Effective School Organisation

I.N.T.O.
Serving Education

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Irish National Teachers' Organization
35 Parnell Square
Dublin 1

Telephone: 01-872-2533

General Secretary
Senator Joe O'Toole

Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann
35 Cearnóg Pharnell
Baile Átha Cliath 1

Guthán: 01-872-2533

Ard Rúnaí
An Seanadóir Joe O'Toole
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Foreword

There is a close correlation between the standard of learning of young people and the quality of the working lives experienced by their teachers. Teachers' workplaces are becoming more complex demanding greater transformational leadership to enable schools to cope with the complexities of accelerating change in education. Change is a process not an event. Schools need, therefore, to become more organised workplaces, teachers need to commit to new forms of professionalism by assuming greater responsibility and control and principal teachers need to share power, decision making and expertise with their colleagues, parents and the wider community. This document seeks to persuade teachers to think about themselves, their workplaces and their involvement in the effective organisation of their schools.

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Introduction

Two decades ago there were few people engaged in the study of how schools are best organised as institutions for learning. Now, twenty years on, the number of researchers and research projects on the subject area has grown impressively. This body of educational research has made an important contribution to our understanding of how schools as organisations function effectively and its findings have much to offer the various educational partners. In turn, experienced teachers have much to contribute to this research.

However, in the international field of educational research, studies of this nature have in general concentrated on second level schools although a number of researchers have, in recent years, begun to focus on primary education. In Ireland there has been a distinct lack of such research at either primary or second level. This report is a preliminary investigation by the Education Committee into aspects of this research. It draws on work undertaken in the past by the INTO into distinct aspects of school organisation but instead of treating them as individual topics for consideration this publication seeks to unify these topics under the all embracing concept of Effective School Organisation.

Such a concept is central to educational debate at present as is instanced by the White Paper Charting Our Education Future (1995). Reflecting extensive international concern for school effectiveness the White Paper states that:

Students are entitled to the highest possible standards of teaching and to be facilitated in the attainment of the highest quality of learning. The State should ensure and promote the highest standard of education and learning for all. This entails a variety of interdependent factors, including the quality of the curriculum, teaching and assessment and the quality of teachers in schools, school and institutional management, and planning processes.

It also states that:

Effective management and leadership at all levels within the school are essential if the school’s goals are to be met. The achievement of school
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effectiveness depends crucially on the leadership offered by experienced and skilled principals, supported by vice principals and post holders.

While the INTO does not totally endorse such a unilateral conceptualisation of school organisation, viewing it as merely one type of organisational structure, it does highlight the importance of the concept in the educational context. Concern for the quality of education in schools today is among the highest priorities in all OECD countries. (OECD 1989). This concern is shared by the INTO which has consistently sought to promote the interests of education, and to provide a high quality education service.

The landscape of school organisation has changed radically in recent years. School management and organisation now takes place in an increasingly pressurised and changeable environment. Working as part of a team in a school is an increasingly demanding task involving ever increasing levels of knowledge, skills and abilities. It is essential that all those involved in the life of a school should be up to date and familiar with the latest thought and research.

However, a great deal of organisational/management theory is based, not on educational reality but on an industrial model. In spite of attempts by such theorists to broaden their courses in a 'catch all' or general manner many of them have failed to describe the organisational reality of schools. Many attempts have been made to define and specify outputs for schools but school objectives are not as easy to define as industrial objectives. Developing human potential is less easy to define than product development/diversification, increasing market share or maximising outputs. The raw material of schools is human which, despite what some organisational theorists may propose, cannot be processed, programmed, or manipulated as can iron ore, computer software, or crude oil (Bush et al. 1980).

In addition to an essential process based on relationships schools are different from industry in two other respects. Teachers' recognition as professionals entitles them to a degree of autonomy not facilitated by industrial type management models. Professional discretion means that the involvement of staff in the decision making process is essential if organisational structures are to be effective. Finally, while industrial
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outputs may be relatively easy to describe, manipulate and control, educational endeavours that seek the physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual development of children are infinitely more sophisticated.

This report is based on the assumption that school improvement is achievable. In addition to making a contribution to the literature on effective school management/organisation this document also seeks to persuade teachers that thinking about themselves and what they do, about their work and their schools in a systematic, organised and focussed manner can be empowering. Such activity can transform school culture by increasing organisational effectiveness and provide improved learning conditions for pupils and teachers. In addition, the undertaking of such action research empowers primary teachers as a group and adds to the claim to be the authoritative voice in Irish education.

The ultimate objective of this report is not to provide conclusive data but to generate hypotheses for further research, to stimulate debate and discussion. It is exploratory and descriptive in its nature and seeks to suggest fruitful lines of enquiry that may be pursued in all schools that wish to improve organisational effectiveness. Effective school organisation may be difficult to define but, in the pursuit of its definition, many lessons can be learnt which if applied, will lead to school improvements.
CHAPTER I

Towards an Understanding of Effective School Organisation

Introduction

To be effective, primary education requires learning and teaching of the highest quality. This should not be viewed or interpreted as a quest for uniformity in primary education or a search for the ideal primary school. No two schools are ever totally alike. No school is exactly the same from one year to the next. Schools reflect their internal and external communities - the students and teachers within and the wider community that is served by the school - which contribute to their individuality. The small rural school with four teachers or less is quite different in organisational terms from the large primary school staffed by twenty to thirty teachers and which serves an urban community. Every school, just like every child, is different.

Yet there are features of effective organisation that can be identified, analysed, researched and reported upon in every school. This must never be understood as the search for a recipe of ingredients to produce good school organisation, a blueprint for success which if followed will create an effectively organised school. Rather schools must be studied and analysed - an action research project - in order that practice will inform and enrich the theory that guides it. It is also clear that the deliberate and regular analysis of, and reflection upon, organisational arrangements and practices is a first step towards organisational improvement.

Characteristics of Effective School Organisation

The first major study conducted in Britain was by Michael Rutter and a team from the University of London (1979) who compared the “effectiveness” of ten second level schools in inner city London. Described in the book Fifteen Thousand Hours effective schools were characterised by factors as varied as the degree of academic emphasis, teacher actions in lessons, the availability of incentives and rewards, and the extent to which children are able to take responsibility. This research also highlighted the importance of a balance of intellectually able and less able children in a school, peer group cultures and the school environment.
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which included working conditions, responsiveness to pupil needs and
decoration of buildings. It was this constellation of factors that Rutter
and his colleagues later described as a school’s ethos.

Similar conclusions were reported in the publication Ten Good Schools
(1977). According to this research the good school is one that can
demonstrate quality in its aims, in oversight of pupils, in curriculum
design, in standards of teaching and academic achievements and in its
links with the local community. What they all have in common is effec­
tive leadership and a climate that is conducive to growth. Good schools
see themselves as places designed for learning; they take trouble to
make their philosophy explicit for themselves and to explain it to par­
ents and pupils. The foundation of their work and corporate life is an
acceptance of shared values. However, both of these studies were car­
rried out on second level schools which makes direct comparison with
primary schools difficult.

In research carried out in the U.S.A., Purkey and Smith (1983) found
that certain internal conditions are typical in schools that achieve high­
er levels of outcomes for their students. They listed thirteen major fac­
tors associated with school effectiveness which include school site man­
agement, leadership, staff stability, curriculum organisation, school­
wide recognition of academic success, maximised learning time, collab­
orative planning and collegial relationships, sense of community and
clear goals. Edmonds (1979) concluded after a number of projects and
case studies in New York that there were five indispensable characteris­
tics. They were strong administrative leadership, a climate of expecta­
tion, an orderly, safe climate, a broadly understood instructional focus and frequent monitoring of pupils’ progress.

This type of research may be criticised in that it tends to produce lists of
ingredients or traits of effective schools. These characteristics typically
include such factors as strong academic leadership, a safe and orderly
school climate, an emphasis on basic academic skills, high teacher
expectations for all pupils, and a system for monitoring and assessing
student performance. However, these factors do not appear to address
the dynamics of schools as organisations. There appear to be four addi­tion­al factors which infuse some meaning and life into the process of
organisational improvement within the school. These “process factors”
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(Fullan 1985) provide the means of achieving the organisational arrangements and structures, lubricating the system and fuelling the dynamics of interaction.

The first of these factors is a feel for the process of leadership which is difficult to characterise because the complexity of factors involved tends to deny rational planning; a useful analogy according to Fullan is that organisations are to be sailed rather than driven. The second factor is a guiding value system which contains a consensus on high expectations, clear rules, explicit goals and a genuine caring about individuals. Intense interaction and communication is the third factor which involves simultaneous support and pressure at both horizontal and vertical levels within the school. The final factor is collaborative planning and implementation which needs to occur both within the school and externally.

Chapman (1991), while arguing that school structure, decision making processes and use of resources are important, has suggested that such lists of characteristics or traits are simplistic in their suggestion that their adoption would work in all schools. Such an approach has been adopted by many schools in the USA where such lists have been applied as recipes intended to ensure school effectiveness in a wide range of different environments. However, in this body of research narrow definitions and measurements of effectiveness were adopted concentrating on academic achievement as the sole indicator of school effectiveness. Furthermore they tended to measure school effectiveness by reference to standardised achievement tests which were presumed to measure the attainment of the school’s academic goals. A great deal of the research into school effectiveness has tended to concentrate on a select number of objectives, generally those which can be stated in measurable terms.

A broader understanding of the objectives or goals of primary education is essential. Such an understanding underpins some of the more recent research particularly that undertaken by Mortimore et al (1988) for the Inner London Education Authority. This research, a study of fifty inner city London primary schools, concentrated on measuring student progress according to non-cognitive objectives (including attendance, behaviour, self concept attitude to school) as well as cognitive objectives.
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(e.g. academic achievement in reading, mathematics, written and oral language). The Mortimore study has contributed a great deal to our understanding of effective schooling including the importance of considering intake variations among pupils, the need for a variety of outcomes when considering the nature of school effectiveness as well as confirming the need to consider processes and school culture when attempting to implement change.

Mortimore identified what he called the 'key characteristics' of effective primary schools. These factors described below are not arranged in order or importance. However, they may be considered in groups. The first four factors relate to school policy, the next five relate to classroom policy while the remaining three aspects are of relevance to school and classroom policy.

The first factor identified by Mortimore and his colleagues was purposeful leadership of the staff by the principal teacher. This occurs where the principal understands the school’s needs, is actively involved in the work of the school but is good at sharing power with other members of staff. S/he does not exert total control over teachers but consults them in decision making such as spending plans and curricular guidelines. Confidence in members of the teaching staff is also viewed as a feature of purposeful leadership by the head teacher. The involvement of the Vice Principal in the organisation and management of the school was the second characteristic adopted by Mortimore. The vice principal can have a crucial role in the promotion of effective school organisation particularly where principals involved their vice principals in policy decisions such as class allocation. Delegation and/or a sharing of responsibilities contributed positively to effective school organisation. In well organised schools, according to Mortimore, the teaching staff was involved in curriculum planning and played a major role in developing their own curriculum guidelines. As with the vice-principal, teacher involvement/ consultation in decisions concerning class allocation and spending decisions was important. An effectively organised primary school does not operate with only a small management team but provides opportunities for everyone to have their say. The fourth factor identified in this research was consistency amongst teachers. Continuity of staffing it was found, had positive effects and it was also found that pupils benefit from a consistency in the approach to teaching. The following of
guidelines (loosely or closely) had a positive impact on progress.

The importance of a structured day was highlighted by this research. Effective classroom management is essential to school effectiveness. Pupils benefit when their work is organised by the teacher in a structure that allows freedom and ensures plenty of work to do. Intellectually challenging teaching was found to be important. Children achieve most in classrooms where they are stimulated and challenged. The incidence of higher order questions, creative imagination and problem solving was also seen to be vital. Central to school effectiveness was a work centred environment. This is characterised by a high level of pupil industry with low levels of noise (not silence) and movement around the classroom that was work related and not excessive. Time spent discussing the content of work and the provision of feedback contributed positively to the creation of a work centred environment. It was found to be important that there was a limited focus within lessons. Children made most progress when the teachers devoted their energies to the organisation of one particular subject area (sometimes two) at any particular time. This does not imply that all children should undertake exactly the same task but should be provided with work appropriate to their needs. Maximum communication between teachers and pupils was a further trait identified. Pupils gain from having lots of communication/interaction with the teacher. If most time is devoted to individuals children can expect only a small number of contacts per day. By speaking to the whole class or by organising whole class activities this number can be increased. However this is not an advocacy of “traditional” whole class teaching but stressed the value of a flexible approach that blends individual, group and class interaction as appropriate.

Assessment and record keeping were identified as important contributors to school effectiveness. In addition to the value of record keeping in the principal’s role it was also found to be an important aspect of teachers’ planning and assessment. The keeping of personal and social development records in addition to academic progress was also found to be beneficial. Parental involvement in the life of the school was found to positively influence pupils’ development. The operation of an informal open-door policy, the encouragement of parents to become involved in reading at home, helping in the classroom and on educational trips was associated with effective school organisation. Effective school organisa-
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tion requires *a positive ethos*. A pleasant atmosphere where the emphasis is on rewards rather than on punishment and criticism, firm but fair classroom management and positive attitudes among staff members both contribute to and result from a positive ethos. The contribution of trips, visits and lunch time or after school activities was also noted. It is important to note that a positive climate not only affected pupils. Teachers’ working conditions were an important component that simultaneously resulted from and contributed to school climate.

The twelve key factors point to effective school organisation creating inviting, supportive environments where leadership is given by principal teachers who are not afraid to assert their views and yet are able to share management and decision making with staff members. Class teachers provide a structured learning situation for their pupils within which freedom and personal responsibility are encouraged. Through the flexible use of whole class, group and individual contacts they maximise the communication with each pupil. Furthermore by limiting their focus within a session, teacher attention is less fragmented providing increased opportunities to present challenging work to pupils.

Several other research findings are considered in the research undertaken by Mortimore. It is reported that smaller classes lead to greater progress and development - especially for young pupils and interestingly, especially in the area of mathematics, behaviour and self concept. Classes with fewer than 24 pupils generally made better progress than larger classes especially those classes containing 27 or more pupils. This evidence overturns previous studies which found class size to be unimportant. A number of factors contribute to this including the measurement of progress as opposed to attainment, the inclusion of other factors other than language based indicators and the consideration of real reductions in class size as opposed to previous studies which compared large with larger. The implication of this finding is clear - efforts to secure extra resources to provide smaller classes for primary school pupils should be increased.

The study also argued that serious or frequent change can have negative effects on a school where changes of principal, vice principal or class teachers during a school year had a disruptive effect. While change of staff is inevitable, stability is an important aspect of school life and
the negative effects of sudden and unplanned change should be mitigated as much as possible. School wide curriculum policies/guidelines were found to be of benefit in mitigating the effect of such changes.

Other factors that were investigated in the study over which schools or staff had little if any control were buildings, resources, intake, size of school, size of classes, age of pupils, social class, ability composition and teacher characteristics. The effects of some of these were found to be significant but while they contributed to school effectiveness they did not in fact ensure it. Mortimore and his colleagues likened these factors to a supporting framework in which the principal and teachers can work. Within the framework they were of the opinion that the above twelve factors or characteristics were crucial.

Further work has been undertaken in this area by Mortimore (1991) who in a study of findings from a number of countries conceptualises the effective school in the following terms:

**Leadership**
The research shows that having a principal who is purposeful but neither too authoritarian nor too democratic and who is able to share ownership of the school with colleagues is important. The quality of leadership, however, includes the ability to delegate to a deputy without feeling threatened, and to involve members of the staff in the planning and the management of the school.

**Management of Pupils**
It is important to organise schools so that pupils are involved in its organisation and can be rewarded for their efforts. The data also shows that controlling behaviour with methods that are neither too weak nor too harsh is likely to be most effective. It is essential that teaching/learning sessions are structured, work-centred and include teaching that is intellectually challenging.

**Management of Teachers**
The involvement of teachers in the corporate life of the school and the pursuance of consistency in their approach to pupils is likely to make the school a less stressful place for both parties. Teachers should be encouraged to be good role models and should ensure that classrooms
have positive psychological climates in which pupils are encouraged to communicate frequently with their teachers.

_A Broad and Balanced Curriculum_
The provision of a broad, balanced curriculum which recognises the academic role of schooling and which values students with special educational needs, is a difficult but crucial task. Limiting the focus of lessons so that pupils generally work in common curriculum areas allowing teachers to support their learning without being ‘pulled in different directions’ is difficult but is highly conducive to effective learning.

_Pupil Care_
Treating pupils with dignity and encouraging them to participate in the organisation of the school - even at a young age - gives a positive signal that they are valued. In the same way, using rewards rather than punishment to change behaviour is important. Parental involvement in the life of the school and the establishing of a partnership between parents and school is likely to increase the confidence of the community in education. It is critically important to keep systematic records of pupil progress if the curriculum is to have coherence for individuals.

_School Environment_
The environment should be as attractive and stimulating as possible. Trouble taken over classroom displays and removing graffiti have positive consequences. These may have a profound effect on the attitudes of pupils attending the school.

_School Climate_
The school’s values should be achieved through consensus. A general attitude that is positive towards learning and positive about young people in school will give a clear signal of what the school stands for and where its priorities lie. The establishment of clear rules and guidelines for pupil behaviour and the maintaining of high expectations for all pupils are ways in which the goals and values of the institution are translated into daily life.

These studies by Mortimore may be compared to the work of Rutter (1979) who identified the following as factors that were determinant of
effectiveness. He argued that it was important that there should be a balance of intellectually able and less able children in the school since, when a preponderance of pupils in a school were likely to be unable to meet the expectations of scholastic success, peer group cultures with an anti-academic or anti-authority emphasis may form. A system of rewards and punishments is needed in every school. However, ample use of rewards, praise and appreciation were associated with favourable outcomes. Good working conditions, responsiveness to pupil needs and good care and decoration of buildings were associated with better outcomes. In an effective school there had to be ample opportunities for children to take responsibility and to participate in the running of their school lives. Successful schools tended to make good use of homework, to set clear academic goals and to have an atmosphere of confidence as to their pupils' capacities. Outcomes were found to be better where teachers provided good models of behaviour by means of good time-keeping and willingness to deal with pupil problems. Findings on group management in the classroom suggested the importance of preparing lessons in advance, of keeping the attention of the whole class, of unobtrusive discipline, of a focus on rewarding good behaviour and of swift action to deal with disruption. Outcomes were more favourable when there was a combination of firm leadership together with a decision-making process in which all teachers felt that their views were represented. It is clear that in these studies there is a high level of agreement on the characteristics of effective schools.

While acknowledging that circumstances vary considerably from school to school, in general, the following factors are, according to Kavanagh, (1993) common to schools which fit the 'good and effective' category:

- Good leadership, especially from the school principal.
- Knowledge and ownership, among staff especially, of the school's aims values.
- Good organisational climate; open system; clear and honest communication.
- A committed and professionally alert teaching staff.
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- A pleasant and orderly environment conducive to good teaching and good learning.

- High, but realistic expectations regarding student development and achievement.

- A total curriculum which is sensitive to the ability and readiness of all students and which allows all students to experience some success and affirmation.

- A good system of pastoral care operating within the school which enables widespread inclusion in a strong sense of community.

- Good communication with parents and a good rapport between school and parents.

- Favourable public image.

Reynolds (1982) suggests that effectiveness was associated with small class size, school size and a low rate of staff turnover. In terms of organisational process, effective schools had balanced rule enforcement, low levels of physical punishment, principals who devolved power, close parent/teachers relations, staff with positive expectations of their pupils and organisational forms which involved pupils academically and socially in the organisation of the school.

Caldwell and Spinks (1988) list forty three characteristics used in the search for schools which were highly effective in a general sense. These lie in six areas: climate, leadership, curriculum, decision-making, outcomes and resources. Taken together, these characteristics attempt to describe an 'ideal' type school. However, it is acknowledged that not all will be found in any one highly effective school and that some schools which are considered highly effective may have some characteristics which are in fact the opposite of those listed.

Curriculum
The effective school has clearly stated educational goals, a well-planned, balanced and organised programme which meets the needs of students and provides them with required skills. There are high levels
of parental involvement in the children’s educational activities. Education needs are identified and placed in an order of priority that reflects local as well as system needs.

**Decision-Making**  
A high degree of staff involvement in the development of school goals was identified as a characteristic of effective school organisation. These schools have teachers who are highly involved in decision-making and there are high levels of community involvement in decision-making in the school. An opportunity for staff to become involved in resource allocation was also cited as a feature.

**Resources**  
The school has motivated and capable teachers and there are adequate resources in the school to enable staff to teach effectively.

**Outcomes**  
Effective schools are associated with a low student drop-out rate. Scores on tests reflect high levels of achievement and there is a high degree of success in the placement of students in colleges, universities or jobs.

**Leadership**  
The effective school needs an effective leader who enables the sharing of duties and resources to occur in an efficient manner and ensures that resources are allocated in a manner consistent with educational needs. A principal must be responsive to and supportive of the needs of teachers and concerned with her/his own professional development. S/he should encourage staff involvement in professional development programmes and makes use of the skills teachers acquire in these programmes. An effective leader has a high level awareness of what is happening in the school and establishes effective relationships with the Department of Education, the community, teachers and students. S/he should have a flexible administrative style, be willing to take risks, provide a high level of feedback to teachers and ensure that a continual review of the school programme occurs and that progress towards goals is evaluated.

**Climate**  
The effective school should have a set of values which are considered
important and the principal, teachers and students should demonstrate commitment and loyalty to those values. The school should provide a pleasant, exciting and challenging environment for students and teachers where there is respect and mutual trust among teachers and students. To establish a climate of trust in a school, a good communication system is required. Expectations at the school that all students will do well means that there is a strong commitment to learning in the school so the principal, teachers and students have high expectations for achievement. High morale among students in the school will manifest itself in the fact that students have respect for others and the property of others and will take on responsibility in the school. There is good discipline in the effective school and few occasions when the principal needs to be directly involved in the discipline of students. This positive climate will show itself in a low absentee rate among students and a low student suspension rate. High morale among teachers in the school is derived from high levels of cohesiveness and team spirit among teachers and reflected in a low absentee rate among teachers and few applications from teachers for transfer.

Planning and Budgeting
There are adequate resources in the school to enable staff to teach effectively and the principal facilitates the sharing of duties and resources in an efficient manner consistent with educational needs. A budget document is produced for staff and others which outlines the financial plan in an understandable fashion. Financial resources are allocated, according to priorities, among educational needs.

Implementing
Appropriate accounting procedures should be established to monitor and control expenditure but in a manner that permits money to be transferred from one category of the budget to another as needs change or emerge during the period covered by the budget.

Evaluating
The principal ensures that a continual review of the school programme occurs and that progress towards goals is evaluated. A feature of this evaluation is that consideration is given to evaluating the impact of resource allocation.
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Such detailed description provides individual schools with the basis of a survey instrument against which organisational arrangements might be assessed and priorities for action decided by teachers involved in school planning. These priorities might then be acted upon thus improving school organisation. Despite the detail it is not of course exhaustive.

Stoll & Fink (1994) were involved in an Effective Schools project in 1986 with the Halton Board of Education, Toronto. Effective school surveys for teachers were developed for schools to use as one part of their assessment and self-evaluation process, specifically as a basis for discussion and reflection on what is happening in schools compared to what the research says happens in more effective schools. Halton Elementary teachers' perceptions pointed to the existence and importance of selected characteristics in effective schools. Effective schools could respond positively to the following statements:

1. This school has a clearly articulated mission (philosophy).
2. People in this school work together as a team.
3. Staff participate in shared decision-making.
4. The school has developed a set of clearly stated goals.
5. Planning is a collaborative process involving all staff.
6. The administrative team is accessible to discuss curriculum and instructional matters.
7. The administrative team is 'visible' throughout the school to both staff and students.
8. The atmosphere in this school encourages learning.
9. Staff in this school are encouraged to think for themselves.
10. Staff regularly collaborate to plan curriculum and instruction.
11. People in this school work hard to maintain good relations with parents.

This work also found that more successful schools were characterised by a focus on shared decision-making which was co-ordinated by a small group. There was an emphasis on the prerequisites of fundamental conditions for planning, engagement on an on-going dynamic process and commitment to a few key goals. Importance was placed on assessment, monitoring and evaluation and a use of school effectiveness characteristics in the assessment phase. There was commitment to
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instruction and a consideration of the school’s unique context and culture. Older familiar features of the Halton culture, such as a well established supervision process were incorporated and the school was acknowledged and accepted as the centre of change.

The most recently available of work in this area is to be found in a report by Reynolds et al. (1996) who argue that the knowledge base about effective school and classroom processes seems to distil into the following nine key factors:

- Professional leadership: the principal is the professional leader of the school. S/he is purposeful, fully involved in what goes on in the classroom, and helps makes sure that staff have opportunities to show leadership and to take part in making decisions. The principal is the leading professional which implies a knowledge of and involvement in what goes on in the classroom.

- Shared vision and goals: staff work together with a common sense of purpose and a consensus on values. There is a consistency of practice and a collaborative approach to work.

- A learning environment: the school provides a climate in which pupils are able and willing to learn. The atmosphere is orderly and purposeful, and the working environment is attractive.

- High quality teaching and learning: The school’s activities have one central purpose - helping pupils to learn and to achieve.

- Explicit high expectations: the school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. These are communicated clearly to all pupils, and lessons are challenging.

- Positive reinforcement: Discipline is clear and fair. Staff make sure that pupils know how they are doing, and take particular care to praise them for good work.

- Monitoring pupil progress: Staff systematically monitor and evaluate the achievements of pupils and of the schools as a whole.
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- Pupils' rights and responsibilities: The school promotes pupils' self-esteem. It encourages them to take responsibility, particularly for their own work.

- Purposeful teaching: The quality of teaching is high, particularly because lessons are efficiently organised; they have a clear purpose and are well structured; and the teaching takes account of the fact that different pupils learn in different ways.

These key factors can never be successfully imposed in a 'top down' manner on schools. Rather, they reflect a 'bottom up' approach to school organisation and improvement that is owned by the staff in the school.

Hargreaves (1990) is of the opinion that effective schools are demanding places, where teachers expect and ensure high standards of work and behaviour; at the same time, they are responsive to pupils, for the teachers are approachable and, since they value pupils, seek to involve them in the life and work of the school. It is this combination of pressure and support which according to Hargreaves, characterises the effective school.

