



# **Every School a Good School**

## **A Policy for School Improvement**

**ATL Response to the Consultation  
of the  
Department of Education, Northern Ireland**

***“Creating a collegiate culture”***

**March 2008**

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## Every School a Good School

*"Children's education and life prospects correlate closely with family backgrounds and early developed abilities. Schools alone seem to have limited impacts, either at the time or later."*

**Alan Lennon**, retired Chairman of the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment Council and former chair, Education and Skills working group, Department of Economic Development: Economic Outlook & Business Review, First Trust Bank, November/December 2007

*"School improvement was as much a grass roots movement as a Government policy, but it provided support for two policy themes. First, it supported the contention implied in the earlier reform that autonomous schools could produce better pupil performance. Second, it underpinned the rejection of an apparent determinism which explained pupil failure in terms of social factors, as summed up by the Labour Secretary of State for Education, David Blunkett – 'poverty no excuse'. Whilst fatalism and low expectations were, and possibly remain, a feature of some schools, it seemed by the mid-nineties that the pendulum of rhetoric had swung excessively, leading to the title Schools making a difference: let's be realistic (Thrupp, 1999), and '... improvement methods would make a difference. A little difference.' (Johnson, 1999, p.166) Limitations on the utility of the school improvement model became clear (Mortimore, 1998, MacGilchrist this vol.)."*

*One was the reliance on high quality leadership and management, when there was continuing concern about that quality which led to the establishment of a National College for School Leadership. The second was the recognition that school improvement placed heavy demands on a workforce already feeling overstretched. Thirdly, improvement research corroborated earlier findings (Coleman et al 1966, Hanushek 1992) and showed that 85% of the variation in pupil performance is due to factors external to the school (Teddlie and Reynolds 2000). Of the remaining 15%, the classroom effect was shown to be the most substantial. This finding coincided with the determination of the Labour Government elected in 1997 to move to the third phase of reform, a programme to develop the teaching force and the quality of pedagogy."*

**Martin Johnson** ATL Acting Deputy General Secretary, in a chapter in: W.T. Pink and G.W. Noblit (Eds.), International Handbook of Urban Education, 2007 Springer.

## **Introduction:**

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), as a leading education union, recognise the link between education policy and our members' conditions of employment. Our evidence-based policy making enables us to campaign and negotiate from a position of strength. We champion good practice and achieve better working lives for our members. We help our members, as their careers develop, through first-rate research, advice, information and legal support. Our 160,000 members – teachers, lecturers, head teachers and support staff – are empowered to get active locally and across the United Kingdom. We are affiliated to the ICTU and TUC, and work with government and employers by lobbying and through social partnership.

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers were shocked and astonished to receive the Consultation Paper “Every School a Good School” without warning, notice or pre-consultation. Bringing forward substantive policy documents of this nature without key stakeholder engagement, discussion and consultation does not strike us as a sensible way to do business. We trust that this will be noted and that adequate time, and access to key policy makers, will now be afforded to ATL and others for discussion after the 31<sup>st</sup> March deadline.

