initiative aiming to encourage students to stay at school post-16. These head teachers had not attended the European Conference.

How would you define effectiveness in a school context?

An effective school achieves better results with some of the students than could have been expected. It would have committed teachers and pupils who want to get on. For us an effective school is where students want to stay beyond the age of 16. Because of the success of the economy in Ireland there are a huge number of jobs available particularly in the building and leisure industries. This means that there is work for everyone and less incentive to stay on at school to get the best leaving qualifications possible so as to go to University. The 'Celtic Tiger' economy means that young people are being lured away from education by the prospect of earning very good money in unskilled work. Effective schools need to find ways of encouraging the students to stay on and to attend school when they should.

Which features would indicate effectiveness in a school?

Schools are effective in many different ways. The staff need to work together for the good of the pupils... in my experience there is generally no consensus. There needs to be a happy staff and happy students and this is helped by a nice environment where people's talents and ideas can be encouraged and where there is space for development.

What do you understand by self-evaluation?

Looking at your own work and seeing how you can improve your practice the next time. It can be with regard to a single lesson or a certificate course. How effective we are might be seen from the results of tests, talking to pupils and ex-pupils and parents. Some schools have used a survey of focus parents for this.

Is self-evaluation valid?

It can be biased. I know that some schools have used a 'critical friend' in order to get over this but I suppose he might not be entirely neutral. You need to be honest and I would imagine that the more you self evaluated the more honest you might be and the more effective you become.

Is it generalisable?

If you mean do the results of the self-evaluation transfer to other schools then, no. Every school is different so the results of self-evaluation in one school are bound to be different from another. The way of carrying out self-evaluation may be more generalisable but not the results.

To what extent is school effectiveness and self-evaluation interconnected?

The more you self evaluate the better you will become at it and providing you do something with what you find then the school should get better as a result. If you simply ask people what they think and then do nothing about it there will be no difference.

Is self-evaluation rigorous enough to help bring about school improvement?

It's back to honesty. It is not easy to look at the school through others eyes. We are all looking for different things from a school and what one parent or pupil considers essential may be entirely different from another. Anything that gets the staff of a school working together must be worthwhile but it is back to what you do with the information you have once you gather it.

Does it influence learning and teaching?

If it doesn't then it is a waste of time. The main difficulty with self-evaluation seems to be with the way teachers and departments work. They tend to operate separately from the rest of the school - there isn't a sense of working together and without this it is difficult to see how improvements can take place.

Is personal self-evaluation the same as institutional evaluation?

Institutional evaluation has to do mainly with testing pupils and using the results. Self-evaluation is a different thing, it is more based on opinions than anything you can put your finger on It's about asking as many people as possible what they think and then using the answers to build up a picture.

What is your understanding of added value?

For us, schools add value when as well as the Maths and English they provide incentives for the students to want to come to school. Schools add value by having sports facilities for soccer, gaelic football, athletics, music, drama, after schools clubs and other extra-

curricular activities. Added value can be seen in the way that some schools ensure that the environment is pleasant, that the school is cared for and kept in good repair.

How do <u>you</u> measure added value?

A sure sign for us of added value is where most of the kids want to stay on at school, if schools were adding enough value we'd be out of a job. We can see added value in many of our schools but there are some, where there is very little. In ------- school the head teacher is not interested in encouraging pupils to come to school. We would like to help but we can't get through to him that he needs to do something about attendance before it's too late.

School Aims

For the planning cycle 2000-2003 the schools aims reflect the national anc authority aims of Raising Attainment and Social Inclusio
The school aims to raise attainment for all pupils through the process of inclusion, by offering and actively promoting equal opportunities and social justice for all pupils in everything that we do in St Joseph's primary school.
Although Raising Attainment and Social Inclusion are interdependent we have , for the purposes of this plan , classified the development priorities a follows.