Organisational Development
The focus of organisational development is on institutional rather than individual factors. It emphasises the concept of action research where the action comes from members of the organisation and the research is the collection, by the individuals, of information about their functioning. It aims to utilise the information, to collaborate in a problem-solving process to improve professional functioning. It took some years before education began to explore the possibilities which industry pioneered and the first research project which collected data in over eighty schools confirmed the hypothesis that a school's educational effectiveness was associated with the morale of the staff, the power structure, the problem-solving process and the degree of trust amongst colleagues (Reynolds 1985). An experiment which attempted to train the staff in organisational development was highly successful. There was measurable reduction of frustration and confusion amongst colleagues, improved communication among all paths of the school community and an increase in innovation within the classroom. Change can be produced where knowledge is seen as new information about the internal
world - expanded self-awareness, self-understanding and self-control. It is not so much about knowledge but attitudes. In order to plan it effectively we need to acquire knowledge and communicate effectively with out professional colleagues. Organisational development provides some indication of what is involved in the process of effective communication.

1. Clarity of communication is essential to school effectiveness. It opens up channels between teachers and between schools and their community. If teachers dare to communicate with less reserve and increasing objectivity then they can:

2. Establish clear goals. The range of educational needs is as diverse as the different levels and abilities of children and the institutions created to meet those needs. Goals can therefore be diffused; recognition of this pluralism can lead to definitions which will not deny differences but emphasise integration and the shared ownership of a common goal. Teachers need to feel included in, and committed to, the process of achieving this goal.

3. Conflict. If teachers are to communicate effectively and be committed to defining goals the possibility of a conflict of interest between individuals, departments and institutions within the system arises. There are techniques for the management of conflict and for the positive use of the human energy involved. This requires a better understanding and experience of:

4. Group process. Most of the management of the life of schools is done through the working together of groups. Yet the instrumental importance of the group and the time spent in group activity of varying sorts is disproportionate to the limited knowledge of group dynamics. The non-productivity of many staff meetings is an example. Some experiences of the teaching profession in collaborative group effectiveness has minimised this resource and limited the interest in schools to address, and build on, its own adaptability and success in:

5. Solving problems. Problems exist when there is a difference between what is happening in the present, and a preferred target. The degree of difference indicates the size of the problem. The technique
involved here is, first, to identify problems and to find a mutuality amongst colleagues as to which of many to deal with first. This means being open to consensus in:

6. Making decisions: All teachers have experienced the lack of commitment to a decision which has been made by an exclusive few which affects a whole school. Some organisations avoid the demanding process of consultation; yet the rewards are great, both in the creation of an effective learning environment and in personal satisfaction for teachers.

Yet in spite of this range of research and examination the notion of an 'effective school' is grossly problematic (Murgatroyd & Gray, 1992). They argue that while a focus on 'products' or output is a conventional way of conceptualising organisations effectiveness it is not appropriate in educational organisation which must have a 'process' focus also. They suggest that if an increased understanding of school effectiveness is to be reached, then it will require research that will take into account an appreciation of staff-staff relationships, staff-pupil relationships and school-other relationships.

This thinking is closely linked to that of the INTO which is critical of many of the above approaches to studies of effective schools. The approaches tend to be more descriptive than analytic and suggestive of a far greater degree of conformity than might realistically exist in schools. They also appear to be closely linked with certain types of schools to the exclusion of others. Conceptualisations of schools in these terms have also led to the belief that it is possible to compare one school with another in terms of organisational effectiveness by examining the presence of certain traits. These studies attempt to define the essence of the concept in terms of essential traits or features and inclusion in "the class of effective schools" is determined by possession of these.

An idea of Wittgenstein (1968) provides a basis on which the literature of effective school organisation might be re-assessed. Wittgenstein maintains that in many cases the members of a class have no one thing in common which makes us use the same word for all, but are related to one another in many different ways. It is this relationship or relationships that enables us to describe these classes with the same word. In
place of stipulating the necessary and sufficient conditions one may substitute the concept of "family resemblances".

To exemplify this point Wittgenstein makes use of the concept of games. He claims that the search for common characteristics with respect to games will be unsuccessful for these do not exist, and that what one finds instead is a series of relationship and similarities.

"Look, for example, at board games with their multi-facous relationships. Now pass to card games; here you will find many correspondences with the first group, but many common features drop out, and others appear. When we pass to ball games, much of what is common is retained, but much is lost... and we can go through many other groups of games in the same way; we can see how similarities crop up and disappear."

Similar overall resemblances and resemblances of detail may also be noted among members of a family. One cannot point to a single characteristic that is present in all members of a family yet similarities of build, features, eye colour, gait or temperament may be observed. Wittgenstein calls this complicated network of similarities 'family resemblances'.

Such an approach may usefully be applied to the concept of an effective school organisation. Rather than seeking the defining characteristics that determine membership of this class the idea of "family resemblances" provides an analytical tool that is more appropriate for a concept that is not static but continually developing. This approach is not dependant on the possession of certain fixed attributes, necessary and sufficient to secure membership of the group, but is constructed in terms of a set of ideas about the type of work done by an effective school.

This approach permits the rejection of recipe or trait approaches to effective school studies yet allows the examination of a number of ideas that relate to the concept.

The INTO is of the opinion that these in reality comprise two sets of ideas - those that relate to the organisation of the school in general terms
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and those that relate to the management of the classroom. This sub-division broadly agrees with and corresponds to the work of Mortimore (1988) and Murgatroyd and Gray (1992). Accordingly, this report will be concerned with the first of those sub-sets of ideas that relate to school organisation. Specifically it will examine the following issues:-

- the role of the principal in school leadership
- the role of the vice principal
- the promotion of staff involvement in school organisation
- school planning and consistency of approach
- record keeping and assessment
- parental involvement in school organisation
- the cultivation of a positive climate.

Recommendations

Further research should be conducted on the sub-set of ideas about school effectiveness that relate to classroom management. Such an investigation would provide the ideal companion to this publication by completing the research project on school effectiveness.

Although school organisational structures and processes differ from state to state (and occasionally within a state) much commonality may be observed. Comparative studies have the potential to inform teachers and others who work in education and provide for the dissemination of ideas, theories and practice. Funding for this study should be provided from E.U. funds. A study of school structures in E.U. countries should be undertaken.
Introduction

Purposeful leadership is the most frequently quoted influential variable relating to effective school organisation. The nature of leadership and authority in the school organisation and its effects are therefore worthy of examination. While the detailed nature and pattern of management tasks may vary depending on local circumstances, the basic principles of good management are common to all sizes and types of primary school. Leadership is about the creating and nurturing of an environment in which people give of their best. This is a complex task, a point recognised by the White Paper *Charting our Education Future* (1995):

*Schools are complex institutions. The manner in which the principal discharges his/her responsibilities significantly influences the effectiveness of the education provided in the school.*

The Report on the National Curriculum Convention noted that principals directly influence institutional effectiveness.

*Research has identified a strong relationship between positive school leadership and institutional effectiveness, and described the successful principal as providing skilled instructional leadership for the staff, creating a supportive school climate, with particular emphasis on the curriculum and teaching and directed towards maximising academic learning, having clear goals and high expectations for staff and students, establishing good systems for monitoring student performance and achievement, promotion on-going staff development and inservice, and encouraging strong parental involvement and identification with, and support for the goals of the school.*

The Principal Teacher: Chief Executive or Leader

Recent writers on school management and administration point to emerging differences in emphases in the concepts of leadership and administration/management (Smith, 1989; Grace, 1995; Leader, 1995;
Gronn, 1996). As the environment within which education takes place becomes increasingly turbulent more than just management and administrative skills are required. Management may be likened to those bundle of skills focused on keeping the school, in many and diverse ways, on path; ensuring the status quo for effective teaching and learning. As change is increasingly necessary or imposed because of changed circumstances, additional perspectives and skills are required. These will have the purpose of facilitating change in organisation, curriculum, teaching and learning, implementing new initiatives and dealing with declining enrolments among others. These additional skills, required for a time of 'crisis', are increasingly clustered together as leadership skills. The costs and benefits of necessary or imposed change for the various groups in the school community may lead to resistance, low morale or frustration. Leadership is being identified as the means of enabling the school community to achieve the transformation necessary to cope and deal with the pressures.

Without this clarification there exists the danger that educational leaders will become administrators who happen to be educators rather than educators who are also administrators. Pressures on school leaders are pushing them to consider themselves as administrators with duties that include monitoring, reporting, auditing, allocating, setting and evaluating the achievement of targets and appraising. With a greater emphasis on office-based activities, a chief executive or managerial type role could emerge with a consequential diminution of the educational leader role. The review which follows examines the characteristics of leaders in effective schools as reported in a representative selection of studies.

The Successful Principal
Hager and Scarr (1983) summarised several characteristics of principals in effective school organisation. They identified them as individuals who take strong initiatives in identifying and articulating goals and priorities for the school. These principals run their schools rather than allow them to operate by force of habit. They hold themselves and their staff personally accountable for student achievement. Principals of effective schools understand educational programmes inside and out. They are educational/instructional leaders rather than administrative leaders and they communicate this to staff. They are also highly visible in the classrooms and hallways of the schools, care about their schools'
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academic progress, attempt to handpick staff members and set a tone of high expectations for staff and students.

Purposeful leadership of the staff by the principal was a key factor identified by Mortimore (1988) in effective school organisation. He stated that purposeful leadership occurred where the principal understood the needs of the school and was involved actively in the school's work without exerting total control over the rest of the staff... principals were involved in curriculum discussions and influenced the content of guidelines drawn up within the school without taking complete control. Effective principals involved the vice-principal, post holders and teaching staff in decision making. Mortimore and colleagues were of the opinion that in schools where the deputy participated in decision making, higher levels of teacher communication about work, and fewer critical comments were made than was the case in schools where the deputy was less involved. The involvement of teachers in drawing up school guidelines was associated with exciting and stimulating teaching in classrooms and greater pupil involvement with work. Another aspect of involvement - the participation of teachers in decisions about the allocation of classes - was associated with greater amounts of teacher time communicating about work generally and, more specifically, giving pupils feedback about work. The study also noted that, in general, schools with new heads and long serving heads were associated with negative effects, whilst schools where the head had been in post for three to seven years were associated with positive effects.

This research also presents what the authors view as being the main implications of their study for principal teachers. Principals need to have a very clear view of their leadership role. They need to be able to divide the decisions they are required to make into two groups: those which are quite properly their responsibility to take and for which any attempt at delegation to a staff decision would be seen as a dereliction of duty, and those which, equally properly belong to the staff as a whole. In some cases it will be perfectly clear to which group a certain decision belongs: in others, it will be extremely difficult to decide. Mistakes will be made and the consequences - as when the staff discover that a decision affecting their way of working has been taken with no opportunity for them to voice an opinion on the matter, or where there is a conflict of interests between individual teachers on the staff - will
have to be suffered. However, if the head is perceptive and sensitive
s/he will soon learn to distinguish which decisions are which.

Coulson (1986) provides an account of the primary principal which is
based on Mintzberg’s (1973) managerial framework in which he
describes what he takes to be the characteristics of successful principals.
He claims that successful principals are goal oriented in so far as they
have a vision of how they would like to see their schools develop. Thus
they give the school a sense of direction. They enjoy a relatively high
degree of personal security in that their sense of themselves as people
enables them to tackle issues inside and outside the school without feel­
ing unduly threatened. This suggests that some measure of disengage­
ment from the traditionally strong ego-identification between head and
school may be desirable. These principals have a high tolerance of ambi­
guity, those whose personal needs for structuring, continuity and sta­
bility are high may find frequent change and constant uncertainty a
potent source of frustration and tension. They tend to be proactive in
confronting the internal and external demands of the school. Successful
principals are sensitive to the dynamics of power inside and outside the
schools and are adept at seeking out sources of power and support
through informal networking. They can take an analytical perspective
towards problem solving and can bring to bear appropriate profes­sion­
al knowledge, experience and expertise. Successful principals behave in
ways which enable them to be in charge of the job and not let the job be
in charge of them. They are able to fulfil the basic demands and require­
ments made of them without too often being harried or swamped by
role requirements.

The vision, dedication, energy and instructional leadership of the prin­
cipal teacher is the single most important factor in overall school suc­
cess according to Davis and Thomas (1989). They argue that it has
become clear from research on effective school organisation that the
leadership of the principal is the single most powerful determinant of
school effectiveness. According to them effective principals are individ­
uals who have a desire to lead and a willingness to act with courage and
deliberation in difficult situations. They are prepared to lead rather than
be led and as a consequence are high in initiative and resourcefulness.
Being highly goal-oriented with a keen sense of clarity regarding
instructional and organisation goals is seen as an essential characteristic
of the effective principal who will set good examples by working hard at tasks.

It is also important that the principal teacher recognises the uniqueness of teachers in their style, attitudes, skills and orientations and supports different styles of teaching. Effective principals match teaching skills with teaching arrangements and assignments. They care about staff and staff development and, therefore, flexibly schedule demands on staff time and have the ability to let teachers emerge as leaders. Good principals identify their roles in terms of providing educational leadership and creating an environment for learning and are less concerned with administrative routine. The successful principal is sensitive to and aware of the informal dimension of leadership within the school, i.e. leadership based on power, prestige or personality which may or may not conflict with the formal leadership structure of the school. Failure to acknowledge, incorporate or contain (as appropriate) these institutional forces will be a source of conflict affecting school organisation negatively.

Southworth (1990) supports the idea that leadership is an important factor in determining organisational effectiveness. He quotes Peters and Waterman (1982) who suggest that a principal is a cheerleader, enthusiast, nurturer of champions, hero finder, wonderer, dramatist, coach, facilitator and builder. He speaks of traits such as passion, care, intensity, consistency, attention, drama and the implicit and explicit use of symbols. Successful school leadership is associated with the principal teacher who sets a strong administrative example while at the same time is a strong instructional leader who is fully supportive of teachers. Successful schools have principals who provide a structured institutional pattern in which teachers can function effectively and where there are high levels of parent-teacher and parent-principal contact. The successful principal while providing a strong role model for teachers and pupils manages to achieve a balance between a strong leadership role for themselves and maximum autonomy for teachers.

Southworth has produced a profile of the effective primary school principal. He suggests that s/he:

* emphasises the centrality of teaching and learning via her/his teaching commitment, persistent interest in the children's work and
development through attention to teachers' plans, practice, reflections and evaluations.

- ensures that there are explicit curriculum aims, guidelines and pupil record keeping systems and that all of these are utilised by teachers and other staff in order to establish an acceptable level of consistency, continuity and coherence in the work of the school.

- acts as exemplar; regularly teaches; leads assemblies and works hard for the school.

- ensures that teachers have non-contact time.

- sets high expectations for self, staff and children.

- encourages and develops others to lead and accept positions of responsibility.

- involves the vice principal in policy decision making, principal and vice-principal operate as partners.

- involves teachers in curriculum planning and school organisation and generally adopts a consultative approach to decision making.

- is conscious of the school's and individual teacher's needs with regard to teacher attendance at inservice training courses and is aware of her/his own professional development needs.

- is considerate towards staff as people; is willing (on occasions) to help reconcile and make allowance for personal/professional role conflicts.

- constantly enquires into many aspects of the school as an organisation, tours the school before, during and after school, visits staff in classrooms and work places, perceives the school from different perspectives; observes and listens; manages by "wandering about".

- develops and sustains a whole school perspective in so far as there is a shared and agreed vision of effective practice which is adopted by and becomes the staff's collective mission.
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• nurtures and maintains a school culture which is inclusive of the school staff and which facilitates professional and social collaboration.

• is personally tolerant of ambiguity.

• ensures that the school has an explicit and understood development plan; has a sense of direction; anticipates future developments.

• involves parents in the work and life of the school; is an effective communicator of the school's successes and challenges; presents a positive image of the school, staff and pupils.

These profile components provide an indication of the complexity of the leadership role expected of the principal teacher in today's schools. A further example of a study which highlights the central leadership role of the principal is to be found in the work of Murgatroyd and Gray (1992) in which they describe some of the findings of a Local Education Authority advisory team study of interpersonal relationship in a school. The following points were made in the report.

1. A feature of effective leadership is visibility. Leaders need to be seen. Ineffective leaders generally hide or remain unobserved. The observable presence, involvement and interest in the work of the school by those with ascribed status is of considerable importance in the generation of a corporate spirit and in the maintenance of a high level of morale.

2. Leaders, to be effective, need to be able to communicate thoughts and feelings and describe behaviours to others. Ineffective leaders usually have poor communication skills.

3. Leaders need to accept others, not reject them.

4. One feature of acceptance displayed by effective leaders is openness and genuineness. Ineffective leaders tend to be secretive and not genuine.

5. To be able to follow a leader others need to know why it is they are following. Ineffective leaders rarely declare their intentions.
6. Ineffective leaders do not face problems but seek to avoid them. Effective leaders face problems, share them and seek to learn from them.

7. Ineffective leaders resolve difficulties in a punitive fashion while effective leaders seek appropriate responses to particular circumstances.

In general, principal teachers are appointed following initial training and experience gained in the classroom. The above research highlights areas of responsibility for which initial teacher education and classroom experience do not prepare a principal pointing to the need for inservice education and support.

Training and Support for Leadership
Leadership revolves around two key features: (1) the degree of loyalty and following a leader can generate toward the achievement of the agreed and shared purposes of the organisation by means of her/his personal and professional qualities, including empathy, warmth and genuineness; (2) the concrete nature of the actions (organisational and educational) the leader and her/his followers wish to take. These two are suggested as necessary and sufficient conditions for effective leadership in the school and where these qualities are present the organisation is more likely to be effective in achieving its aims and objectives. Where effective leadership is absent the educational institution not only fails to achieve its educational objectives but also fails to provide satisfactory environments for the development of significant learning or personal relationships.

Given the importance attached to effective leadership for the achievement of educational objectives in schools, by Murgatroyd and Gray (1992) in their paper, it is necessary to examine two questions. First, can the skills associated with leadership be developed through training? Second, what support do leaders require to enable them to maintain leadership in the school? Leadership is a term used to describe a particular combination of personal qualities, ('ways of being') which both encourage and enable others to follow. Leadership is not about skills, rules or procedures but about the person and the quality of their relationships with others. Leadership here is defined in the context of open-
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ness, acceptance, sharing and exchange. Yet notions like 'power' and 'authority' are often equated with leadership. Leaders who see themselves as organisers, decision-makers, arbiters or supreme authorities will experience difficulty as leaders since they will simultaneously create dependency and find themselves increasingly isolated and the subject of criticism. Leadership training needs to maximise and empower the individual talents and personal qualities of those who see themselves as leaders. Leaders may occupy any position in the school and leadership may come from any point in the school. Training cannot be normative, prescriptive, skill-based or problem-centred but needs to focus upon the personal and interpersonal qualities of the person. It might develop and sustain openness, empathy and warmth and encourage exchange, acceptance and exploration. Leadership training therefore must be person-centred. If effective organisations depend upon effective leadership then schools, to be effective both in terms of managing change and enhancing the quality of interpersonal relationships, need leadership.

In the opinion of Sergiovanni (1984) things 'hang together' in excellent schools: a sense of purpose rallies people to a common cause; work has meaning and life is significant; teachers and students work together and with spirit; and accomplishments are readily recognised. To say excellent schools have high morale or have students who achieve high test scores or are schools that send more students to college misses the point. Excellence is all these and more. It includes developing a love of learning, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, aesthetic appreciation, curiosity and creativity and interpersonal competence.

Sergiovanni (1984) identifies five leadership forces:

* Technical - derived from sound management techniques.
* Human - derived from harnessing available social and interpersonal resources.
* Educational - derived from expert knowledge about matters of education and schooling.
* Symbolic - derived from focussing the attention of others on matters of importance to the school.
* Cultural - derived from building a unique school culture.
The successful principal needs a combination of these skills many of which can be developed through effective training and support. The literature concerning the training/support needs of principal teachers contrasts starkly with the absence of provision in Ireland at present.

**New directions in School Leadership**

Although Murgatroyd and Gray stress the importance of interpersonal relationship in school leadership a systems approach still dominates. This dominance is now being questioned by an increasing number of researchers and teacher leaders.

The rejection of system approaches to leadership training is a theme taken up by John Carr in his address to the INTO National Principals' Forum (1996) entitled *School Leadership - Reclaiming Our Roots*. He warns against the emerging reliance on scientific management approaches to school administration and challenges the viewpoint that the school is a machine and that the manager’s task is to sustain mechanical procedures rather than take account of human resources. He urges school principals to adopt a human relations view of management based upon what he describes as the 3Rs of Leadership - Resources, Relationships and Responsibility.

*Resources*, according to Carr are about what teachers as individuals can contribute to the school - the expertise, competence, skills and enthusiasm which people have available to them in using whatever financial, support services or technical assistance which is available to the school. The promotion of good *Relationships*, which, in his view, is the key to school effectiveness and success, is about the daily interaction between people - the degree of individual and team commitment to teamwork between teachers, children, parents or whosoever we deal with on a daily basis in our school communities. While establishing, developing and maintaining professional relationships is the duty of every member of the school team, the principal, as leader, has a vital motivating role to play in fostering good relations in schools. *Responsibility*, Carr suggests, entails forging a professionalism distinctly suited to the basic values of teaching in today’s society. This involves promoting a caring concern for the child as client, providing a high quality service and resisting external interference in the pupil/teacher relationship by ensuring professional discretion and judgement. It entails establishing collaborative
cultures and promoting trust and confidence in the school, in the education system, and in the competence of teachers to deliver a high quality education service. Imposing teachers' own blueprint on professionalism involves assuming greater occupational control and increased collective professional autonomy at school based and at national level through the establishment of a Teaching Council.

Effective school leadership therefore entails the promotion of cooperation rather than competition, the development of joy in work and fulfilment in learning and the driving out of all forms of fear. School leadership must involve helping people to do a better job, in a happier work like atmosphere, for their own benefit and for the benefit of the whole school, its children, its parents and its community.

Cultural life in schools is constructed reality, and leaders play a key role in building this reality. School culture includes values, symbols, beliefs, and shared meanings of parents, students, teachers and others conceived as a group or community. Components crucial to the effective school operation include planning, directing, organising, human effectiveness, controlling and monitoring. All of these aspects of school life depend on effective leadership.

Until relatively recently most school systems have been simple organisations offering children instruction in the '3 Rs' and a small number of ancillary subjects. Those who occupied the principal's office were expected to maintain the status quo and to sustain parents' confidence in state education. At present, most schools are struggling to respond promptly and adequately to changing demands for education, to dynamic societal forces, to new reforms and to pressures for greater accountability. How schools respond to these pressures has a significant impact on school effectiveness. Consequently, appropriate procedures for responding to rapidly changing conditions are essential for leading, administering and managing contemporary schools.

These changes have also been the focus of work undertaken by the INTO in the past. In The Role of the Principal Teacher: A Review (1991) the organisation recognised that the principal teacher works within a network of changing relationships. This role can be seen as evolving from a narrow authoritarian concept to a more democratic, inclusive role as
a member of a team. The chief executive model was rejected in favour of this more team-oriented, collegial approach to school administration which accommodated teachers' professional status and aspirations.

However, that report recognised that a number of changes in the operation of the principals were required. It recommended that properly structured inservice courses be developed with a view to enhancing the professional development of principal teachers with particular emphasis on leadership skills, curriculum development techniques, classroom technology, school planning procedures communication systems and the delegation of duties and responsibilities to staff members, particularly the vice principal.

In particular, *The Role of the Principal Teacher* recognised the professionally demanding role of the principal teacher with fulltime teaching duties. It recommended a reduction in the staffing schedules at which an administrative principal should be appointed and monthly reductions in class teaching responsibility with substitute cover to enable the undertaking of administrative duties. It concluded with demands for the appointment of caretaker and secretarial staff to all schools, the provision of office accommodation and increased allowances for additional duties. Many of these calls for improvements were also made in the Report of the Primary Education Review Body (1990) and the Report of the Primary Curriculum Review Body (1990).

While limited progress has been made on some of these issues over the last five years much work remains to be done. Despite the fact that the White Paper *Charting our Education Future* recognises the decisive influence of the principal teacher on the effectiveness of a school it fails to spell out how the above recommendations will be met.

Other aspects of the White Paper concerning the role of the principal require comment. The organisation supports the concept of induction programmes and incareer development opportunities for principal teachers which the White Paper proposes. However, it is essential that the dominant features of such courses should not be routine managerial or administrative tasks but rather should focus on the role of the principal as an educational leader who facilitates, in cooperation with all the
teachers in the school, a quality learning environment. The proposal to establish networks for principals is likewise welcome.

The organisation however rejects as inadequate and professionally insulting the section dealing with principal teachers of small schools. "Principals of small schools who have full-time teaching duties have particular needs which will be taken into account. Some of these needs will be met by means of specially designed in-career development courses for such principals. The networks of principals referred to above will also be useful in helping principals in small schools to develop school planning processes and management procedures which suit their particular circumstances". Some of the particular needs of principal teachers will of course be met by the provision of inservice and a support network. However, to ignore completely the many real needs of principal teachers for which inservice will not provide and which prevent or seriously hinder the operation of the role is to fail to grasp the centrality of these problems. The demands of full time class teaching leave little time, energy or enthusiasm to engage in the type of full time professional leadership activities referred to in this report.

The proposal in the White Paper to introduce limited terms of office for administrative principals is one that requires explanation. If the proposal is designed to enhance mobility then surely all principal teacher positions should be filled for limited terms of office of seven years. In addition, should not the teaching principal have the same opportunity as suggested in the White Paper to pursue positions in the regional educational boards, the inspectorate or education centres as their colleagues who carry out the role of administrative principal? The distinction made between teaching and non-teaching principals should be justified or withdrawn.

The INTO does however note that in 1994 a survey of teachers showed that 53% of teachers were in favour of the concept of limited terms of office compared to 28% who were not. This survey also found that females were more in favour of the proposal than males and that highest support was to be found among post holders. In light of these findings the INTO welcomes the White Paper commitment that discussions will be held concerning the implementation of these proposals with relevant interests.
The Principal Teacher and School Leadership

Recommendations

As schools attempt to respond to the needs of a rapidly changing society, attention has begun to focus on the part played by the leadership of the principal teacher. Research has pointed to a need to change the culture of leadership from one dominated by concepts of power and authority to one characterised by acceptance, sharing and exchange. The INTO supports these developments but recognises that a great deal is required of Government to enable teachers in their schools to respond to these changes. The following recommendations are made in that context:

1. All schools should be provided with secretarial assistance to enable principal teachers to shed some of the increasing number of routine administrative tasks that attach to the role. Whereas in the past, schemes discriminated in favour of larger schools priority should be accorded to schools where the principal has full time teaching duties.

