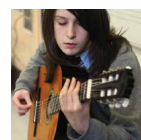
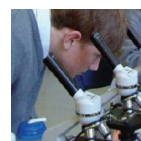


Parents, school evaluation and school improvement

National Parents' Council – Post-Primary
25th Anniversary Conference
1 May 2010

Harold Hislop, *Chief Inspector*



PROMOTING THE QUALITY OF LEARNING

A chairde

Ba maith liom mo bhuíochas a ghabháil le do chathairleach agus do choiste as ucht an chuiridh a thug siad dom labhairt anseo ag an gcomhdháil stairiúil seo. Nuair a labhair Jim agus Rose liom mar gheall ar an ócáid, bhí mé thar a bheith sásta an deis a thapú mar creidim go láidir gur fiú ról na dtuismitheoirí sa choras oideachais a threisiú.

I want to thank you for your welcome here today at this your 25th anniversary conference. When Rose and Jim first spoke to me about your conference, I was delighted to accept the invitation to address you, especially on such an historic occasion for your organisation.

NPC-PP has come a very long way from its early days in 1985. Thankfully, we have seen many significant changes in the way parents are seen within the educational system over that quarter century. That said, I think it is clear from the ESRI study that you have commissioned that we have much more to do if we are to realise all of the benefits that can flow for learners when their parents are meaningfully involved in their education.

My role in the educational system is mainly about evaluation and school improvement and it's on that topic that your Committee asked me to speak today.

Outline

- Introduction: Parents and their children's education
- The quality of schools
- Parents and improving the quality of schools
- Parents and inspection
- Improving inspection
- Questions

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I want to begin by reflecting a little on the important role that you can play in your children's education but I want to talk mainly about improving the quality of schools.

I believe that you can and ought to have a key role in that improvement agenda and I want to explore how that might be realised.

Inspection also has a role in improving the quality of schools and it is the context where most parent associations meet with inspectors. I want to speak a little about how parents can contribute most effectively to that engagement.

And finally, I want to speak about some improvements that we are seeking to make to the inspection process.

A profound impact on the life-chances of the child

- **Parents**
 - Informal involvement
 - Formal involvement
- **The involvement of parents in their child's education can have a profound impact on**
 - *the quality of a child's learning*
 - *the school-related choices that the young person makes*
 - *the child's long-term engagement with education*
 - *the child's life-chances*
 - *the educational and life-chances of the sons and daughters that the young person will have in the future*

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Reading the ESRI report that you have commissioned made me reflect on two very personal memories. One of my earliest memories is learning letters from the alphabet as my mother baked bread. She had no teacher training and relatively little education, but her encouragement certainly got me started on the road to literacy.

My second memory comes from yours later. I began work as a teacher in a newly-founded school. We would never have got it off the ground if it had not been for the drive of an energetic principal who worked hand in glove with parents. She created a genuine, relaxed and open relationship with parents. We could have honest conversations about how children were progressing or didn't, and what both parents and teacher could do about it. I believe that openness made a profound impact on the learning that we managed to foster in pupils.

Those two memories fit with what your ESRI report refers to as "informal" and "formal" involvement of parents. It is a useful distinction to make because it reminds us that informal parental involvement with the child's education - supporting the child's learning at home, fostering interest and excitement about learning, guiding the child's choices) are just as important as parents' more formal encounter with the school – through parent-teacher meetings, formal reports, and even at the level of parents' councils.

Much of that ESRI report resonates with me. I know from personal experience that the genuine involvement of parents in supporting their children's education can make a huge difference, not only for the child's learning, but for his/her life chances and the life chances of future generations. That's why I believe your work at NPC-PP is so important. It's also why improving the quality of schools is also important and why you ought to play a vital role in that improvement agenda.