## Summary of Key Points Made by ATL:

- That the significant external/internal influences on pupil performance are not adequately considered. (Consultation Point 1);
- That Partnership at school level needs to be included as a key component of social partnership and industrial democracy (Consultation Point 1);
- ATL proposes Staff/Trade Union Involvement in the governance of schools (or Social Partnership within schools) (Consultation Point 1);
- That over-reliance on assessment data and measured outcomes to gauge school improvement will impact negatively on the welcome assessment processes and revised curriculum being introduced. (Consultation point 1);
- That the Teacher Competency Framework produced by the GTC should be included as a key characteristic (Consultation Point 1);
- That Socially Balanced Intakes should be included and central as the Key Issue to be addressed (Consultation Point 2);
- That there is a need for a though-going review of self assessment (Consultation Point 2);
- That other areas that impact on school improvement should include the level of financial resources, class sizes, pupil behaviour, teacher workload, availability of good CPD opportunities for teachers, the effect of policy 'churn' and initiative overload (Consultation Point 2);
- That "Fairness" should be included a key principle (Consultation Point 3);
- That the Minister has an important political role in arguing for the wider political measures that would address the "externalities" contributing to school system performance. (Consultation Point 4);
- That parents and the wider local community have significant responsibilities in the education of young people. (Consultation Point 4);
- That the GTC Charter of Education should provide the basis for statements of entitlements that teachers and schools should expect from the ESA (Consultation Point 4);
- That the Department, the ESA and proposed and existing publicly funded sectoral education bodies should submit themselves to a formal quality process such as EQFM, liP or other;
- That ETI should lead work on the guidance to be developed on self evaluation and that there should be trade union involvement in this work (Consultation Point 5);
- That over-reliance on measurement and quantitative outcomes may distort the educational experience (Consultation Point 5);
- That the prevalent "Command and Control" leadership styles should be tackled; and that trade union/ staff representation on School Boards of Governors should make up no less than one third of the Board. (Consultation Point 6);
- That concerns over erosion of teacher professionalism and gradual loss of teacher autonomy are growing (Consultation point 6);

- ATL proposes Joint Industrial Relations Training for school leaders and school union reps is recommended (Consultation Point 6);
- That externally accredited and portable Management courses be made available for new and middle managers, such as the Chartered Manager award (CMI) and the ILM's "First Line Manager" award. (Consultation Point 6);
- That access to the PQH qualification is not determined by, nor selection at the behest of, the school Principal alone. (Consultation Point 6);
- That concerns on the "Extended Schools" initiative are taken account of (Consultation Point 7);
- That data gathered through testing systems generally tends to inflate educational achievements within the system. (Consultation Point 8);
- That more emphasis needs to be placed on teacher assessment. Teachers should be supported in developing assessment systems which are comprehensive and reliable; trialled and moderated. (Consultation Point 8);
- That note is taken of the ARRTS educational research repository (Access to Research Resources for Teacher Space). (Consultation Point 8);
- That schools should consult with Trade Unions in each school on the School Development Plan (Consultation Point 8);
- ATL recommends that cognisance is taken of the ETI indicators in "Together Towards Improvement" and that measures which take account of collaboration within schools are required as well as measures of external collaboration. Equally, measures of teacher satisfaction, teacher morale, teacher motivation, teacher and pupil happiness should be considered. There should be full consultation with teachers unions on "Value Added" measures, Unique Pupil Numbers and Levels of Progression.(Consultation Point 8);
- That concerns over setting Quality Indicators for School Improvement are taken account of, and that Indicators should include i) the Social Balance of School Intakes and ii) measures of the external factors contributing to/ inhibiting school educational performance (Consultation Point 9);
- ATL are not convinced about the need for or use to be made of Quality Indicators and are concerned that these could be used in a mechanistic way – as a 'rod' for more excessive measurement. If pushed, ATL consider the most important indicators would be: a) The Social Balance of School Intake; b) Qualitative measures of external factors contributing / inhibiting school educational performance; c) the happiness of pupils; d) the Mental Well Being of staff, pupils, parents; e) the degree of Industrial Democracy / social partnership within the school. (Consultation Point 10).

## Consultation Point 1

### Acknowledged Successful Characteristics for Successful Schools

**External/internal influences on pupil performance:** The quotation at the start of this consultation response, from ATL's Acting Deputy General Secretary, Martin Johnson, indicates clearly that the factors influencing educational performance are mostly outside the school. Academics coming from a variety of directions have made similar findings: economists using econometric methods, school improvement research, even the English DfES' own analysis – the picture is clear – the external influences on pupil performance are more important – much more important. These “externalities” account for some 85% of the differentials in school performance.

Although it is now well understood that social class, income, family circumstances, the support of parents, and community culture are more important than what happens at school, this does not generally feed into policy formation.

Indeed, the logic is that public spending on education may be better directed at other social policy areas.