2. The provision of a school building represents a considerable investment of tax payers money. That investment must be properly protected and therefore every school should be provided with the services of a caretaker who will undertake routine repairs and renewals.

3. The most important resource for the principal with class teaching duties is time. Each teaching principal should be relieved of teaching duties each September and every June to undertake their responsibilities. In addition to this, periods of release from teaching duties must be provided to teaching principals on a monthly basis. These releases must be covered by substitute cover, or by the establishment of a supply panel to cater for the needs of teaching principals.

4. A more collegiate approach should be adopted to school organisation. The bringing about of such change will require the cooperation of principals and teachers and, therefore, inservice education must be provided for all teachers to facilitate such change.

5. As part of a collegiate approach, principal teachers should engage/continue to engage in staff consultations on professional matters and
matters that relate to conditions of work such as class allocations, policy development(s) and procedural change.

6. Recent years have seen an increase in the administrative/managerial duties of the principal. Changes proposed in the White Paper could see an increase in this aspect of the principal’s role of educational leader. Many of these tasks can be shared with the vice principal and teachers with posts of responsibility. Discussions about the delegation of duties should be undertaken immediately.

7. The role of the principal teacher is a demanding one that already carries an overload of responsibilities. All future change should be by negotiation and agreement. Consideration should be given to teachers in schools other than the principal undertaking responsibility for change such as curricular initiatives.

8. The proposal to provide induction programmes for newly appointed principal teachers is welcome. The INTO demands an input into the design and delivery of these programmes.

9. The proposal contained in the White Paper to introduce limited terms of office of seven years for new non-teaching principals only is unacceptable. It fails to recognise the contribution of principal teachers with full time class teaching duties to the education system. The INTO demands immediate discussions on this issue with the Department of Education.

10. Serious concern about the under-representation of women in the position of principal has been voiced by the INTO in the past (1994). At present women comprise 70% of the teaching population occupy 48% of principalships. The INTO demands the immediate establishment of a committee consisting of representatives of teachers, management and the Department of Education to investigate and report on this matter.
There has been relatively little research into the role played by the vice principal in primary schools in this and other countries probably according to Stone (1986) because what they do is regarded as unimportant, particularly when compared to the work of the principal. Evidence of this can be seen in the fact that in the Plowden Report (1967) there is only one reference to the role of the vice-principal: “the vice principal usually stands in for the principal in her/his absence and may relieve her/him of such jobs as interviewing parents or taking morning assembly though these responsibilities should not be confined to principals and vice principals. Occasionally, a deputy head has no class of her/his own though we doubt the wisdom of this”.

The lack of prominence is also evident in many texts concerned with school administration, organisation or management. Joan Dean (1987) has only one reference to the role of the vice principal in her book Managing the Primary School, “the deputy by definition deputises for you in your absence but must also carry some other responsibilities... such as staff development or... evaluation”. Nias (1987) states that as far as she is aware there is no study which looks ethnographically at the roles of principal and vice principal in the primary school or the relationship that exists between them.

Burnham (1968) describes the role of the vice principal as the man (sic) in the middle role conflict hypothesis where the fundamental key to that role - delegation by the principal - depended on individuals with little or no capacity for delegation. He also pointed out the immense variety of duties which ranged from a few clerical type duties to vice principals wondering what they were supposed to do. As a result of this lack of an accepted role many vice principals were involved in internal conflict, suffered frustration and were often humiliated.

Leadership, according to Etzioni (1964) has both an instrumental and an expressive dimension. Instrumental refers to task definition and achievement while expressive or social emotional is concerned with the affective, pastoral aspects of internal interaction. Burnham was of the
opinion that the roles of principal and vice principal represent leadership role differentiation in the school organisation. He viewed the principal as the instrumental leader directing the group towards its goal while the vice principal was the social-emotional leader of the school.

Burnham argued that these roles elicit different reactions from members of the organisation. The instrumental or task leader initiates action which may mean “cost” or “change” for the group members often giving rise to feelings of hostility. On the other hand the social-emotional leader will attempt to absorb or deflect this hostility thus safeguarding the staff-leader relationship. Burnham is of the opinion that these roles are incompatible because the instrumental leader demands such qualities as ‘drive’ and ‘push’, academic knowledge and organisational skills whereas the vice principal role will demand a high degree of interpersonal skills. Such an understanding of differentiation indicates that a certain “distance” will be created between task leader and staff but an escape from this isolation is to be found in a close relationship with the social emotional leader. When both principal and vice principal work closely in partnership staff will follow the authority and the direction of the principal teacher.

The role of the vice principal therefore is a powerful one that contributes to the well-being of the organisation. Burnham postulates that school administration would be much improved if there was a greater awareness of the functional aspects of the role. He states that a great deal of ambiguity, frustration and conflict might be avoided or resolved if duties which should be the remit of the vice principal were to result not from delegation by the principal but by virtue of differentiating organisational forces.

Coulson (1976), in an attempt to confirm this theoretical model, asked the principals and vice principals of 340 primary schools whether they considered certain behaviours appropriate to the principal or vice principal. He concluded that, in general, principals and vice principals agreed that instrumental leadership was more appropriate to the principal while administrative duties were more suitable for the vice principal. However, principals and vice principals disagreed over the expressive or social-emotional leadership of teachers. Principals considered this as part of their responsibilities while vice principals were of the
opinion that it was their concern. This he concluded was an area for potential role conflict.

As reasons for the diversity of role perception Coulson suggested that principals are promoted from an occupational position and role for which they are prepared into one for which they have received little preparation. Close identification between the principal and the school leads to the development of an all embracing style of leadership which precludes the development of a distinct role for the vice principal. The day to day work of the vice principal is not unlike that of any other teacher and except in cases of the principal’s absence responsibility and recognition is minimal. Given that job satisfaction is linked to recognition, opportunity for professional growth and involvement in responsibility for decision making, it is not surprising that vice principals in Coulson’s study expressed a lack of satisfaction.

Coulson also highlights the fact that the previous career of the vice principal provides little preparation in the skills necessary for carrying out administrative and socio-emotional leadership tasks. A high degree of role conflict attaches to the position which is subject to pressures from principal and colleagues. Future career prospects also affect the operation of the position as the vice principal attempts to balance acceptance of the present servicing role against a more future focussed, independent stance in preparation for promotion to principal.

A major barrier to proper delegation of responsibility, according to Coulson, is the ‘persistence of paternalism’. The ego identification of the principal with the school causes the principal and others to think in terms of her/his school and therefore to develop a deep sense of personal responsibility for school and staff. Such over identification with the school may lead the principal to strive constantly to be aware of everything in order to be assured that the school is moving towards her/his ideal. These attitudes make the development of a meaningful management role for the vice principal difficult to negotiate.

Nias (1987) does not subscribe to the role differentiation observed by Burnham and Coulson and found that both principal and vice principal played both an instrumental and expressive role in school organisation. This enhanced professional self-confidence and job satisfaction and pro-
vided a powerful role for the vice principal. She suggests that the main instrumental role for the vice principal is in the area of communication, much of which was informal and dependant on a capacity to interpret the casual or unspoken response. This work emphasises the role of the “go between” in the role of the vice principal.

Nias found that the provision of opportunities for the vice principal to deputise, to assume responsibility and to influence school policy contributed to effective leadership. She suggests that vice principals encourage other teachers to think about school policies and their implementation and also affected standards (such as punctuality) by their attitudes. The vice principal is also central to the communication systems (formal and informal) in the school and by competent administration, positively affected staff morale.

This research contrasts with that of Coulson and Burnham. For Nias, the role of the vice principal is not an unimportant shadow of the principal, without substance or meaning that confuses power with influence and bureaucratic with personal authority. However, the fact that both exist in a state of “mutuality” both playing dual roles heightens the need for effective communication. This relieved professional stress and established trust.

Nias, while conceding the danger of drawing general implications for schools from her study, makes three conclusions. Firstly, there is a need to strike a balance between tight role definitions - too narrow a job specification can lead to a reduction in interdependence between the principal and the vice principal while a high degree of ambiguity may be the cause of a poor management structure. In the event of ambiguity growth and development can only be assured if both principal and vice principal can respond flexibly. Secondly, both principal and vice principal must be tolerant of the other. The principal must accept a degree of power sharing while vice principals need to know how to stop short of usurping the principal’s role. Thirdly, she contends that communication - listening and talking both formally and informally - is an essential part of the management process.

As business cannot be transacted independent of cultural context it is important therefore that we accept the blurring of the personal and the
professional, the expressive and the instrumental. However, the establishment of partnership between principal and vice principal must not be viewed as a simple operation. It cannot be a quick or easy process which is entirely free from tension.

Waters (1983) states that while vice principals want to do something worthwhile very often they find that their duties, in addition to teaching, are of a menial nature. Paisey and Paisey (1987) suggest that the assumption of many principals is that the vice principal is justifying her/his job by running errands, by being the intermediary or by being the eyes and ears of the principal. However, they describe four different relationships which they argue are found in practice.

1. The Frustration Relationship
A vice principal, keen to undertake wider responsibilities, finds that the principal reserves as a personal domain the business of school administration. This frustration increases when the principal’s over possessiveness is accompanied by incompetence in the discharge of duty and where the vice principal’s opinions, if sought, are ignored.

2. The Authority Relationship
A principal fears the loss of personal authority and control and of unfavourable comparison with the vice principal may adopt this relationship. It can also result where a principal perceives the vice principal to be incompetent and therefore meriting only minimal recognition and consultation.

3. The Change Relationship
The principal, having decided policy, expects the vice principal to assume responsibility for carrying it out. The vice principal acts as executive and effects the change, substantial or otherwise, that the principal wishes to see.

4. The Collegial Relationship
The vice principal is fully involved in school administration, privy to information and consulted when problems arise. Consultation takes place concerning policy and its implementation leading to a high degree of interpersonal trust and rapport.
Effective school organisation requires certain skills and the case exists for matching the skills required with the personal and professional skills of both the principal and the vice principal. Belbin (1983) has cited the following skills as a necessary part of successful practice:

1. Organising Skill
2. Chairing Skill
3. Shaping Skill
4. Provoking Skill
5. Investigation Skill
6. Evaluating Skill
7. Finishing Skill
8. Leading Skill.

If these skills are considered in the relationship between principal and vice principal and individual abilities and strengths recognised the resulting collegiality can provide a sound basis for the building up of a successful leadership team in the primary school.

A Partnership Model
West (1992) argues that the principal / vice principal relationship is best conceptualised as a partnership model and that the vice principal be viewed as an assistant principal. This it is argued is preferable to the conceptualisation of the vice principal as either “deputy” or “prospective principal”. The former casts the vice principal as a commissioning agent for the principal while the future orientation of the latter means that information not experience is acquired. By contrast, the concept of assistant principal recognises that all vice principals have careers, though not all are promoted and that some do not seek preferment. It is worth noting that in the negotiations between the teacher unions and the Irish Government under the auspices of the Programme for Competitiveness and Work the concept of deputy principal was retained while the title of A-post holder was changed to that of assistant principal.

West’s theory deserves consideration because while it views the roles of principal and vice principal as separate it recognises the need to work as partners in the areas of leadership and school administration. His theory also makes clear the need for planned development opportuni-
ties for the vice principal - the principal should mentor or foster the growth and development of the vice principal.

This research views the role of vice principal as a major component of school life - a position in its own right rather than a stepping stone to a principal's position in another school or the agent of the principal's bidding. The vice principalship is viewed as an active part of the principalship playing a full part in school life whether the principal is present or not. It elevates the vice principal to a role of importance, affecting the management and organisation of the school. However, if partnership between principal and vice principal positively affects school organisation it must become a professional obligation and not a matter of option chance or luck. Therefore it is important that not only the principal but also the vice principal receive specific training for their respective positions.

The partnership model as presented identifies an improvement on the "My School/My Class" model (Alexander 1992) where the division of labour is between principal and class teachers, each with clearly defined roles and 'zones of influence'. The role of the vice principal might be undefined or non-existent in this situation. Through highlighting the role of the vice principal with more clearly defined duties and responsibilities three roles exist in the structure. The significance of the third role depends on the quality of the duties and responsibilities. If, however, the duties and responsibilities involve nothing more than class teaching, standing in when the principal is absent and relatively low-level jobs the two-tier structure essentially remains.

Alexander reports on a further development on this model to a more inclusive one that takes account of the roles of other post-holders, and especially of co-ordinators (curriculum or section of school, for example). In this development curriculum and co-ordinator leaders represent a significant and formally recognised additional layer in the management structure, reporting back to the head and the staff as a whole.

In the former models the principal deals with school-wide decisions while teachers deal with class-room decisions. In the latter and emerging model there is the recognition that a substantial amount of decision-making to do with content and the development of specific aspects of
the curriculum requires the expertise and time of others. Decision-making and leadership are, consequently, more diffused among the staff of the school.

**Incareer development for the Vice Principal**

Poster (1986) asserts that "on the job" training is not sufficient, for however good a school's management structure and processes, it is limited by the context of its values, goals and objectives. This work further suggests that the eight management skills of Mintzberg (1973), applied to the role of the vice principal, indicate an approach which might form the basis of such training.

**Peer Skills** - the ability to establish and maintain a network of contacts with equals. This involves an understanding of interpersonal, listening and counselling skills.

**Leadership Skills** - the ability to deal with the complications of power, authority and dependence. The vice principal needs to develop a sensitivity to the internal and external dynamics of the school.

**Conflict Resolution** - the vice principal should be able to mediate conflict and handle disturbance as the intermediary role suggests.

**Resource Allocation** - successful organisation involves deciding between competing uses of time and other resources.

**Information Processing** - the ability to build networks, extract, validate, and disseminate information effectively is an integral part of good organisation. Poster claims that schools are particularly weak in the area of information processing and views the vice principal as the proper person to correct this lack.

**Day to day decision making** - finding solutions to problems from a variety of alternatives. These activities contrast with the corporate activity of long term planning.

**Entrepreneurial Skills** - a successful vice principal will be able to take sensible risks and implement innovation. Sergiovanni (1986) sees such skills as essential to effective school organisation when schools are involved for finance, support and service with par-
The Role of the Vice Principal

Skills of Introspection - the successful vice principal has the ability to understand the impact of management on the organisation through processes of effective, reflective self-assessment.

While it is a relatively easy task to identify a range of required skills it is an entirely different and more difficult exercise to devise suitable incareer development courses in which these skills can be acquired or developed. However, given the essential role of the vice principal in successful school organisation it is essential that such courses be designed and delivered. Failure to do so will result in a loss to schools in terms of efficiency and effectiveness (Moody 1996).

Belcher (1988) has outlined what he views as a proper role for the vice principal based on the perceived realities of primary school life. This role must be sufficiently adaptable to meet the needs of the school yet remain a properly defined, distinctive role.

Time. Being a full time class teacher is incompatible with a significant managerial role. It presents a situation that must be faced, a problem to be overcome if vice principals are to function effectively in schools.

Curriculum Leadership. Belcher maintains that the vice principal should have responsibility for an area of curriculum because responsibility for resource provision or subject development would enhance the leadership profile of the vice principal.

Managerial Responsibilities. A significant managerial role must be found for the vice principal in the school which would permit the organisation and planning of events, outings, assemblies or the chairing of staff meetings.

Professional Development. The vice principal must be given some responsibility for the professional development of staff such as the induction of new teachers.

Refuse to Perform Trivial Tasks. The vice principal should, according to Belcher, refuse to perform trivial tasks and cease to become "gen-
eral dogsbodies”.

Status. A high public profile with staff, parents, pupils and others is essential. An office, however small, and the printing of the vice principal’s name (along with the Principal’s) on the school stationery could contribute to this.

However the realities of the role of the vice principal remain. A survey of 63 vice principals by Reay and Dennison (1990) found that having a full teaching load posed problems in terms of team work as this limited partnership and scope for delegation. Nearly half felt that repetitive, uninteresting and even trivial administration tasks demeaned their positions. When absent vice principals received only class teaching cover other tasks / responsibilities were subsumed by the principal. These problems of status, tradition, expectations and subordination must be tackled if a meaningful effective role is to be created for the vice principal.

However, in spite of encouraging work in this area by Southworth (1994) and Camsey (1995) there is evidence that the vice principal may become a wasted educational resource in the school of the future. Haigh (1995) has pointed out that more than 10% of vice principal’s positions can be expected to disappear from secondary schools and that primary schools can expect to lose some vice principals also. It is suggested that the vice principal is a luxury that schools can do without and that the savings on a vice principal’s allowance might pay for number of posts of responsibility to other teachers for involvement in school management and effective leadership. This reflects industrial trends such as flattening hierarchies or delayering. Perhaps it is becoming clear that although it is acknowledged that a meaningful role for the vice principal is associated with effective school organisation unless such a substantial role is developed in practice the position of vice principal will wither and die (Southworth 1994).

The post of vice principal was first established in primary schools in 1920. Recognising the paucity of promotional opportunities open to assistant teachers a new position - vice principal - was created. In large schools more than one vice principal could be appointed. This situation continued until agreement was reached on the Ryan Tribunal Report
The Role of the Vice Principal

(1968) which suggested graded personable allowances for principals and vice principals in addition to the common basic salary scale along with the discontinuance of multiple vice principalships in favour of graded posts of responsibility.

Not all primary schools are entitled to the appointment of a vice principal. In order to qualify a school must have a points rating of 150 or over. In such schools the vice principal is usually appointed on the basis of seniority. To be appointed vice principal in a school of 750 points or over a teacher must be qualified, have given not less than five years service, the last three of which were satisfactory. In schools of lesser points rating the teacher must be qualified, probated and be giving satisfactory service.

The role of the vice principal is outlined in Circular 16/73 Section D which states:

"the Vice principal is required to assist the principal teacher in the day to day organisation and supervision of the school. In addition to her/his teaching duties, the vice principal should be assigned specific duties by the Manager. Before assigning such duties to the vice principal the manager should discuss the matter with the principal teacher."

Recent INTO research (1994) has shown that many teachers are dissatisfied with present arrangements concerning the appointment and role of the vice principal. A survey of 361 teachers found that 86% were of the opinion that the post of vice principal was under-developed. 73% of respondents favoured merit related appointment with younger teachers being more in favour than older teachers. 53% of teachers surveyed favoured limited terms of office attaching to the post with female teachers being more in favour than their male counterparts.

In response to such findings, research into the role of the vice principal has been carried out by Moody (1996). His qualitative research focuses on six vice principals in Dublin and deals with career to date, leadership in schools and career expectations. Most of the vice principals interviewed by Moody saw that the real source of power lay with the principal. One reported that the vice principal was just there to fill in for the
principal in his/her absence. Perceptions of the role ranged from “keeping the peace” to “part of the management team”.

The vice principals in this study put forward the following descriptions of a good principal in terms of school leadership:
- *primus inter pares* rather than a ‘dictator’; one who is open to staff involvement in decision making;
- having an interest in education, an awareness of change and an ability to come up with and initiate ideas;
- one who will not lose sight of the curriculum in spite of administrative duties.
- a good communicator who can bring staff with her/him.

The following were adjudged to be the qualities of the good vice principal:
- a supporter of the principal;
- a buffer between principal and staff;
- next in line in the administrative hierarchy and there for the staff; and
- capable of deputising for the principal.

Most felt that they did not have a particularly significant part in the leadership of their schools, although they had played some part. Most were involved in lower order administrative tasks for which they found time before, during and after school. This lack of time allocation however, actively discourages planning and structuring and makes a meaningful management/leadership role difficult, if not impossible, to undertake. The vice principals in the sample gave the impression that there was a great deal of uncertainty among them as to what they were expected to do in terms of the leadership of the school. They also seemed to act as a consequence of “being allowed to” do so by their principals.

While some of the sample felt that they were recognised as vice principal by outside bodies such as parents (individuals or groups) and sporting bodies others complained of a lack of recognition. One remarked that “the lollipop ladies are aware that I must be of some significance in the leadership role of the school; I sign their forms for them”. Another responded that “nobody gives a hoot that I’m the vice principal really.
The Role of the Vice Principal

It’s not seen as a major role by parents. It only becomes important when it has to be used, which is when the principal is missing”.

Most of those interviewed felt under-utilised, frustrated and not really acknowledged in terms of their contributions to their schools. They felt that the role was undefined, unrecognised and insignificant in terms of administration, leadership and management of schools. Lack of time prevented the adequate carrying out of duties.

Moody suggests that a number of conclusions can be drawn from his research which confirm much of the international literature on the subject. The role is not intrinsically satisfying to the occupants who are critical of their dependence on the principals’ style of leadership. They found themselves in a socio-emotional role playing the “person in the middle”/ buffer between staff and principal. Dissatisfaction with the lack of meaningful tasks to carry out is also confirmed in this study. In most schools tasks are shared among all teachers with little differentiation between the type and quality of task given to those in promoted positions. Trivial and undemanding tasks do little to enhance the position of vice principal.

Moody makes the following recommendations:
- the vice principal must become accepted as a senior figure in the school;
- principal and vice principal need to agree a division of labour;
- development opportunities for both principal and vice principal need to be provided in the context of the schools needs and development;
- regular times to work together need to be provided;
- some release time from teaching duties must be obtained;
- vice principals should have overall responsibility for at least one aspect of the school;
- appointment procedures should be re-considered.

The study concludes, according to Moody, with an endorsement of team building as important. Vice principals who become leadership and management partners with their principals and who remain strongly committed to teaching and learning will ensure that the most important people in every school will benefit - the pupils.
It is clear that the role of the vice principal teacher is under-developed in Irish primary schools. This represents a loss to school organisational effectiveness that must be corrected as a matter of urgency. The vice principal must be recognised as part of the administrative and leadership team of the school in partnership with the school principal and must be provided with meaningful tasks and responsibilities.

The White Paper *Charting our Education Future* makes a number of points concerning the vice principal. The authors place the vice principal in a partnership with the principal and view them as a cohesive management unit. The discharging of all the duties of the principal when s/he is absent is a second role envisaged by the White Paper. The selection procedure that applies to the appointment of principals is recommended for vice principals who, it is argued, should have access to similar and joint inservice development programmes.

The INTO is supportive of the majority of these proposals and in doing so makes the following recommendations.

**Recommendations**

1. While the ambiguity that attaches to the role of the vice principal has enabled many schools to establish professional and effective relationships between principal and vice principal and to create a meaningful role for the vice principal in staff development and staff relationships it is clear from research that this does not happen in all schools. The position of the vice principal teacher in the primary school must be closely examined and the role clarified. The vice principal should be considered in terms of a partnership with the principal teacher who together form a managerial/leadership team.

2. Specific responsibilities must be assigned to the vice principal. The INTO acknowledges that while there is merit in facilitating an agreed division of tasks and responsibility between the principal and the vice principal there is also an argument for guidelines to be produced which would assist in such a sharing of responsibilities. It is therefore recommended that these guidelines should be drawn up by the Department of Education following full consultations with the INTO.
3. The INTO is of the opinion that in guidelines advising on task/responsibility sharing which may be issued and/or arrangements which may be reached between principal and vice principal care should be taken to ensure that the vice principal be assigned both leadership/educational and administrative responsibility of significance.

4. The INTO welcomes the proposal contained in the White Paper concerning inservice development programmes. However, it notes with concern that while a specific commitment is given in the case of principal teachers no such commitment is laid down for vice principals. It therefore recommends that over the next five years each vice principal will have participated in a special incareer development programme related to the role and functions of the vice principal.

5. If the vice principal is to effectively discharge new responsibilities in a new and expanded role then time must be provided for the discharge of duties. The literature on school effectiveness points clearly to a significant role for the vice principal in school organisation. This cannot be achieved without an allocation of time and consequently the INTO recommends that some time free from class teaching or other responsibilities be provided for the discharge of these duties. In smaller schools this might be provided in the form of substitute cover for a specific number of days while in larger schools (500 pupils or over) there should be full time release from class teaching duties. The INTO should begin negotiations with the Department of Education on these issues.

6. The INTO is supportive of the concept of the principal teacher fostering and mentoring the career of the vice principal as a senior management position in the school. It recommends that in every school the vice principal should be assigned meaningful duties that enhance rather than demean the position.

7. The recent agreement concluded under the terms of the Programme for Competitiveness and work provides that appointment to the posts of Deputy Principal and assistant principals be by way of competition through formal selection procedures. Open and transparent procedures should be agreed prior to the implementation of propos-
al and that particular care be taken to prevent the development of
gender imbalances in the number of vice principals appointed.

8. The operation of the role of vice principal is closely associated with
school effectiveness. The INTO believes this to be so regardless of
the size of the school. Consequently it is recommended that a vice
principal be appointed to every school of more than one teacher.
CHAPTER 4

Promoting Staff Involvement in School Organisation

Introduction

For schools to be effectively organised decision making cannot be concentrated in the hands of one person. Indeed it could be argued that the concentration of such decision making in the hands of the principal has thus far limited the development of teacher professionalism in a great many schools. Such a unidirectional understanding of school organisation does much to perpetuate a conceptualisation of the principal teacher as an all powerful and an unchallenged autocrat (INTO 1991). This virtual exclusion of teachers other than the principal from participation in decision making must be challenged and changed if school administration is to be charged with general support and enthusiasm. Such changes are slowly taking place and a more collegiate, democratic and teacher centred style of leadership is beginning to replace more classical styles of school management. This is no small task, requiring as it does the examination of a culture, the negotiation of change and the restructuring of roles.

There is research evidence to support the effectiveness of this trend in school organisation. Schools have been found to be more effective when, through teacher involvement in decision making, consensus is achieved on aims and values and where practice is developed from the collaborative efforts of all the staff. Manifestations of this include a unity of purpose, (Rutter, 1979) consistency of practice in curricular areas (Mortimore, 1988), discipline (Reynolds, 1976) and collegiality (Rutter, 1979). Mortimore also recorded that the involvement of teachers in curriculum planning and the development of curriculum guidelines is central to successful school organisation. He noted that the involvement of teachers in decisions concerning class allocation was important and showed that consultations with teachers about spending decisions and other aspects of school policy were associated with effective schools. Such evidence clearly highlights the centrality of staff involvement in school organisational effectiveness.

Models of School Organisation

Although many models of school management have been devel-
Developed to explain and understand schools as organisations these broadly fall into two categories which reflect two contrasting traditions. While the components of each are not mutually exclusive they are set out as such, for the purposes of description and examination. These models comprise the pyramidal hierarchy/managerial approach and the collegial/consultative approach.

Under the managerial model school organisation is set out and underpinned by rules and regulations. The focal point of the model is a powerful principal who often makes unilateral decisions according to personal judgement. It is hierarchical in nature with the principal at the zenith who either formally or informally exerts an influence over promotional prospects. The information system in the organisation is largely in the control of the principal who also maintains almost complete financial control.