The quality of schools is important

- Most Irish schools provide successfully for the learning needs of most students
- But the needs of students are always evolving
- Schools need to adapt, change and improve the learning opportunities they provide
- And a small number of schools are not performing adequately

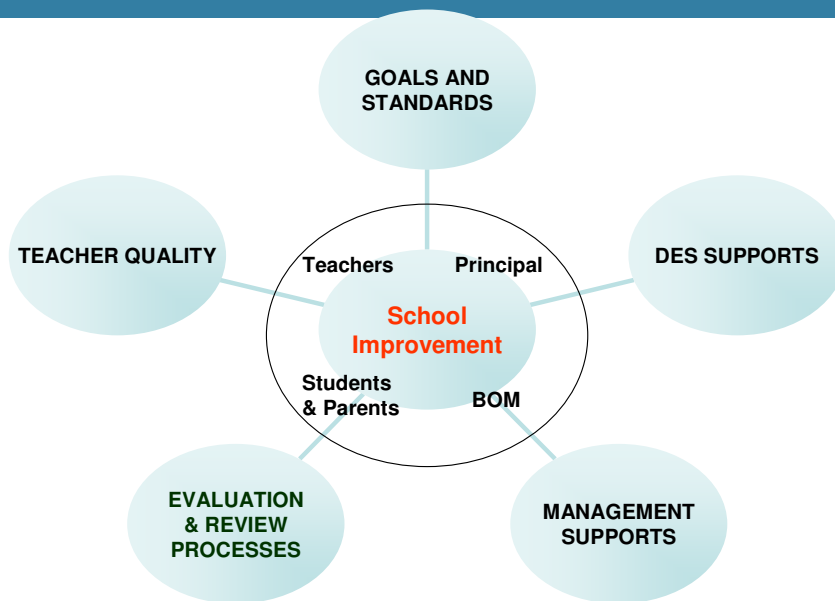
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All of our schools articulate a vision of helping children and young people achieve their full potential. Curriculum development over the last twenty years has attempted to place the learner at the centre of the educational process. Developments in teaching methods have also evolved very significantly to move beyond teacher-directed approaches to the facilitation of learning based on the needs and learning styles of individual learners.

We have considerable evidence from a number of sources to suggest that, in general, Irish schools provide successfully for the learning needs of many students. Our students' achievement in an area such as literacy, for example, when measured in international comparisons such as PISA, is of a high level. Many of the parents' councils that inspectors meet during the course of whole-school evaluation speak warmly of the experience that their children have in these schools. Indeed our inspections of schools indicate that most schools are good schools that are well-committed in practice to doing the very best for students.

But we need to guard against any complacency regarding the quality of schools. The needs of students and the skills that young people will need are always evolving. Our schools need to constantly strive to adapt, to change and to improve the services they provide. Just because we have achieved good outcomes in the past, does not mean that continuing to do what we have always done will guarantee continued success. And, inspection has also shown us that while the vast majority of schools are effective, a small number are not providing adequately for the students that they serve.

The quality of schools is everyone's business



The Inspectorate is particularly interested in improving the quality of all schools. But I want to emphasise to you that quality in an effective educational system is not solely or even mainly the responsibility of an Inspectorate.

In an effective educational system, each school – its board of management (involving teachers, parents and patronal interests) and its principal and staff must take primary responsibility for the quality of the learning that goes on in the school. That is the responsibility that comes with the privilege of managing, leading and teaching in a school. The wider school community – its students and parents should also have a major role to play in improving the quality of learning that young people experience.

Inspection and the work of the Inspectorate is one further contributor to the quality of the school and the school system generally. What I am saying is that school improvement must be at the heart of an effective school and that to achieve good quality schools, we all need to be involved.