Raising Attainment : Early literacy / Numeracy/ Early intervention,Mathematics, Writing,Target Setting , Cluster Planning, Excellence Funding.

Inclusion: Curriculum Developments - P.S.D.Expressive Arts, R.E., Health Education and Technology. Support for Learning, Excellence Funds and Cluster Planning.

Specific Aims

a Roman Catholic Primary School and it is our intention tc provide an educational service of the highest quality.

We aim to provide "Best Value" through the development of a stimulating and rewarding learning experience in which independent learning is encouraged, the needs of individual pupils met and full potential realised.

We encourage positive attitudes towards learning so that each child enjoy his/her primary school experience and derives maximum benefit. To ensure this we undertake to nuture each child's intellectual, social, physical, emotional and moral development within a safe, caring and well resourced environment.

School Planning Procedures

The 1998/99 plan was used as basis for discussion and audit . All staff were involved in the audit of the school plan which resulted in the production of the school Standards and Quality report and the School Plan 2000-2003. An example of the criteria used to audit the plan is enclosed as an appendix.
Following approval of the plan by the education Authority the plan will be discussed with the school board and a summary issued to parents.

The School Standards and Quality report exists as the audit of the previous school plan and the identification of the future work of the school through the process of school self evaluation. The full Standards and Quality report is enclosed and can be summarised as follows;

Key Area 1 - Curriculum -	3	good
Key Area 2 - Attainment -	3	good
Key Area 3 - Learning and Teaching -	3	good
Key Area 4 - Support for Pupils -	4	very good
Key Area 5 - Ethos -	4	very good
Key Area 6 - Resources -	3	good
Key Area 7 Management , Leadership, Quality Assurance -	3	good

APPENDIX 4

PAGE

MISSING

IN

ORIGINAL

		1	2	3	4
3.2.2	Resources appropriate to the age, needs and abilities of the children are available.			✓	
3.2.3	Use is made of the education resource service.		✓		
3.2.4	An up-to-date inventory of resources is available.			✓	
3.2.5	Resources can be easily accessed by staff and, where appropriate, children.			✓	
3.2.6	The use of shared resources is timetabled.			✓	
3.2.7	Resources, apparatus and equipment are maintained in good condition.			✓	
3.2.8	The local area and community are used as a resource.			✓	
3.2.9	Catering is provided according to specification.		✓		
3.2.10	Resources are stored securely.		✓		
3.3.1	Health and safety guidelines are implemented.		✓		
3.3.2	Resources for personal hygiene are available.			✓	
3.3.3	Supervision procedures are implemented.			✓	
3.3.4	Security procedures for the safety of staff and children are implemented.		✓		
3.3.5	Procedures for dealing with emergency situations are known to all staff, children and parents.		✓		
3.4.1	Financial resources are allocated according to identified priorities.		✓		
3.4.2	Staff are consulted and informed about financial allocations.		✓		
3.4.3	DMR procedures and guidelines are implemented where appropriate.		✓		
3.4.4	Procedures for monitoring school funds and other monies are implemented.		✓		
4.1.1	The heads of the school and pre-five establishments co-operate with each other.		✓		
4.1.2	Curricular links exist between the school and pre-five establishments.			✓	
4.1.3	The school receives information about the children entering P1 from pre-five establishments.		✓		
4.1.4	Induction procedures exist for children entering P1.		✓		
4.2.1	The headteachers of the school and local primary and special schools co-operate.			✓	
4.2.2	Curricular links exist between the school and local primary schools.			✓	
4.3.1	Primary and appropriate secondary school staff co-operate with each other.		✓		
4.3.2	There are curricular links between the school and its associated secondary schools.		✓		
4.3.3	Information about individual children is passed to appropriate staff in the secondary schools.			✓	
4.3.4	The school participates in induction procedures for children entering S1.		✓		
4.4.1	Children are encouraged to continue learning.		✓		
4.4.2	Children are given the skills and opportunities to learn independently of their teachers.		✓		

