

**O'Keefe, Joanne, MEd, 2013, *Teachers' Perceptions of Whole-School Evaluations: The Case of Three Post-Primary Schools in County Cork, Ireland***

## **ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION**

This study set out to examine teachers' perceptions of Whole-School Evaluation (WSE). This is one of the evaluation models used by the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills to monitor the effectiveness of the education system provided by the Irish State.

The Inspectorate has been in operation in Ireland since 1832 and has always had an evaluation function. The evaluative function of the Inspectorate is set out in the *Education Act, 1998*. The WSE process involves a week long, in-school phase, where a team of inspectors visit the school to establish its effectiveness in the areas of Teaching and Learning.

In order to gain an international perspective the evaluation models used in England, Finland and New Zealand will also be examined. The research methods used to elicit the views of the teachers in the three rural post- primary schools in County Cork were questionnaire and interview. The response rate from the questionnaires was 78%.

The study revealed that 63% of teachers did not find the WSE a positive experience, citing feelings of stress and anxiety before and during the process. Advice, support and encouragement from the Professional Development Service for Teachers before the inspection are recommended to allay teachers' fears.

The respondents in this study want the inspectors to take the form of mediators and liaise with the management and staff of the school.