**Contestability:** ATL also considers that over-reliance of assessment data and measured outcomes to gauge school improvement will impact negatively on the welcome assessment processes and revised curriculum being introduced. Indeed, the whole “Every School a Good School” document contains a worrying over-reliance on the narrow, micro-management, “*Blame 'n shame*” culture predominant in England under the New Labour dogma of “contestability”. “Contestability” is the notion that all public services improve when supply and provision is contested, normally through competition, rivalry and tendered bidding.

**Northern Ireland: the industrial relations “sore thumb”:** ATL believes a vital component missing from the DE consultation document is the principle of the involvement of staff in governance.

Within this submission, ATL has stressed the need for a collaborative involvement of teacher trade unionists within the governing body of the school. The school is their institution, the place they invest their time and professionalism; an institution they are bound up with, in many cases, for their whole careers. Teachers want to be involved, and to contribute to the success of their own schools.

The trade union tradition in Britain is largely adversarial. The Social Partnership in Education instituted in England and Wales from 2003 should be understood as exceptional within the UK workplace experience. With social partnership arrangements in place in England, Wales and in the Republic of Ireland (through national Partnership arrangements) Northern Ireland is now

the Industrial Relations “*sore thumb*” on these islands. Social partnership arrangements need to be nourished, cherished and deepened, with the danger ever present that matters will slip back to the ‘default’ adversarial bargaining position.

It is now widely accepted across the UK, and internationally, that successful trade unionism – trade unionism which is growing and ‘on the move’ – is linked to the degree to which unions are actively and positively engaged in developing the success of their workplaces. In short, successful unions are unions that help to “*run things*”. Moves to promote and engage in social partnership at strategic level are welcomed – but why not at school/workplace level too? Why not promote the idea that the teachers and ancillary staff in the school should sit, as of right, on School Boards of Governors? Amongst the potential advantages are that it:

- allows staff to have a genuine say in the shape and direction of their workplace;
- will allow staff to see the union as “themselves”, not some outside force to be “brought in” *in extremis*;
- underlines the collegiality necessary in any good school;
- countermands the relatively unfettered powers of Principals;
- can reduce the stress of Principals (where supply/demand issues are now prevalent). The Principals burden would be shared, the job less ‘lonely’

**Role of Governors:** ATL considers the professionalisation of the role of Governors should be reviewed, including the recruitment and remuneration of same.

**Data:** ATL is concerned that the data that is collected is relevant, robust, reliable and with moderation procedures within and across schools if comparisons are to be made.

**Teacher Professionalism:** ATL is concerned that, throughout the document, the highly valued role of the General Teaching Council in Northern Ireland (GTC) is underplayed and, in particular, a key characteristic of a successful school would be the degree to which teachers are aware of and understand the Teacher Competency Framework produced by the GTC

## Consultation Point 2

### Key Issues to be Addressed

ATL does not agree with the “Key Issues” listed.

The ability of individual schools to improve systemic school performance ignores the most important “externalities” Schools are not, of themselves, a large variable. For instance, within the English DfES (2004) Statistics of Education, the variation in Pupil Progress 2003 is an important reference. It uses a huge database of pupil performance, itself a by-product of the target/performance system. Forthcoming work by Cassen (London School of

Economics) analyses nearly half a million individual pupil attainment paths. It found that prior attainment, gender, FSM (Free School Meals eligibility) and the effect of increasing numbers of pupils for whom English is a Second or Additional Language accounted for **92%** of the variance in later attainment in secondary schools. It states that only 'some of the unexplained [i.e.8%] variance may represent differences in school effectiveness'.

In short, unless these “external influences” are included, and at the top of the list, then ATL cannot support the view set out here.