		1	2
5.1.1	Staff are given opportunities to participate in the management of the school.		✓
5.1.2	Staff are given opportunities to work together as a team.		✓
5.1.3	Communication between management and staff is effective.		✓
5.1.4	The management of the school takes account of the welfare needs of staff.		✓
5.1.5	Grievance procedures are known and, where necessary, properly implemented.		✓
5.2.1	Parents are made aware of the aims of the school.		✓
5.2.2	Parents are given advice on how to help with their children's learning.		✓
5.2.3	Parents are informed about their children's progress.		✓
5.2.4	Opportunities are given for parents to discuss their children's progress.		✓
5.2.5	The school liaises with parents about the needs of individual children.		✓
5.2.6	Parents are encouraged to take part in the life of the school.		✓
5.2.7	Parents are informed and, where appropriate, consulted about school matters including the curriculum.		✓
5.2.8	General information for parents is available in relevant community languages.		✓
5.2.9	The school responds, where appropriate, to the needs of working parents.		✓
5.2.10	Where established, home visiting programmes are planned in partnership with parents.		N/A
5.3.1	The school identifies and responds to children's views.		
5.3.2	Children are given opportunities to take responsibility.		
5.4.1	The school co-operates, as appropriate with staff from the police, fire brigade, health service, social services and and community and residential education.		✓
5.5.1	The school, school board and PTA/PA co-operate.		✓
5.5.2	The headteacher and school board comply with legislation.		✓
5.5.3	The headteacher keeps the school board fully informed about school matters and takes account of their views.		✓
5.5.4	The school board communicates and, where appropriate, consults with parents.		✓
5.6.1	The school co-operates with interest groups in the community.		✓
5.6.2	The school contributes to local community activities and events.		✓
5.6.3	Co-operation exists between the school and groups using its premises.		✓
5.6.4	The school offers its resources for community use.		✓
5.6.5	The school presents itself positively in the community.		✓
6.1.1	Equal opportunities are provided for children.	✓	

APPENDIX 6

STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT

Attainment	Performance Indicator.	Level
	2.0-2.3	3

How are we doing?

- Pupils are aware of high expectations of staff and parents.
- Each child's ability is taken into account by teachers when planning attainable but challenging tasks.
- A policy of using task boards ensures that pupils understand what is required and can work through curriculum tasks at an appropriate pace.
- Pupils are encouraged to work individually, in pairs, groups and as a class as appropriate.
- Students work purposefully, are praised and rewarded for good work and are involved in self evaluation.
- Good work habits are encouraged.
- Pupils attain well in relation to National and standardised tests.
- A variety of assessment procedures ensures a balance of summative and formative assessment.
- Staff are aware of school targets of 97% and working towards achieving these
- Continued rigorous monitoring and tracking of pupil progress through the schools comprehensive attainment programme across all areas of the curriculum.
- The school's process of attainment is supported by informal and formal assessments of pupils work across all areas of the curriculum.
- Recording profiles are utilised by all staff in planning the curriculum for all pupils.

How do we know? Evidence Gathered

- National test profile - testing being completed at level A in P1 by some pupils
- More pupils achieving level E in p7 than before
- Pacing of tests increased at all levels
- Progress rigorously tracked through the schools processes of attainment in all areas of the curriculum.
- Pupil performance in weekly tests, maths challenge, national competitions etc.
- Standardised test results
- Recording of assessment profiles in each area of the curriculum.

How Good is Our School?

School Name _____

What did we do to gather our evidence?

Self Evaluation Process

Attainment

examined school records of attainment
discussed standardised test results
tracked progress through skills programmes
looked at teachers reports to parents
monitoring that appropriate information being passed on from class to class
information from review meetings available for staff to act upon where necessary
parents and pupils self evaluation of homework tasks
pupil self evaluation of quality of own work [some stages]

What are we going to do now?

