

*To investigate whether or not the current performance
management process is effective in Irish Post-Primary
Schools*

**By
Christopher O'Brien**



National College of Ireland

MA in Human Resource Management

Submitted to the National College of Ireland, 09/09/2013

Abstract

To investigate whether or not the current performance management process is effective in Irish Post-Primary Schools.

By Christopher O'Brien

Purpose: The aim of this dissertation is to explore whether or not the current performance management process is effective in Irish Post-Primary Schools, paying particular attention to how this process has been modified over time.

Methodology: The researcher, when carrying out the primary research on this dissertation topic will adopt an inductive-interpretivist approach. An exploratory design will be selected and implemented by using a qualitative method; this approach will include a number of in- depth interviews. Purposive sampling will then be applied; the sample will consist of four industry experts including two experienced principals and two teachers.

Findings: The Principal manages performance in Irish Post-Primary schools internally by conducting a Self-Evaluation; the Department of Education & Science also monitors them externally through a process known as a Whole School Evaluation. The external method of performance management appears to be inconsistent, this is as a result of a lack of financial and human resources supplied by the Department.

There is no motivational approach put in place to increase the productivity of an underperforming teacher. It is entirely up to the individual, they must have an element of self-motivation in order to be a high performing teacher. The promotional opportunities are restricted in this profession and if selected the promotion is typically a transition from a teaching role into an administrative role. With the Department making cutbacks, the idea of a rewards or recognition programme seems to be completely out of the question.

Value: There is a shortage of academic literature and research done on this topic within Ireland, by merging the relevant primary and secondary research it will benefit any current professionals operating in this industry, or any individual searching for information into it in the future.

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

National College of Ireland
Research Students Declaration Form
(Thesis/Author Declaration Form)

Name: _____

Student Number: _____

Degree for which thesis is submitted: _____

Material submitted for award

- (a) I declare that the work has been composed by myself.
- (b) I declare that all verbatim extracts contained in the thesis have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged.
- (c) My thesis will be included in electronic format in the College Institutional Repository TRAP (thesis reports and projects)
- (d) ***Either*** *I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.
Or *I declare that the following material contained in the thesis formed part of a submission for the award of

(State the award and the awarding body and list the material below)

Signature of research student: _____

Date: _____

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank my family particularly my Mom and my brother's Richard and Peter for their continuous support throughout the writing of this dissertation.

I would like to say a special thank you to my supervisor Bronwyn McFarlane for offering her availability and support throughout the year.

Thanks to Donall for critiquing the final draft of the written dissertation.

I would like to thank those that were interviewed in the primary research stage of this dissertation; their time and invaluable information were greatly appreciated.

Finally I would like to thank all of MAHRM for making the year a most enjoyable experience.

Table of Contents

Chapter One - Literature Review	1
1.1 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT	2
1.1.1 Purpose of Performance Management	2
1.1.2 Approaches to Performance Management	4
1.1.3 Perceived issues with the Performance Management Process	6
1.2 FACTORS INFLUENCING PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT	7
1.2.1 Factors influencing Performance Management	7
1.3 MOTIVATION AND THEORETICAL APPROACHES	10
1.3.1 Early Theoretical Approaches to Motivation	10
1.3.2 Modern Approaches to Motivation	12
1.3.3 Incentive Programmes and Performance Motivation	14
1.4 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS	15
1.4.1 Performance Management in English & Austrian Schools	15
1.4.2 Self-Evaluation and Principalship	16
1.4.3 Total Quality Management in Schools	17
Chapter Two - Irelands Post Primary School Sector	18
2.1 IRISH POST PRIMARY SCHOOL SYSTEM	19
2.1.1 Irelands Post Primary Educational System	19
2.1.2 The Categories of Each Post Primary School	19
2.1.3 State Funding and Fee Paying Schools	20
2.1.4 Perceived issues faced by Irish Post Primary Schools	20
2.3 MEASURING THE PERFORMANCE OF TEACHERS IN IRELAND	21

Chapter Three - Methodology	26
3.1 INTRODUCTION	27
3.2 PROBLEM DEFINITION	28
3.2.1 Research Objectives and Rationale.....	28
3.3 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY	29
3.3.1 Interpretivism.....	29
3.3.2 Positivism.....	30
3.3.3 Rationale for choice of philosophy.....	30
3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH	31
3.4.1 The Deductive Approach.....	31
3.4.2 The Inductive Approach.....	32
3.4.3 Rationale for choice.....	32
3.5 Research Design	33
3.5.1 Descriptive Studies.....	33
3.5.2 Exploratory Studies.....	33
3.5.3 Explanatory/Casual Studies.....	34
3.5.4 Rationale for choice.....	34
3.6 TIME HORIZONS	35
3.7 DATA COLLECTION	35
3.7.1 Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods.....	35
3.7.2 Data collection rationale.....	37
3.7.3 In-depth interviews.....	37
3.8 SAMPLING	38
3.8.1 Sample Size & Frame.....	38
3.9 CODING	39
3.10 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS	39

Chapter Four - Findings	41
4.1 INTRODUCTION	42
4.2 FINDINGS - OBJECTIVE ONE.....	42
4.3 FINDINGS - OBJECTIVE TWO.....	48
4.4 FINDINGS - OBJECTIVE THREE.....	51
4.5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	56
Chapter Five - Recommendations & Conclusions	58
5.1 INTRODUCTION	59
5.2 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IN IRISH SCHOOLS	59
5.3 MOTIVATION AND INCENTIVE SCHEMES IN IRISH SCHOOLS	60
5.4 DEVELOPING THE CURRENT PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS IN IRISH SCHOOLS	62
5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS	63
<u>Bibliography</u>	64
Appendices.....	72
Appendix A - Industry Experts Interviewed.....	72
Appendix B - Topic Guide.....	73
Appendix C - Transcribed Interviews.....	74

List of Figures

Figure 1: The Performance Management Cycle.....	3
Figure 2: The Human Performance System.....	8
Figure 3: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.....	11
Figure 4: Herzbergs Motivation – Hygiene Theory.....	12
Figure 5: Vroom's Expectancy Theory.....	14
Figure 6: The "Research Onion"	27
Figure 7: The Two Research Approaches.....	31
Figure 8: Quantitative & Qualitative Data.....	36

INTRODUCTION

“Children have a right to an education, a quality education.”

(Colby & Witt, 2000).

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore whether or not the current performance management system employed by the State is effective in Irish Secondary Schools, paying attention to how systems have been altered over recent years in order to increase efficiency and results within schools.

The author has endeavored to illustrate the aspects of quality education including evaluating the processes through which trained teachers use child-centered approaches within well managed classrooms in order to produce outcomes that cover the knowledge, attitudes and skills, which are associated with national goals for education. The researcher attempts to extensively investigate the methods used by the State in assessing the performance of post-primary teachers in Ireland. Teachers are obliged to be inspected by the Department of Education and Science on a regular basis in order to monitor performance and ensure high standards are being maintained. Whole school evaluations were also implemented in 2003-2004 aiming to complement and improve the development of inspections.

Theory, secondary research and industry facts will be examined to gain a background to this sector. The rationale behind the research methodology will be provided in chapter three. The primary research conducted will be qualitative, comprising of in depth interviews with four sector experts.

Chapter One - Literature Review

1.1 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

1.1.1. Purpose of Performance Management

Armstrong (2006, p. 1) defines performance as a systematic process for improving organisational performance by developing the performance of individuals and teams. Essentially this means achieving better results from the organisation, individuals and its teams by managing performance within an agreed framework of standards, competency requirements and planned goals.

Performance management ultimately aims to attain a high performance culture which “attempts to make the good better, share an understanding about what is to be achieved, develop the capacity of people to achieve it and provide the support and guidance people need to deliver high performance and achieve their full potential to the benefit of themselves and the organisation” (Armstrong & Baron 2005, p. 2)

Armstrong (2006, p12) emphasises that the performance management process should be flexible, and not regarded as a “system” as this suggests a standardised, rigid and bureaucratic approach that is not consistent with the theory that performance management is a evolutionary and flexible process that is implemented by managers working with their colleagues in the particular environment in which they operate. Performance management needs to be capable of fitting process-based and flexible organizations. These organisations are increasingly becoming the norm, and the process has replaced the appraisal system that typically fits hierarchal and bureaucratic organisations.

The processes of performance management consists of a number of phases:

1. Planning: This phase involves agreeing on certain objectives and competence requirements, which formulate performance agreements, performance development plans and performance improvement strategies.
2. Acting: This phase involves carrying out the chosen activities necessary to achieve plans and objectives.
3. Monitoring: Regularly assessing the progress in achieving the objectives.
4. Reviewing: Analysing achievements and progress so that further action plans can be agreed on and then put into place.