**Socially Balanced Intakes:** ATL are astonished that no mention has been made of the effect of socially balanced intakes on school performance. It has long been generally accepted academically, if not acted upon by policymakers, that overall school performance improves with balanced intakes. The references at Note 1 are only a small selection of what is available. One extract, from **Sullivan and Whitty's** 2005 work <sup>(1)</sup> states:

*'There is consensus that school composition effects are important and that schools with a high proportion of students of low social status or low prior academic ability are at a disadvantage (Coleman 1966, Henderson et al 1978, Mortimore et al 1988, Rutter et al 1979, Smith and Tomlinson 1989, Summers and Wolfe 1977, Thrupp 1995, Willms 1986)...Levacic and Woods (2002) find the concentration of social disadvantage in a school relative to other local schools has a strong impact on GCSE improvement over time. These school composition effects may be due to the influence of peer groups on aspirations and behaviour, or they may be due to other processes, such as schools with low proportions of 'able' students finding it hard to attract good teachers.'*

**Assessment:** ATL will, additionally, warn of the dangers in over assessment.

The current assessment and testing system tends to:

- narrow the curriculum and reduces flexibility in curriculum coverage;
- have a negative impact on pupil attitude;
- depresses staff morale and leads to 'teaching to test.'

The current system of Key Stage tests

- leads to duplication of testing between stages, particularly between Key Stages 2 and 3;
- provides data which is not used by teachers upon which to build further learning;
- does not accurately reflect changes in performance over time;
- does not provide valid information about students' attainment;
- undermines Assessment for Learning approaches;
- produces performance levels that are not sustained;
- assesses a limited range of skills;
- measures schools on indicators that are not only too narrow but are damaging to learning;
- leads to a narrow teaching focus; often 'teaching to the test'
- excludes many higher-level cognitive skills;

- produces simplistic grades which often of little value in diagnosing learner needs.

**Terminology:** The “Every School a Good School” document has a negative and inspectorial tone running through it. ATL would request the Department of Education to replace the word “*inspection*” with a less threatening term such as “*School Performance Review*”

Other areas that impact on school improvement include the level of financial resources, class sizes, pupil behaviour, teacher workload, availability of good CPD opportunities for teachers, the effects of policy ‘churn’ and initiative overload.

### Consultation Point 3

#### Key Principles upon which School Improvement Policy should be based.

ATL recommends the inclusion and centrality of several “externalities”, notably:

- Wider external causes of school performance differentials (up to 85%) – see Consultation Point 1, above
- Balanced Intakes – see Consultation Point 2, above.
- Need for a review of Assessment– see Consultation Point 2, above.

**Fairness:** Additionally, ATL would propose the key principle of “Fairness” In particular, ATL considers that the “Teacher Exception” in Fair Employment legislation needs to be addressed – as this “sore thumb” encourages school managements to consider themselves “*untouchable*” and tends to promote poor, authoritarian, often biased or discriminatory “*command and control*” environments with little due regard to fairness.

**Career Structure:** ATL considers it a key principle that systemic educational performance will only improve when the career structure and roles are broadly consistent across Northern Ireland and expects the ESA to play a role in the standardisation of posts, responsibilities and rewards.

### Consultation Point 4

#### Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities

**Role of the Minister:** In view of the wider points made in Consultation Points 1, 2 and 3, ATL would argue that the Minister has an important political role in arguing for the wider measures that would address these “externalities”. Such measures may include:

- Wage compression;
- Income equality, and movement towards a minimum “living wage”;
- Tax Fairness - see recent TUC Report on tax avoidance in “The Missing Billions – the UK Tax Gap” (1);

- Targeting Social Need
- Health access.

ATL are concerned to see an imbalanced focus on the responsibilities of teachers alone. Teachers do have responsibilities, but so do Principals, Governors, Education employers and the Department of Education itself. In particular, it would be proper for the Education and Skills Authority to have a published “Service Standard” in regard to its duty towards teachers. Again, the role of the GTC is not apparent within “Every School a Good School”. ATL considers that the GTC Charter of Education should provide the basis for statements of entitlements that teachers and schools should expect from the ESA.

Parents and the wider local community have significant responsibilities in the education of young people which should be considered. In addition, will the Department, the ESA, the Education Advisory Forum and the growing number of planned sectoral education bodies all submit themselves to an evaluation process such as EQFM, liP or other?