A contrasting style of school organisation can be found in the collegial/consultative approach which emphasises personal and professional relationships in schools with a view to developing a collective spirit. This model is characterised by the active participation of staff members in school organisation. In this model, which does not exclude the powerful principal, the role of professional and group leader is assigned to the principal. Participatory decision making contrasts with the concept of the principal as autocrat.

Both of these traditions influence the way Irish primary schools are organised. The managerial autocratic concept is a legacy of historical tradition. However, the collegial model is increasingly gaining ground particularly in the context of the breaking down of traditional teacher autonomy and its replacement by collective approaches to school matters. Both of these traditions will be examined in greater detail. However, it is necessary to examine formal structures that exist in Irish primary schools.

**Posts of Responsibility**

The pyramidal promotion structure in the Republic of Ireland consists of graded posts of responsibility in addition to vice principal and principal positions. Posts of responsibility were first proposed by the Report of the Ryan Tribunal on Teachers' Salaries (1968) as a replacement for a
system of multiple vice principals that existed at the time. Following negotiations on these proposals the present system of A and B posts was agreed. The number and type of promotional posts available in a school is determined by the number and age of pupils on role.

It is now argued that this system is in need of radical overhaul. Research conducted by the INTO and reported upon in A Career in Teaching (1994) indicates that a large proportion of teachers are highly dissatisfied with their promotional prospects which is beginning to impact negatively on morale and motivation. Contributing to this high level of dissatisfaction were the limited range and number of promotional opportunities, the points system and the dominance of seniority as a determinant of promotion. In response to these findings the INTO called for a major review of teachers’ career structure including the common basic scale, the length of the incremental scale, long service increments, qualification allowances and promotional opportunities.

The Report on the National Education Convention (1994) argues that the system evolved at a time when the management of schools was relatively uncomplicated and that it is now less well suited for the modern-day needs of schools. Among the criticisms raised against the current system by the Report are the lack of clearly defined selection procedures and responsibilities for post holders, a lack of flexibility to meet the needs of individual schools and a failure to involve post holders in the management of the schools.

However, while there might be a level of agreement that some redesign of an unsatisfactory system is necessary there does not exist a consensus about how such a task might be accomplished. Discussions at the National Education Convention highlighted some of these views where it was held that promotion to management which results in good teachers leaving the classroom devalues the status of the classroom teacher. It was also argued that a middle management structure could create divisions in schools and that the present structure is based on outdated industrial ideas that do not meet the needs of schools.

It was suggested at the Convention that such an outdated model be replaced by a collaborative concept of management involving all the staff in group planning and consensus management. Such a structure
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would be more suitable to organisations staffed by professionals, rid schools of "them and us" scenarios and would recognise and reward classroom as well as administration duties. However, this approach was rejected by the Convention Secretariat on grounds of cost and efficiency. They argued that the proposals would not ensure that a fair and equitable distribution of responsibilities resulted and that such an approach failed to identify ultimate responsibility.

The Convention Secretariat did concede however, that the proposal highlighted a major flaw in present arrangements whereby managerial functions have to be attended to during the normal working day when staff are teaching. The Report proposes that the concept of exchanging teaching hours for managerial responsibility and duty be given serious consideration.

The Convention Report puts forward a number of proposals for the reorganisation of middle management structures in schools which it argues are aimed at matching responsibility linked to posts to the central tasks of the school, creating a career in teaching which does not require withdrawal from the classroom and the provision of opportunity for teachers to assume responsibility for leadership and management in schools. These proposals, it is argued, would result in teachers not undertaking routine administrative duties which would free them to concentrate on academic and pastoral tasks. This in turn would reduce the workload of the principal teacher enabling her/him to concentrate on more central aspects of instructional leadership.

It is proposed that senior teacher positions be created with responsibility for various tasks including curriculum coordination, assessment policy, resources management, school planning, pastoral care or staff development. These posts would be closely linked to the academic work of the school, provide opportunities for staff to take responsibility and provide a recognition of their role in the school. It was envisaged that responsibilities might then be clearly defined and candidates matched to those duties. Qualifications, experience and track record should form the main criteria for appointment for posts it is argued and post holders should be provided with a reduction in class contact hours as well as adequate remuneration as much of the work involved would be undertaken in addition to the normal working day.
Promoting Staff Involvement in School Organisation

The Secretariat to the Convention proposed that many task related activities not directly related to the academic work of the school or school management not be undertaken by teachers. These lower order tasks might become the responsibility of secretarial, administrative or technical assistants thus freeing teachers with posts to undertake meaningful tasks more in keeping with their professional expertise. The undertaking of higher order tasks would permit teachers to engage in a meaningful career structure.

The White Paper *Charting our Education Future* (1995) also examines posts of responsibility as part of in-school management. Among the points that it raises as contributing to a school’s success are the principal’s ability to delegate effectively to vice principals and post-holders and the promotion of a sense of collegiality among other teachers. It states that this is to be achieved through discussions on a major reorganisation of middle management system in the context of the Programme for Competitiveness and work. The objectives outlined include:

- matching responsibility to the tasks of the school;
- outlining specific responsibility for posts;
- the provision of opportunities for teachers to assume responsibility; and
- the establishment of selection procedures.

It argues that these changes have the potential to enhance school effectiveness and involve a major transformation of school organisation and operating culture. However, it does recognise that implementation will require time and consultation.

However, such a pyramidal structure of principal, vice-principal and post holders is not appropriate to a great number of Irish primary schools due to their size and staffing arrangements. It has also been argued that such a hierarchy is an import from the world of business organisations which is inappropriate to the professionally staffed organisational structures of the school. It is therefore necessary to examine more closely organisational structures.

The present structural and operational arrangements appear to equate with the classical bureaucratic model of school administration rather
than other structures. Six essential characteristics of bureaucracy can be identified

- division into component parts;
- units/people develop specific expertise;
- uniform procedures/communication co-ordinate into a coherent whole;
- each component part is regulated thus defining responsibility;
- each part is supervised in hierarchical form;
- service is delivered uniformly regardless of client or service provider.

However such a unidirectional structure can no longer cope with the complexities of educational/school organisation. Charles Handy (1985) asserts that several assumptions which underpin bureaucratical structured organisations need to be challenged. He disputes the notions that concentration plus specialisation will produce efficiency and that hierarchy is natural. He challenges the idea that labour is a cost arguing that people are assets with skills to be developed not property to be used. Finally he argues against the concept of the organisation as the property of the proprietor and views it instead as, in a real sense, owned by everyone in it who are the real stakeholders.

The application of these bureaucratic type structures to schools has been challenged. These formal structures fail to take account of aspects of professionally staffed organisations which are fundamentally different from those contained in bureaucratically organised structures. Professionals in organisations tend to operate within a collegial structure. Professional activity is by its nature client oriented which often conflicts with systems designed and operated in a bureaucratic manner.

However, it is not enough to simply point to the difficulties posed by one form of organisational arrangement. Alternatives must be explored and debated and if found to be more acceptable implemented. An alternative to the bureaucratic model of management is the collegial model.

**Collegiality and Collaboration**

Professionals are team players who share and test professional knowledge and consensus leadership is the norm. Rather than power dominated hierarchies the concept of equals applies and leadership is of the
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primus inter pares variety. Often referred to as 'collegiality' this concept of school organisation has been put forward by a number of researchers working in this area. Elliott et al. (1981) and Campbell (1985) equate collegiality with professional accountability where all members of the school view themselves as mutually accountable. Collegiality has been used to promote participation by some organisational theorists (McGregor 1960; Herzberg 1966). This concept has also been put forward as an alternative to the concept of the autocratic principal by Coulson (1980).

The characteristics of collegiality have been outlined in several studies and have been found to include:
- participatory approaches to decision making;
- democratic and consensual decision making;
- shared values, beliefs and goals;
- equal rights of participation in discussion;
- equal voting rights for decision making;
- sub groups answerable to the whole group;
- shared responsibility;
- equal rights to determine policy;
- open accountability;
- an extended view of expertise;
- the power of the argument takes precedence over the positional power of the advocate;
- collective rather than individual empowerment is the goal; and
- shared ownership of the curriculum.

(Bush, 1986; Morrison, 1994; Pollard et al. 1994).

Each individual school must foster the personal growth of the teacher and maintain and develop abilities, talents and skills of teachers. These teachers are assets to be nurtured not simply material to be used. In this context those charged with school leadership will be required not simply to maintain efficiency or moderate a hierarchy but to be a mentor to other teachers. The principal will be required to become less an administrator and more an instructional leader.

Each teacher in the school must be viewed as a stakeholder in the enterprise. In this context experience, effort and excellence must be recognised and rewarded. Leadership styles will be required that will view everyone as a stakeholder, and a resource for everyone else. There must
be a new emphasis on quality of life - a quality of life that supports and nourishes the professional development of all members of staff as opposed to developing the specific/technical abilities of some.

However, if teachers are expected to forgo some of their traditional classroom independence and embrace a more collegiate working arrangement it is reasonable to demand a new degree of control in determining the working conditions in the school. Control of and responsibility for working conditions may be expected to increase levels of job satisfaction and dignity. Such concepts are commonly considered today in terms of collaboration and collegiality.

Collaboration and collegiality that entail a commitment to shared decision making and staff consultation have been identified as factors that are associated with positive outcomes in school effectiveness studies (Lieberman and Miller 1984). Although closely identified with the process of curriculum planning and development activities which are of course central to effective school organisation, collegiality and collaboration are also a central and essential feature of organisational well being. Shulman (1989) argues that teacher collegiality and collaboration are not merely important for the improvement of morale and teacher satisfaction but are absolutely necessary if we wish teaching to be of the highest order.

However collegiality and collaboration are at the core of leadership models which provide for teachers to exercise substantial leadership. Again Shulman outlines this position. Schools are asked to become like our best corporations, employing modern methods of management to decentralise authority, to make important decisions at the point where street level bureaucrats reside. Leadership is not monopolised by administrations, but is shared with teachers. Any study of school effectiveness must therefore be concerned with the concepts of collegiality and collaboration - the manner in which everyone has their say.

However, prior to blindly advocating the adoption of new practices it is important to investigate these concepts which are not without their critics. These focus in the main, on implementation difficulties, time constraints or lack of training and experience to operate collaboratively. There are also problems of finding a shared understanding of what the
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terms mean. Too often these terms are used as if portraying a commonly understood ‘good’ that all schools should adopt when in reality there are different forms of both.

A critique of popular conceptions of collaboration and collegiality has been undertaken by Hargreaves (1994) which he argues must be looked at in the context of human relationships. He identifies, within this context, two perspectives - the cultural perspective and the micro-political perspective. The cultural perspective emphasises what is shared or held in common including norms, habits, values and beliefs or what we might refer to as teacher culture. However two problems exist with this perspective. It firstly presumes that all organisations have cultures and secondly, theoretical emphasis on what is common might not be reflected in practice where difference, conflict and disagreement are socially significant.

The micro-political perspective deals with the use of power to achieve outcomes and the differences between groups are emphasised rather than similarities. The power and influence of individuals and groups is of central importance. Rather than viewing leadership as a matter of management and legitimacy it is a question of managerial power and organisational control. Collegiality therefore can be imposed externally or teachers may be co-opted.

Because the cultural perspective is dominant in educational literature Hargreaves argues that it is appropriate to examine the micro-political perspective as its adoption has important implications for how we understand collaboration and collegiality. He argues that it casts doubt on the virtues of team teaching and other such collaboration at classroom level where there are differences in values and beliefs among teachers. It also raises issues concerning individual rights in the face of group pressure. He also argues that this perspective allows teachers to critically examine collaboration and to recognise where it may become, not the development and realisation of common purposes, but the implementation of purposes devised by others. Without such a perspective externally mandated changes may be adopted without any real consideration of their worth. It is also argued that this perspective permits the analysis of collaboration and collegiality to see whose interests are really served.
Hargreaves sees this perspective as important because it sensitises teachers to the dangers posed by the substitution of evolutionary and spontaneous forms of collaboration by administratively controlled, simulated forms of collegiality. These he distinguishes as collaborative culture and contrived collegiality.

**Collaborative Cultures**

1. *Spontaneous* - evolve from and are sustained by teaching staff.

2. *Voluntary* - value is recognised; work is enjoyable and productive.

3. *Development Oriented* - teachers have a commitment to the work; initiating change rather than just reacting to it.

4. *Pervasive across time and space* - informal, not closely regulated.

5. *Unpredictable* - teachers have control; compared to systems approaches, outcomes are of the uncertain.

**Contrived Collegiality**

1. *Administratively Regulated* - an administrative imposition.

2. *Compulsory* - little discretion or individuality to individuals. Threats or sanctions often underpin this approach.

3. *Implementation Oriented* - teachers are persuaded to work together to implement external mandates.

4. *Fixed time and space* - takes place at particular times.

5. *Predictable* - designed to have relatively predictable outcomes.

This analysis allows examination of the concepts of collaboration and collegiality and indicate clearly that there are different forms. If we seek the involvement of the teaching staff in the school organisation we must be explicit about what this entails. Collegiality that often promises teacher empowerment may in fact be professional enslavement to external mandates. Collegiality that often promises efficiency may in fact generate inefficiency. While such problems must be addressed centrally each school, each teacher must also examine practice.
The Principal in Collaborative Cultures

The embracing of a collaborative culture will make particular demands on principal teachers. In order that collaboration may flourish it is important, according to Day et al. (1985) that the principal teacher must be receptive to other people's ideas, realise that mistakes will be made, be tolerant when let down by those to whom authority has been delegated and be able to exercise powers of self-restraint. However, such changes will not only impinge on the role of the principal. There are four specific aspects to which attention must be paid if authority is to be delegated.

1. Jobs must be clearly defined and mutually agreed. Every staff member to whom authority is delegated deserves a clear written statement of their responsibilities. Within such job descriptions there needs to be a recognition that a scale post holder has to accept responsibility for a general quality of teaching and a leadership role throughout the school. There will be occasions when this will require involvement in other tasks outside those which have been specifically defined.

2. Goals must be set and clearly understood so that everyone knows which specific goals relate to every delegated task.

3. Ideas must be communicated to everyone at every level in the school to help them make the right decision.

4. Controls must be established as there can be no delegation without control.

Meaningful delegation will make demands of all who work in the organisation - not least of those who delegate and those to whom responsibility is delegated. Delegation requires careful planning if a decentralised organisation is to be created that is capable of inspiring initiative, imagination, self discipline and loyalty.

In the past there has been little tradition of delegation in the primary school. While in second level schools, particularly the larger ones, the distribution of authority is based on a system of departmental sub units almost all primary teachers have classes which were up to recently seen as relatively independent of each other with each teacher having a high
degree of autonomy and classroom authority. However, in recent years, with the advent of school planning and initiatives such as team or co-operative teaching, the internal operations of the primary school have become more complex. This requires a distribution of the tasks and responsibilities among members of staff. While a certain amount of distribution has taken place it has been of an ad hoc nature and is unevenly found in schools.

If collaboration and collegiality are to become an integral part of professional life in all schools then it needs further research and discussion. Only through dialogue between the advocates of closer professional collaboration and those who are less supportive of its benefits to schools can the tensions between organisational models be explored. At present both leadership and collegiality need to be regarded as invitations to enquiry rather than as a rhetoric of conclusion (Eisner 1985).

**Needs and Motivation**

Although all people have different personal needs and respond differently at different times to conditions and action, certain basic needs may be considered.

**Affiliation** - all people have a need for belonging. It is important that all staff feel they belong in the school as part of a teaching team.

**Achievement** - people have a need for sense of getting somewhere with the task(s) at hand. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities can help here.

**Appreciation** - it is difficult to work well if one feels that one's efforts are not appreciated. Praise and thanks are two of the highest motivational factors.

**Influence** - while few desire complete control over what happens in schools most have a need for a sense of some influence over what happens.

**Self Esteem** - each person has a self image of abilities and potential that is often reflected back by others. We become as others see us.
These general classifications may be considered in more specific terms. Members of an organisation are likely to be positively motivated if they are involved in the formulation of new approaches rather than being told they must adopt a particular position. Other factors which are likely to have a positive influence on motivation include feelings of solidarity and belonging to a school community that is open and friendly, recognition of effort, clear goals and competent planning. Change in any organisation is unsettling but certain factors contribute to the motivation of individuals to undertake change. These include a demonstrable need for change, a confidence in one’s skills/abilities that change can be managed and being able to rely on the support of the principal and other colleagues. Previous good experience can be a powerful positive motivational force as can the provision of time to undertake the work and regular opportunities to discuss and exchange ideas and information.

However, equally there are forces and conditions which impact negatively on teacher motivation. Many of these will be direct opposites of those above and include a lack of planning and organisation, a feeling of threat or coercion, a lack of trust and confidence in those responsible for change. It is important that change is not simply mandated externally because what really counts in schools cannot be mandated by external agencies. If projects that involve change do not provide teachers with opportunities to develop and to exercise responsibility then they are likely to influence motivation negatively.

A number of practical steps that might be taken by a principal to increase teacher motivation have been compiled by Day and his colleagues (1985). These include:

1. Facilitating early initial discussions within the staff;
2. Keeping overall control of the programme;
3. Developing staff, especially their skills, understanding and self-confidence;
4. Making available as much time as possible (and letting it be seen that s/he is doing so);
5. Leading by example;
6. Involving all staff, and not just teachers;
7. Providing aid, back-up and support, especially when there are particular difficulties;
8. Utilising the skills and expertise of staff;
9. Making a very careful appraisal of the status quo, prior to committing the school to change;
10. Encouraging staff to suggest developments and modifications once the change process is under way;
11. Building up a system of steady, reliable support for teachers who are attempting to innovate in their own work;
12. Building upon success and not failure;
13. Delegating authority as well as responsibility carefully;
14. Appreciating work already done, however trivial; not alienating those who are committed to the system which you may wish to change; and
15. Not personalising opposition - keeping it on a professional level.

These steps all have the potential to contribute to staff motivation, particularly in the context of change. It is obvious that all these steps require top class communication skills and systems. However, communication systems do not just have an importance in the context of change. Even in times of relative organisational stability staff involvement in school life cannot be promoted or facilitated unless excellent communications systems are in place.

Communication Systems
All schools require a good external and internal communication system and simply because the majority of primary schools are small in organisational terms it is nonetheless an element of school effectiveness which should not be overlooked or underestimated. If a school is to function effectively, care and attention must be paid to formal, informal and inferential systems of communication by all members of staff. An effective organisational framework requires excellent communication and to rely totally on the odd word over morning/lunch break or the casual conversation while on yard duty is to seriously limit the ability of the organisation to solve problems and make decisions.

Neither should schools underestimate the importance of home-school communication. Evidence from studies in Britain shows that even where communication between school and home is good many parents will not get the messages sent (Dean 1987). Such problems are not unique to Britain and simply indicate the effort that must be put into
communication to maintain organisational effectiveness. Time invested in improving communication and communication systems in a school will pay dividends in terms of improved personal and professional relationships with pupils, colleagues, parents and the wider community.

Three types of communication in schools have been identified by Dean (1987):

1. The Formal System
   The formal system of communication is used to communicate plans, policies and information and includes meetings, timetables, memos, schemes of work and roll books.

2. The Informal System
   Informal systems may be divided into two - the casual, unplanned conversation that occurs in the staffroom, corridor or yard and the grapevine which is often used (however accurately) to convey information. This underlines the importance of complete and clear communication of information to avoid misinterpretations.

3. The Inferential System
   Everybody and every action in a school is a type of communication - language used, tone of voice, body language, clothes worn, appearance and topics chosen for discussion. This system is quite complex as can be seen from the fact that messages are often received differently from the way they were intended. A school may think that it is welcoming to parents but may not be perceived as such by them because of, for example, inadequate or confusing directions within the school.

Several different interactional patterns can be identified (Handy 1980) which affect communication effectiveness. Experimental work has demonstrated their relative merits. These patterns have been described as the wheel, the circle and all channel. The wheel, where communication patterns resemble the spokes of a wheel is always quickest to reach a solution or conclusion. However it is inflexible if the task changes. The circle, in which communication moves from one person to the next in the form of a circle is the slowest and attracts the lowest satisfaction rating. The all channel model as its name suggests allows each individual to communicate with everybody else in the group. This model was
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found to be best for open ended complex problems. Regardless of which model is adopted communication, according to Dean (1987) will be effective if:-

* It is personal, addressed to the individual rather than as part of a group.
* It meets a need or arouses interest.
* It gives power or recognises status or position.
* It requires action which can be seen to be done as a response.
* It identifies with the organisation.
* The presentation is right.
* The status of the source is respected.
* The context predisposes the listener to be receptive and avoids distraction.

Staff Meetings
Of all methods of communication both formal and informal one that requires investigation is the staff meeting. According to Hennigan (1985) it is the most important method of facilitating the communication of information within a school. He goes on to state that where a school is organised along democratic lines, meetings become the means by which the organisation hangs together.

In Irish primary schools the regularity of meetings and their influence on organisational policy has increased in recent years. Yet many teachers consider staff meetings to be “a dull waste of time or as a burden to be endured while more interesting work awaits elsewhere... mismanaged meetings can arouse distaste and even hatred” (King 1968). Given this reaction to a central part of organisational effectiveness it is essential to identify problems and establish factors which will facilitate increased effectiveness.

Four purposes of staff meetings have been identified:-

Participation
According to Bridges (1967) the most effective administrative structure of a school is a participative one and while often accepted in theory, is seldom the reality experienced. The need arises therefore to actively plan strategies to increase the participation of teachers. The staff meeting is one strategy which if used properly offers much scope in is area.
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Communication
No matter how good informal and inferential communication processes are, an organisation, if it is to be effective, requires formal methods of communication. The regular staff meeting is important in facilitating communication.

Emotional Needs
Most teachers care about the organisation in which they work and seek to be involved in it. This is not only a professional identification but a personal/emotional one. Professionally conducted staff meetings affect not only organisational effectiveness but job satisfaction.

Problem Solving
A primary purpose of the staff meeting is to problem solve and take decisions.

However, many staff meetings fail to achieve these objectives. Research by Hennigan (1985) reported that many teachers often felt bored at meetings and complained about a lack of participation. Teachers reported that meetings were often dominated by a minority and that the principal, who assumed the role of chairperson, spoke most of the time. No agenda was provided in a number of cases and minutes were not taken. A lack of follow through on decisions was reported. His findings indicate that while schools might aspire to democratic and participative forms of management, in reality different systems of organisation apply.

In order to maximise the benefit to school organisation from staff meetings it is important to keep in mind that staff meetings offer an opportunity to share ideas. Staff meetings should not be called so that staff can listen to a series of announcements from the principal. Meetings should be planned well in advance, include a starting time and a finishing time and the purposes should be made clear. An agenda for the meeting should be drawn up, all members of staff should have an input and each teacher should be circulated this agenda before the meeting to enable preparation to take place. The order of business on the agenda should indicate priorities. Different members of staff might be given responsibility for chairing different meetings but the primary responsibility of the chairperson remains to help the group to complete the planned agenda. To facilitate follow up, a record should be kept of decisions.
The following points have been put forward by Day (1985) as a guide for those with the responsibility for organising meetings.

**Before the meeting.**

1. Consider the individuals involved and the interests they will bring to the meeting.
2. Consult with staff regarding the agenda and time of the meeting.
3. Provide any necessary information before the meeting.
4. Organise tea or coffee and ensure that the room will be comfortable and appropriately laid out. Staff should be able to look at and talk to each other.

**During the meeting.**

1. Ensure that it starts on time.
2. Establish agreement related to the content, style and purpose of the meeting.
3. Check out the feelings and understandings of staff members as the agenda progresses.
4. Use humour appropriately.
5. Bring latecomers up to date.
6. Convey in behaviour that members are respected and contributions to the meeting valued.
7. Listen, encourage, respond, link and bring in, ask clarifying questions, support, offer feedback to members.
8. Check any domination and work for a balanced contribution amongst staff members.
9. Encourage the talking out of differences.
10. Thank those attending and observe agreed time limits.

**After the meeting.**

1. Follow up contact with individual teachers who may need a further chance to talk on matters arising from the meeting.
2. Check out the staff feelings about the meeting and whether there are any suggestions for making the next meeting even more efficient.

3. Support any agreed follow up action by staff.

Dean (1987) makes similar points concerning the preparation of meetings, elaborates on the working session and in particular, on problems which may arise. She highlights the following situations which require consideration in the context of staff meetings. It is important for the chairperson of the group to notice a person who does not appear to be contributing and to perhaps seek a contribution on an issue/subject with which s/he is familiar. This can sometimes be overcome by seeking positive contributions and using these as a starting point. Other problems arise occasionally when two members of the group start a discussion between themselves to the exclusion of the rest of the group. A way of dealing with this is to summarise what has been said and invite contributions from others. Other situations that require careful and tactful leadership are situations where one person makes too many contributions to the meeting.

Effective staff meetings will not simply occur. They require detailed preparation, skilled participants and purposeful follow through. These require diverse and often specialist skills which are unlikely to be found to naturally occur in any one school. It is quite likely that whole school inservice education will be required if the necessary skills are to be achieved.

Conclusions
The involvement of all staff in the organisation of the school is closely correlated with school effectiveness. There are several aspects to this which require attention both within the school organisation and outside it. The INTO, in its document *A Career in Teaching* (1994) stressed the dual nature of career, the objective dimension which consists of a series of statuses and clearly defined offices and responsibilities and the subjective dimension defined as an ongoing perspective in which people see their lives and interpret their attributes, actions and the things that happen to them. From a subjective perspective there are few opportunities for teachers to commit themselves to career development, professional enhancement or job related growth. Addressing the subjective aspect of teachers’ careers will require positive action including the
rapid expansion of inservice education programmes, the establishment of induction procedures, the pursuit of support services, the active support for members at critical periods of their lives, and the secondment of teachers to act as curriculum advisors.

The hierarchical system of promoted posts also requires critical examination as is evidenced by the contributions made by teachers to the INTO research document *A Career in Teaching* (1994) and by contributors to the Education Convention. The recent negotiations that took place between teacher unions and the Irish Government will, when implemented, result in the promotion of over 50% of primary teachers. The proposals are aimed at improving inschool management through a process of restructuring. The objectives of the restructuring are

- matching the responsibilities of the posts more clearly to the central tasks of the school and the clear specification of responsibilities for various posts;
- focusing on the provision of opportunities for teachers to assume responsibility in the school for instructional leadership, curriculum development, the management of staff and their development, and the academic and pastoral work of the school;
- the establishment of selection procedures for vice-principals and post-holders, with the aim of ensuring that the most suitable people are appointed.