Figure 1: The Performance Management Cycle



There are various activities involved in the performance management process. The main activities include producing a role definition, by doing this the competence requirements and key result areas are defined. The performance agreement is then generally produced outlining expectations, what the individual must do to achieve objectives, how performance will be measured and the competences required to deliver results. A personal development plan is then designed; this provides the path necessary to develop a person's knowledge and skills to improve their levels of competence.

Managing performance throughout the year is essential, as individuals carry out their day-to-day work and planned learning activities it is important to continuously provide them with feedback on their performance by conducting informal reviews and updated objectives. Finally a performance review is done at the formal evaluation stage, this takes into account the achievements the progress and the problems faced by the employee and will act as a foundation for producing a revised performance agreement (Armstrong 2008, p19).

1.1.2 Approaches to Performance Management

The director of the Performance Management Group, De Ceri Thomas (2013) provided a review of the five main approaches that are available to organisations when attempting to manage the performance of their staff.

This first approach is known as Total Performance Management. This would be regarded as the most structured approach consisting of a set of organised activities such as role profiles, individual targets or objectives, personal development plans and appraisals with an element of feedback or self assessment from managers.

The second approach is the Skills and Competency Based Approach and is a less complex method. This approach has a greater emphasis on competencies as a framework for measuring and structuring progression, as well as being an approach linked strongly with pay. It interprets that the traditional management by objectives method is not suitable for certain employees. The key to better performance is the attainment of new skills and the exhibition of existing skills.

The third approach is based within a team driven environment applying considerable priority towards the business plan or a set of specified goals. This approach can be useful when introducing a new business unit or section with a number of detailed goals to be achieved.

Houldsworth & Machin (2008) wrote a paper based around various approaches towards team performance management and how they could be integrated into companies within the BERLON group. The mechanism they have used is the climate measure (OCSII); this is being used within the business to help determine leadership capability. The paper focuses its attention mainly on team climate and how it can be affected with organisational performance. This performance management approach has been designed to support the businesses strategic objectives, encouraged by the CEO with the intention of focusing on developing individuals to become more efficient leaders to ultimately benefit BERLON and its success in the future.

It was found that the emphasis on monitoring climate has been a major contributing factor that has enhanced BERLONS recent organisational performance. The paper examined three sectors of the business where implemented changes in climate have led to improvements in the businesses performance. However the report argues that even

though “high performing climates appear to be linked with profitability, or other measures of business performance, this is not seen to be universal within the company” (Houldsworth & Machin, 2008). The climate survey used in this approach is a device, which has been used since the 1960’s with a strong link to benefiting performance. This approach is described as a supporting tool for developing team performance management.

De Ceri Thomas (2013) has named the fourth approach as a continuous learning and coaching approach; this is the most individually based method of performance management. It specifically focuses on improving performance by demonstrating how individuals learn best through experience. This begins with the individual having an informal discussion with a manager or a coach and coming to a conclusion as to what their strengths and weaknesses are. The individual then focuses on two or three weaknesses, which had been previously been identified. By choosing this approach the individual can build a greater level of self-confidence, as it is easier to produce a number of quick wins increasing their motivation to perform better.

The fifth approach is project based. A typical problem with performance management is that it is essentially based on formal roles and reporting lines within the business as opposed to what work is actually being done. An example of this can be seen through group projects whereby the contribution that an individual makes is not necessarily what they have been put there to do. This approach looks at how organisations are trying to re-focus performance management processes around project working. This emphasises the skills and attributes the individual brings to the project and how they are deployed.

IRS, Ed Lawler and Michael McDermott carried out research as to how performance management is deployed in organisations. An IRS survey that was carried out in 2003 had a sample of 47 organisations and it identified that there are three main approaches to performance management (Armstrong, 2006 p36).

The first approach is known as a clear strategy: it is a systematic method with a formal policy matching all areas of the performance management process. The results of the survey illustrated that 48% of the respondents opted for this approach (Armstrong, 2006 p36).

The second strategy is a general approach: in this method policies exist in key areas such as employee appraisal, development and job evaluation, however there was no overall performance management strategy. This approach was slightly less popular amongst the respondents of the survey as it was only adopted by 42% (Armstrong, 2006 p36).

The final approach included a few initiatives: here an *ad hoc* strategy existed to performance management, with policies being present in some areas but not in others, this approach is very poorly coordinated. This was the least favourite approach as only 10% of respondents chose it (Armstrong, 2006 p36).

1.1.3 Perceived issues with the Performance Management Process

Thorpe & Beasley (2004) wrote a paper on the characteristics of performance management research. In this paper they considered the role of an academic contribution in performance management. It stated that there are three main issues that make performance management a unique area of research. These issues reveal how a business and its management may face problems that will effect performance management.

The first issue revolves around the practice of management being largely diverse. Management is required to work across technical, cultural and functional boundaries, information must be gathered from relevant areas that may influence performance such as economics, statistics and mathematics in order to provide a more organized and meaningful approach to the practice.

The second issue is in relation to a research agenda in performance management and whether to investigate it from one perspective or one discipline or to consider a “cross-disciplinary approach and to what extent can practitioners bring insights to our understanding of this domain” (Thorpe & Beasley, 2004).

The third issue involves gaining respectability from academic peers by reproducing useful findings that involve the practice of managers. Heron & Reason (2001) imply that the theories of organisation do not have much relevance to practical issues that face employees actually managing a business. (Thorpe & Beasley, 2004).

Halachmi (2011) had a further issue with the performance management process; he attempted to inform managers and those in authority about the potential dangers of relying too much on performance measurement as a management tool. The paper found that the current pressure to increase awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in the way that people are evaluated professionally and who is responsible for conducting the evaluations could be counterproductive. Also there is an additional burden on those who need to demonstrate the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation. The future allocation of resources and increased productivity make the use of performance measurement extremely attractive. Failure to comprehend the possible follies of over relying on performance measurements can lead to it not working in the way it was intended to, affecting the service of the public's best interest (Halachmi, 2011).

Greiling (2006) had a similar view on this issue. He has very definite opinions on how an individual's performance is measured and whether or not there this can act as a tool for increasing the efficiency of public services. He investigates, in detail, therefore possible methods of increasing the efficiency of public services that can be achieved through performance measurement and performance based contracting. The report finds that most of the theories applied to obtain a theory driven answer were unconvincing leading to the conclusion that performance measurement is not reliable as an efficiency driver. (Greiling, 2006).

1.2 FACTORS INFLUENCING PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

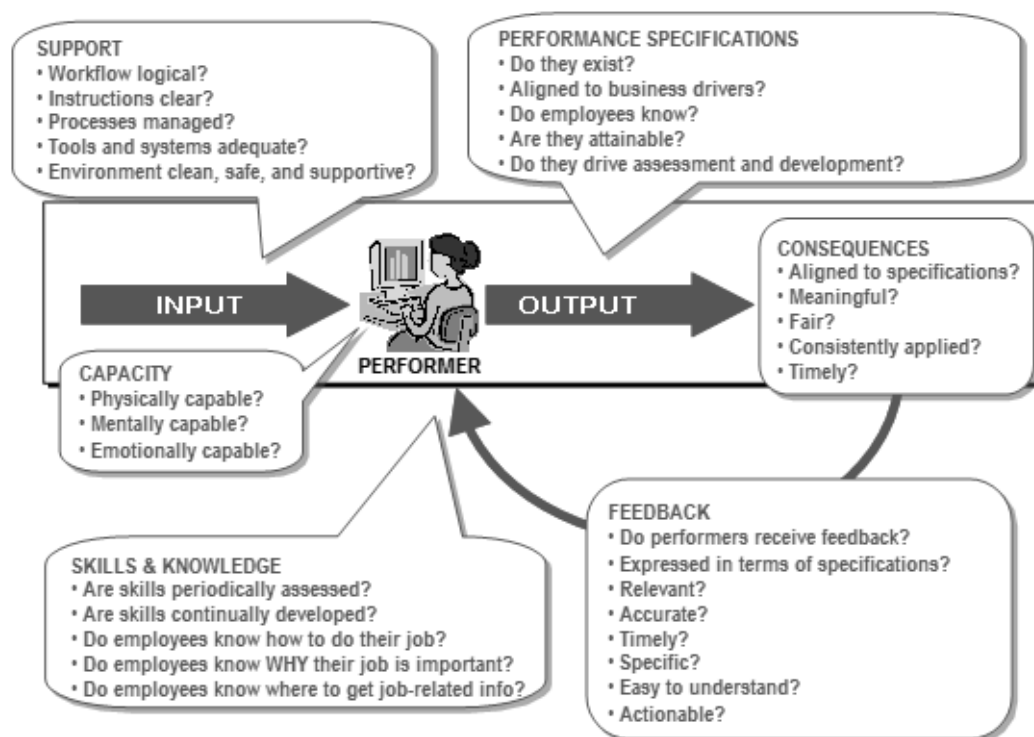
1.2.1 Factors Influencing Performance Management

Rummler & Brache (1990) illustrated six variables that affected one's job performance as illustrated in Figure 2. The six variables take the influences of performance specification, consequences, knowledge and skill, task interference and individual capacity into account. They manufactured a basis systems model, which comprised of input, output, consequences and feedback. Some performance variables can influence the performer directly. However, other variables affect the performer indirectly through the environment that surrounds them as they carry out their work. For example organisational culture is a less direct but typically powerful influence on performance.