Critical elements in the effective school

- School governance and leadership within the school
- The school's focus on teaching and learning
- Systems for planning, monitoring and self-evaluation
- Parental involvement in the work and life of the school
- Student involvement and the school's facilitation of the student voice
- How additional internal and external supports are used to enhance the education and care of students

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In thinking about the good school I would highlight six facets that I believe are critically important:

School governance and leadership within the school

The school's focus on the core work of learning and teaching

Systems for planning, monitoring and self-evaluation

Parental involvement in the work and life of the school

Student involvement and the school's facilitation of the students' voice

How additional internal and external supports are used to enhance the education and care of students

The above is just a summary but the list does give us a picture of what we would like to see in our local school. It is also certain that these different facets are closely related and interact with each other in the day-to-day work of the school. In the remainder of this talk, I will focus on some of the potential roles that I see for parents in the task of ensuring that these elements of the school are effective. And I also want to speak about how parents can be involved when we as inspectors come to the school to play our role in evaluating the school.

Parents and the quality of teaching and learning

- Supporting, encouraging learning at home
- Support for child at home has to be connected to work of the school
- Parents supporting learning
 - Providing expertise for classroom projects
 - Supporting curricular or extra-curricular activities
 - Supporting career guidance initiatives
- Good communication between school and parents
 - Parents should be enabled to provide feedback to the school about teaching and learning

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Let me start with the quality of teaching and learning.

I have already spoken about the way in which parents can encourage and support their child's learning in the home. But the support for the child or young person at home must be connected with the school's work. Individual parents should and do take the responsibility to engage with the school in appropriate ways to support their child's learning. In tandem with this the school must have a welcoming climate towards parents and implement processes and procedures that easily facilitated effective good home-school contact.

Parents can have a role in supporting the school's most important work, teaching and learning through, for example:

Providing expertise for classroom projects

Supporting curricular or extra-curricular activities

Linking fundraising activities with priority resources for teaching and learning

Supporting career guidance initiatives.

Most importantly, however, parents should have a continuing engagement with the school's leadership and teaching staff about the quality of the school's provision for students. The parents' association can play an important role by supporting the development within the school of good communication systems for parents. Parents should be enabled to provide feedback to the school either individually or collectively through the parents' association on the overall quality of teaching and learning in the school. I will speak a little more about that in a moment.

Parents and school governance

- Board is critical to operation of school
- Parents are key representatives on the board
- Parents have a great responsibility to contribute the genuine views of parents
- Good communication between the parents' representatives on the board and the parents' association

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Can I turn to school governance and leadership within the school?

The school's board of management is critical to the effective operation of the school. Parents are key representatives on the board and can, together with the other board members, help shape the school's mission and influence the quality of provision for students. These parents have a great responsibility to contribute the genuine parental view on the issues that come before the board and participate fully in informed decision making at board level.

There should be good communication between members of the parents' association and members of the board of management including the parent representatives on the board. This is critical, not only to ensure that the parents on the board are fully informed about parental concerns and views but because the parents' association can make such a valuable contribution to supporting the life of the school.

The board is charged with the overall running of the school including the development of the school plan and reporting to parents on the school's progress as set out in the Education Act. There are opportunities for parents' associations to seek to support the work of the board especially through involvement in policy development and in providing their view on new proposals that impact on students and parents.

Parents and school self-evaluation

- Effective schools are always asking questions...
 - How effective is our teaching and the learning of our students?
 - Are the learning outcomes of our students improving?
 - What are the learning outcomes for different groups of students?
 - Are we good at retaining students? At promoting student attendance?
 - Are we stretching students' achievements as much as possible? Getting as many as possible to take higher levels?
- Collecting hard evidence to answer questions
- Identifying steps for improvement
- Implementing and monitoring the results

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A third element of practice in an effective school concerns systems for planning and monitoring. Really effective schools are always asking themselves “How well are we doing?” Indeed this does not apply only to schools – all organisations need to do this. Effective schools are always asking themselves questions such as

Are there things that we could improve?

Are the learning outcomes achieved by students as good as they should be?

Are the outcomes that some groups of students achieve good enough? Could they be better?

Could more of our students take subjects at higher level rather than at ordinary level in the State examinations? Has the proportion taking higher level changed over the last few years?

What are our retention rates? – not just overall but for sub-groups within the school? Can we improve attendance and retention?