The current structure of posts of Principal, Vice principal, Grade A and Grade B posts will be replaced by the grades of Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal and Special Duties Teacher. The rates of allowances are set to increase by 28%. It is intended that the Principal, Deputy Principal and holders of posts will together form the inschool management team for the school. The dominance of seniority as the sole determinant of promotion will be modified, at primary level although merit of experience will still continue to be recognised as a main criteria together with capability, and willingness to undertake the duties attached to the post.

In order to provide real possibilities for teachers it is essential to continue to strive to ensure that at least two thirds of all teachers have promotional opportunities.
However, in addition to the promotion of teachers to posts of responsibility there exists the need to increase collegiality in our schools. The professional development of teachers is intrinsically bound up with the concept of collegiality and therefore there exists an urgent need for inservice and retraining as well as for the provision of time in which to engage in collaborative activities.

The teaching staff in any school are its primary resource whose skills, talents and energies must be developed and harnessed if a school is to function effectively. For too long teachers have been excluded from meaningful school organisational structures. New inclusive procedures and policies must be developed that recognise teachers' professionalism and seek to extend it.

**Recommendations**

1. Schools must become organisations where the work of teachers is recognised, valued and rewarded. The INTO is of the opinion that the collegial approach to school organisation offers the greatest potential in this respect. It does however recognise that school organisation along different lines does not necessarily exclude teachers and devalue professionalism. Changing school culture is not the foremost requirement; recognising, valuing and rewarding teachers' professional roles in school organisation is essential.

2. Teachers should be given an inclusive role in the decision making process in school organisation specifically in areas such as class allocation and spending priorities.

3. Curriculum development is an area that appears to offer great potential for the development of collaborative cultures in schools. Inservice education must be provided to enable teachers to develop the required skills and time must be provided in school for such developments.

4. Current demographic trends mean that the number of promoted posts in primary schools are declining. This is unacceptable at a time when increased demands are being made on teachers in schools. Schools as organisations require the development of specific skills and expertise over and above classroom teaching; teachers who provide these deserve appropriate remuneration and recognition.
5. There exists a need for all teachers to be provided with inservice education relating to collaboration with colleagues. Features of this inservice education should include the skills and expertise necessary for effective staff meetings.

6. Unless principals are willing to share power and responsibility, teachers in the school are provided with few if any opportunities to develop leadership/administrative skills. Inservice education must be provided for principal teachers that will provide training for involving other members of staff in school organisation.

7. Post holders should have clearly defined remits agreed with the principal and Board of Management. Remits might include some of the following suggestions:

   (i) developing and monitoring policies in a certain curriculum area or at a particular stage of the school;
   (ii) ensuring effective forward planning, record-keeping and class management by individual class teachers;
   (iii) providing a positive lead in the practice of teaching by demonstrating techniques to colleagues within co-operative and team teaching arrangements;
   (iv) piloting innovatory work;
   (v) providing particular support to groups of pupils such as children with special aptitudes or pupils with learning difficulties;
   (vi) contributing to various classes in particular curriculum area where staff expertise may be lacking;
   (vii) planning and supervising the use of resources in the school;
   (viii) deploying staff to make the most effective use of their capabilities;
   (ix) providing appropriate advice and support to teachers including teachers on probation and non-teaching staff;
   (x) promoting effective links with parents and the wider community.
   (xi) coordinating specific curricular areas within a school or amongst a cluster of schools.
CHAPTER 5

School Planning

Introduction

An action is effective if it achieves its objective. A school can be classed as effective if there is congruence between its objectives and achievements. In other words a school is effective to the extent that it accomplishes what it sets out to do. Before objectives can be achieved aims must be identified and strategies planned to meet them. An integral part of establishing and achieving a school’s objectives is the process of school planning.

The primary responsibility for the development of schemes of work for pedagogic practice remains with individual teachers. This is reflected in the Rules for National Schools:

Each teacher is required to make adequate written preparation for her/his school work, to prepare weekly, in advance, a scheme of work for each week, and at the beginning of the school year, to prepare a definite and detailed scheme of the year’s work in each subject, suited to the needs of her/his pupils. At the close of every month the portion of the syllabus dealt with during the month should be noted in a progress record. The progress record is an important school record, the custody of which is one of the duties of the principal teacher. It should be available in the school at all times and should be kept for a least one complete school year after the completion of the year to which it relates (Rule 126, Rules for National Schools).

Prior to 1971, the role of the principal teacher was mainly concerned with the implementation of Clar na Bunscoile, a prescribed curriculum. This responsibility was to be undertaken through the effective supervision and coordination of each teacher’s work. Significant changes in this regard were envisaged in Curacclam na Bunscoile (1971) which advocated greater consultation between principal and staff in the development of a school plan based on the principals of the curriculum. In particular, the principal teacher was charged with the following responsibilities:
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- to hold regular conferences with staff in order to discuss problems, to pool opinions and to evaluate progress;
- to outline a plan of work for the school as a whole incorporating the principles of integration and the environmental approach and to ensure that the individual schemes prepared by teachers subserve this general plan;
- to coordinate the work of the various classes so as to ensure continuity and avoid unnecessary duplication; and
- to ensure that all curricular areas are dealt with adequately in all classes.

Curaclam na Bunscoile allowed teachers new freedom to adapt curricular aims and objectives to local needs and circumstances. It was envisaged however, that this adaptation could be the result of collaboration between staff and principal.

This approach was continued in Circular 16/73 which laid down that principal teachers should hold regular conferences with the staff of the school on matters concerning the general work of the school and that the principal in consultation with the staff should plan at the beginning of the year, a comprehensive scheme of work.

This collaborative approach to school planning was considered by the INTO in its document A Proposal for Growth: The Administration of National Schools (1979) where is was recommended that schools should close for a period at the start of the school year and at the end to facilitate such consultation and planning. It further demanded that if this process were to be successfully undertaken in schools then regular staff meetings during the school year would be required.

In 1990 the INTO investigated school based curriculum planning and supported the view that school planning was a means by which professional autonomy and inter-dependence might be significantly reinforced; job satisfaction and morale might be greatly enhanced; consultation and collaboration might be expanded and the functioning of the school as an effective and efficient organisation might be strengthened considerably. However, it did recognise and report on a number of factors in Irish primary schools that impacted negatively on the process of school planning including the lack of:-
- appropriate inservice education;
- criteria and guidelines to assist planning;
- teacher advisors to facilitate planning;
- appropriate time for planning;
- resources and support services;
- ancillary staff in schools.

School policy was perceived as a cyclical process involving a review of existing practice, the establishment of priorities for development, the design of an appropriate and realistic response, an evaluation of its implementation leading to a further review and a new set of priorities. It perceived school planning as a transformational mechanism for engaging all members of staff in the process of reflective practice. A school congenial to reflexiveness, the report argued, not only threatens prevailing assumptions about content and methodology, but also challenges the core values and purposes embedded in its organisational structure. The report perceived that the resolution of conflicts and dilemmas was the key task in effective curriculum development and school planning.

The importance of school planning was recognised in the Report of the Review Body on the Primary Curriculum (1990) which recommended that individual school plans should be drawn up by each school. It did however recognise the need for criteria and guidelines for school plans to be established which should derive from the aims and objectives of the curriculum.

The Report of the Primary Education Review Body similarly endorsed the concept of school planning. It stated that

"It is generally agreed that the most effective way of attaining (educational) objectives is through a carefully constructed school plan for each school... The School plan should involve the entire staff under the leadership of the Principal Teacher in defining the overall objectives of the school and the ways in which these objectives can be realised."

The Report recognised that over the years (in practice from 1983 onwards) that the primary inspectorate had been urging principal teachers and school staffs to devise school plans where the whole staff
are engaged on a regular basis in policy and curricular planning for the whole school. The Review Body considered the development and implementation of a School Plan to be an essential pre-requisite for the efficient organisation of every school. It was of the opinion that a school plan should evolve over time and be revised in the light of changing circumstances.

The concept of school planning received further, more detailed consideration at the Education Convention (1994) which considered the Green Paper proposal that all schools should develop plans, drawn up by the principal teacher in consultation with the staff and other partners and approved by the Board of Management. While there was general approval for the school plan proposals and while involving the various partners was seen as a valuable mechanism for promoting a collaborative culture, there was a lack of agreement about the degree to which the different partners should become involved in the exercise. The Convention Report suggests that involvement would depend on the task or element being developed and instanced a significant role for parents in areas such as health, social and religious education and in discipline and homework policies and home school links. The professional staff of the school would have responsibility for curriculum delivery and policy implementation with parents having a consultative role.

The Report of the Education Convention also addressed the concept of the school plan as process or product and detailed what it viewed as a reluctance to produce planning documents especially if it appeared these were to be widely available outside the school. The publishing of documents can create a finality or a casting in stone at odds with the ongoing developmental nature of school planning. It noted concern that published documents might be used to rigidly evaluate schools which could cause such documents to become more akin to marketing devices aimed at creating a more positive but unreal image of the school. Alternatively, an over-critical public might undermine the development work in such school planning and discourage further work.

The Secretariat to the Convention, noting the general confusion in relation to purposes, content, preparation, approval and availability of school plans outlined certain advantages to school planning. Their
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report argues that development planning includes the identification of priorities, the selection of a limited number for action, the devising of action plans to address them, the specification of targets to be achieved and the monitoring of progress. The last two often tend to be neglected with the result that some school plans are vague and ambiguous and progress is difficult to monitor. Such problems lead to success being difficult to identify, stagnation and the disillusionment of staff.

Another difficulty occurs where school plans are regarded as final documents and as a consequence are seldom reviewed. Regular and systematic evaluation of school practices must to be conducted if the school plan is to influence school effectiveness. School development plans provide a focus for this activity. However, schools need freedom and time to plan and implement change without having to report in detail to a wider public while a particular innovation is in process. An exception to this, according to the Report on the Convention, is the Board of Management which should be given regular progress reports.

As a way forward, the Secretariat of the Convention recommended that school plans should be devised as having two components. The first should comprise, what it terms, the relatively permanent features of school policy including aims and objectives of the school, curriculum provision and allocation, approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, and policies on home/school/community liaison, homework, discipline and enrolment. This section of a school plan could be published in a separate document and any modifications or revisions could be reported each year. Such a document would inform parents and others about the school and its general policies and would be circulated widely.

The second component of the plan, titled “the development section”, should be devoted to outlining and reporting on the specific planning priorities which the school was undertaking. The concept underpinning development plans is that each school would undertake, on an ongoing basis, a limited number of small-scale development projects which the staff had identified as important priorities. These priorities for development would arise out of an internal evaluation of the school’s policies and practices, covering both curricular and non-curricular areas. Because the content of these development proposals would be of a pro-
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Professional nature, and of relevance to the staff of the school, it would not be necessary to publish them in the same way as more permanent school policies until an action/development plan has been successfully implemented. It could then be incorporated into the general school plan.

According to the Convention Report the potential benefits to be derived from schools engaging in the planning process include the following:

(a) Putting in place a formal procedure, adapted to the needs and resources available in each individual institution, can assist schools in the process of implementing and managing change;

(b) The development of plans and priorities, identified on the basis of an internal evaluation of the school, can make a significant contribution to the improvement of the quality of education being offered to the pupils;

(c) The process of planning provides an opportunity for engaging staff in collaborative planning and teamwork by focussing on whole-school issues and, thereby, counteract the isolation which teachers traditionally experience within the narrow confines of their own classrooms;

(d) The planning process provides an effective vehicle for incorporating national, local and school priorities into the work of each individual school;

(e) The development of action projects, arising out of an evaluation of school needs, provides an efficient and effective method for identifying the resources needed to introduce innovation and improvement into the school, and so promote quality enhancement;

(f) Engaging in the drawing up of school plans and establishing priorities requiring action, provides an effective means of identifying teacher development needs, and enables more precise specification of the inservice provision that would meet both the needs of the teachers and schools; and
(g) The process of planning can afford a means of empowering teach­
ers within a school by extending their professional skills and gain­
ing a greater degree of ownership over the central issues which influence their work.

These comments are closely related to those of the INTO who in 1990 recognised that school planning should:

(i) attend to what the school intends as the cumulative worthwhile experiences of each child (aims, guiding principles);

(ii) clarify thinking about curriculum organisation, administration and policies of the school in the light of the schools own guiding principles;

(iii) facilitate continuing development of the curriculum policies and of the organisational and administrative procedures of the school;

(iv) lead to harmony of approach within the school;

(v) seek to cater for the individual needs and the stages of develop­ment of the pupil population of the school;

(vi) recognise differences between children due to variations in intel­lectual, personality and physical ability, etc.;

(vii) consider the schools unique local circumstances and how these are to be taken into account;

(viii) provide for the needs of the whole school community including staff development and professional needs.

It is clear that while some schools have made considerable progress in the area of school planning, many would benefit from assistance in vari­ous forms. The publication of guidelines on school planning giving a clear indication of what the school plan should include are urgently required.

Teachers will need to acquire a range of skills, notably communication
and evaluation skills in order to engage in this process and much of this inservice could be provided at school level through the provision of advisors where necessary. The principal teacher will require specific assistance in promoting the development of school plans and encouraging a collegial climate among the staff. Resources such as secretarial assistance, reproduction equipment and curriculum materials will be necessary. Staff will require adequate planning time if they are to be expected to engage in this exercise.

The INTO agrees with the Convention Report that schools, in common with most organisations, can derive many benefits from engaging in a systematic planning process. Putting in place a formal planning and reporting procedure can greatly assist schools to implement and manage change and improve the quality of education being offered to students. This process of planning offers an excellent opportunity for engaging the Board of Management, the principal, staff and parents in a collaborative exercise aimed at defining the school's mission and putting in place policies which will determine the activities of the school. Staff can become involved in planning and teamwork by focusing on whole-school issues, thereby counteracting the isolation which teachers may experience in their own classrooms. Teacher development needs are identified when teachers draw up school plans and establish priorities; this also enables a more precise specification of their incareer training needs. Teachers and parents are empowered through the process of school planning and in this way critically influence the quality of education in the school.

While the Convention Secretariat are to be commended for their adopting an inclusive approach to school planning involving both product and process, experience at primary level suggests that, in the light of the different types and sizes of primary schools and the varied level of provision and support, there cannot be a single model of school plan which is appropriate for all. Tradition, location, funding, personnel are but some of the variables which dictate the development and the implementation of school planning at primary level. In its response to the Green Paper, entitled Among School Children, the INTO reiterated its support for the concept of the school plan as outlined in its previous report entitled School Plan (1990). It sees school planning as an explicit manifestation of a continuous process whereby the principal teacher
and staff of a school collaboratively review, design, implement, reflect upon and evaluate the effectiveness of the range of curricular and organisational experiences and opportunities, both formal, and informal provided for the full and harmonious development of the children in their schools. The INTO argued that the school plan is not a statement of achievable objectives. It is not a document designed to enable an uninitiated outsider comprehend the full range of activities of the school community. It does not purport to be completely transparent. It cannot, nor should it, attempt systematically to exclude ambiguity by making the realities it describes completely explicit. Nor does it presume to solve difficulties in the school simply by articulating them. It is provisional on contingency, developing in response to changing needs and teachers' humane and professional reflection on those needs.

The principal benefits of school planning as a mechanism for promoting school effectiveness lies in the process - the opportunities provided for teacher interactions, discussions, sharing of ideas, of experiences and of particular expertise and knowledge. This is confirmed by Flynn (1993) who argues that the plan scoile is a staff development process that evolves over time and results in better student learning, greater job satisfaction for teachers and more effective organisation.

Hargreaves (1996) argues that in a world where problems are unpredictable, solutions unclear and demands and expectations intensifying collaborative decision-making and problem solving is widely viewed as a cornerstone of postmodern organisations. While collaboration is indeed a promising principle for promoting school effectiveness it can often become a burden as well as a blessing particularly when principal teachers are forced to abandon the spontaneous unpredictable and support aspects of teacher based collaboration in favour of contrived collegiality as can happen during preparation for school inspections. Contrived planning opportunities occur when spontaneous, dangerous and difficult-to-control forms of teacher collaboration are discouraged or usurped by administrations who capture it, contain it and contrive it through compulsory cooperation, required collaborative planning, stage-managed mission statements, labyrinthine procedures of school developing planning, and process of collaboration to implement non-negotiable programmes and curricula whose viability and practicability are not open to discussion.
The point which Hargreaves makes is not that contrived collegiality is a manipulative, underhand way of tricking passive teachers into complying with administrative agendas. Rather it can oftentimes become its own self-sustaining reality, with its own symbolic importance and legitimacy. The problem with contrived collegiality is not that it is controlling and manipulative as such, but that it is superficial and perceived by teachers as a complete waste of their time, efforts and energies. Contrived collegiality can paradoxically suppress teachers' desires and create a cynicism and an antipathy towards collaboration.

School planning while acknowledged as a vital characteristic in the promotion of effective schooling, can also become an administrative millstone if it is allowed to override the discretionary judgements of teacher professionalism. Teacher professionalism in the 1990s entails cooperative classrooms, collaborative staffrooms and self managing schools. School planning provides the mechanism whereby individual teachers can maximise their capacity to exercise professional judgement, while at the same time enabling school staffs to manage, direct and control change and the myriad of innovations which have already begun to infiltrate the school curriculum.

The absence of guidelines from the Department of Education has been a major inhibiting factor in the development of school planning. Despite the fact that the Department of Education established a special committee at the request of the INTO, to draw up guidelines no documentation has been issued to schools to date. Frustrated with the delay, the INTO decided, as an interim measure to issue its own guidelines to principal teachers. In drawing up school plans, school are urged to take the following factors into consideration;

- location of the school;
- catchment area of the school;
- the condition of the school building;
- the general facilities available in the school;
- the level of maintenance throughout the school;
- the availability of resources, materials and equipment;
- staffing levels;
- the training, interests, attitudes and specialisms of the teachers;
- general strengths and weaknesses;
- the pupils' socio-economic background;
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- the age and differing abilities of the pupils including those with special needs;
- class distribution;
- the availability of parental and other support;
- the support of the Board of Management;
- attitudes of parents.

The following components covering both school organisation and curriculum were suggested in order to help teachers develop policies for their school:

(a) School organisation
In this area the following are some of the elements which might be considered.

- Enrolment arrangements including reception class meetings, school visitation;
- Timetabling including opening and closing times, lunch breaks, holidays, school outings, meetings with parents, staff meetings, school calendar, allocation of shared accommodation and equipment;
- Access to additional personnel (remedial teacher, special therapist, visiting teacher etc.), fire drill;
- homework policy;
- purchase of books, art materials, P.E. equipment etc.;
- supervision of pupils during teacher absences;
- arrangements for substitute provision;
- discipline including the rules of schools and an appropriate code of discipline;
- general supervision, assembly dismissal, yard duties;
- staffing arrangements and supervision on school outings;
- effective use of particular talents of staff members;
- home/school liaison, talks to parents, meetings with parents, involvement of parents;
- strategies for dealing with new demands;
- transport arrangements;
- assessment, record keeping and reporting procedures;
- referral procedures for children with special needs;
- procedure for evaluating and revising the organisation of the school;
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- administration of school book schemes, book grant;
- administration of milk scheme, savings schemes;
- induction of teachers;
- equal opportunities policy;
- library arrangements including class library, school library, local and mobile library;
- staff development including the inservice needs of teachers;
- Board of Management functions, including areas such as, child abuse procedures, health safety and welfare, (fire drill, safety officers, first aid), posts of responsibility and complaints and grievance procedures; and
- Relationship and Sexuality Education, Stay Safe Programme and Drugs Awareness Projects.

Many of these areas are non-contentious and will require minimal discussion. Consequently such topics may be a very good starting point for schools which have not as yet undertaken school planning in a structured manner.

Having effective school organisation in place will have a highly positive influence on the subsequent procedures adopted in structuring and delivering the curriculum.

**(b) Curriculum**

*Planning for each curricular area*

In order to draw up a plan for each curricular area the school staff may consider and come to an agreement on the following issues:

(a) the value of including the particular area in the curriculum;
(b) the full extent of this particular area of the curriculum (breadth);
(c) the weighting to be given to each subsection of each curricular area;
(d) the curricular content of each level in the school;
(e) the most effective pedagogic principles and methodologies for enabling pupils to learn efficiently and effectively;
(f) the necessary physical and human resources; and
(g) the assessment and evaluation of pupil progress in this area.
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Schools should also consider the aims and objectives which as outlined by the NCCA under the following headings:

General Aims of Primary Curriculum.
Specific Aims of Primary Curriculum.
General Objectives of Primary Curriculum.
Specific Objectives.

All the above areas will be included in the new revised curricular framework. In implementing the curriculum schools should take the following issues into consideration:

• work plans to achieve these aims and objectives;
• equal opportunities strategies for cross curricular areas;
• strategies for the assessment and the evaluation of individual areas of the curriculum and the overall implementation of curriculum;
• strategies for revision of curriculum based on outcomes of evaluation;
• strategies for assessment of individual pupils - this may include decision on the use of standardised or diagnostic tests, school designed tests and informal assessment;
• recording of pupils progress, reporting procedures to class teachers, parents other agencies;
• textbooks in the various curriculum areas;
• learning programmes for less able pupils;
• learning programmes for gifted pupils.

School plans generally contain policies in the following curricular areas:

Gaeilge: Gnáth comhrá na ranga agus na scoile, léamh agus comhrá, litriú, gramadach, filiocht, scríbhneoireacht, téacsleabhair, meastuchán.

English: Language development policy, reading schemes, spelling lists, phonic scheme, writing programme, textbooks, poetry, drama, library facilities, creative writing, grammar, assessment procedures.

Mathematics: Mathematics programme, textbooks, materials equipment and assessment procedures.
Environmental Studies: Local history and Geographic projects, nature trails, visits to museums, field trips to historical and geographical places of interest, nature trails, science programme, equipment, experiments, field trips, civic programme, development education.

Expressive Arts: Music programme, instruments, choir, band, recitals, Art and Crafts programme, materials, equipment, visits to galleries.

Physical and Health Education: Physical education programme, equipment, sports, games, health education programme.

Religious Education: Religion programme, religious ceremonies.

In addition to these curricular areas schools are increasingly being asked to contribute to solutions of a range of social, economic and cultural problems. Teachers are expected to promote European awareness, multi culturalism, cultural heritage, pluralism, mutual understanding, gender equity and integration of those with special needs. Teachers and schools are asked to develop and adopt programmes to counter bullying, drug abuse, sex abuse and the spread of AIDS. Teachers are asked to heighten awareness of environmental issues including pollution and recycling. All of these areas and others seek a place on the formal school curriculum increasing the need for collective planning to prevent curriculum overload.

The last decade has witnessed an enormous increase in school planning activities. This work has come about because of the efforts of teachers to embrace collective planning as a method of increasing the efficiency of school organisation. This work has not taken place in a supportive climate. The Department of Education has failed to provide guidelines to assist in developmental planning. Neither have the necessary resources in inservice education or time been provided. Teacher commitment to school planning has already been demonstrated. Continued reluctance on the part of the Department of Education to provide the necessary resource requirements, particularly time, places an inordinate strain on
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the process if not threatening its very existence.

Recommendations

1. The INTO recognises that among the many obstacles that hinder progress in the area of school planning of primary importance is the issue of time. Under current arrangements teachers are expected to engage in planning activities outside of school hours. It is unacceptable that the Department of Education continue to promote the benefits of school planning while refusing the provide the time to enable teachers to undertake the process. The INTO demands immediate negotiations on the issue with the Department of Education.

2. Guidelines and criteria are urgently required to assist teachers in the process of collaborative planning. A committee established to clarify the concept of the school plan and to draw up criteria and guidelines has yet to issue a report. The INTO views this delay as intolerable and calls for the immediate publication by the Department of Education of agreed guidelines and criteria.

3. Apart from the demands that school planning makes on teachers' time it also requires certain skills and expertise. Many of these may be present in a school but given the centrality of school planning to school effectiveness this expertise is not a matter to be left to chance. Inservice education must be provided on a whole school basis to enable teachers to develop the required skills. This inservice education must take account of the processes involved in school planning and resist the temptation to provide standard solutions and models to be imported.

4. Apart from the resources of time and expertise of teachers there are many other resources needed to support successful school planning. Every school should be provided with the necessary secretarial assistance and office requisites to enable the development of a school plan. A range of curriculum materials is also required to facilitate school planning. These materials must be made available to every school.
5. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment should produce guidelines on school planning which should accompany new curriculum guidelines when they issue to schools.

6. Many schools will be able to undertake the process of developing a school plan without external assistance. For a variety of reasons other schools may require the support of an advisor to assist teachers as they begin to plan collaboratively. A number of teachers should be seconded, provided with appropriate training and utilised to facilitate school planning in schools.

7. One of the benefits of collaborative planning is that it can assist in the identification of teachers' in-career development needs. These require a range of provision which at present is unavailable. The INTO demands that a comprehensive programme of inservice education be planned and made available to teachers as a matter of priority. Schools could then be encouraged to identify their own needs regarding inservice education.

8. The INTO recognises that the process of school planning provides schools with the opportunity for continuous self-evaluation. The identification of problems, the designing of solutions and the improvement of practice empowers teachers and enhances their professionalism, enabling them to exert more control over their schools and their activities. Without the appropriate resources and support school planning demands may be viewed as an unfair imposition on schools. Properly resourced and supported it is an opportunity to develop and extend the professionalism of teachers which should be accepted.
CHAPTER 6

Record Keeping and Assessment

Record keeping, including assessment has been identified as an important characteristic in effective school planning and organisational development (Mortimore et al. 1988). Although assessment is an indispensable element in the teaching learning process the worldwide institutionalisation of testing has raised inordinate political awareness about issues such as standards of achievement, screening and the early identification of slow learners, record-keeping and pupil profiling, right of access to recorded data, effective communication of assessment outcomes and the aggregation and publication of test results. While various curriculum reform movements have highlighted the circular relationship between assessment and curriculum design assessment procedures are determined by curriculum and curricular revisions are made in the light of assessments. The formalisation of assessment is fast becoming one of the most powerful of the external influences on national curriculum systems. In many countries, economic decline in the 1980s was perceived to be associated with pupil deficiencies and schools and teachers were charged with more responsibility for pupil competencies. Attention began to focus on areas of knowledge which could be translated easily into behavioural objectives so that curricular outcomes could be more easily measured. Assessment policies thus became increasingly associated with attempts to develop more explicit curriculum statements, expressed not in the context of pupils encounters, but in terms of the behaviours expected of each individual.