Performance expectations are strongly linked with outputs this is because they relate to expectations, goals and standards regarding output. However barriers are linked to inputs to performance. Signals to performance, conflicting tasks or actions and resources such as finances, equipment, tools and information are all included in this category. Consequences linked with outcomes of performance and can have a positive or negative disposition.

Similarly feedback relates to information that people obtain regarding their performance. This provides the information required to allow performers know how they are doing. A person's manager or supervisor may provide this or it may be built into the job itself, therefore allowing the person to know, without external feedback as to whether their performance was adequate or in need of correction. The final two variables include skill/knowledge and individual capacity; these ultimately rely on the performer (Rothwell et al 2007).

Figure 2: The Human Performance System



Thomas Gilbert (1978) created The Behaviour Engineering Model, which also identifies six variables that correlate strongly to those listed by Rummler & Brache. The six variables include the following:

- Resources, environmental supports and tools
- Consequences, rewards and incentives
- Data and information
- Skills and Knowledge
- Motives
- Individual capacity

These can be divided into two categories. The first three variables are environmental variables, which influence performance, as they are external to the individual. It is generally the organisations responsibility to provide the performer with what they need to be successful and it is the manager's job to remove any barriers that might get in the way. The last three variables are internal to the person. These variables can strongly affect performance but they rely on the individual.

Resources can include tools, financial resources, equipment, time and other environmental supports. Management should provide sufficient resources to performers in order to enable them achieve their optimal levels of performance. When such resources are not provided it is very unlikely that performance expectations will be achieved. In fact it often results in lower levels of performance.

Incentives, consequences and rewards are there to encourage employees to perform. Consequences can be negative and positive, this can be beneficial for example if an employee receives a negative consequence following a certain behavior it is less likely that it will be repeated. Incentives and rewards have an opposite affect and they can come in many forms, such as a verbal warning, on one hand, or a formal recognition for an individual's increased effort to improve their performance on the other.

Data and information play a significant role in affecting how performance is managed. This category includes the expectations set out by the organisation with regards to goals and desired performance. Job standards and goals are also information that can help provide a sense of drive or motivation that a person requires to deliver high performance. Specific, timely and useful feedback aids an individual to correct poor performance, as well as helping to enhance effective performance. Buckingham & Coffman (1999) emphasize that the importance of this research is to focus on the

strengths rather than the individual's weaknesses when providing feedback to assist in producing successful performance.

Gilbert, like Rummler & Brache, examined the internal individual variables, which influence performance. Again he focused on the individual's skills and knowledge and how people acquire knowledge and skills through a variety of different methods including formal training programs and educational institutions. When an aspect of knowledge or skill is absent the result is, most often, poor performance in that specific area.

He also examined personal capacity and established that some people just do not have the capabilities to operate in a high performance environment. Capabilities can be limited by mental or physical reasons that are necessary to perform particular jobs. Motives include the reasons for people doing what they do, how they see themselves, their desires, needs, fears, hopes and a range of other personality traits (Rothwell et al, 2007, p6).

1.3 MOTIVATION AND THEORETICAL APPROACHES

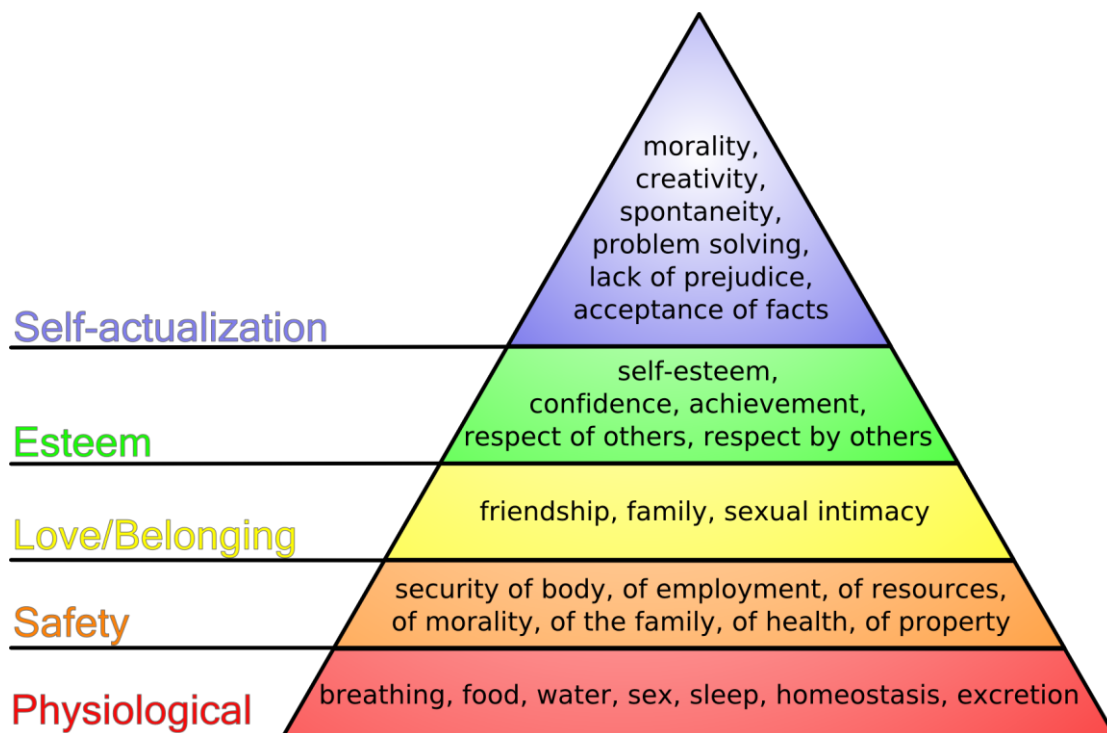
1.3.1 Early Theoretical Approaches to Motivation

Performance Management aims at increasing the workforce's motivation to achieve organisational objectives. Robbins & Coulter (2007) define motivation as "the willingness to exert high levels of effort to reach organisational goals, conditioned by the effort's ability to satisfy some individual need".

Humanistic theories are based around the idea that people have strong cognitive reasons for performing numerous different actions. This is illustrated in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which characterizes performance at different levels. Maslow (1943, 1954) believed that by satisfying individual's needs their overall motivation is enhanced. He established a hierarchy of needs, which aimed at increasing performance in the work place and providing them with a sense of job satisfaction. The hierarchy begins with the most basic needs and as each one is satisfied an employee will eventually reach a level of self-actualization. He formulated a five-stage model segmented into basic needs including physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem and self-actualization needs.

Mcleod (2007) highlighted that this theory was initially targeted at anyone who had the desire to move up the hierarchy to maintain a level of self-actualization. However, progress is generally disrupted, as the lower level needs have not been met. Life experience and emotions play a huge part in the success of this theory.

Figure 3: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Douglas McGregor's (1960) Theory X and Theory Y approach to motivation segmented people into two different categories. He believed Theory X employees are assumed to be workers who have little ambition, avoid responsibility, dislike work and require to be monitored by a manager or a supervisor. On the other hand Theory Y employees are quite the opposite. They are assumed to be workers who can exercise initiative and self-direction as well as desire and responsibility. These types of individuals enjoy their work and are already self motivated. There is no evidence proving that either set of assumptions is, in fact, true nor is there any evidence illustrating that Theory Y workers have been proven to be more motivated towards their organizational goals.