Good schools ask these questions. They collect evidence and data to answer these questions. They identify where they should improve and the steps needed to achieve this. They implement these actions and they rigorously monitor the outcomes. This is what I mean when I talk about effective school self-evaluation.

Parents and school self-evaluation

- Parents (and students) should be part of this process...
 - Helping to set the questions asked (board, parents' association)
 - Providing evidence to answer the questions, for example through surveys and questionnaires
 - Making sure views of all groups within the school are heard – supporting real diversity
 - Supporting initiatives taken to improve learning and teaching
 - School should report to its community about its priorities, its plans for improvement and the progress achieved

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I would like to see schools further developing their own internal self-evaluation systems rather than relying solely on inspection for an evaluation of the effectiveness of aspects of the school's work.

Many schools have developed very good capability in school planning over the last decade in particular. However the latest thinking on school development highlights the importance of the school's own internal self-evaluation and review process in improving the learning of students.

There is a very obvious role for parents and students as part of this process.

Surveys and other means of gathering the views of parents and students can be very valuable when a school policy and practice are being reviewed. I would encourage schools and parents to work together to develop ways of capturing the perspectives of parents and students on priority issues each year. Parents' associations have a particular responsibility and challenge to ensure that the diversity of views from the school community are heard in this process.

And the outcomes of the self-reviews should be shared with all of the school community. Just as parents have access to inspection reports, there is no reason why a confident and active board of management cannot not share the school's self-review and action planning with parents.

Parents and school inspection

- Purposes of inspection
 - **Assure quality** in education system
 - Provide an **external perspective** on the work of the school
 - **Affirm** good practice
 - Constructively identify **areas for improvement**
 - Facilitate and complement the school's **self-evaluation**
 - Recommendations provide a **platform for development**

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External evaluation through inspection complements this sort of internal self-evaluation that I am speaking of. I believe that we need both forms of evaluation.

Inspection provides an *external perspective* on the work of the school. inspectors can affirm good practice and identify areas for development. In this way we complement the school's own review process and we believe that our recommendations provide a platform for further development.

We use a range of inspection models in post-primary schools

Types of evaluations and reports	2009
Whole-school evaluations	57
Subject inspections	560
Programme evaluations	35
Centres for education	14
Total inspections	666

By April 2010, a total of 3,552 reports on 1,569 schools available on website

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The most well known form of inspection in post-primary schools is whole-school evaluation and I will speak about that in a moment, but it's well to remember that we carry out other forms of evaluation. In fact, Subject Inspection – where we inspect the quality of provision for an individual subject in the school – is the most commonly used form of inspection. 560 of these inspections took place in second-level schools in 2010. We have completed at least three or four such inspections in most second-level schools in recent years.

Subject Inspections focus on the teaching of a subject, but they can also give an indication of more general strengths and weaknesses in the school as a whole. So too can programme evaluations, that examine the provision of TY, LCA, LCVP or JCSP programmes.

Many of the recommendations in these reports can have wider application in other subject departments and effective schools use them not only to review the work of the subject department inspected but also to consider lessons for the rest of the school. The publicity given to WSEs can tend to obscure the SI and programme evaluation reports but I would encourage parents and school communities to examine these other reports in just as much detail as WSE reports.

Parents and whole-school evaluation

- WSE is a collaborative process, involving the teachers, management, parents and staff of the school
- Evaluates
 - Management
 - Planning and self-review
 - Curricular provision, teaching and learning
 - Supports for students
- Reports on the work of the school as a whole: strengths, areas for development

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Whole-school evaluation (WSE) provides an intensive evaluation of the work of the school as a whole. We have designed it to be a collaborative process involving the teaching staff, the management of the school, parents and students. At various stages during the WSE process, members of the school community have the opportunity to interact with the evaluation team to discuss their work, their role, and their vision for the school. These interactions provide the evaluation team with an insight into the structure and dynamics of the school.

