

**Durkan, John, 1995, 'School Effectiveness Research: Towards a Reconceptualisation of Theory and Methodology in School Effectiveness Studies'**

### **ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION**

In this dissertation, the centrally important role of leadership, especially as it pertains to school effectiveness, is examined. After an introduction, which outlines the research questions, there is detailed evaluation of contemporary scholarship on the topic. The emphasis on teaching and learning, identified in virtually every school improvement study as a vital characteristic of good schools is noted. In a later chapter, the author focuses on the powerful factor of collaborative culture, acknowledged repeatedly in the literature as a further central feature of acknowledged best schools. In a final chapter the challenge of moving from theory to practice is examined.

The author examines how the knowledge gained from school effectiveness work can be translated into school improvement and change-strategies that will ultimately make schools more effective in terms of producing higher levels of pupil academic and social development. The chapter concludes by considering some of the issues from the 1980s still waiting to be resolved by school effectiveness research and argues for a more effective alliance between school effectiveness researchers and school improvement practitioners as the best way to meet the need for the rapid development of school effectiveness and school improvement work in the 1990s.