The Review Body on the Primary Curriculum (1990), however, resisted many of the negative aspects associated with international curriculum reform movements. Its members adopted a more humane approach to child development and recommended the following key assessment principles based upon the existing child-centred curriculum principles.

- The system of assessment should be related to and reflect the content and objectives of the curriculum;

- Assessment should provide information on how pupils are performing and their potential ability in relation to the aims and objectives...
of the curriculum;

- The results of the assessment should provide a basis for decisions about pupils' further learning needs;

- There should be continuity between classes and schools (primary and post-primary) in relation to such procedures. Thus, there is need for a moderating component in the assessment;

- Assessment procedures should be comprehensive enough to allow for the full range of abilities across all the subjects of the curriculum;

- The procedures should allow for effective communication of relevant information to parents, teachers, Department of Education and other agencies.

The Green Paper on *Education Education for the Changing World* (1992), while endorsing many of the Review Body's recommendations, particularly those associated with diagnostic assessment, proposed the institutionalisation of testing at ages 7 and 11 based upon a range of new tests which could be easily administered, scored and interpreted. The proposed formalisation of testing at specific ages was, subsequently rejected by various interested groups, particularly teacher organisations. The INTO in its Response to the Green Paper *Among School Children* (1993), for example, stated that such testing will not necessarily lead to the identification of children with special needs. Children in need of special help will have been identified at school by competent teachers. Emphasis should therefore be placed not on institutionalised testing procedures but on the provision of remedial or compensatory resources to follow such identifications.

A number of difficulties with the Green Paper proposals on assessment also surfaced at the Education Convention (1994). It was argued that if the results of testing were made known to outside bodies such as the Department of Education, a Board of Management, parents, this would be likely to create a high stakes accountability situation which would have a negative and narrowing effect on the Primary Curriculum. It was also pointed out that it is difficult to devise tests that serve differing purposes (diagnosis, monitoring) as the Green Paper proposed, in an equally satisfactory manner. In addition, warnings were expressed that
practical problems could be anticipated in controlling the conditions of
testing from school to school and in handling data aggregated at the
national level.

There was, however, substantial agreement on some issues such as
quality assurance and the early identification of early under-achievers
at primary level. It was generally accepted that all schools should have,
as part of their school plans, a system for evaluating individual pupil
progress and for communicating assessment results to parents. Assessment results were also to be considered on a whole school basis.
There was tacit support for the use of standardised tests as a means of
providing normative and diagnostic information which could facilitate
teaching and learning strategies.

The White paper on Education (1995) incorporated many of the senti-
ments expressed by various parties at the Education Convention, in par-
ticular that assessment should be diagnostic, formative and continuous
and geared towards providing information for teachers, schools, stu-
dents and parents which would help to improve the quality of educa-
tion and educational outcomes. It also asserted that assessment should
combine informal teacher assessment with the judicious use of stan-
dardised tests, without making disproportionate claims on class time or
activities. The White Paper also stated that assessment should cover
comprehensively all parts of the curriculum and all the various ele-
ments of learning - the cognitive, creative, affective, physical and social
development of students, their growth in self esteem, the personal qual-
ities being acquired, and the acquisition of knowledge, concepts, skills,
attitudes and values. Such a view of assessment has major implications
for recording and record keeping particularly since it is accompanied by
suggestions that parents would be guaranteed statutory right of access
to their own children's school records.

While many of the proposals relating to assessment contained in the
White Paper command universal support amongst teachers at primary
level, unqualified support for the White Paper proposals was restrained
because of the statement that "under the direction of the school principal,
students will be assessed by their teachers at the end of first and
fifth class in order to evaluate the quality of their learning and to iden-
tify any special needs that may arise". For many teachers this statement
is viewed as an alternative method of institutionalising testing at 7 and 11 years.

Recognising the valuable contribution which assessment makes to the organisation of learning and in an attempt to be constructive on the question of screening and the early identification of learning difficulties, the INTO in its draft Response to the White Paper (1996), advocated the introduction of formative assessment. It also suggested that, within each school’s profiling and formative assessment policy, provision might be made for the administration of standardised tests in relevant curricular areas, particularly in first class with a view to identifying children with ongoing learning difficulties for the purpose of demanding additional help and support, and in fifth class with a view to enabling class teachers to identify areas where children might benefit from additional help before transferring to the post-primary system. Access to an appropriate remedial service should be made available to all children who require help in the various curricular areas, irrespective of geographical location or size of school. The INTO, however, indicated clearly that the administration of tests for the purpose of aggregating assessment outcomes for each school is totally undesirable, inappropriate and unacceptable because of the danger that it will narrow the focus of the curriculum, distort the purpose of assessment and cause irreparable damage to the pupil teacher relationship, where confidentiality and trust are an integral part of the teaching learning process.

The view put forward by the INTO is a more radical view of assessment than has hitherto been the case. It supports the promotion of formative assessment as an integral aspect of the teaching/learning process. It envisages a radical shift away from transmission approaches to learning to a more constructive view of conceptual understanding. Traditional approaches to assessment relied too heavily on rote learning techniques, a form of learning which, according to Denvir (1990), is no longer helpful to children who will be expected to be flexible, adaptive and able to change in response to our rapidly developing and complex technological society. Good formative assessment linked to stimulating learning tasks is one of the major factors in the development of effective teaching and school organisation. Formative assessment, or assessment for teaching as it is commonly known, entails the collection of detailed information about the children which enables the teacher to plan and teach
effectively in order to maximise children’s future learning. The emphasis on formative assessments demands a teaching approach in which children’s conceptions are clearly exposed enabling teachers to plan activities which address the real issues which confront young learners. Such a view of assessment heralds a change in purpose and a move away from assessment which is designed either for selection, for evaluation or for curricular control. It involves a switch from an over-reliance on norm-referencing summative testing towards more diagnostic evaluation and criterion-referencing of achievement. It involves one or more of a range of assessment activities from informal observation to oral, practical or written tasks. The assessment of children’s understanding of concepts is more validly based on their use of strategies rather than totalling the number of items answered correctly or incorrectly on a standardised test or in a written internal test.

Appropriate assessment can be used to identify the optimum in conditions for learning, which teaching and learning strategies are most appropriate and how to report successful achievement. Gagne and Briggs (1974) for instance have identified broad categories of instructional goals together in the potential learning environments which can be used throughout the curriculum. They have also identified the types of behaviour that can be used as indications of success for each class of goal. Assessment can then be used to describe achievement in terms of general indicators of success and learning activities can be facilitated according to goal type.

Diagnostic assessment can also be used to describe the teaching and learning process if Glaser and Nitko’s (1971) approach to the diagnostic process is adopted. Their approach is analytical rather than diagnostic (in the medical sense of deficits) and it not only assesses student performances, but also provides information on the effectiveness of teaching methods. Teachers who use this analytical approach with successful students may identify powerful teaching and learning strategies.

Recently, methods of assessment have been developed which appear to fit well with theories of teaching and learning propounded by Vygotsky. Adaptive testing is a method of assessment administration which uses only those test tasks with a level of difficulty that is approximately equal to the level with which the student can cope. Items are stored in a
Adaptive testing is a method of testing that enables each student to be given a different set of tasks which will identify her or his level of development on the competence continuum (Griffin and Nix 1991).

Although adaptive testing has yet to be fully developed it can be used to describe efficiently and accurately the teaching and learning process of teachers who are involved in the development of a task bank of appropriate items.

To maximise their understanding of children's achievement, teachers exhibit a wide range of assessment techniques both formal and informal. According to Denvir, when carrying out formative assessment, they sometimes deliberately but often unconsciously, select activities intuitively. Despite the fact that these judgements are often based on sound experience, they are often not clearly articulated and thus underrated, labelled as subjective and accorded less status than numerically quantifiable results of standard written tests, although they usually reflect children's performance with greater subtlety. From an education perspective, however, there is no standard of comparison which can surpass or supersede the considered judgement of an observant and skilful teacher working daily with individual children over a period of several months a year. To be effective, it is imperative that any movement towards a more radical approach to educational assessment be firmly rooted in modern theories of how children think and learn.

Theoretical basis for adopting a Formative Assessment approach

Today's pupils are not regarded as mere repositories for adult 'knowledge' but organisms who, like adults, are constantly trying to make sense of and to understand their experiences (Glaserfeld 1987). They are viewed as inherently and spontaneously active and self directed agents in their own learning. Their knowledge comes from active construction of concepts in making sense of their world. Such a view of learning is deeply rooted in the theories of Piaget, Bruner and Vygotsky. Piaget argues convincingly that genuine intellectual competence is the manifestation of largely unassisted activities. By actively engaging with
aspects of their physical environment and by experiencing the characteristics of objects through the senses, children take part in a process of exploration and discovery which enables them to construct a new conceptual framework, and thus construct their own knowledge. The teacher provides the setting, intervening intermittently to monitor and assess the level of each child’s conceptual knowledge and understanding, thus acting as a director or facilitator of the learning process. Appropriate materials and contexts for development are provided and sufficient time and space is made available to individual children so they are free to act upon the world and construct their understandings, through their own self-directed problem solving; not always through the direct efforts of their teachers (Wood 1988). Children thus learn through different sequences at their own pace and through a multiplicity of strategies. Individual differences are recognised. Assessment in such a classroom scenario relies heavily on observation and questioning techniques, which, while not readily accessible as numerically quantifiable scores on written tests, are nevertheless, vital elements in planning the teaching learning process and in making professional judgements about individual children’s capabilities.

While Piagetian theories are regarded as central to the teaching learning process, teachers also know that children who are unable to perform tasks, solve problems, memorise or recall experiences when they are left alone often succeed when they are assisted by experienced adults. Bruner agrees and argues that the procedures that underlie intelligent or adaptive thinking are not exclusive innovations of the child. Rather they are communicated, from the mature adult to the immature mind of the child (Bruner 1966). For Bruner there are close correlations between teaching, communication, learning and thinking. Vygotsky holds a similar view. He argues that the capacity to learn is itself a feature of human development. While Vygotsky shares Piaget’s contention that action is a prerequisite for learning to occur, he nevertheless posits the view that learning is a product of contrived encounters co-operatively achieved through joint construction or joint reference between the understanding of the child (as novice) and the more expert teacher (the vicar of culture). A child’s readiness for learning, therefore, becomes paramount involving not only the state of the child’s existing knowledge but also her or his capacity to learn through contingent teaching. The core of Vygotsky’s approach to learning is concerned with children’s potential as well as
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their actual achievement levels. Assessment in this instance has to indicate what the child can do alone and that which can be achieved with the help of a experienced adult. Describing this gap in the child's knowledge as the zone of proximal development, Vygotsky asserts that readiness involves not only the state of the child's existing knowledge but also his or her capacity to learn with help (Vygotsky 1962). Assessment from a social constructivist perspective of learning, therefore, demands grasping the children's pre-existing knowledge, establishing children's conceptualisations and the degree to which children's alternative conceptual frameworks differ from that of the teacher. It entails establishing each child's conceptual knowledge with a view to devising strategies to bring her or him along a continuum between what s/he knows and the teacher's expert knowledge. It is by its nature, therefore, a formative, spiralling or scaffolding process. The purpose of assessment, in this type of classroom scenario is to represent as closely as possible the current state of the child's conceptual development in a particular domain without necessarily being confined to the implemented curriculum. Exposing the children's conceptions enables the teacher to plan activities which address the real issues confronting the learner.

Assessment designed mainly for formative diagnostic purposes means that the teacher, the pupil and the parents are the main beneficiaries. The teacher receives immediate evidence of the effectiveness of her/his teaching and of the learning capacity of the child through careful questioning, and observation during class time and through correction of tasks which are designed to take account of the many background variables which can affect children's performances. Appropriate record keeping techniques are central to this process.

Recording and Record-keeping

There is need for a considerable degree of flexibility in any record keeping system that is designed to take account of the variety of pathways that exist between novice and expert achievement and the complexity of sources of human error or differences (Lawn et al. 1990). A proper balance must be struck between the necessity to record detailed information in a written format and the need to maintain an assessment system that does not deflect teachers from engaging in the teaching-learning process by intruding too much into actual teaching time. Recording systems should only be designed to enhance practice and to facilitate more
effective communication of information to relevant parties. They should be practical, manageable and based upon theoretical perspectives of the learner and of learning. Assessment is an integral part of teacher judgement. It includes an array of meaningful strategies and techniques including oral, aural, external or school based, textbook or written tests or tasks, standardised tests, structured and unstructured teacher observation and questioning, some of which is formally recorded on personal record cards, profile reports or portfolios which include samples of children’s work. Care must be exercised to ensure a balance between summative and formative assessments. Summative assessment seeks to classify achievement by what is known and what is not known. On the other hand, formative assessment is concerned not just with what is known but how it is known. Lack of achievement similarly has to be identified and understood in terms of barriers which produce the lack of achievement. Formative assessment, argues Lawn (1990), is concerned with the totality of children’s knowledge: the personal; the tacit and the explicit; and how their knowledge is integrated and accessed. From an effective school organisation perspective, formative assessment provides the necessary insights which are required to plan the implementation of effective curricula and to build up a reliable picture of individual children’s achievements and difficulties in a gradual manner. Three systems of recording pupil achievement have been identified in recent times - record cards, pupil profiles records and portfolios of achievements.

**Record Cards**

Following the abolition of the Primary Certificate and local authority scholarship examinations in 1967, a national ‘record card’ system was introduced in primary schools with a view to recording pupils’ progress, especially in the last two years of primary education. Each subject was to be graded on a common scheme which included lag, cuíosach, maith agus an-mhaith (weak, fair, good, very good). There was also provision on the record card for comments regarding children’s behaviours, attendances and other relevant information. Problems, however, soon emerged as schools began to compare and interpret the various ratings and individual teacher grades. In the 1980s, the official ‘record card’ system gradually began to be replaced by more elaborate and comprehensive school based report cards designed around the results of standardised tests and teacher judgements partic-
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ularly in areas such as personal and social development, attitudes and beliefs, behaviour, creative abilities, language and numeracy, and physical skills. Teachers were urged by the INTO on two occasions in the 1980s to keep under review the type, format and method of reporting based upon their own school’s record keeping system (INTO 1986, 1989). Staffs and schools were encouraged to adopt a common approach to record keeping and reporting procedures. Varying formats were advocated according to the type of assessment used and the level of information required. The following proposals were suggested in relation to content, design and characteristics:

Content
The content of record cards should:
- be relevant to the purpose of the record;
- be clearly sequenced;
- include for each child details of books, materials used;
- give direct indications rather than implications for future teaching;
- provide a clear distinction between entries concerned with a pupil’s school experiences and those which are assessments of attainment;
- present assessment information clearly stating:
  (a) the derivation of norms used when grading or rating;
  (b) the criteria used when deciding on pupils’ competence;
  (c) details of standardised tests used as a basis for grading and rating;
  (d) details of other testing techniques used; and
  (e) teacher-graded test marks in a standardised form, possibly as standardised scores, to indicate the range and distribution of scores. This is particularly necessary when sets of marks from different sources have to be compared.

Design
Each record card should include:
- a clear layout;
- clear, stable printing that will not fade;
- clear, section headings;
- the pupil’s name in a prominent position;
- sufficient space to provide for comments; and
- a prominently placed key to explain the use of abbreviations, symbols and criteria for the assessment of pupils.
Characteristics
The following characteristics should be regarded as basic elements of any record keeping system:

• minimum teacher time should be required to maintain it;
• it must be easily interpreted;
• it should provide enough details for another teacher to make a balanced judgement about a pupil; and
• it should serve as many functions as possible and should be so constructed as to enable additional facts to be added to reveal any general trends in a child’s or a school’s progress.

External access to information contained in school reports raises serious questions regarding the possibility that the personal liberty and privacy of pupils, particularly in respect of their social behaviours, health related information and competencies may be infringed. It is essential, therefore, that all concerned with school records act in a responsible and professional manner. This is a matter that requires further investigation particularly in the context of proposals in the White Paper.

Record cards can be classified into five types reflecting the purposes for which the records are intended:

(i) Records to aid the teacher’s professional judgement.
These records are kept to chart pupils’ progress and to assist in the diagnosis of learning processes or the evaluation of teaching methods.

(ii) Records kept for use within school.
These are records that are kept in the school to ensure continuity of education as the pupil progresses through the school.

(iii) Transfer forms to other schools.
The purpose of these records is to provide appropriate information so as to ensure the continuity of the pupil’s learning as s/he transfers from one school to another.

(iv) Reports to parents.
Reporting to parents is usually compiled on official or school based cards. The data on such cards tends to represent a summary of the
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child’s achievement and is used to communicate relevant information to parents.

(v) Reports prepared for specific purposes.

Often schools are required to pass on relevant information on pupils to appropriate authorities, including psychologists and the school medical services. The information contained on such reports is generally confined to the area under investigation.

It is important, in attempting to contribute towards school effectiveness, that records and reports compiled by teachers serve the purposes for which they are intended. Good record keeping must rely on teacher judgements as well as on facts. Proposals to open up school records to parents and pupils must be accompanied by guarantees from school management and the State which will ensure that teachers who make statements in good faith will be protected and that in the event of a legal challenge arising from contributions to records kept on pupils, teachers will have the support of all the relevant authorities.

Pupil Profile

The development and use of pupil profiles has emerged in recent years involving both formal and informal teacher judgements. The Review Body on the Primary Curriculum (1990) recommended that Pupil Profiles be entered on Department of Education Profile Cards, a theme which was further developed in the Green Paper on Education (1992), the NCCA (1993) and the White Paper (1994). The profile movement places the learner as the central figure in assessment. Pupil Profiles are useful to teachers in interpreting and recording pupil achievement in the various curricular areas for the purpose of reporting assessment information. Although varying greatly in response to the particular area being assessed, they tend to contain three basic elements - indicators, bands or levels and assessment contexts. Indicators describe what pupils should be able to accomplish following instruction and learning and are usually based upon curriculum objectives. Bands or levels are found when indicators are grouped together to provide more general descriptions of achievement. Assessment contexts refer to the circumstances in which evidence is gathered by teachers for use in making judgements about pupils’ achievements.
A profile is not, in itself, an assessment instrument. Rather, it is an approach to interpreting and recording assessment results which emerge in specific assessment situations and as such complement formative assessment procedures and perhaps resolve the tension between summative and formative assessment (Shiel 1996). This tension is highlighted by Brown (1991):

There is a serious educational argument that formative and summative assessment are, in fact, incompatible, not only because the different functions lead to requirements for very different information, but because it (the requirement to generate two types of assessment data) results in a dilemma for the teacher. While formative assessment requires open and honest admission of failures as well as successes, summative assessment for comparative purposes encourages teachers to hide the problems and teach to the test to try and improve results.

Issues relating to pupil profiles have emerged in Ireland following the publication of the Report of the Review Body on the Primary Curriculum and various NCCA reports on assessment (1990; 1993). Preliminary work on the development of profiles has already been undertaken by the Educational Research Centre in Drumcondra based upon the following principles.

1. Pupil profiling should be conducted for formative purposes (e.g. acquiring information about pupils’ learning needs, communicating information about individual pupils’ strengths and needs to other teachers and to parents);

2. Pupil profiling should be based on teachers’ judgement of their pupils’ attainment of key curricular objectives, made during ongoing classroom work. These assessments would be informal;

3. A pupil profile should cover all areas of the primary curriculum (not just English and/or Mathematics) and hence development work must take into account the assessment of achievement in other curricular areas;

4. A pupil profile should be criterion-referenced (i.e. related to the curriculum objectives set out for Irish primary schools);
5. A pupil profile should provide indicators of achievements for each grade level (i.e. assessment by grade level rather than development level);

6. A pupil profile should yield reliable data on pupil achievement;

7. A pupil profile should be manageable (i.e. not make undue demands on teachers or on pupils);

8. A pupil profile should yield useful diagnostic information.

Profiling is expensive in terms of the resources required to develop a suitable recording system. However research in other countries suggests that good quality profile systems can be valuable assets to teachers provided the following quality assurance features are respected. Profiles should

- be comprehensive to provide a rounded picture;
- be qualitative - to describe achievement;
- be criterion-referenced - related to curriculum;
- be formative - providing helpful feedback for pupils;
- be capable of demonstrating progression;
- allow for reporting of what a pupil has achieved at the end of a school experience;
- be valid and reliable in making explicit the professional judgements of teachers;
- be comparable across classes and schools;
- provide for uniformity of reporting;
- be manageable and flexible;
- enhance teacher professionalism by helping them to increase the range of learning experiences for their pupils;
- help to motivate pupils;
- provide parents with information on the strengths and weaknesses.

O'Leary and Sheils (1995) analysed these properties and produced this description of an appropriate Irish profile:

Pupil profiling is a valid, reliable and manageable approach to interpreting, recording and reporting assessment information
about pupil achievement across the curriculum. Pupil profiling primarily relies on teacher judgements of pupil achievements and, within schools, can yield useful formative and summative information.

The Education Committee of the INTO is currently undertaking a major study of assessment and recording of pupil achievement. A greater analysis of recording and reporting procedures will be undertaken as part of that report.

**Portfolios of Achievement**
Children engage in a variety of learning activities which include group projects and experiments, individual constructions and presentations, class exhibits or school displays. Children devote a considerable amount of time and energy to completing group and individual tasks, much of which goes unnoticed unless it can be captured with a view to providing evidence and samples of achievement and talent. Portfolios involve the systematic compilation of children’s work. They provide a means of reviewing progress from year to year. Portfolios are also popular forms of archival material which can be reviewed and revisited annually. They become a means of making the school standards public and give credibility and recognition to children’s achievements alongside summative testing results. Revisiting portfolios on a regular basis is an excellent means of monitoring school achievements. They can become valuable reference points for teachers and provide a sound basis for local networking particularly in the expressive arts, science and historical projects. They enable teachers to identify children’s strengths and weaknesses, particularly in respect of self directed work and single or group contributors. Samples of work provide a visible or audible manifestation of individual child’s competence in a particular learning domain. Portfolios may contain collections of children’s work compiled by both children and teachers, thus ensuring that every child gains a sense of success and achievement. They also encourage a sense of pride based upon each child’s achievement.

At first sight, the compilation of portfolios may seem an elaborate and time-consuming process, but if the contents are kept simple and children’s work is collected systematically, then the outcome can be very successful. Selecting material and writing commentaries is an ideal
opportunity for teachers to share and reflect on what they consider to be the important aspects of children's work. There are fewer ways of promoting better professional practice.

**Recommendations**

The INTO proposes the introduction of formative assessment in primary schools. Formative assessment focuses on the real and immediate learning activities of students and is supported by teachers who carry out such assessments on a regular basis based upon their views of how young children think and learn.

Assessment for teaching entails the collection of detailed information about the children which enables the teacher to plan and teach effectively in order to maximise children's future learning. It involves one or more of a range of assessment activities from informal observation to oral, practical or written tasks. Diagnostic assessment is often used as part of formative assessment insofar as it informs future teaching and learning activities, but usually it involves the use of specific procedures such as standardised tests or other diagnostic instruments. Diagnostic assessment is usually applied when more general formative assessment fails to indicate activities from which children can learn.

1. Schools should be facilitated to develop policies on the formative assessment of their pupils. The application of tests or any alternative profiling system must not make disproportionate claims on class time or pupil activities.

2. Formative assessment of pupils at infant level should continue with teachers profiling individual children, using relevant descriptors of achievement designed to inform teaching and learning.

3. Appropriate diagnostic tests should be developed for administration to children in senior infants, such tests to be applied only in circumstances where more general formative assessment fails to identify areas where a small group of children may be experiencing particular difficulties. The purpose of such testing should be to provide access as early as possible to appropriate intervention for those children who present with particular difficulties in certain
curricular areas. As part of an overall assessment programmes, sufficient resources and back up services should be provided, as of right, to help each child overcome his or her identified difficulties.

4. Standardised tests or other appropriate instruments should be developed for administration in all classes or class groupings, such tests or instruments to be made available to schools free of charge with a view to enabling teachers, in line with their respective school policies, to implement formative assessment programmes in their schools.

5. Within each school's profiling and formative assessment policy, provision may be made for the administration of standardised tests in relevant curricular areas, particularly in first class with a view to identifying children with ongoing learning difficulties for the purpose of demanding additional help and support and in fifth class with a view to enabling class teachers to identify areas where children might benefit from additional help before transferring to the post-primary system. Access to an appropriate remedial service should be made available to all children who require help in the various curricular areas, irrespective of geographical location or size of school.

6. The administration of tests for the purpose of aggregating assessment outcomes for each school is totally undesirable, inappropriate and unacceptable because of the danger that it will narrow the focus of the curriculum, distort the purpose of assessment and cause irreparable damage to the pupil teacher relationship, where confidentiality and trust is so much a part of the teaching learning process.

7. Teachers will continue to cooperate fully in the administration of regular assessment of the performance of a sample of schools with a view to providing information on an aggregate basis to the Department of Education and to the general public.

8. A comprehensive programme of incareer development should be introduced enabling teachers to become familiar with the methodology involved in keeping individual profiles on children. Incareer
development programmes should also help familiarise teachers with standardised assessment systems and group moderation schemes designed to ensure uniformity of standardisation on the descriptors of achievement in relevant kinds of profiles. The process of recording and of developing effective communication techniques should also be addressed in in-career development programmes.

9. Pupil Profile Cards or Pupil Report Cards designed to correspond with aspects of the primary school curriculum, should be developed. Such cards should include provision for information on children's social and emotional development together with teacher assessments of their levels of progress and any additional relevant information which may be of benefit to both teachers and parents.
CHAPTER 7

Boards of Management and Parental Involvement

The White Paper Charting our Education Future (1995) recognises the central role played by parents in the education of their children which confers on them the right to active participation in the child’s education. This recognition is a measure of the importance placed on home-school relations in educational debate today. Parents are recognised as partners with teachers in the education of their child. This is a recent trend in education reform and can be seen in two ways. Parents are represented on Boards of Management of schools and there is an increasing level of parental involvement or interaction with the life of the school.

Boards of Management

Prior to 1973 the managerial system in Irish primary schools had not altered substantially since the foundation of the national school system in 1831. Under this system the patron undertook responsibility for the establishment of a school in a locality. This patron was normally the ecclesiastical authority who could act as school manager or could appoint a manager. The latter was more common and in most cases the manager was the local clergyman. Although not originally intended, denominational schools became the norm in Ireland.

The manager’s duties included the appointment and dismissal of teachers, the maintenance and equipping of the school, overseeing the general work of the school and the arrangement of the school timetable. For a period these duties also included the distribution of teachers’ salaries. Coolahan (1981) has observed that while the more important powers remained with the central authorities at local level the manager had considerable power over the teachers.