Parents meeting with the inspection team

- Agenda
 - Work of the parents' association: meetings, issues, priorities, communication
 - The work of the school: how the association supports the school; its involvement in planning and review; consultation between school and association
 - Areas that are working well; aspects that need to be improved
 - Parents involvement in the life of the school
 - Other issues suggested by the parents' association

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The inspectors' meeting with the representatives of the parents' association is an important element of the whole-school evaluation. The broad agenda for the meeting with inspectors is set out in the *Guide to WSE in Post-Primary Schools*.

The discussion with parents generally covers:

The work of the Parents' Association: meetings, issues, priorities, communication, training opportunities.

The work of the school: how the association supports the school, involvement in policy development and school planning, consultation on discipline, enrolment and homework, areas working well and aspects of the school that can be improved.

Parents' involvement in the life of the school: how parents support the curriculum, extra-curricular activities and home-school linkages.

Parents may also list additional specific agenda items for discussion. We welcome issues and items for discussion and will include them on the agenda for the meeting.

Parents meeting with the inspection team

- Associations need to prepare carefully
 - Association's own work; ways in which it supports the school
 - What is working well/what needs to be improved
 - *How will the association's officers collect or inform themselves of the views of parents in general?*
 - *Are the views of the officers representative of all parents?*
 - *Could NPC-PP advise associations on how to tackle this challenge?*
 - Think about other issues that the association wants to place on the agenda for the meeting with inspectors
 - Think about who should meet the inspection team

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An important message from me to you today, is that the parents' association needs to plan and prepare carefully if it is to get the most out of the meeting with inspectors. It is probably relatively easy for a parents' association to compile a summary of its own work and to outline the ways in which it supports the school. It should also not be too difficult to describe its involvement in the process of policy development. Consultation with the Parent Representatives on the Board of Management would be important in that regard.

But the Parents' Association should consider how it will formulate a view on what is working well in the school and on aspects that can be improved. This is one of the most important areas for discussion. Our experience shows that individual parents' associations vary widely in their ability to really engage with this element of the discussion. I am sure that individual parents' associations would welcome and benefit from the advice of the NPC-PP regarding how this might be done effectively. For example, are there useful consultation procedures that would enable the executive members of an association to compile a corporate view of the main strengths and priorities for development in the school? Your own ESRI study showed that the level of engagement of parents with schools generally and with parent associations is often closely linked to socio-economic status of the parents. All the more reason, therefore, for parents associations to work hard to make sure they are genuinely listening to and representing the views of all parents as far as possible.

And I think that some parents associations need to consider carefully who will meet with the inspectors. This is a matter for the association not the Inspectorate. For most associations, their officers will meet with the inspection team. However, I am aware that some schools have traditionally had parent-teacher associations. I am sure that these are useful in promoting school-parent linkages, but during the WSE, I feel it would be important that parental views are presented to inspectors by parents and not by officers of the association that include the principal or another teacher.

After inspection

- External evaluation can provide advice but improvement only happens if there is effective implementation in school
- Primary responsibility for following through on recommendations rests with board and staff
 - BOM, CEO, Principal, Staff must take ownership of need for change and implement change programme
 - Parents need to be involved closely in this process
- Others external to the school may be involved to a limited extent
 - Patron/VEC, certain DES divisions, Inspectorate, school support services, etc.

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External evaluation can provide advice but improvement only happens if there is effective implementation in school. Inspection should not be an isolated event. It should form part of a continuous process of reviewing and improving the work of the school.

The prime responsibility for implementing recommendations rests with the board of management, principal and staff. Parents too, should be involved in this process. And at times others beyond the school may be involved.

Indeed in a few cases, schools may not have the capacity to initiate improvement. In these cases, it is sometimes necessary for the patron to become involved, or for the Department to intervene with the patron and board of management to ensure that the need for change is realised and acted upon. Experience has shown us that circumstances in each of these schools varies and a range of actions may need to be taken depending on the circumstances.

What should happen after inspection?

