

Sweeney, Josie, 1995, *Good Schools: A Study of the Factors which influence the effectiveness of schools*

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

In recent years there has been much debate on the most appropriate educational framework with which Ireland can face into the new millennium. Current economic and fiscal constraints have ensured that commercial considerations, value for money concepts and performance measurement mechanisms have been an integral part of the process which seeks to promote the highest standards of education and learning for all. Aware of the growing volume of study and research into the relatively new domain of 'effective education' the writer undertook this dissertation to explore the concept of effectiveness within the school environment. The study sets out to identify prime factors which influence the effectiveness of schools in general while also seeking to examine in the context of the writers particular school, the perceived effectiveness of home/school contacts and parent/teacher interaction.

Chapter 1 introduces the topic, puts it in context and undertakes a brief review of effective schooling research literature with a view to identifying some salient features of an effective school.

Chapter 2 concentrates on the essential role of the parents in the education process and their contribution to effective schooling. Attention is focused on different levels of parental involvement and the support structures required in order to derive maximum benefits from such involvement.

Chapter 3 is devoted to the crucial role of the principal and the concept of principalship. The work of the principal is critically analysed and concepts of leadership are explored drawing on most recent research findings in psychology and business organisation and management theory. Chapter 4 summarises the results of the school based survey and presents in diagrammatic form the findings on a number of aspects of home/school contact and parent/teacher interaction.

Chapter 5 briefly summarises the study and presents the conclusions and recommendations arising. The contention is that society will be the richer for any increase in the effectiveness of our schools.