Frederick Herzbergs (1959) Motivation-Hygiene Theory was based on a study among employees to establish what were the satisfying motivators and the dissatisfied hygiene factors. Intrinsic characteristics consistently related to job satisfaction. Motivator

factors increased job satisfaction and extrinsic characteristics were linked to job dissatisfaction. Figure 4 illustrates the different types of motivator and hygiene factors.

Figure 4. Herzbergs Motivation – Hygiene Theory



1.3.2 Modern Approaches to Motivation

Adams' equity theory (1963) identified that employees recognise exactly what they get from a job situation as a result of what they have put into it. Employees then can compare their own input and outcome ratio with that of others operating in a similar job situation. According to this theory if ratios perceived to be evenly distributed then a state of equity exists. However, if ratios are not equal, inequity exists and it can effect whether a person feels over or under rewarded. Typically when this situation occurs, employees attempt to rebalance the ratios by increasing performance. It has the potential to create a competitive culture within the organisation.

When inequity exists within a business, employees generally respond in a number of ways. They can distort their own or others' ratios alter their own inputs or outcomes, persuade others to change their own inputs or outcomes, choose a different comparison or even quit their job. The distributive justice influences an employee's satisfaction;

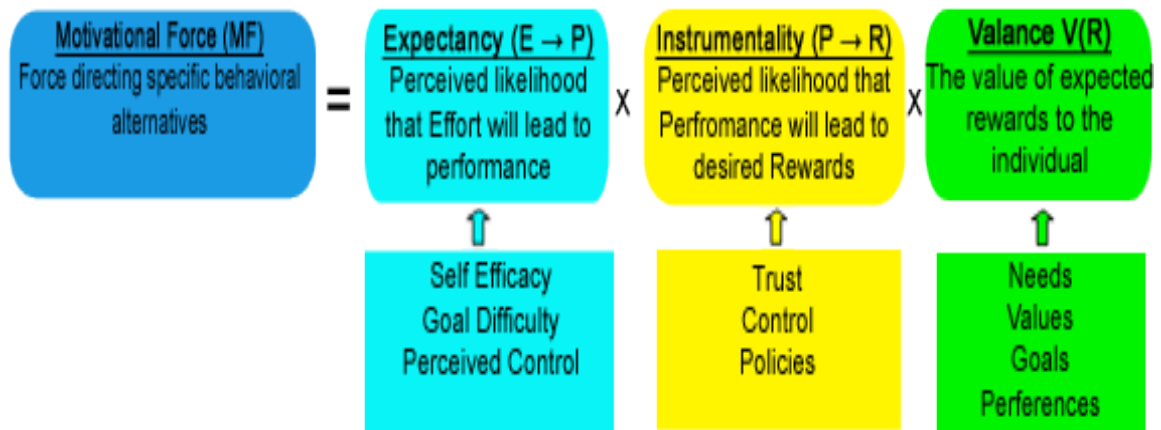
this is the perceived fairness of the amount and the distribution of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards among individuals. The procedural justice affects an employee's commitment to the business; this specifically looks at how fair the process is for determining the allocation of rewards.

Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964) states that people tend to act in particular ways based on the expectation that the act will be followed by a certain outcome and that the outcome will be extremely appealing to the individual. It is important when considering this theory to understand and manage employee's goals and the link that they have towards effort, performance and rewards. There should be valid appraisal systems in place here to assess the effort an employee applies to training and development and ultimately provide them with the appropriate rewards to satisfy their needs.

Expectancy Effort – Performance: Expectancy is the belief that an individual's efforts result in the achievement or attainment of desired performance objectives. This is generally based on one's past experiences, self-efficacy and the perceived difficulty of the performance goal or set standard. Factors that can influence a person's expectancy include goal difficulty, self-efficacy and control. In order for an employee's expectancy to be high they must have some control over the initial outcome.

Instrumentality Performance – Outcome: This is the belief that an individual will receive a reward if they have achieved a level of performance that was expected of them. This reward can be in the form of recognition, a promotion, a salary increase or a sense of accomplishment. Valence is the value people place on rewards based on their overall sources of motivation such as their needs, values and goals. This theory can aid a manager's understanding of how individuals are motivated to make decisions and inspect their various behavioral alternatives.

Figure 4: Vroom's Expectancy Theory



1.3.3 Incentive Programmes and Performance Motivation

There are two main types of rewards, extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. Extrinsic rewards are concrete rewards that an individual can receive and are typically of a monetary value for example bonuses, a salary raise, promotion, gifts and other kinds of tangible rewards. Intrinsic rewards are intended to provide an element of personal satisfaction. These rewards include recognition, trust and information or feedback.

Milne (2005) identified that reward and recognition programmes can positively influence performance, motivation and interest within an organisation. Informal incentives such as recognition are often found to be more powerful than a formal incentive programme. Prendergast and Topel (1996, p960) are of the opinion that objective and accurate methods of measuring an employee's performance are generally unavailable. Performance is rather measured from the subjective opinions made by superiors and this may leave the door open for favoritism which could be a major flaw as it could lead to a unmotivated workforce if others feel they are being treated less favorably.

Smith, contrastingly, highlights how financial rewards have been at the core of reward management expositions for the last 35 years. He believes that there has been a strong link with pay and performance in both the private and public sectors. Crow (2008)

discussed how school reform literature calls for attention to be paid towards providing incentives for teachers. He conducted a study whereby a sample of elementary school principals were given career incentives and then their behavior was monitored towards these incentives. This study established that principals viewed their career as having ancillary, economic and task related rewards. However, various principals have different preferences over which incentives they would like to receive and the nature of their future goals.

1.4 PERFROMANCE MANAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

1.4.1 Performance Management in English & Australian Schools

Brown (2005) investigates numerous ways in which performance can be managed in English primary schools. This journal can be used to contrast the various processes implemented in both primary and post primary schools. The paper highlighted that in primary schools a variety of performance management processes are used. The varied use of performance measuring tools to assess a teacher's efficiency is a result of the principal's uncertainty and understanding of how to introduce effective performance management. According to a study within the report a minimum of 24 out of 30 head teachers found that the level of performance management training that they received was not sufficient to enable them to properly assess the efficiency of their staff. It highlighted how those in authority received no formal training on performance management (Brown, 2005)

Similarly Mulford et al (2008) examined successful school principalship in the Australian state of Tasmania. Surveys on successful school principalship were sent to a population of 195 government schools with 67 percent of them completing it. Surveys investigated relevant factors such as "demographic characteristics (including a measure of poverty), leadership characteristics, values and beliefs, tensions and dilemmas, learning and development, school capacity building, decision making, evaluation and accountability, and perceptions of school success" (Mulford et al, 2008). The report established that world wide poverty is a huge issue today, and there is a divide between poverty and education.

The journal questions the effectiveness of schools as institutions in serving the students in high poverty areas. Certain schools will become known as high poverty institutes

and will reflect on the type of student it attracts. Common characteristics of these schools are successful and high-performing leadership. (Mulford et al, 2008).

1.4.2 Self-Evaluation & Principalship

In contrast Sarrico, Rosa & Manatos (2012) found that self-evaluation and performance management were not well developed in schools. Instead the majority of schools just monitor progression, completion rates and exam results. They did not appear to do this in a formal and systematic way and are confused as to what the overall results of assessment convey and how they can use this information to assess the schools strengths and weaknesses in the particular area of performance being measured. They established that teachers found it difficult to make the transition from the measurement of results to improvement actions. They have established that self-evaluation has displayed improvement actions in only a small number of those participating. An agreement that the external evaluation process of schools has encouraged the development of self-evaluation (Sarrico, Rosa & Manatos, 2012).

Al-Hamdan & Al- Yacoub (2005) aimed to examine the different opinions of those involved in evaluating the performance of principals in a Kuwait secondary school. The study was designed to establish the strengths and weaknesses associated in performance evaluation process. A sample of section heads was taken including principals to take part in a 15-item questionnaire. The study identified that the opinion of the sample group was that the performance evaluation form designed for the principal, allowed for self evaluation, encouraged discipline at work by minimizing absence, allowed them to enhance their performance in the next semester of the following study year and encouraged participation in training courses (Al-Hamdan & Al- Yacoub, 2005).

Agasisti, Bonomi & Sibiano (2012) researched whether or not managerial characteristics within a school could influence their performance. Their aim was to outline the factors that influence increasing school performance, measured by recognizing and establishing student achievement. A private Italian junior secondary school was chosen to complete a survey. The survey highlighted some features that characterize high performance schools. Formalized, structured tests that are fully capable of measuring student achievement should be in place and put into action, special services would be provided for disabled or foreign students, a high level of

authority provided to principals in decision making and a good staff morale working towards achieving a common goal (Agasisti, Bonomi & Sibiano, 2012).