- Full circulation of the report
- Read and examine strengths and areas for development
- Review the school's self-evaluation
 - Are the priorities set in self-evaluation different to those identified by the inspection?
 - Do we need to change our priorities?
- Plan actions to address recommendations
- Implement and monitor improvements

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Of course, in the immediate aftermath of an inspection school communities are inclined to say “Whew! Thank heavens that’s over!” But effective schools use inspection reports to inform their own questioning, planning and improvement work in the school.

These school communities read and examine the strengths and recommendations identified by the inspectors. They review their own self-evaluations and compare them with those of the inspection team.

They use the report as part of a platform for planning and action. And they monitor the implementation of any necessary improvement. Some schools even include their plans for follow-up in the school responses that they submit for publication with the inspection report.

Parents involvement after inspection

- Parents should be involved in continuing dialogue with school management after inspection
- Become familiar with the findings and recommendations
- Dialogue with board re implementation
- Evidence from parents and students can be used in monitoring implementation
- Follow-up should be part of school's self-review and reporting to parents

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The parents' association should be involved in a continuing dialogue with the school management in the period after the inspection has been completed and the report has been published.

Parents should have an opportunity to become familiar with the recommendations made in the report and the actions the school proposes to take to continue to improve the work of the school. For example, could the officers of the parents association or the parental representatives on the board of management make a presentation to parents on these issues?

Can the school or the parents' association collect evidence from parents about the implementation of proposed changes?

And I would also expect that school could report to parents on the success or otherwise of their efforts to improve – perhaps in the form of their annual report.

Reviewing and improving inspection

Some current priorities

- **Better report writing**
 - Clearer and shorter
 - More focussed on teaching and learning
 - Supporting self-review processes
- **Improve the range of inspection models that we use**
 - Subject Inspection, Whole-School Evaluation
 - Thematic evaluations
- **New model of WSE in trial stage**

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Like schools, we in the Inspectorate are committed to reviewing and improving the way we carry out our work. For example, we know that we need to improve the accessibility of our inspection reports and we are spending considerable effort in making the language of the reports clearer and more user-friendly.

We also want to improve the models of inspection that we use in schools. I have mentioned two this afternoon – Subject Inspection and WSE.

We need to add to that range of inspection approaches. We are currently trialling a very substantially revised model of WSE in post-primary schools and I want to share some preliminary details of that trial with you.

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning

WSE-MLL

- Shorter and more focussed report
- Teaching and learning across the school
- Less time on school planning and even more time in classrooms
- Asks boards of management for their self-review
- Greater voice for parents and students
 - Questionnaires to all second and fifth year students and parents

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This model, called WSE-MLL will provide a shorter and more focussed report on the school.

It will look at teaching and learning not just in four or five subject departments in the school (which we do at present) but at teaching and learning across classes and lessons throughout the school.

We will spend less time on examining paperwork in the school and on meetings, and spend an even greater proportion of time in classrooms.

At the beginning of the inspection we are asking boards of management for their assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the school so that we get some sense of the capability of the school to conduct self-evaluation.

Schools exist to serve the learner and so one of the more important changes that we are making in this new model is to give voice to both students and their parents.

Parental and student questionnaires

- **Parents: 30 questions covering:**
 - The school in general
 - The school and my child
 - Teaching and learning in the school
 - Other information about the school
- **Students: 30 questions covering:**
 - My school in general
 - How things work in my school
 - Teaching and learning in my school
 - Other information about my school

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In the trails we have collected the opinions of a large sample of parents and students (second and fifth year students and their parents) using confidential anonymous questionnaires which we have processed electronically/mechanically. We have asked parents a range of 30 questions about:

The school in general (facilities, discipline, school/home contact, parents association)

The school and the child (enrolment, welcome, child enjoys school, child feels safe, drugs, bullying)

Teaching and learning (quality of teaching, child's progress, reports from school, advice on subject choices, homework, monitoring work, parent/teacher meetings)

Other information (school's seeks parental views, dealing with problems, whether financial contributions are voluntary)

We ask their children a range of 30 questions about

the school in general

how things work in the school (rules, attendance, punctuality of lessons, homework, free classes, bullying)

teaching and learning in the school (student's progress, how teachers explain lessons, how teachers listen to students, working with other students, using ICT, homework)

other information about the school (subject guidance, extra-curricular activities, making the school a better place)

Confidential parental questionnaire

Whole-School Evaluation (MLE) - Parent Questionnaire

Name of school:



Please put an x in the correct box like this: Do not write any other comments on this page.