### Consultation Point 5

#### **DE actions on a) Guidance on a) Self Evaluation and b) Design/Delivery of Training Package**

**Self Evaluation:** ATL considers that ETI should lead this work, and that there should be significant teacher representation on the policy working group to develop guidance on self evaluation. Teachers’ trade unions should be represented, as should the GTC (NI). That GTC work on self evaluation, as well as ETI publications such as “The Reflective Teacher” have been ignored in “Every School a Good School” are major omissions.

Equally consistent high quality Career Professional Development should be open to teachers, with the GTC playing a strong role, and CPD not narrowly linked to micro performance targets at school level.

ATL has long held the view that, just as one cannot “fatten the pig” by continually weighing it, so educating the child cannot be done by ever more onerous and regular measurement of performance. ATL considers that over-reliance on measurement and quantitative outcomes may distort the educational experience.

### Consultation Point 6

#### **DE Leadership Actions**

**Command and Control: Autocratic Leadership Styles:** ATL’s casework reports show that most of the problems we deal with are “people problems”, the exercise of power and “styles of management”. Issues such as workload, bullying, harassment, depression, staff conflicts and aggressive appraisal styles are symptomatic of poor, autocratic management styles.

Most teaching staff have worked nowhere else. Many go from school to teacher training college (or university) then back to school to start a long career. The experience is of a very structured and hierarchical organisation. Consequently, teachers are astonishingly deferential, passive and timid. Teacher workload is universally excessive. The difference between those who cope, and those who crack, is frequently related to the degree to which the school management style is collegiate, inclusive, trusting and warm.

Principals have considerable workload and responsibility themselves, but also have considerable, and unfettered, power. Principals who operate collegiate styles of management attract less attention from unions like ATL. Too often, however, schools are run on old fashioned “command and control” lines, with limited information sharing, “*grace and favour*” promotional systems, and a general absence of transparency. “Low trust” school environments are characterised by micro target setting, low autonomy and poor teamwork.

ATL’s task is to promote and propagate forms of school or “industrial” democracy, pointing to a better way. Teachers value having a positive “*work narrative*”, a purposeful sense of belonging to a shared enterprise. Our evidence is that this matters **even more than pay**, and is vital to personal well being. A few extra quid will never fully compensate for working ten hour days, with weekend working, in high stress, emotionally involved professional occupations.

Just as, within the establishment of the ESA, ATL believes there should be trade union representation on the Board (as well as within the Educational Advisory Forum), ATL also holds the view that there should be staff Trade Union representation directly on school Boards of Governors

The recent Skills at Work 1986-2006 survey report (2) gives a fascinating glimpse of the skills base in British workplaces, with some interesting outcomes for teachers. The 2006 report, following on comparable surveys in 1986, 1992, 1997 and 2001.

Over the past two decades, job skills have risen significantly across most sectors and indices, with the value of graduate level qualifications, “influencing skills” and complex computer skills particularly rising in the labour market. However, the report notes that *“the rise in skills amongst employees has not been accompanied by a corresponding rise in the control they can exercise over their jobs. Between 1992 and 2001 there was a marked decline in employee task discretion, which has remained unchanged since 2001.”* The report goes on to note that *“A comparison of the index of task discretion between 1992 and 2006 shows a particularly high loss of job control in ‘Education’ and ‘Finance’.”*

Skills at Work is a detailed, respected and authoritative source. It captures plainly the prime source of industrial relations concerns for teachers and lecturers – the loss of autonomy, professional judgement and job control.

In Northern Ireland and across the UK, we “*route march*” our children through more tests and exams than anywhere in Europe. Driven by centralized

targets, exposed in the media (through Freedom of Information) to the scrutiny of school league tables, constrained by the straightjacket of the national curriculum and micro managed through performance appraisal, the 'professionalism' of teachers is under strain. Increasingly, the role of teacher is challenged by a level of job discretion more resembling the role of a "Training Technician".