1.4.3 Total Quality Management in Schools

Perillo (2006) wrote a paper on practice enhancement and optimising teaching performance in schools. The idea behind practice enhancement is to use it as a tool to develop strategies for examining, changes in communications and excellence in teaching practice planning. The paper illustrates the importance of managers accurately implementing appraisals and states that it should be critically considered by school leaders and teaching staff when formulating a process for managing the performance of teachers in schools (Perillo, 2006).

Toremen, Karakus & Yasan (2009) examined total quality management systems in primary schools based on the teacher's views and how their perceptions are related to different variables. The study found that teachers identified with the indicators of total quality management (TQM) practices, especially with regards to change management. Teachers expressed different views on TQM depending on the levels of education, variables of branch and tenure. There were no differences according to the gender variable (Toremen, Karakus & Yasan, 2009).

Chapter Two- Irelands Post-Primary School Sector

2.1 IRISH POST-PRIMARY EDUCATIONAL SECTOR

2.1.1 Irelands Post-Primary Educational System

In Ireland, post primary education caters for students in the 12 to 18 year old age group. The system begins when the student enters in to a 3-year junior cycle of study; this is followed by a 2-year senior cycle with the option of an additional 1-year transitional study to break up the two cycles. Therefore the length of post primary education leads to 5 or 6 years in total. Formal State evaluations take place at the end of both the junior and senior cycles, with a greater emphasis on the senior cycle, as the results obtained on the Leaving Certificate Examinations are essential for admission in to third level education.

According to the Education Welfare Act 2000 [1], in Ireland, education is compulsory from the age of 6 to 16; students are required to have a minimum of 3 years of secondary school education before being capable of leaving school. The Department of Education and Science regulate the organization of post primary schools including the enrollment process and the curriculum.

2.1.2 The Categories of each Post-Primary School

There are 723 Secondary schools in Ireland according to the Statistics Report for 2011/2012, carried out by the Department of Education and Skills. The majority of these schools are voluntary secondary schools (with 376 schools in total, enrolling 186,409 students), followed by vocational schools (with 254 schools in total, enrolling 116,839 students) and then comprehensive and community schools (with 93 in total enrolling 55,799 students). The majority of these schools are denominational. There has been a tradition in Ireland of single sex schools; this trend has been recently changing. Approximately 80 percent of the State Supported Primary schools are mixed sex pupil clientele along with nearly half of the Post-Primary schools (Coolahan, 2005 p141).

Voluntary Secondary Schools have always dominated the secondary educational sector in Ireland. These schools are predominantly owned by religious authorities such as, the Catholic Church. The academic education being provided by these schools is their main focus with the overall intention of preparing students for further education. The local vocational education committees monitor and regulate the vocational schools, concentrating specifically on technical and professional training. In order to cater for multi-denominational and secular education, community and comprehensive schools were created in the 1960's with the objective of combining both the professional and academic training.

2.1.3 State Funding and Fee-Paying Schools

Regardless of the type of school, the state pays all teachers directly. The state fully finances vocational, community and comprehensive schools, although this does not always apply to voluntary schools. Voluntary schools, which choose to be non-fee paying on a per capita basis, are financed by the state.

There are 55 fee-paying Voluntary Secondary Schools in Ireland enrolling 25,601 students, these particular Voluntary schools fees average between 5,000 and 8,000 Euro per student, per year, and therefore they do not receive the per capita grant. Depending on the schools admission policy irrespective as to whether they are fee-paying or a non-fee-paying school they may offer a scholarship scheme to students to cater for students from low socio economic backgrounds or students with a record of good results.

2.1.4 Perceived issues faced by Irish Post-Primary Schools

The demographic boom and the recession in Ireland have posed problems for Irish schools at both primary and secondary school level. The problems faced include flooded applications on enrollment dates and increasing saturation. An additional issue, which has surfaced over the years, is the misuse of the exception clause by schools for example refusing admission to children of the traveling community, children with no faith or even children with special needs on the grounds of the schools ethos.

The new system which has been tested in Limerick over the past 5 years is by no means stable or strategy proof. In online forums, parents have displayed their concerns and disappointment in the system where their children have been rejected from their first choice school and have been placed in a school down at the bottom of their preference list.

2.3 MEASURING THE PERFORMANCE OF TEACHERS IN IRELAND

Towards the end of 2007, 20,000 people took up office in Boards of Management in 3,300 schools across the country. The Boards of Management are the legal employers of the teachers operating in Ireland, therefore it was seen to be desirable that a clear set of guidelines were implemented with regard to the recruiting and performance management of all school teachers.

Ruari Quinn (2008) stated “the lack of clarity in the past has created problems for pupils, parents, teachers, principals and Boards of Management alike. An agreed procedure with clear guidelines and safeguards would benefit all concerned, particularly those teachers who are not considered to be performing to the required standard”. The Minister for Education and Science welcomed any suggestions on how to reinforce and improve the current method of assessing our teacher’s performance. He went on to highlight that he believes the vast majority of Irish principals and their teachers are performing exceptionally well given their current circumstances where the capitation grant only provides for 50 per cent of the costs of being able to operate a 100-pupil school.

Until recently, the performance assessments of Irish teachers operating in secondary schools were conducted externally by the Department of Education. Whole school evaluations (WSE) are used as a tool to rigorously monitor and evaluate the quality of a school’s management, teaching and an overall learning assessment. The type of WSE can vary regarding primary schools and post primary schools. The evaluation can specifically focus on a particular subject or inspect a broader range of lessons on the recommended curriculum. (The Department of Education and Science).

Early in 2012 the Department of Education hinted at implementing a schools self-evaluation scheme in order to have a better management system, enhancing a schools overall performance. Teachers in Ireland have shown that they can improve their pupils learning by regularly reviewing their practice. This new systematic process requires the cooperation of school principals, deputy principals, and teachers and also the board of management. Parents and students are consulted in order for permission to be granted to allow the evaluation processes begin (Department of Education and Skills, 2012)

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) conducted a Teaching and Learning International survey in 2009. The survey indicated IBEC's plans to progress and improve professional development and performance management of Irish teachers. This survey highlighted that the work of teachers operating in Irish secondary schools is not evaluated regularly enough when compared to other OECD states. It also showed that the teachers of Ireland do not receive as much professional development as their European counterparts. The report showed Irish teachers only undertook 6 days of professional development over an 18-month period, in comparison to an average of 15 in other countries. 44% of Irish teachers have been working in schools that have been self evaluated, contrasting with 70% in European schools. Finally it highlighted that 57% of our teachers said they have been appraised or received any feedback from a principal, this percentage is much higher in TALIS countries being 78%. (IBEC Agenda, 2009)

The National TALIS report was issued by the Education Research Centre, which included providing a more extensive range of development mechanisms, such as increasing external inspector visits to schools. The report called for a better approach to administrative duties by principals in order to improve the standard of supervision of their workforce. It proposed that external evaluations occurred in every school at least once every five years. Progress for schools to implement self-evaluations will enhance future developments in important areas. (IBEC Agenda, 2009)

In 2013 the chief schools inspector hinted at the prospect of there being annual reviews on the performance of both principals and teachers. Harold Hislop highlighted that Ireland lacked the presence of a regular system for effectively evaluating a schools staff. However he did mention that yearly performance management and development

reviews were utilised in the civil and public service. The rationale behind researching into this area and thus formulating a fully functional evaluation system was to develop a better system for assessment and looking at how the results of the assessment can be used to improve teaching and learning.

The most common mechanism currently in use by the Department of Education involves a process called Whole School Evaluation (WSE), which can include school inspections, teacher appraisal and student assessments to measure and improve the quality of education being taught. When the inspector has completed the WSE, the inspector, detailing his/her findings, writes a report. The report is then submitted to the school involved for approval, and then published by the Department of Education and Science. Once the report has been published the school can then review its performance results and analyse their strengths and weaknesses as outlined in the report.

The school development planning process begins with a whole school review. This process involves an analysis of the current organisational and curricular realities focusing specifically on the elements of teaching that are working and activities that need to be updated or refined. A huge amount of data needs to be considered in order to carry out a WSE effectively; this data includes attendance records, teacher observation notes, copybooks, pupil's journals, profiles and portfolios, parent/pupil feedback and school plans for different curricular areas.