Even after the establishment of the state and the Department of Education this system of management remained largely unchanged. It was not until 1973 that the then secretary of the Department of Education, Seán O’Connor, suggested the establishment of an alternative structure which would include parental participation. This theme was echoed later by the then Minister for Education, Richard Burke T.D. who stated that it was necessary to move forward from the position
where there was only lip service to the role of parents hitherto (Coolahan 1989).

In 1975, with the offer of increased grants to schools with Boards of Management, structures for boards were agreed. These were subsequently revised in 1981, following a period of INTO non-cooperation with Boards of Management, in order to achieve teacher participation. The following structures now apply:

(i) In schools having a recognised staff of not more than six teachers:
   - three members, appointed by and representative of the patron;
   - two members, parents of children enrolled in the school, elected by parents of children attending the school;
   - the principal teacher.

(ii) In schools having a recognised staff of seven teachers or more:
   - four members, appointed by and representative of the patron;
   - two members, parents of children enrolled in the school, elected by parents of children attending the school;
   - the principal teacher;
   - another teacher elected by the teaching staff of the school.

The White Paper Charting our Education Future proposes the following structure:

A “Core Board” to be appointed to consist of:
   - two nominees of the patron;
   - two parents elected from parents of students attending the school;
   - one staff member elected by the school staff;
   - the school principal.

This core board will propose two members from the wider community to the patron for appointment. This eight member board will then be formally appointed by the patron who will also be responsible for ensuring a gender balance.

At present the tasks and responsibilities of Boards of Management are governed by The Rules for National Schools, Circulars of the Department
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of Education, The Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure and Acts of the Oireachtas. Boards of Management are charged with the direct governance of the school. Such duties include:
- the appointment of teachers and ancillary staff;
- approving school closures;
- approving teacher absences for various purposes;
- determining the seniority of teachers;
- the appointment of teachers to vice principalships and to other posts of responsibility;
- ensuring compliance with relevant legislation, and
- ensuring that the school is adequately insured and maintained.

Specific duties attached to the role of Chairperson of the Board of Management include:
- acting as correspondent with the Department of Education and all outside bodies;
- presiding at Board of Management meetings;
- signing the monthly returns and annual statistical returns; and
- serving on the selection board for the appointment of teachers.

According to the White Paper, Charting Our Education Future, the essential function of a Board of Management will be to ensure effective educational management and provision in a school. A board will provide a management and support structure which will enable the principal and staff to achieve the aims and objectives of the school on a day to day basis. It is therefore appropriate to look at the features of an effective Board of Management.

Characteristics of the Effective Board of Management

Working as a Team
Building an effective team requires regular attendance and energetic commitment from all members. It means making use of what each member has to offer, sharing the work load, give and take on individual issues, respect for colleagues and their differing opinions and loyalty to final decisions.

Good Relationship with the Principal
It is essential to establish a good working relationship between the
Board of Management and the principal teacher. Each party must have a clear understanding of their respective roles. In broad terms, the Board of Management is responsible for deciding the framework for the conduct and development of the school. However, within that broad framework the governing body should respect the professional position of the staff and the position of the principal as the professional leader of the school and as the person responsible for the day to day management and administration of the school. The INTO believes that trust and confidence are the key elements in any partnership relationship. Staff should have confidence in its Board of Management and in return the Board should have trust in its staff. Relationships, which are the key to school success, are about interactions between all the people involved in the school community.

**Effective Time Management and Delegation**

Boards of Management have a great deal to do within a limited time. They should therefore identify the priority issues in which they need to be directly involved - including decisions which in law must be taken by the full board - and delegate the rest to committees, working groups or individuals. It is important to set clear terms of reference for such delegation so that everyone knows what they are expected to do and how and when they should report back to the full Board of Management.

**Effective Meetings**

To make the best use of time it is important that a Board of Management has:

* a carefully planned agenda focussing on the items of most importance.
* a secretary who can organise meetings and papers efficiently and ideally provide information and procedural advice.
* purposeful chairing that brings out the best in all members of the Board, keeping a brisk pace and ensuring that decisions are properly taken and clearly understood.
* clear minutes setting out points for action.
* participation by appropriate outsiders - to give advice, to make a presentation etc.

**Knowing the School**

Board of Management members should get to know their school
through visits organised in close co-operation with the principal teacher. The principal’s report to the Board of Management is also an essential part of this communication process.

Training and Development
To help their school most effectively members of Boards of Management need to take their own development seriously. They should consider their training and support needs carefully and be prepared to allocate funds for external courses, visits to other schools or for training for the whole Board of Management.

According to Holt and Murphy (1993) school effectiveness will be influenced by how successful Boards of Management function. If parents, teachers and members of the public who become involved in school management do not receive adequate and on-going development opportunities, school management will be reduced to a muddling through decision making activity. To expect individuals to administer and manage a modern school without appropriate training is not only unsatisfactory, but detrimental to contemporary education. Schools should not be affected because the individuals responsible for management are inadequately prepared to perform their duties.

The improvement in the performance of members of Boards of Management should have a positive impact on the effectiveness of a school (Holt and Murphy 1993). They suggest initiatives for improving the effectiveness of Boards:

- Boards members and parents should be encouraged to participate in school events.
- More opportunity should be offered for creative management.
- Board members should be invited to visit schools regularly.
- Board members, teachers and parents should be encouraged to meet regularly both formally and informally.
- Liaison with the Department of Education should be improved.
- Board members should be assisted to understand their responsibilities.
- Red tape should be reduced.
- Team building training should be offered.
- A "help line" should be established for Board members.
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- More assistance should be sought by members of Boards from the local community.
- Members of Boards should be informed of good practice on other Boards of Management.

There is provision in the *Rules and Procedures for Boards of Management* for a monthly meeting of the Board. Central to the effective running of the Board is the principal’s report. The following topics have been put forward by Day et al. (1985) for inclusion in such a report. The point is made that while some items will be mentioned at most meetings others will require comment only at a specific time during the year.

**Pupils.** Number on roll; class organisation and size (in some schools this may only be necessary at the start of each school year); comparison with numbers on roll over the last 2-3 years at a similar stage in the school year; future numbers - falling/rising roll implication; a general statement of attendance; a general statement of lunches/sandwiches where it varies from the norm.

**Staffing: teaching and non-teaching.** The teaching complement at the start of the academic year with any relevant details on teachers with posts of special responsibility; new appointments; resignation, with reasons; absence.

**Curriculum/organisational developments.** Any relevant comments on particular developments such as specific projects or new approaches; assessment and testing; changes in teaching/class organisation; capita­tion - report on annual expenditure; educational visits; courses attended by staff; policy developments/innovation.

**Extracurricular activities.** Special events such as plays and concerts; news of clubs and societies; information on any inter-school activities.

**Parental involvement.** Activities organised by the school and any form of parent association; fundraising activities.

**Buildings.** Repairs; improvements; furnishing and equipment; the general appearance of the school building and surrounds; anticipated future resource needs.
Health and safety. Visits of school nurse, dentist, doctor, etc; fire drill; any matter relating to general health and safety insurance.

Visitors. Details of any special visitors to the school; groups using the school outside of school hours.

Special items. Requests for leave of absence; requests for secondment; requests for occasional holidays; a review of special needs that cannot be met within the school allowance; school achievements.

Future events. Dates of activities that are taking place in the school in the months before the next meeting.

School matters. Celebrations (Halloween, Christmas); Sacramental preparation; incidences of vandalism; competitions entered; tours.

Parental Involvement
Apart from its pupils, parents form the most important group of people with whom a school has to relate and the support and interest of parents are essential to a school. Recent research evidence confirms that parents do want to be involved in the life and work of the school attended by their children. A school is more likely to have the support and trust of parents if it makes them welcome, offers them a range of contacts, sounds out their opinions and responds to their concerns. Outward-looking schools issue a handbook for parents, seeing it as an opportunity to present itself, its aims, values and ideas in a positive way. Parents can also be informed of school activities by newsletters which tell parents what they want to know at the time they want to know it.

Parental attitudes are among the most important influences on a child’s school career with children whose parents have high but realistic expectations likely to perform better than those children whose parents expect less. Teachers therefore have a professional obligation to meet with parents, to assist them in forming realistic expectations for their children and to encourage them to support their children’s schooling. Schools should also be organised so as to provide a framework of consent and co-operation, accountability and communication. Effective school organisation therefore demands that schools seek out and take
account of the views of parents. This places special responsibility on the professional staff in the school.

The Plowden Report (1967) suggested that each school should draw up a programme to encourage and promote parental involvement which included:

- a regular system for the principal and class teacher to meet with parents prior to enrolment.
- arrangements for more formal private parent teacher meetings, preferably twice a year.
- open days to be held at times when parents can attend.
- parents to be given booklets prepared by the schools to inform them about their choice of school and how their children are being educated.
- written reports on children to be made at least once a year and the child’s work should be seen by parents.
- parents should be invited to help in schools with a variety of activities.
- special efforts should be made to contact parents who do not visit schools.

Ten years later the Taylor Report *A New Partnership for Our Schools* (1977) recognised that parents still had a need for adequate communication. It stated that it (the Board of Management) should satisfy itself that adequate arrangements are made to inform parents, to involve them in their children’s progress and welfare, to enlist their support, and to ensure their access to the school and teachers by reasonable arrangement.

That many of Plowden’s suggestions are commonplace in many Irish schools can be seen from the White Paper *Charting our Education Future* which recognises that access to information will be made easier, as is already the case in many schools through pre entry meetings, class meetings, school handbooks and the annual report of Boards of Management. Indeed the role of parents in education and their participation in schools has developed well beyond the vision of the Plowden Report. In many schools today parents are involved in teaching/learning activities such as paired reading, nature walks and school trips. Groups of parents are often facilitated to meet to discuss aspects of school life so that they can increase their contribution to children’s
progress in such areas as assistance with homework or promoting reading. A parent room is a feature of an increasing number of schools where parents can meet with each other or with teachers and become involved in activities and/or classes. These are particularly evident in areas of disadvantage where the appointment of local home school community liaison co-ordinators has increased parental participation in schools.

Parental involvement varies from school to school and from time to time. A great deal of parental involvement/contact with the school is informal and carried out on a personal basis with the class teacher. As a consequence it may prove difficult to assess levels of parental involvement in a particular school. However, its informality should not be allowed to mask its importance and every effort should be made to build up partnerships of trust and co-operation with parents.

A Report by the Surrey Inspectorate (England) in 1974 concluded with a list of criteria that a school might use when making judgements about parental involvement in the school. In each case the reader is intended to ask “Is this true of our School?”

1. Parents know what the school is aiming at and how the teachers are setting out to achieve it.

2. Every effort is made to involve parents as soon as their child joins the school.

3. Every parent is known by name at sight, to at least one teacher in the school.

4. Parents have many opportunities to make judgements about the standards of learning and teaching and the content in all subjects.

5. All parents are welcome in the school and are treated as partners in the education of their children.

6. Parents are kept fully informed about their child’s progress, potential and achievement.

7. All parents have regular opportunities to discuss their children’s
progress and any difficulties they are encountering.

8. Teachers listen to and take note of parents' views about their children's progress and the school is aware of parents' views about the education of their children.

9. Parents are made to feel that they have a contribution to make to their children's education which is recognised and appreciated by the school.

10. Parents feel supported rather than intimidated by the professional expertise of teachers and this helps them in bringing up their children.

11. All teachers prepare adequately for meetings with parents and make notes of important points from these meetings.

12. Inexperienced teachers are trained for their work with parents and supported in it until they are competent.

13. The school uses every kind of parent skill to enrich the curriculum.

14. There are parent/teacher activities to suit all kinds of people and every effort is made to involve reluctant parents.

15. Parents are fully aware of the channels of communication with governors which are open to them via the parent governor.

The White Paper proposes a number of measures which are aimed at fostering active parental partnership with schools:-

- formal recognition (with statutory confirmation) of the National Parents' Council as the representative body for parents.

- statutory representation for parents on each board of management and education board.

- parental involvement in staff selection through representation on selection boards.
Boards of Management and Parental Involvement

- a statutory duty on boards of management to promote the establishment of a parents association in each school.

- requiring each board of management to draw up a formal home school links policy.

- a statutory right to access by parents to school records relating to their own children.

- the continuance and development of the Home/School/Community Liaison Service.

The INTO welcomes moves to involve parents closely in the education of their children. Partnership between professional and parent for the benefit of the child is central to the work of an effective school. Parents as a group can provide the school with voluntary services and material support. As individuals they help and motivate their children thus complementing the efforts of the school. However if parental support is to achieve its full potential schools must be places that welcome parents. School organisational practices must be developed and maintained to incorporate these objectives. There has been tremendous progress in this area in recent years - progress that can be built on by both parents and school in the interests of the pupils.

Recommendations

1. Positive parental involvement should be an integral part of every school and the INTO recognises that many schools have developed local initiatives to increase participation and involvement. Many other schools are hampered in this regard by a lack of funding, expertise or time. The INTO recommends that:

   (a) an annual grant be provided to every school to develop home-school links;
   (b) inservice education be provided where necessary for teachers who require assistance in developing and fostering home-school links;
   (c) time be provided for the development of policies to assist home-school linkages;
(d) guidelines be issued by the Department of Education to schools which will assist in the broadening links between home and school.

2. The INTO is of the opinion that school management should represent a partnership in education and that there should be equal representation of parents, teachers and parents on the Management Board. Education legislation must enshrine this principle.

3. The Green Paper *Education for a Changing World* (1993) contained a number of comments on gender equity which the INTO recommends should be incorporated into the White Paper. These are

   All educational institutions at primary, second and third levels will develop and publish an active policy to promote gender equity. Their progress in implementing this policy will be reported in annual reports.

   All Boards of Management in schools will aim at gender balance in their membership and have not less than a minimum representation of each sex. These requirements will also apply to staff selection committees.

4. The INTO recommends that programmes be designed and made available to schools to promote parental involvement in schools and to develop positive attitudes in relation to a number of issues including gender equity and self-esteem.
CHAPTER 8

Cultivating a Positive Climate

Every school like every organisational community has its own unique culture formed by the people in it, history and tradition, environment and potential. The White Paper *Charting Our Education Future* recognises that each school has a tangible quality defined by its physical and organisational structures and a critical intangible character called ethos which encompasses collective attitudes, beliefs, values, traditions, aspirations and goals. It refers to ‘ethos’ as an organic element which arises from practices carried on in a school on a daily, weekly and yearly basis.

Although often thought of solely in terms of a denominational or multi-denominational ethos it is also true that the concept of ethos can be applied to organisational arrangements, educational structures, practices, values and goals that characterise individual schools. In this respect also each school is different; every school has a different atmosphere or feel to it. Although all schools share a common goal of helping children to learn, how each school, as a community of people, decides policy and priority, arranges internal and external structures, obtains and utilises resources and through practice seeks to achieve its goals determines its organisational climate.

O Sioráin (1992) refers to school climate as “whatever way the school atmosphere promotes openness, colleagueship, commitment, pride, cooperation and a thrust for excellence, it is that which creates the potential for enabling staffs to make schools more productive as well as shaping an open and healthy school. It is this organisational climate which was studied by Mortimore et al. (1988). Among the features identified by them as contributing to a positive climate are teachers’ working conditions, positive attitudes among staff members and the climate created by the teachers for the pupils and the principal for the teachers. They noted factors such as teacher enthusiasm, enjoyment of teaching and sense of fun along with firm but fair classroom management that emphasised rewards rather than sanctions and tight control of children.

Although the terms climate, culture and ethos are often used inter-
changeably there are distinctions that require closer examination if progress is to be made. Citing Goodchild et al. (1989), O Siorrán equates “ethos” with the vision/values dimension of an organisation. It exists at the level of rhetoric, is aspirational, giving an indication of what people ought to value. “Culture” is the reality of the school, the practice based dimension showing what people actually do value. “Climate” refers to the schools atmosphere and is the linkage “the performance gap” between ethos atmosphere and culture. This report distinguishes between “elements of culture” which are concrete, situational elements of school organisation. This might be likened to the content of school culture. “Types of culture” refers to ways in which teachers organise themselves or are organised to manipulate the elements of culture. It might be considered as forms of culture.

This approach can also incorporate the more detailed conceptualisation of culture provided by Millikan (1985).

Culture comprises two elements - an intangible component that includes values, philosophy and ideology and characteristics that are capable of a more tangible expression. This latter group can be classified into conceptual manifestations, behavioural manifestations and visual manifestations. All of these elements are in dynamic interaction making discrete and specific boundaries difficult to define. In addition all internal components shape and are in turn shaped by the community or context of the school. These may be outlined as follows:-

(1) Intangible Components: values, philosophy.

(2) Tangible Components: aims and objectives; curriculum; communication; metaphors; organisational stories and heroes.

Visual Manifestations: facilities; equipment; memorabilia;

Behavioural Manifestations: ritual and ceremony; teaching and learning; operational procedure; rules and regulations; parental and community support and interaction.
The intangible components are comparable to what O Sioráin has described as “ethos”. Values act as guidelines for behaviour and reflecting organisational priorities while philosophy, reflecting those values, is a statement about what the school is trying to achieve. On the other hand, the tangible elements of culture represent components of school life, practices and processes. They are the content elements of school culture.

Elements of School Culture
While each school has a unique and personal culture the components or elements of culture can be found in all schools to a greater or lesser degree. What is of interest is the significance accorded to each by members of the school community, the extent to which they cause and are caused by policy and practice and how school organise to manipulate them. The tangible elements of school culture require regular examination. For a school a first step in the cultivation of a positive climate is to analyse, clarify and co-ordinate the various elements of culture which reflect its values, philosophy and ideology. Teachers as professionals, serious about the organisational effectiveness of a school and the development of a positive climate, must engage with the constituent parts of school culture. A transformational leader must be involved in developing, guiding, maintaining and redesigning school culture. A first step is to identify these elements.

Aims and Objectives
Aims are broadly expressed intentions that serve to inspire and focus effort. Objectives on the other hand are used to translate aspiration into directed activity. Aims and objectives are all too often cast in stone and uncritically held. A variety of factors contribute to this including a lack of time for critical reflection, a lack of suitable inservice and perhaps a tendency to accept unquestioningly outside or imposed “official” aims and objectives. Aims and objectives should never be held unquestioningly but should be subject to regular examination and if necessary reconsideration. This can then form the basis of renewed and revitalised practices.

Curriculum
Curricular provision differs from one school to another despite the fact
that curricular guidelines are provided. This is often quite a small, subtle difference due to inclusions or exclusions that colour its delivery and impact. While the development of the whole child may be an aim of every school and teacher more significant differences are to be found where there is a lack of particular expertise. Within a 24 teacher school the impact of one or two teachers without the necessary expertise in one curricular area may be negligible because of arrangements with colleagues. The impact on curriculum delivery in a smaller school is potentially more serious. However, while such difficulties may be overcome through the making of arrangements with colleagues, there is little to compensate for the lack of physical facilities that prevent curriculum implementation in a school.

Apart from the official curriculum of a school which is usually conceptualised in terms of what is to be formally taught and learnt there are a range of other activities that contribute to school climate and culture.

**Communication**
The importance of high quality communication must not be underestimated by those who seek organisational effectiveness. This has several dimensions in a school organisation context including language, inference and structures. Language used in an organisation, (particularly an insider, organisational language) separates those who are members from those who are not. While one of the criticisms of teaching as a profession is that it does not have a highly developed professional/technical vocabulary language may still be used to admit some to a culture and exclude others. Not all communication uses language and indeed more is often communication without words, by action, body language or appearance. In this instance the tenor of communications becomes important and its impact. Communication structures are a vital aspect of effective culture/climate which are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

**Metaphors**
Metaphors are frequently used to describe a school and its organisation. They are also a way of making sense of the organisation, understanding it and comparing it with other organisations. The comparisons chosen are often revealing. Schools have been compared to the:-
Cultivating a Positive Climate

Military:- regimental and authoritarian; hierarchical leadership structures; inflexible structures and demands that stifle creativity and innovation;

Factory:- Schools where organisation is mechanistic and routine fall into this category. Predetermined behaviours and outcomes are expected from a production line approach to teaching. There is a systems approach to organisation which emphasises efficiency rather than effectiveness.

Happy Family:- The emphasis in this school is on human-ness and humaneness. There is a supportive environment which emphasises creativity and individuality and places a strong emphasis on interpersonal relationships. Self direction is encouraged as is self motivation as opposed to directing and monitoring performance efficiency.

Laissez-faire:- An absence of guidelines or control produces a “do your own thing”, anything goes mentality which is often coupled with a lack of concern for efficiency and effectiveness.

These, or other metaphors, do not have to be accepted. One way of communicating an image which in turn can create the reality is to select a positive metaphor that reflects the school’s culture and use it.

Organisational Stories and Heroes
Every organisation will gather a number of stories that make tangible elements of culture such as values. Transformational leaders recognise the power of such stories and encourage stories of a positive nature. Quite often such stories attain the status of myth; so embellished do they become. This does not lessen their importance to the organisation for what is important to the organisation is not their attention to detail but their encapsulation of an idea.

In a similar way each organisation has its own role models or ‘heroes’. These can be identified among staff, students or parents past or present. Such people acquire the status of cultural high priests/priestesses, the creators of folklore. The transformational leader will identify these individuals and value their contributions.
Resources
Resources include material resources and human resources. First among the material resources of a school are its buildings and grounds which make an immediate and lasting impression on visitors. Equipment in a school often indicates priorities that have been chosen from an inadequate funding system. The ability of some schools to supplement this inadequate funding is also a determinant of levels of resources available.

First among the resources of any school are its teachers. Like its material resources the specific expertise of its staff often provides an indication of priorities. Staffing arrangements mean that individual schools can do little to modify staffing ratios and therefore the focus should switch to developing the abilities and talents of members of staff. This is a common objective of many organisations but one that schools in Ireland have yet to focus on. Inservice education of teachers has been ignored by government and the schools at local level. As organisations seeking to maximise their resources schools must be provided with the financial ability to invest in their teachers to develop the required expertise.

School Memorabilia
Many schools devote attention to this aspect of development and become involved in the production of school magazines or publications some dealing with sporting or artistic endeavours. Photographs on display in the school often provide an indication of curricular emphasis and school priorities. A school leader who wishes to transform needs to take account of these factors and realise their potential to send consistently positive messages to the internal and external community.

Ritual/Ceremony
Much of school life concerns ritual and can be used to build school pride and a strong sense of belonging. This is a powerful tool which shows itself through organisational behaviours and processes and is often connected to internal arrangements. Ceremony on the other hand is a more public, often more formal expression of school life and culture. As these ceremonies are usually a public promotion/celebration of school activities. These often impact on ritual and routine it is important to secure staff support for them.
Teaching and Learning
All organisational arrangements in schools are directed at maximising the benefit of teaching and learning activities. These activities are not only to be found in the classroom but in the general environment of the school that is created by organisational practices. Many factors combine with administrative policies to influence the effectiveness of teaching/learning encounters including resources, time, appropriate rewards and effective teaching techniques and methodology. It is important that these are taken into account and recognised as important in the context of school culture.

Rules and Regulations
Rules and regulations should be thought of as “action guiding” rather than prescriptions for desired behaviour. They seek to ensure consistency of action, define parameters and influence outcomes. In bureaucratically organised groups these are interpreted rigidly leaving little room for interpretation. In groups with collegial structures which are staffed by professionals they are often seen as action guiding.

Parental Involvement
The quality of parental involvement in schools influences school climate. In most schools minimalist approaches to parental interaction have been replaced by a variety of opportunities for contact including curriculum information meetings, guidance and advice meetings, concerts, sports days, open days, school fairs, exhibitions and a more informal open-door policy.

In many schools the parent body is formally organised in the form of an association or committee. These provide a channel through which the fund of skills, expertise, knowledge, experiences and good will may be harnessed for the good of the school.

Types of Culture in Schools
Comparisons between schools reveal substantial differences in these important components of culture. For example in one school everything might be very precise. Uniforms are worn, timetables are observed, people are addressed formally, rules and regulations are enforced and parental involvement is tightly managed. In other schools more informal structures are in place. Life is far less regulated, first names are
used, members of the organisation exercise self control rather than being bound by rules and regulations and parental involvement is of an informal, friendly nature. These different processes are largely determined by how the individual members of the organisation are organised.

Handy (1988) using Harrison’s (1972) classification outlines four different organisational processes/arrangements which he calls:-

- the club culture
- the role culture
- the task culture
- the person culture.

In the *club culture* organisation centres around the head or founder who, if s/he could, would do everything. Because this is impossible the organisation, composed of like minded people, exists to act on the leader’s behalf. Convenient and personal, when the organisation is small, the club culture is sometimes characterised by a dominant head and the exclusion of those who do not belong in the club. Although rich in personality the weakness of this culture can be found in the dominance of the leader. If the leader is weak, corrupt, inept or picks the wrong people the organisation is also weak, corrupt, inept and badly staffed. Once the organisation increases in size formality has to be increased and the personal empathetic style is lost.

A school where the *role culture* is dominant will be organised as a set of jobs occupied by people who work together in a logical, orderly fashion to achieve the aims of the organisation. It is characterised by conservation, routine, predictability, security, comfort, certainty and efficiency. It is managed or administered rather than led, job descriptions lay down role requirements and people are trained. Role cultures do not value independence, initiative or individualism.

*Task culture* might be viewed as an organisational arrangement that is more co-ordinated than the club culture but capable of a faster response to problems than the role culture. Here the talents and resources of a team are applied to a project, problem or task. A task culture thrives where there are problems to be solved by competent, enthusiastic peo-
Cultivating a Positive Climate

people. Forward looking, friendly and co-operative it is a culture that resists routine and repetitive tasks.

The *person culture* is different to the first three in that as its title suggests it puts the individual before the organisation which is seen as a resource or framework for the individual. Because they are based on the idea that individual talent is all-important they can be difficult to run - individuals might be persuaded, influenced or cajoled but never managed.

These cultures can be compared and contrasted with those identified by Hargreaves (1994) who describes four cultures of teaching as individualism, collaboration, contrived collegiality and balkanization. Although they do not equate exactly with each other the individualism of the person culture may be identified, the individual parts of the role culture equate with the balkanization culture, the contrived collegiality has similarities with the club culture and the collaborative culture may be seen to closely resemble the task culture.

In reality these pure forms do not exist. Most organisations have a mix of all four influenced by size, work flow, environment and history; the right mix at the right time being the key to success. This is difficult to achieve because the members of the organisation will have their own preferences. If personal preferences coincide with the dominant organisational culture(s) then the result is likely to be a strong and cohesive organisation. The climate of the school can now be understood in terms of elements or components of school life which are influenced by dominant forms of organisational culture(s). A positive climate results when ethos or aspiration is identical to the culture; equally problems arise where ethos and culture differ greatly.