Your child's year group: 1st Year 2nd Year 3rd Year Transition 5th Year 6th Year

The school in general

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Facilities are good in the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The school is well run	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Discipline is good in the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I am aware of the code of behaviour/school rules	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. There is good contact between the school and home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I am aware of the work of the school's Parents' Association	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. There is a good atmosphere in the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The school and my child

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
8. The information about how to enrol my child in the school was clear	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. The school made my child welcome when he/she first enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. The school helps my child's social and personal development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The questionnaires are presented in a series of statements.

The parent chooses “Strongly agree, Agree, Not sure, Disagree, Strongly disagree”. The student questionnaire is similar.

Confidential student questionnaire

Whole-School Evaluation (MLE) - Student Questionnaire

Name of school:



Please put an x in the correct box like this: Do not write any other comments on this page.

What year are you in? 1st Year 2nd Year 3rd Year Transition 5th Year 6th Year

My school in general

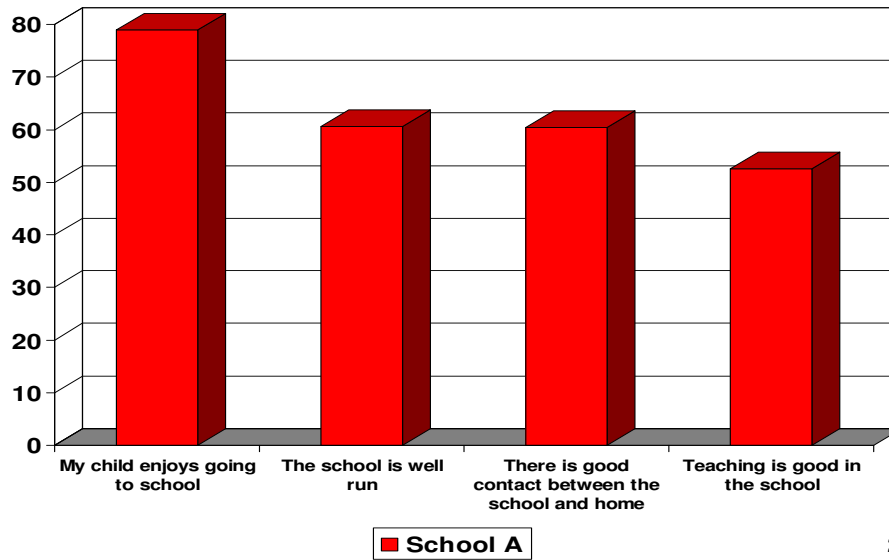
	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. I am proud to be in this school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I enjoy going to my lessons and learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The facilities available in the school are good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I feel safe and cared for in the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I get on well with other students in the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. There is a good atmosphere in the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How things work in my school

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
7. I understand the school rules	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. The behaviour of students is good in the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Some parental responses