In order for schools to engage effectively in initiating quality assurance practice it is important that both the schools management and its staff have access to methodologies and instruments which will aid their overall performance. By conducting an internal review, planning and a School Self-Evaluation (SSE) it aims to help in achieving the standards of quality, which they aspire to. Each school works within a specific local context. Some of the factors can include;

- The location, size and catchment area of the school
- Pupils' special needs
- Physical, material and human resources available at the school

- Socio-Economic Circumstances of the students and community

A set of themes arises under which a school may undertake a self-evaluation of its own performance. The themes cover five broad areas including school management, curriculum provision, school planning, support for pupils and learning and teaching in curriculum areas. In order to be able to make judgments, the school will attempt to gather information specifically focusing on the relevant theme or themes that are being evaluated. After collecting and analysing all of the evidence and information, the school will then be in a position to reflect on its own performance and make a statement with regard to the themes area or aspect of its activity.

According to the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) (2013) when considering how a school is performing under a theme, it is useful to think of a quality continuum consisting of a number of specified points representing stages of development in the improvement process. The most common used continuum consists of four levels including:

- Significant/major weaknesses
- Weaknesses outweighing strengths
- Significant Strengths
- Strengths outweighing weaknesses

Once the area of weakness has been identified the school can then draft a plan of action to improve on this theme. In order for the SSE to be effective the system must be monitored and adapted to suit any incoming changes, which may occur in the educational sector. By conducting this internal review regularly it will continue to be relevant and of assistance to schools and become part of the schools development planning process.

Rhodes et al (2012) found the Bouckaert and Halligans framework is useful for assessing public sector performance management, however it may have to be altered. The administrative culture was found to be an important factor in influencing the speed of the change and the attitude of those in authority is a crucial piece of the process, which is part of the framework of Pollitt and Bouckaert. It finds evidence that political and economic crises accelerate the introduction of integrated performance management

systems, however trust in the government does not seem to be an important factor. The paper examines how the political and economic crises will prioritise external performance management measures and internal performance measures such as financial, staff management and whole of government reporting.

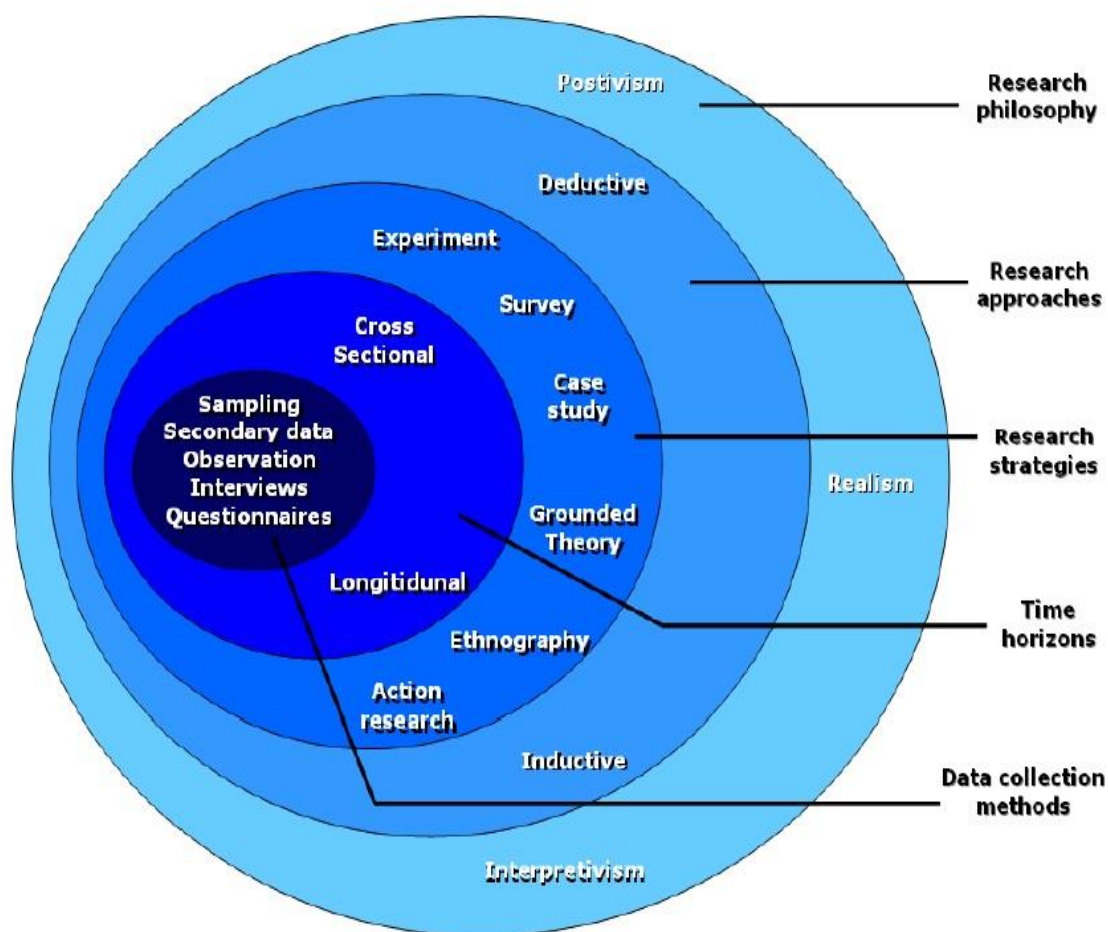
Chapter Three – Methodology

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the methodology employed throughout the course of the writing of this dissertation and aims to illustrate the research process implemented by the author. Despite various researchers finding it difficult to agree on a specified set of steps regarding the research process, for the purpose of this study, the author has chosen a set of steps to be followed.

There are a number of research approaches that one can follow for example Kotler et al (2008, p. 333) suggested a straightforward four step research process, while Collis & Hussey (2009, p.10) and Malhotra & Birks (2007, p.7) purposed and interpreted a more complex six step research approach. This chapter however will be structured into a set of layers quite like Saunders et al's (2012, p. 128) "research onion."

Figure 6: The "Research Onion"



3.2 PROBLEM DEFINITION

Domegan & Flemming (2003, p. 54) stated, “The research process is only as good as the problem definition stage.” Malhotra & Birks were of a similar opinion in that they believed that any research process should begin with identifying the problem. They continued to highlight the importance of clearly defining the problem, as the rest of the report is dependent on this preliminary problem. They mention how it involves establishing the problem and then attempting to identify the specific elements that effects the research problem (Malhota & Birks (2007, p. 34).

Collis & Hussey (2009, p. 10) provide that a topic of general interest must be simplified in order to allow for a research problem that is small enough to be investigated. After rigorously reviewing the appropriate literature, the researcher has established that there is an insufficient amount of existing literature, and any that was

found appeared to be out-dated and in need of reform. The author has identified the following areas to investigate.

3.2.1 Research Objectives and Rationale

The research objective of this proposal is “To investigate whether or not the current performance management system is effective in Irish Secondary schools”. In order to gain a greater understanding of this particular objective it can be broken down into a number of research sub objectives. These sub objectives include:

Objective One:

An investigation into the most important factors that may positively or negatively influence the performance of a school and its teachers (Holdaway, 1990).

Rationale:

This research objective identifies the reliable factors, such as proven statistics that show evidence of how schools are performing. It examines how schools with different socio economic backgrounds are performing and how talented teachers are distributed amongst these schools.

Objective Two

An investigation into who conducts the appraisal process and its relation to job performance, motivation, promotion, salary increase, job satisfaction and use of a motivational tool (Blum, 1990).

Rationale:

This section examines exactly who conducts the performance appraisals of teachers in Irish Secondary schools, whether it is a principal, board of management or an elected government body. It then aims to provide a structure of how the process is carried out. Also it looks at the role that the appraisal plays in both rewards and performance analysis in teachers.

Objective Three:

An investigation into the specific, measurable, accurate, realistic and timed (SMART) action plans that can enable teachers to achieve specified goals and standards (Blum, 1990).

Rationale:

Having established how performance appraisals are conducted and by whom they are conducted, this process must be analysed as to whether or not it effectively assesses the performance of teachers in secondary schools in Ireland. Educational recommendations on SMART action plans may then be formulated to improve, adjust or monitor teacher's performance more effectively.

3.3 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

Collis and Hussey (2009, p. 56) identified two main research paradigms including interpretivism and positivism philosophies. At this stage the researcher must select what type of philosophy to use when carrying out the research process.

3.3.1 Interpretivism

Interpretivism “is based on the observation that there are fundamental differences between the natural world and the social world. Because of this, the logic and methods of the natural sciences are not applicable to the study of societies” (Crofts et al, 2011). The main difference between the two paradigms is that “unlike the natural world, where a particular action consistently produces a give result, social actors do not uniformly react to stimuli. Rather, they actively interpret the situations in which they find themselves and act on the basis of these interpretations”(Crofts et al, 2011). Saunders et al (2012, p. 137) similarly used the term “social actors” to illustrate how we are all just part of the play that is life, how we interpret the moments in our life in accordance with the meaning we place on them.