Further Developments.

continue to try to raise achievement through the rigorous monitoring and tracking of pupil progress.
maintain positive ethos of achievement
celebrate success
analyse standardised test scores and national testing information
continue to develop and maintain pupil profiles and records of assessment across each area of the curriculum.

<u>These developments appear on the school plan under;</u>

Raising Attainment - target setting in mathematics and language
All curriculum areas.

Priority Raising Attainment - Mathematics

Maintenance [ ] **Development** [*] **Estimated Cost** 600

Target	Indicators of success	Action (including responsible personnel)	Timescale	Resources and Staff Development	Monitoring and Evaluation
To raise standards in Mathematics To implement the recommendations in "Improving Mathematics Education 5-14" - H.M.I. and Achieving success in Maths S1/S2.	planning formats being used. Programmes of study in Maths at each stage to include renewed emphasis on mental calculation. Earlier National Testing for able pupils at all levels. Information regarding testing easily stored and accessed. Improved results in standardised tests.	East Renfrewshire planners established. Continue to evaluate present teaching methodology to ensure well structured lessons. Emphasise interactive participative teaching and learning. Ensure supply Teachers are given advice. Continue timetable for teaching of Maths to give 10 minutes each day within existing guidance for structure and balance of the curriculum. Extend setting at P7/P6 to cut down on the number of groups being taught by each teacher. Consider "fast track" through existing programme for most able pupils. Pilot new developments and curricular changes at particular stages. Review programmes of assessment particularly with regard to pacing and timing of National Testing. Ensure recording procedures for National Tests are understood and implemented. Supported study programme for P6 and P7. Participation in National Maths Challenge. Teachers' self evaluation exercise informs forward planning.	2000-2002	OFSTED Video. Hungarian Maths Video. Achieving success in Maths S1 - S2 H.M.I. Improving Mathematics Education 5-14 H.M.I. The National Numeracy Strategy D.I.E.E. Resources to support mental calculations. School and authority based In-service. Resources for supported study , homework and assessment.	Forward plans. Observation and discussion of classes/lessons. Minutes of meetings. Daily programmes of work and timetables. Children's jotters. Assessment records.

Audit

National Priority 1

ACHIEVEMENT AND ATTAINMENT	**To raise standards of educational attainment for all in schools, especially in the skills of literacy and numeracy, and to achieve better levels in national measures of achievement including national examinations.**

Local Improvement Objective	School Implementation Strategies	Key Targets for 2002-2005	Link to: School Aims	Link to: HGIOS
1.1 To improve the authority's performance in national examinations to an even higher level above the national average.	Audit and review school policy statements on learning and teaching, assessment and support for pupils. Devise format for written framework guidelines. *Set timescale for testing and formal monitoring of test attainments*	To produce updated school policy statements in *all* areas 2002-2004 To put written policy guidelines in place regarding a framework for National Test predictions *incorporating information from EMIS and the Audit Unit* 2002-2005 To improve predictions of pupil attainment *2003-2005* To establish a structured response to analysis of test results 2002-2005	*	2
1.2 To tackle gender issues in attainment, especially in literacy.	Promote discussion of gender issues among staff, pupils and parents. Ensure availability of an appropriate range of strategies for learning and teaching, assessment and class management.	To prepare advice for staff and parents regarding support for pupils 2003-2004. To produce strategies to help counter adverse gender factors 2003-2004	* *	2

Our Ref: JW/EH
Your Ref:
Date: 30 November 2000
When calling please ask for:

04 DEC 2000

Dear Jim

School Plan 2000-2003

Thank you for sending in your school plan.

I would like to commend you and your staff for the detail and quality of your plan and I am pleased to approve the plan on behalf of the Director.

Implementation of the plan will be monitored by the Quality Development Officer with "pastoral" responsibility for your school.

Having been impressed by the quality of your original submission, I am confident that implementation of the plan is in good hands.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely

Head of Quality Development & School Provision