Job autonomy is important. Task discretion is an important determinant of psychological health and a reliable predictor of job satisfaction. That the skills expected of the teaching workforce are growing expeditiously whilst the autonomy and task discretion associated with teaching are steadily reducing should be a concern to all associated with the profession. The issue should now take centre stage in our educational debate within the School Improvement Policy.

Finally, ATL would propose that:

- Joint Industrial Relations Training for school leaders and school union reps;
- Externally accredited and portable Management courses for new and middle managers, such as the Chartered Manager award (CMI) and the ILM's "First Line Manager" award;
- A review is undertaken of the training available to Governors
- Access to the PQH qualification is not determined by, or at the behest of, the school Principal alone.

## Consultation Point 7

**Wider Community, parental support, specifically Re a) Extended Schools b) School Resource Materials to develop parental links and c) joined up Departmental actions**

**Extended Schools:** ATL broadly supports the principle of extended schools. While teachers and heads/Principals need to work in partnership with other agencies/organisations, they should not be in charge of the extended services. Schools normally fulfill a core community function as local "hubs" and this is a desirable target. The Extended Schools programme, however, still has the "feel" of an "initiative" or "scheme".

**ATL's concerns about Extended Schools are:**

- **Workload:** The concept of extended schools has been implemented in England within the context of the national agreement - "*Raising Standards, Tackling Workload*" DENI will be aware that this national workload agreement has not been implemented in Northern Ireland. ATL will be hawkish about any workload effects of extended schools on our members. There is equally the danger that young teachers are "cajoled", even bullied into taken on additional, unpaid duties;
- **Initiative Fatigue:** There is real danger that, with massive recent policy churn, the initiative will be seen through a prism of "initiative fatigue";

- **Universality:** Funding is not universal, and will be subject to distracting, time consuming, competitive bidding wars. At present funding is of a “project”, or temporary, nature;
- **Parents:** the role of parents and community interests should be central to the success of the Extended School, but that these roles and responsibilities should be clear and well understood;
- **Opening up schools?** That extended schools, run under the auspices of the school Board of Governors, will not – of itself – “open up” schools to increased community usage;
- **Councils:** The role of local government, which is central within many of the English good practice models - is unclear, as yet, in Northern Ireland;
- **PFI leeching:** There is real concern that PFI and PPP schools could see DENI funding eaten up by unreasonable profiteering by PFI service providers;
- **Current Provision:** ATL is cognisant that a significant “Play Club” network of some 240 “clubs” had been developed under the direction, guidance and auspices of Playboard NI (the lead children’s play charity in Northern Ireland).

It is not self evident that Playboard has been consulted adequately on this matter. Indeed there is evidence that we are witnessing the grotesque spectacle of Extended Schools funding becoming available at the same time as Play clubs (which should be central to the extended schools concept) are closing down for lack of continued EU funding. The prospect of the displacement of Play clubs by Extended Schools also cuts across the Shared Future policy. In many towns, villages and urban areas, Play clubs service three, four or more neighbourhood schools, providing rare opportunities for cross community contact

## Consultation Point 8

### Target Setting and Data

ATL has strong views that League Tables, micro targeting, over testing, over assessing and over prescription generally have had a debilitating effect on the quality of education. The research evidence that the school contributes to, at most, 15% of attainment, summarised in the introduction to this response, should be recognised. A far greater factor to impact upon performance is *within school variation* (i.e. variation in attainment between classes taken by teachers working in the same, and/or, different departments).

The effect of an accountability framework which ranks schools, and sets further targets, is that those schools with the most disadvantaged intakes end up at the bottom of the table, and are then vilified in the press and subject to oppressive and inappropriate monitoring. They are also set inappropriate targets for improving performance. And yet research in England has shown that, when value added measures are taken into account, it is recognised that many of these schools are performing well in relation to the socio-economic

circumstances of their intake, and would do even better if the accountability framework fully recognised their worth.

