

Higginson, Brid, 2005, *The Issues and Challenges of Discipline/ Behaviour Management in Primary School: A Comparative Study.*

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Behaviour management/discipline is one of the key issues relevant to modern educational practice. This study compares and analyses the issues and challenges of discipline/behaviour management in six primary schools - 'all boys', 'all girls' and 'mixed' schools of both advantaged and disadvantaged school status to investigate each school's current issues and to explore the influences of gender and socio-economic status on school discipline. This study examines the perceptions of staffs in relation to four main areas in behaviour management/discipline. These are *whole-school policy, pupil indiscipline, behaviour management practices* and *effects of disruptive/negative pupil behaviour*.

A number of key conclusions are drawn from the study. In the area of *whole-school policy*, consistent staff familiarity and regular pupil consultation regarding the school code of behaviour are vital to its success. Furthermore, constant *whole-staff* review and evaluation of the school code of behaviour is necessary to ensure its effectiveness. In the area of *pupil indiscipline*, boys present with behavioural issues more than girls, regardless of socio-economic school status, with pupils experiencing social, emotional and home difficulties and pupils with special needs as the most prevalent category of pupil to present with behavioural problems.

In terms of *behaviour management practices*, positively oriented rewards and sanctions are the most frequently utilised practices by teachers on a hierarchical basis. In relation to the *effects of persistent negative pupil behaviour*, persistent pupil indiscipline affects teachers personally, and also seriously affects teacher-pupil relationships, effective curriculum delivery and other pupils' learning. Finally, the vast majority of teachers consider the provision of in-service and supports, in the area of classroom and discipline/behaviour management, as a critical need.