Interpretivisim is typically chosen when conducting qualitative research; the reason for this is that it provides researchers with the ability of making sense of the topic and the social meanings or reactions being studied.

3.3.2 Positivism

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013, p. 29) positivist outlook is that science is seen as “the way to get the truth”. Croft et al (2011) reiterate this point by illustrating that the main objective of this philosophy is to explain and predict through quantitative research, observation and study. Conditions that can effect research observation must be carefully controlled to prevent improper influences. This paradigm involves a set of questions or hypotheses being subjected to testing to enable them to be verified, it is typically used when conducting highly structured data collection methods such as surveys.

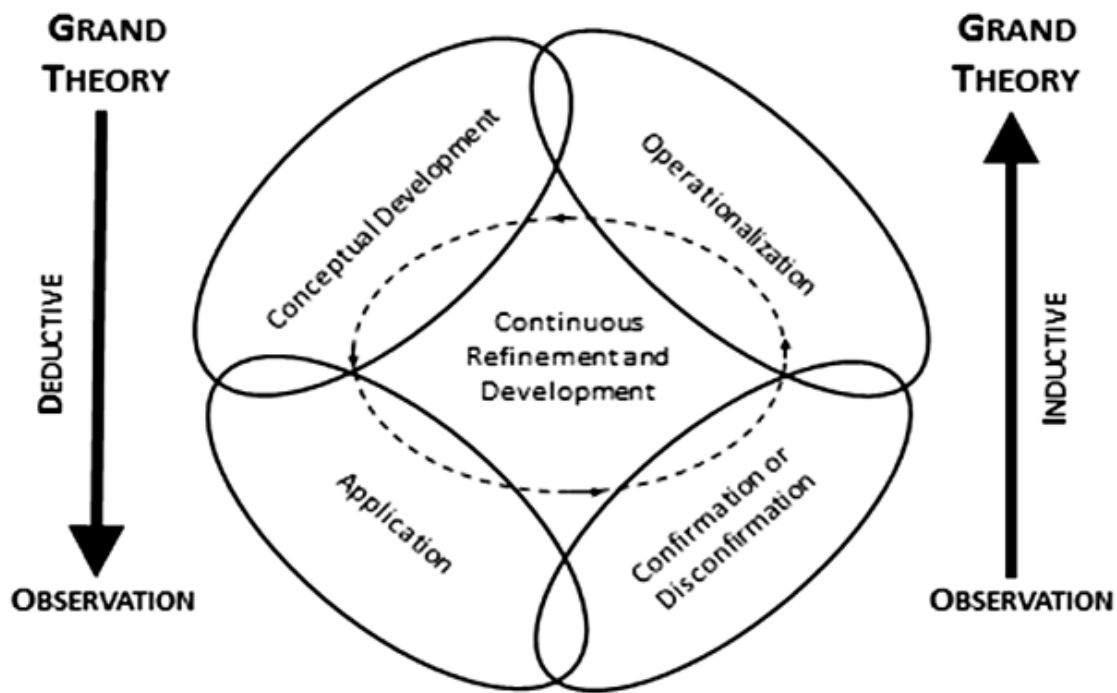
3.3.3 Rationale for choice of philosophy

After extensively examining both the research objectives and relevant literature, interpretivism has been selected, as it is the most appropriate philosophy for this dissertation. As there is not enough relevant, up to date theory on this topic, interpretivism will enable the researcher to produce a theory rather than test a hypothesis, which would be done if we were to follow the positivism philosophy. This philosophy should allow the author to participate in a direct discussion with professionals from the specific industry with the aim of by manufacturing a theory in this area by the individuals providing their perspective and an in-depth insight on the modifications or alterations of the industry.

3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH

The research conducted within any given study requires a vast amount of relevant theory, however Saunders et al (2012, p. 143) makes it evident that this theory does not necessarily have to manipulate the design of the research. Theory should be reiterated after the research process to produce enough information to allow for findings and conclusions to be drafted. There are two different types of research approaches; a deductive approach and an inductive approach.

Figure 7: The two research approaches



3.4.1 The Deductive Approach

The deductive approach works from the more general to the specific. This approach is sometimes referred to as a “top down” approach. It can begin with a theory regarding a topic of interest, which can then be narrowed down into more focused, or specific hypotheses that can be tested. Testing allows for them to be further broken down in order to collect observations to provide some form of answer that addresses the hypothesis (Trochim, 2006). Saunders et al (2012, p.145) emphasised that the “most important characteristic of the deductive approach is to test your proposition in relation to original theory through collecting quantitative data.

3.4.2 The Inductive Approach

The deductive approach is almost the exact opposite; it works by moving from specific observations to broader theories and generalizations. This approach begins by monitoring specific measures and observations in order to identify regularities and patterns. This should provide enough information to formulate exploratory hypothesis and further develop general conclusions (Trochim, 2006). The sample size for this approach is typically a lot smaller than with a deductive approach. This approach usually selects a qualitative data collection method; this is in order to get an insight on various individuals’ perspectives on the matter.

3.4.3 Rationale for choice

An inductive approach will be selected for this dissertation, as it is the most appropriate method due to the nature of the research topic. This approach will enable individuals to express their own opinions when answering research questions such as “do you think there are any flaws in the current evaluation system?” or “what measures are taken if the performance of a school or staff member is found to be underachieving?” This author can develop what has been learnt through conducting qualitative research methods and then interlink the data to build on existing literature. The primary objective of this approach is to acquire a greater understanding of people’s perspectives on current performance management processes in place and their opinion on future processes.

3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

After the research objectives have been outlined a research strategy or design can be formulated. This involves strategically planning a number of techniques to conduct the necessary studies in order to obtain the most accurate results. The research design ultimately maps out the gathered information, how it is measured and the analysis of data relative to the research objectives. There are a number of different types of studies, which can be considered when selecting a research design including exploratory studies, descriptive studies, and explanatory or casual studies.

3.5.1 Descriptive Studies

The overall goal of this technique is that it is designed to describe. The objective is to ultimately gather data that will provide a description of all of the elements or characteristics of the topic that is being researched. Sekaran & Bougie (2013, p. 97) emphasised it involves extracting as much quantitative information as possible such as satisfaction ratings and demographic data.

Descriptive and casual approaches are known as conclusive research methods, these are typically more structured and formal and would not allow people to express their opinions, unlike exploratory. It is mainly associated with using quite a large sample; the data collected is therefore easier to analyse using quantitative methods. (Malhorta & Birks, 2007, p 97)

3.5.2 Exploratory Studies

Unlike descriptive studies, this study involves investigating research objectives through a series of open-ended questions. The purpose of this is to acquire a deeper understanding into the particular topic. Saunders et al (2012, p.171) provide that this design can be carried out through a number of in-depth interviews with industry professionals who would be experts on the topic.

3.5.3 Explanatory/Casual Studies

The information gathered through these studies may be subject to correlation assessment to establish the full extent of the relationship. The main focus here is to study the situation or issue to provide some explanation of the relationship between two variables (Saunders et al, 2012, p.172).

3.5.4 Rationale for choice

For the purpose and nature of this dissertation the researcher has selected and exploratory design. The author recognises the information and facts that have been published in the literature review and also aims to dig deeper to get a further insight into how well performance is managed in Irish schools through the use of in-depth

interviews with industry experts in order to measure numerous different opinions on the research objectives.

3.6 TIME HORIZONS

It is essential to allocate and to decide on the time scale of any sort of research. According to Saunders *et al* there are two different types of time horizons including longitudinal, providing a perspective quite similar to a journal, which captures a period in time and cross-sectional which is more inclined to take just a snippet of a period of time (Saunders et al (2019, p. 190)

One of the major advantages of the longitudinal time horizon design is that change can occur over the course of the data collection if it is spaced over a longer period of time and research can be modified to produce more accurate findings. (Malhorta & Birks, 2007, p. 77)

Given the nature of the research of this dissertation a longitudinal design may be more appropriate, however due to there is particular time restraints presented throughout the academic year and it is for this very reason the author has chosen to adopt a cross-sectional approach.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION

A lot of secondary information has been collected throughout the literature review, the industry overview; the data produced from these sources have highlighted the need for the research questions and objectives. It is important now to gather primary data, first hand information from sources who are associated to the area of research.