Handy reports that while teachers viewed themselves as "task culture aficionados" management/organisational structures did not always reflect this. He also pointed to large cultural differences between primary and second level schools which reflected a dominant role culture. Secondary schools were characterised by timetables, responsibility divided by function, systems and co-ordinating procedures. Alternatively primary schools were seen to be organised as a benevolent club culture characterised by personal and informal communication, smaller in size than second level schools, containing team leaders
rather than managers. Matthew and Tong (1982) identified school organisation with a person culture which requires the co-ordination of individual professionals.

In reality all of these cultures exist in all schools. What makes schools different however is the mix of cultures in the organisation. It is also important to refrain from judging one culture as good for a school and another as bad. All cultures have their strong points and weak points. Success lies in identifying the right culture for each operation as cultures have the ability to unite teachers or to form barriers between them.

However the cultivation of a positive climate is not a matter of chance or luck. It is not dependent on some intangible element of school life over which members of the organisation have little or no control. School climate has both content and form. Those seeking school improvement/effectiveness must have a knowledge of the elements of culture and the ability to select priorities for action. An understanding of the dominant cultural form(s) is also necessary.

The cultivation of a positive climate requires knowledge and understanding of the elements of school culture which can be manipulated, modified and transformed. Priorities can also be selected which produce observable differences among schools. Those who seek to improve schools must also be able to negotiate change. Koontz and O'Donnell (1968) have outlined the following criteria for negotiating change well. They argue that change is more likely to be acceptable:

- when it is understood than when it is not;
- when it does not threaten security than when it does;
- when those affected have helped to create it than when it has been externally imposed;
- when it results from an application of previously established impersonal principles than when it is dictated by personal order;
- when it follows a series of successful changes than when it follows a series of failures;
- when it is inaugurated after prior change has been assimilated than when it is inaugurated in the confusion of other major change;
- when it has been planned than if it is experimental;
- to people new on the job than to people old on the job;
Research studies into school effectiveness suggest that schools should be organised not around hierarchy, isolation and bureaucracy but around professional collaboration and genuine collegiality. While such structures diminish the individual autonomy of the teacher in the classroom they increase teacher control and influence in the broader teaching context.

Teachers have a choice between accepting external and internal bureaucratic control which compels them to implement the mandates of others or professional empowerment which involves the forging of new relationships in schools between teachers and principals, parents, pupils and the wider community. Those who seek to impose external controls are only too happy to supply schools with recipes and steps to increase school organisational effectiveness. Those who advocate the latter course of action cannot by definition propose a singular course of action but can do little more than present a range of options to be adapted to suit needs and circumstances. This report is one such contribution to that process.

Recommendations
This chapter has examined aspects of school ethos and culture that may contribute to the development of a positive climate in schools. Among the factors that have been found to contribute to a positive climate are teachers’ working conditions, openness, collegiality, commitment and professional relationships. The INTO recognises that building a positive climate in a school is one of the most complex tasks facing teachers. The following recommendations are made in that context.

1. Every school should be encouraged to make explicit its underlying values in the form of an individual integrated educational philosophy. This process should be undertaken as part of the school planning process for which time, resources and inservice must be provided.

2. The importance of high quality professional interpersonal relationships cannot be over-emphasised in the context of school climate.
The INTO demands that school based inservice education be made available to schools that will assist teachers to maintain and develop a high quality supportive environment.

3. Change is an integral part of modern educational organisations. The successful management of change is essential to the building of a positive climate in schools. The INTO demands that inservice education planned to accompany curricular change recognise the collaborative culture of schools. Rather than seek to impose change on schools such inservice should empower schools to develop and introduce appropriate curricular change on an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary basis.

4. Every school must be provided with the resources to deliver all aspects of the primary curriculum to its pupils. As a consequence, the persistent under funding of primary education which contributes to a restricted curriculum in some schools must be addressed as a matter of urgency. The INTO demands

(a) the elimination of all sub standard school buildings;
(b) an end to the disparity in funding between different levels of education;
(c) adequate grants for maintaining, heating, lighting, cleaning and insuring primary schools;
(d) funding for the employment of ancillary staff including caretakers, secretaries and classroom assistants;
(e) an adequate budget for the provision of educational materials and equipment.
Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Relationships are the key to school effectiveness and success. Where good management and staff relationships are maintained, the rewards in terms of outcomes tend to be relatively high. Deming, long credited in Japan for his interpersonal approach to management, advocates a quality assurance philosophy based upon a positive, logical and humanitarian approach to management in general. The following relevant features of the Deming philosophy (adapted for the British Deming Association, The Way Forward) should, in view of the INTO, provide a sound basis for the future development of effective school organisation in Ireland:

- The individual child must always remain the most central and important aspect of our work.

- Parental and community satisfaction with our teaching is not enough; we must exceed our clients and their guardians expectations by providing a top quality caring and professional education service;

- A commitment to quality assurance and continuous improvement (entailing reliability, consistency, predictability and dependability) must be a central feature of our work.

- Schools must operate as a genuine team focussed on the child without the internal competition and conflict which typify western scientific management styles. Professional discretion must therefore be guarded and exercised through the process of genuine collaborative school planning. (Ná ligimis don chóras riamh on tua a bhaint as lámh an tsaoir.)

- Teamwork based upon collegiality must transcend all teacher, child and parent relationships.

- The vast majority of problems and difficulties are caused by poor
management. Real quality administration must begin in the staff room and extend to all aspects of the schools practices and procedures.

- Good operations, best efforts, hard work and experience are not enough: everyone associated with the school must understand what changes are needed and the reasons for them. This applies to outside agencies as well as school staffs.

Finally there is no substitute for good knowledge - a good teacher should know her or his job well, and be prepared and willing to update her or his knowledge skills on an ongoing basis. Is námhad don cheird gan í a fhoghlam.

Recommendations

**CHAPTER 1: Towards an Understanding of Effective School Organisation**

Further research should be conducted on the sub-set of ideas about school effectiveness that relate to classroom management. Such an investigation would provide the ideal companion to this publication by completing the research project on school effectiveness.

Although school organisational structures and processes differ from state to state (and occasionally within a state) much commonality may be observed. Comparative studies have the potential to inform teachers and others who work in education and provide for the dissemination of ideas, theories and practice. Funding for this study should be provided from E.U. funds. A study of school structures in E.U. countries should be undertaken.

**CHAPTER 2. The Principal Teacher and School Leadership**

As schools attempt to respond to the needs of a rapidly changing society attention has begun to focus on the part played by the leadership of the principal teacher. Research has pointed to a need to change the culture of leadership from one dominated by concepts of power and authority to one characterised by acceptance, sharing and exchange. The INTO supports these developments but recognises that a great deal is required of Government to enable teachers in their schools to respond to these changes. The following recommendations are made in that con-
1. All schools should be provided with secretarial assistance to enable principal teachers to shed some of the increasing number of routine administrative tasks that attach to the role. Whereas in the past, schemes discriminated in favour of larger schools priority should be accorded to schools where the principal has full time teaching duties.

2. The provision of a school building represents a considerable investment of tax payers money. That investment must be properly protected and therefore every school should be provided with the services of a caretaker who will undertake routine repairs and renewals.

3. The most important resource for the principal with class teaching duties is time. Each teaching principal should be relieved of teaching duties each September and every June to undertake their responsibilities. In addition to this, periods of release from teaching duties must be provided to teaching principals on a monthly basis. These releases must be covered by substitute cover, or by the establishment of a supply panel to cater for the needs of teaching principals.

4. A more collegiate approach should be adopted to school organisation. The bringing about of such change will require the cooperation of principals and teachers and, therefore, inservice education must be provided for all teachers to facilitate such change.

5. As part of a collegiate approach, principal teachers should engage/continue to engage in staff consultations on professional matters and matters that relate to conditions of work such as class allocations, policy development(s) and procedural change.

6. Recent years have seen an increase in the administrative/managerial duties of the principal. Changes proposed in the White Paper could see an increase in this aspect of the principal’s role of educational leader. Many of these tasks can be shared with the vice principal and teachers with posts of responsibility. Discussions about the delegation of duties should be undertaken immediately.
7. The role of the principal teacher is a demanding one that already carries an overload of responsibilities. All future change should be by negotiation and agreement. Consideration should be given to teachers in schools other than the principal undertaking responsibility for change such as curricular initiatives.

8. The proposal to provide induction programmes for newly appointed principal teachers is welcome. The INTO demands an input into the design and delivery of these programmes.

9. The proposal contained in the White Paper to introduce limited terms of office of seven years for new non-teaching principals only is unacceptable. It fails to recognise the contribution of principal teachers with full time class teaching duties to the education system. The INTO demands immediate discussions on this issue with the Department of Education.

10. Serious concern about the under-representation of women in the position of principal has been voiced by the INTO in the past (1994). At present women comprise 70% of the teaching population occupy 48% of principalships. The INTO demands the immediate establishment of a committee consisting of representatives of teachers, management and the Department of Education to investigate and report on this matter.

Chapter 3. The Role of the Vice Principal

1. While the ambiguity that attaches to the role of the vice principal has enabled many schools to establish professional and effective relationships between principal and vice principal and to create a meaningful role for the vice principal in staff development and staff relationships it is clear from research that this does not happen in all schools. The position of the vice principal teacher in the primary school must be closely examined and the role clarified. The vice principal should be considered in terms of a partnership with the principal teacher who together form a managerial/leadership team.

2. Specific responsibilities must be assigned to the vice principal. The INTO acknowledges that while there is merit in facilitating an agreed division of tasks and responsibility between the principal
Conclusions and Recommendations

and the vice principal there is also an argument for guidelines to be produced which would assist in such a sharing of responsibilities. It is therefore recommended that these guidelines should be drawn up by the Department of Education following full consultations with the INTO.

3. The INTO is of the opinion that in guidelines advising on task/responsibility sharing which may be issued and/or arrangements which may be reached between principal and vice principal care should be taken to ensure that the vice principal be assigned both leadership/educational and administrative responsibility of significance.

4. The INTO welcomes the proposal contained in the White Paper concerning inservice development programmes. However, it notes with concern that while a specific commitment is given in the case of principal teachers no such commitment is laid down for vice principals. It therefore recommends that over the next five years each vice principal will have participated in a special incareer development programme related to the role and functions of the vice principal.

5. If the vice principal is to effectively discharge new responsibilities in a new and expanded role then time must be provided for the discharge of duties. The literature on school effectiveness points clearly to a significant role for the vice principal in school organisation. This cannot be achieved without an allocation of time and consequently the INTO recommends that some time free from class teaching or other responsibilities be provided for the discharge of these duties. In smaller schools this might be provided in the form of substitute cover for a specific number of days while in larger schools (500 pupils or over) there should be full time release from class teaching duties. The INTO should begin negotiations with the Department of Education on these issues.

6. The INTO is supportive of the concept of the principal teacher fostering and mentoring the career of the vice principal as a senior management position in the school. It recommends that in every school the vice principal should be assigned meaningful duties that enhance rather than demean the position.
7. The recent agreement concluded under the terms of the Programme for Competitiveness and work provides that appointment to the posts of Deputy Principal and assistant principals be by way of competition through formal selection procedures. Open and transparent procedures should be agreed prior to the implementation of proposal and that particular care be taken to prevent the development of gender imbalances in the number of vice principals appointed.

8. The operation of the role of vice principal is closely associated with school effectiveness. The INTO believes this to be so regardless of the size of the school. Consequently it is recommended that a vice principal be appointed to every school of more than one teacher.

**CHAPTER 4. Promoting Staff involvement in School Organisation**

1. Schools must become organisations where the work of teachers is recognised, valued and rewarded. The INTO is of the opinion that the collegial approach to school organisation offers the greatest potential in this respect. It does however recognise that school organisation along different lines does not necessarily exclude teachers and devalue professionalism. Changing school culture is not the foremost requirement; recognising, valuing and rewarding teachers' professional roles in school organisation is essential.

2. Teachers should be given an inclusive role in the decision making process in school organisation specifically in areas such as class allocation and spending priorities.

3. Curriculum development is an area that appears to offer great potential for the development of collaborative cultures in schools. Inservice education must be provided to enable teachers to develop the required skills and time must be provided in school for such developments.

4. Current demographic trends mean that the number of promoted posts in primary schools are declining. This is unacceptable at a time when increased demands are being made on teachers in schools. Schools as organisations require the development of specific skills and expertise over and above classroom teaching; teachers who provide these deserve appropriate remuneration and recognition.
5. There exists a need for all teachers to be provided with inservice education relating to collaboration with colleagues. Features of this inservice education should include the skills and expertise necessary for effective staff meetings.

6. Unless principals are willing to share power and responsibility teachers in the school are provided with few if any opportunities to develop leadership/administrative skills. Inservice education must be provided for principal teachers that will provide training for involving other members of staff in school organisation.

7. Post holders should have clearly defined remits agreed with the principal and Board of Management. Remits might include some of the following suggestions:
   (i) developing and monitoring policies in a certain curriculum area or at a particular stage of the school;
   (ii) ensuring effective forward planning, record-keeping and class management by individual class teachers;
   (iii) providing a positive lead in the practice of teaching by demonstrating techniques to colleagues within co-operative and team teaching arrangements;
   (iv) piloting innovatory work;
   (v) providing particular support to groups of pupils such as children with special aptitudes or pupils with learning difficulties;
   (vi) contributing to various classes in particular curriculum area where staff expertise may be lacking;
   (vii) planning and supervising the use of resources in the school;
   (viii) deploying staff to make the most effective use of their capabilities;
   (ix) providing appropriate advice and support to teachers including teachers on probation and non-teaching staff;
   (x) promoting effective links with parents and the wider community.
   (xi) coordinating specific curricular areas within a school or amongst a cluster of schools.

Chapter 5. School Planning Issues
1. The INTO recognises that among the many obstacles that hinder progress in the area of school planning of primary importance is
the issue of time. Under current arrangements teachers are expected to engage in planning activities outside of school hours. It is unacceptable that the Department of Education continue to promote the benefits of school planning while refusing the provide the time to enable teachers to undertake the process. The INTO demands immediate negotiations on the issue with the Department of Education.

2. Guidelines and criteria are urgently required to assist teachers in the process of collaborative planning. A committee established to clarify the concept of the school plan and to draw up criteria and guidelines has yet to issue a report. The INTO views this delay as intolerable and calls for the immediate publication by the Department of Education of agreed guidelines and criteria.

3. Apart from the demands that school planning makes on teachers' time it also requires certain skills and expertise. Many of these may be present in a school but given the centrality of school planning to school effectiveness this expertise is not a matter to be left to chance. Inservice education must be provided on a whole school basis to enable teachers to develop the required skills. This inservice education must take account of the processes involved in school planning and resist the temptation to provide standard solutions and models to be imported.

4. Apart from the resources of time and expertise of teachers there are many other resources needed to support successful school planning. Every school should be provided with the necessary secretarial assistance and office requisites to enable the development of a school plan. A range of curriculum materials is also required to facilitate school planning. These materials must be made available to every school.

5. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment should produce guidelines on school planning which should accompany new curriculum guidelines when they issue to schools.

6. Many schools will be able to undertake the process of developing a school plan without external assistance. For a variety of reasons
other schools may require the support of an advisor to assist teachers as they begin to plan collaboratively. A number of teachers should be seconded, provided with appropriate training and utilised to facilitate school planning in schools.

7. One of the benefits of collaborative planning is that it can assist in the identification of teachers’ incareer development needs. These require a range of provision which at present is unavailable. The INTO demands that a comprehensive programme of inservice education be planned and made available to teachers as a matter of priority. Schools could then be encouraged to identify their own needs regarding inservice education.

8. The INTO recognises that the process of school planning provides schools with the opportunity for continuous self-evaluation. The identification of problems, the designing of solutions and the improvement of practice empowers teachers and enhances their professionalism, enabling them to exert more control over their schools and their activities. Without the appropriate resources and support school planning demands may be viewed as an unfair imposition on schools. Properly resourced and supported it is an opportunity to develop and extend the professionalism of teachers which should be accepted.

CHAPTER 6. Record Keeping and Assessment
The INTO proposes the introduction of formative assessment in primary schools. Formative assessment focuses on the real and immediate learning activities of students and is supported by teachers who carry out such assessments on a regular basis based upon their views of how young children think and learn.

Assessment for teaching entails the collection of detailed information about the children which enables the teacher to plan and teach effectively in order to maximise children’s future learning. It involves one or more of a range of assessment activities from informal observation to oral, practical or written tasks. Diagnostic assessment is often used as part of formative assessment insofar as it informs future teaching and learning activities, but usually it involves the use of specific procedures such as standardised tests or other diagnostic instruments. Diagnostic
assessment is usually applied when more general formative assessment fails to indicate activities from which children can learn.

1. Schools should be facilitated to develop policies on the formative assessment of their pupils. The application of tests or any alternative profiling system must not make disproportionate claims on class time or pupil activities.

2. Formative assessment of pupils at infant level should continue with teachers profiling individual children, using relevant descriptors of achievement designed to inform teaching and learning.

3. Appropriate diagnostic tests should be developed for administration to children in senior infants, such tests to be applied only in circumstances where more general formative assessment fails to identify areas where a small group of children may be experiencing particular difficulties. The purpose of such testing should be to provide access as early as possible to appropriate intervention for those children who present with particular difficulties in certain curricular areas. As part of an overall assessment programmes, sufficient resources and back up services should be provided, as of right, to help each child overcome his or her identified difficulties.

4. Standardised tests or other appropriate instruments should be developed for administration in all classes or class groupings, such tests or instruments to be made available to schools free of charge with a view to enabling teachers, in line with their respective school policies, to implement formative assessment programmes in their schools.

5. Within each school's profiling and formative assessment policy, provision may be made for the administration of standardised tests in relevant curricular areas, particularly in first class with a view to identifying children with ongoing learning difficulties for the purpose of demanding additional help and support and in fifth class with a view to enabling class teachers to identify areas where children might benefit from additional help before transferring to the post-primary system. Access to an appropriate remedial service should be made available to all children who require help in the
Conclusions and Recommendations

various curricular areas, irrespective of geographical location or size of school.

6. The administration of tests for the purpose of aggregating assessment outcomes for each school is totally undesirable, inappropriate and unacceptable because of the danger that it will narrow the focus of the curriculum, distort the purpose of assessment and cause irreparable damage to the pupil teacher relationship, where confidentiality and trust is so much a part of the teaching learning process.

7. Teachers will continue to cooperate fully in the administration of regular assessment of the performance of a sample of schools with a view to providing information on an aggregate basis to the Department of Education and to the general public.

8. A comprehensive programme of incareer development should be introduced enabling teachers to become familiar with the methodology involved in keeping individual profiles on children. Incareer development programmes should also help familiarise teachers with standardised assessment systems and group moderation schemes designed to ensure uniformity of standardisation on the descriptors of achievement in relevant kinds of profiles. The process of recording and of developing effective communication techniques should also be addressed in incareer development programmes.

9. Pupil Profile Cards or Pupil Report Cards designed to correspond with aspects of the primary school curriculum, should be developed. Such cards should include provision for information on children’s social and emotional development together with teacher assessments of their levels of progress and any additional relevant information which may be of benefit to both teachers and parents.

CHAPTER 7. Parental Involvement in School Organisation

1. Positive parental involvement should be an integral part of every school and the INTO recognises that many schools have developed local initiatives to increase participation and involvement. Many other schools are hampered in this regard by a lack of funding,
expertise or time. The INTO recommends that:
(a) an annual grant be provided to every school to develop home-school links;
(b) inservice education be provided where necessary for teachers who require assistance in developing and fostering home-school links;
(c) time be provided for the development of policies to assist home-school linkages;
(d) guidelines be issued by the Department of Education to schools which will assist in the broadening links between home and school.

2. The INTO is of the opinion that school management should represent a partnership in education and that there should be equal representation of parents, teachers and parents on the Management Board. Education legislation must enshrine this principle.

3. The Green Paper *Education for a Changing World* (1993) contained a number of comments on gender equity which the INTO recommends should be incorporated into the White Paper. These are

   All educational institutions at primary, second and third levels will develop and publish an active policy to promote gender equity. Their progress in implementing this policy will be reported in annual reports.

   All Boards of Management in schools will aim at gender balance in their membership and have not less than a minimum representation of each sex. These requirements will also apply to staff selection committees.

4. The INTO recommends that programmes be designed and made available to schools to promote parental involvement in schools and to develop positive attitudes in relation to a number of issues including gender equity and self-esteem.

**CHAPTER 8. Cultivating a Positive Climate**
This chapter has examined aspects of school ethos and culture that may contribute to the development of a positive climate in schools. Among the factors that have been found to contribute to a positive climate are
teachers’ working conditions, openness, colleagueship, commitment and professional relationships. The INTO recognises that building a positive climate in a school is one of the most complex tasks facing teachers. The following recommendations are made in that context.

1. Every school should be encouraged to make explicit its underlying values in the form of an individual integrated educational philosophy. This process should be undertaken as part of the school planning process for which time, resources and inservice must be provided.

2. The importance of high quality professional interpersonal relationships cannot be over-emphasised in the context of school climate. The INTO demands that school based inservice education be made available to schools that will assist teachers to maintain and develop a high quality supportive environment.

3. Change is an integral part of modern educational organisations. The successful management of change is essential to the building of a positive climate in schools. The INTO demands that inservice educational planned to accompany curricular change recognise the collaborative culture of schools. Rather than seek to impose change on schools such inservice should empower schools to develop and introduce appropriate curricular change on an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary basis.

4. Every school must be provided with the resources to deliver all aspects of the primary curriculum to its pupils. As a consequence, the persistent under funding of primary education which contributes to a restricted curriculum in some schools must be addressed as a matter of urgency. The INTO demands
(a) the elimination of all sub standard school buildings;
(b) an end to the disparity in funding between different levels of education;
(c) adequate grants for maintaining, heating, lighting, cleaning and insuring primary schools;
(d) funding for the employment of ancillary staff including caretakers, secretaries and classroom assistants;
(e) an adequate budget for the provision of educational materials and equipment.
REFERENCES

Introduction


Chapter 1


Chapter 2


Chapter 3


Ireland. (1968), *Tribunal on Teachers' Salaries*, Dublin Stationery Office.


**Chapter 4**


Ireland, (1968). Tribunal on Teachers' Salaries, Dublin Stationery Office.


**Chapter 5**


Chapter 6


INTO, Response to the White Paper, Charting our Education Future, Dublin Author, unpublished.


**Chapter 7**


**Chapter 8**


The following questionnaire materials are included in this report to assist schools that may wish to undertake a review of aspects of school organisation. They are taken from the INTO Inservice Course *School Planning: a team approach* by Bernadette Collins, Marian Hackett, Tony Kelly, Gerard McHugh and Helen Walsh.

For each section below, indicate by ticking whether or not you perceive this area to be developing well, satisfactory at present or requiring urgent attention.

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<td>Pupil-Teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff-Board of Management</td>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff-Ancillary Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff-Support Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff-Department of Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-Community</td>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**STAFF MEETINGS REVIEW**

1. **Participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![ ]</td>
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   - Some staff under-contribute.
   - Meetings dominated by one or a few.
   - Straying off the agenda.
   - Failure to reach consensus.

2. **Poor Decision Making**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
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<tr>
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</table>

   - Minutes are not taken.
   - Lack of structure for follow through on decisions taken at meetings.
   - Meetings not formal enough in structure.
   - Decisions not acted upon.
   - Same problems come up at every meeting.
   - No time limit on items discussed.
   - No evaluation.

3. **Planning the Meeting**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![ ]</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

   - Wandering off the agenda.
   - Getting 'bogged down' in a particular item.
   - Making time for a School Plan.
   - Lack of time for full discussion.
   - Length of meetings.
   - No fixed agenda.
PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

What stage in the school is your child/are your children at? _______

Jun ☐  Inf ☐  Sen inf ☐  1st ☐  2nd ☐  3rd ☐  4th ☐  5th ☐  6th ☐

Is any other language apart from English spoken at home? _______

Please indicate your views with a tick. If you have more than one child attending this school, please choose one of them and answer all the questions in respect of that child only.

1. My child enjoys being at school ☐ ☐ ☐
2. My child finds school work interesting ☐ ☐ ☐
3. My child is set the appropriate amount of homework ☐ ☐ ☐
4. My child is set the right amount of homework ☐ ☐ ☐
5. My child is encouraged to work to the best of his/her ability ☐ ☐ ☐
6. My child will be helped if he/she is having difficulty ☐ ☐ ☐
7. My child is treated fairly by teachers ☐ ☐ ☐
8. My child gets to talk to teachers about his/her homework ☐ ☐ ☐
9. My child gets to talk to teachers about his/her schoolwork ☐ ☐ ☐
10. My child has friends at the school ☐ ☐ ☐
11. The school sets a high standard for all ☐ ☐ ☐
12. The school is welcoming and friendly ☐ ☐ ☐
13. The school is clean and well maintained ☐ ☐ ☐
14. The school handles pupil discipline fairly ☐ ☐ ☐
15. The school involves parents as partners in their child’s education
16. The school provides adequate extra curricular activities
17. The school organises parent-teacher meetings at convenient times
18. The school’s parent-teacher meetings are well organised and structured
19. The school policies on discipline have been clearly communicated to me
20. The school policies on homework have been clearly communicated to me
21. If I make a complaint I know I will be listened to
22. I am happy with what my child is learning in school
23. I would gladly recommend this school to a neighbour or friend
24. I would like to see more of __________________ in this school
   __________________
   __________________
   __________________
25. I would like to see less of __________________ in this school
   __________________
   __________________
   __________________
26. Further comments:
   There may be a number of things about the school that you would like to mention and have not been covered by the questions listed. If there are, please write in the space below:
   __________________
   __________________
   __________________
I am a:

Girl  □  Boy  □

I am in:

Jun □  Inf □  Sen inf □  1st □  2nd □  3rd □  4th □  5th □  6th □

1. My school is a happy place
2. My school work is interesting
3. I can do the work teacher gives me
4. If I have a problem with my work teacher will help me
5. I feel unsafe in the playground because of some of the other children
6. I think teachers in this school are very good
7. My child is treated fairly by teachers
8. The homework I get is interesting
9. I sometimes get bored in class
10. I get to do the things I am interested in
11. I know how well I am doing in class
12. I like this school
13. I know I can get help in school if something is bothering me
14. The school is clean and tidy
15. The toilets are clean
16. If there is anything you wish to say about your school either good or bad write it here:

_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________