We have, in the UK, one of the most data rich education systems in the world. However, much of this data lacks reliability or validity. Over testing leads to an over concentration on the test items which makes the data on individual pupil performance, school performance and system performance, unreliable. Indeed, data gathered through testing systems generally tends to inflate educational achievements within the system. This inflation is then revealed through international comparisons of educational standards (e.g. through the OECD PISA tests.)

So, the question which should be considered is, *“How is data to be collected which is valid and reliable?”* ATL’s view is that much more emphasis needs to be placed on teacher assessment. Teachers should be supported in developing assessment systems which are comprehensive and reliable; trialled and moderated. The failure to involve teachers in developing assessment systems is leading to a loss of confidence and expertise, within the teaching profession, of their ability to assess their pupils’ achievements and areas for further development, and yet it is on this assessment that teaching which is personalised to the needs of the pupil is achieved and real rises in educational standards are built.

ATL recommends that cognisance is taken of the ETI indicators in *“Together Towards Improvement”* and that measures which take account of collaboration within schools are required as well as measures of external collaboration. Equally, measures of teacher satisfaction, teacher morale, teacher motivation, teacher and pupil happiness should be considered.

There should be full consultation with teachers unions on “Value Added” measures, Unique Pupil Numbers and Levels of Progression.

ATL considers that schools should consult with Trade Unions representatives in each school on the School Development Plan

ATL would be concerned at any “good practice” website which ignores the educational research repository in existence through ARRTS (Access to Research Resources for Teacher Space).

## **Consultation Point 9**

### **Quality Indicators for the School Improvement Process**

Like the IIP (Investors in People) quality initiative, setting “Quality Indicators” for the school improvement process can be useful, but can also become mechanistic – and consistent with the dangerous prevalent culture of micro management and micro measurement.

ATL are not convinced of the need for Quality Indicators without clarity on their purpose. Without understanding the *“Who? What? Where? When?”*

Why?”, it is difficult for ATL to support more potential scrutiny. The instrumental tone of the policy will undermine the proper use of performance data in the context of school development planning and evaluation.

## Consultation Point 10

### Suggested Indicators

ATL are not convinced of the purpose behind the indicators and strongly suspect a negative and inspectorial intent, but if Quality Indicators are required, ATL would say the most important indicators are:

- The Social Balance of the School Intake;
- Qualitative measures of external factors contributing / inhibiting school educational performance;
- The happiness of pupils;
- The Mental Well Being of staff, pupils, parents – the degree to which the school is “at ease” with itself;
- The degree to which there are measures of Industrial Democracy / social partnership in place within the school.

## Section C

The judgement as to whether schools are deemed to be “failing” and in need of “intervention” are often complex, with myriad factors to be taken account of. Schools operate within a wider education service of shared responsibilities and accountabilities. The first draft of “Every School a Good School” betrays a bias in favour of contestability, competition, ‘name and shame’ and an invasive, inspectorial view of performance appraisal. This flawed approach is taken without at all addressing the vast inequalities in school intake prevalent throughout Northern Ireland. Without fundamentally addressing the social balance of school intakes, the measures in Part C can only be read as vindictive.

## Section D

No consultation question has been raised in regard to Section D.

## And finally... ..

ATL would welcome the opportunity to engage with the Department and/or the Minister’s advisory staff to discuss this submission further.

## References:

- (1) The Missing Billions – the UK tax gap: Richard Murphy for the TUC, Touchstone Pamphlets, 2008 ISBN:978 1 85006 814 3
- (2) Skills at Work, Alan Felstead, Duncan Gallie, Francis Green, Ying Zhou, ERSC Centre on Skills Knowledge and Organisational Performance (SKOPE) 2007 ISBN-978-0-9555799-0-5

## Notes:

**Note 1** 'Life Chances and Educational Achievement in the UK: A Research and Policy Overview' in *'Maintaining Momentum: promoting social mobility and life chances from early years to adulthood'* Eds Delorenzi, Reed and Robinson London: Institute for Public Policy Research

### Other References on Balanced Intakes:

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