Percentage of parents who agree or strongly agree



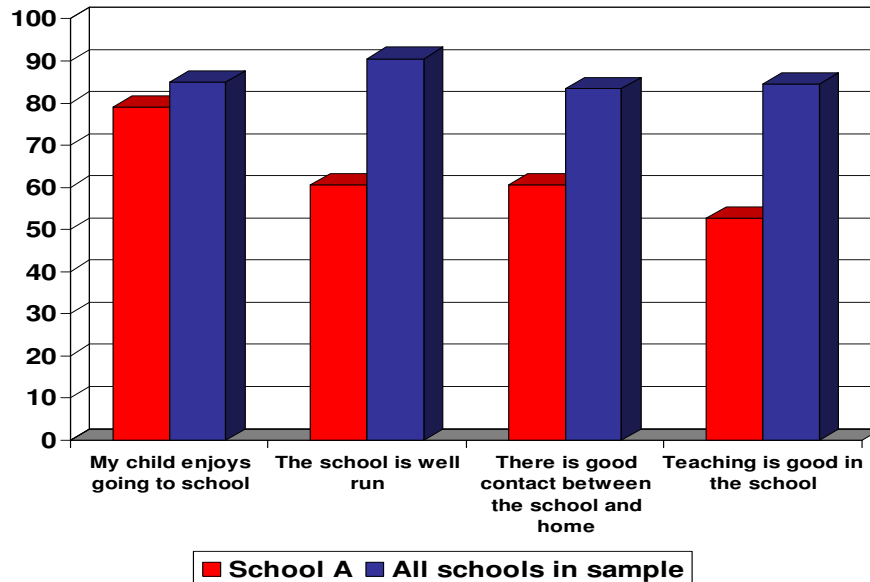
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This data has the potential to become another important source of evidence for us when we evaluate the school.

For example, these are the results from just one school for five of the questions that we asked.

Some parental responses

Percentage of parents who agree or strongly agree



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We have completed the trails in 12 schools, but over time, we will be able to build a database of the typical range of replies to such questions – this chart also shows the sort of responses that we got in all 12 schools compared with the data from that individual school, and you can see interesting questions begin to emerge.

I believe that it is vital that we gather the views of a wide and representative sample of parents and students in this way.

WSE-MLL: next steps

Consultation as required by legislation

- Complete development work on WSE-MLL
- Briefing for education partners in early autumn
- Written consultation document issued to partners
- Comments received and model finalised
- Publication of guide and implementation of model

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We will be completing development work on the WSE-MLL model and briefing the education partners, including NPC-PP on the outcomes in the coming months.

As required by legislation, we will be publishing proposals for consultation on this new model of inspection in the autumn.

We will be including the use of questionnaires (to complement the meeting with the parents association) in our proposals.

I look forward to engaging with NPC-PP and the other education partners in the consultative process on this important reform.

And I look forward to us implementing this significant change which I believe will improve the quality of inspection and encourage further improvement in schools.

Key messages

- Don't underestimate the powerful influence that you can have on your children's learning!
- Each school community needs to be working continuously to improve the quality of learning.
- You are an important part of the school community and should have a continuing interest in the quality of the school's provision for students whether inspections are planned or not!

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So in summary, I have six key messages for parents about your role in improving the quality of children's learning in schools

You can have a powerful influence on your children's learning, their readiness, attitude and success in learning – don't under-estimate that!

Each school community needs to be working continuously to improve the quality of learning.

You are an important part of the school community and should have a continuing interest in the quality of the school's provision for students whether inspections are planned or not.

Key messages

- You should be involved in whole-school inspection in schools: comment on what is working well in the school and identify aspects that can be improved
- When an inspection has been completed, you should know about and support the actions the school proposes to take to continue to improve
- Through NPC-PP you should participate fully in consultations about improving inspection and quality assurance in schools

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You should be involved in whole-school inspection processes in schools and should comment on what is working well in the school and identify aspects that can be improved. Your views are important.

When an inspection has been completed, and the report has been published, you should have an opportunity to become familiar with and support the actions the school proposes to take to continue to improve.

Through your National Parents' Council, you should participate fully in consultations about improving inspection and quality assurance in schools.

Ag comhoibriú le chéile

We have a shared goal

Let's work together to make sure that the dreams we have for our children are realised.

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These are deceptively simple yet enormously challenging tasks.

Your attendance here today, the work and achievements of the last 25 years of your organisation are testimony to the commitment that you have to your children's education and to their future.

It is a commitment that I and my colleagues in the Inspectorate, and indeed other professionals in the education system, share with you.

Let's work together to make sure that these dreams that we have for our children are realised.

Go raibh maith agaibh.