The author has up to this point listed a number of research objectives and provided a philosophy, design and approach to how the research is to be conducted. Here the researcher will illustrate which data collection method that will be used and why it is being used.

3.7.1 Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods

Qualitative research is defined as “an unstructured exploratory research methodology based on small samples that provides insights and understanding of the problem setting”. (Malhorta, 2010, p. 171). The main focus of qualitative research is develop and examine an understand of the research question. Peoples understanding or interpretation of events produce qualitative data and this can be recorded. An y information that has been produced as a result of quality research is said to be fuller or richer in comparison to data retrieved from a quantitative research analysis, this is mainly because qualitative research allows the topic to be explored in greater detail. (Saunders et al, 2012, p. 546)

The most common technique used in qualitative research is the interview. This is because it is both flexible and adaptable in relation to time and its content and can be modified to suit any research questions, the researchers lifestyle and that of the respondents.

Quantitative research is defined as “techniques that seek to quantify data, typically, apply some form of statistical analysis”. (Malhotra & Birks, 2007, p. 152). This form of research is by in large of little use to the majority of people, in order for them to be

useful they must be processed; this enables the author to examine and analyse relationships and trends within the data.

Figure 8: Quantitative & Qualitative Data



3.7.2 Data collection rationale

As previously stated by opting to select a qualitative approach the author is capable of further exploring this topic, as there is no solid theory based on the topic. If a quantitative method were to be selected it would not produce a detailed response, and the ultimate goal of this research is to understand and explore the research question.

Because the research topic is a sensitive subject a series of in-depth interviews with industry professionals was chosen as the most suitable research approach. It is believed that qualitative research can be superior, although it might not be able to identify minor issues that may not be asked throughout the various questions asked in an interview. The researcher believes by conducting in-depth interviews he would be able to collect as much information as possible about this topic from the industry professionals.

3.7.3 In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews can be defined as “an unstructured, direct, personal interview in which a single participant is probed by an experienced interviewer to uncover underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes and feelings on a topic”. (Malhotra & Birks, 2007, p. 207). There are three different types of interviews: unstructured, semi-structured and structured. Unstructured and semi-structured interviews would be most suitable for exploratory research, which would suit this dissertation, as it would allow the person conducting the interview to understand what is happening. (Saunders et al, 2012, p. 377).

The researcher is able to collect a vast amount of necessary knowledge from the industry experts, and by doing this in person, it allows the person being interviewed the opportunity to reflect on events and talk about a issue close to their profession without having to go through the effort of writing it down, it also allows for personal assurance to use the information that they have provided. (Saunders et al, 2012, p.378). The researcher has opted to use semi-structured interviews for the purpose of this dissertation; this includes a number of open-ended questions with the aim to discuss their own personal experience and views on the matter.

3.8 SAMPLING

After establishing the research objectives and questions, sampling must be taken into account; by doing this it will ensure that we will not have to collect data from the total population. Domegan & Fleming (2003, p. 350) state “sampling enables us to study some cases instead of all the cases, while still enabling us to draw conclusions about all the cases”.

The focus of this dissertation is on performance management processes in schools within Ireland; because of this the researcher must select a diverse sample size, which represents both of the sides affected by this process. Purposive sampling allows the author to implement personal opinions to determine the specific individuals whom are capable of providing the data necessary for answering the research questions. (Sekeran

& Bougie, 2013, p. 252) In order for this to work effectively the individuals selected must be informative.

The researcher has decided to use heterogeneous sampling, by doing this the author can choose who to interview and if they would be capable of providing him with a diverse response. This will allow for socio-demographic and geographic representation that would be appealing to both teachers and principals in the industry.

3.8.2 Sample Size & Frame

Because of the nature of the dissertation's research objectives, the sampling frame includes principals and teachers operating in public and private schools within Dublin. Due to the vast amount of schools in Dublin, the author's sample size of four is reasonably representative to gain a good knowledge of how the performance management process is implemented in schools and how teachers and principals express their opinions on its functionality.

The interviews containing information retrieved can be found in Appendix A

3.9 CODING

As qualitative research produces extremely sizeable amounts of information, it is necessary to reduce this data by using coding. Sekaran & Bougie, (2013, p. 337) explain coding as "the analytical process through which the qualitative data that you have gathered are reduced, rearranged and integrated to form theory". After the interviews have been transcribed they will be coded to emphasise differing attitudes, reactions and answers to the questions posed throughout the interview.

3.10 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

A number of limitations arose throughout the course of this research. If given more time, the author would have liked to participate in some quantitative research, possibly

surveying a large sample of school teachers on this subject, by doing this the author feels it would add a more detailed perspective from those witnessing the performance management process first hand.

Possibly the biggest limitation would have been selecting the sample size, and drawing answers from what those being interviewed and forming some sort of conclusion. The interviews occurred throughout the summer break where many principals and teachers would have chosen to go on vacation. Realistically the author would have liked to have had a much larger number of participants to interview in order to further validate the argument, but resources and time constraints did not make this possible.

Due to the nature of the teaching profession time was a major limitation as it was difficult to arrange an agreed time to hold the in-depth interviews, the researcher had to continually contact potential interviewee's to try find a free time period for them to meet. As schools are closed throughout the summer, the majority of teachers and principals alike choose to vacation abroad. This limited the number of potential sources. Even after arranging a specific time and date the arrangements could be cancelled moments before due to some unforeseen circumstances.

All of those interviewed were slightly apprehensive about sharing information or naming anyone who could have been performing poorly in the school environment as it can be a very sensitive subject and they did not wish to slander anybody's good name. The author felt that this may have prevented them from going into more detail in the performance management process by limiting them from giving examples in different performance related scenarios.

The shortage of academic research studied around this topical area has resulted in the research becoming more exploratory in order to try and build some theory around it. Some secondary sources were required such as newspapers and magazines to examine trends and figures.

Limitations are typical in almost every research assignment, the researcher must decide on a way to optimise the use of the resources made available in order to best answer the research questions and objectives. Hence the methodology methods that were selected at the beginning of this chapter as the most appropriate for effectively researching this topic.

Chapter Four - Findings

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of this chapter is to establish the findings, which have materialised as a result of the primary research; they can then be related to the research objectives previously presented in the methodology. The qualitative analysis consisted of four interviews with two parties involved in the performance management in Irish schools. Two principals and two teachers from Dublin were interviewed, Teacher A and Principal D both work in fee paying schools and each have over twenty years service in the Irish educational sector. Teacher B and Principal C both operate in public post primary schools, Teacher B has eight years experience and Principal D has over twenty years of experience.

4.2 FINDINGS-OBJECTIVE ONE

As part of the first objective, the performance management process will be explored as well as the factors that can impact the performance of a school and its teachers. This will cover a number of area's compiling of: how the performance management process is implemented in Irish schools, the factors that can influence performance either negatively or positively and whether or not there are any flaws in the current process.

In terms of how the performance management process is conducted in Irish schools, all those who were being interviewed had reasonably similar answers.

“Now...it would be basically; in this day and age it would be based on results”

(Teacher A)

Teacher A has emphasized that a teacher's performance in the workplace is evaluated through the results of their students. Principal C had a similar view to this but went into greater detail.

“Ehh... teachers performance, I suppose the school basically has an evaluation first of all and I think that would probably be in the past revolved around examination results really em... secondly feedback that you would get back from parents and also students would give you an indication em... basically speaking of how well teachers are doing but you would now have a much more formal structure as well in terms of school evaluation and the different forms of school evaluation”.

(Principal C)

Other interviewees interpreted the question in their own way. They highlighted the importance of self-evaluation in the workplace. This is where the teacher can reflect on their work and attempt to improve their performance and transform their weaknesses in to strengths in order to be a more efficient teacher.

“But the biggest role for a principal is leading a culture where people will evaluate themselves where you see it as important and there are people who are always saying could I do it better? If you don't lead that, if your not doing it

yourself, you have to, I have to evaluate my own work and be seen to do that kind of thing and then hopefully other people will do it as well”.

(Principal D)

A school can be evaluated as a whole. One interviewee discussed the format of a Whole School Evaluation (WSE) and included a brief introduction as to the inconsistency of the performance management tool. A further look into the internal self-evaluation structure was also provided. Principal D really emphasised the importance of self-evaluating their own work as a way of getting those working with her to do the same, as leadership should be shown from the top down.

“The next step would be the process of whole school evaluation that happens periodically throughout a school’s lifetime. Like a school may not have a WSE for years and then all of a sudden the Department might allocate eh... an appointment for the school to be evaluated. Basically when that happens the school is looked upon as a whole and a department inspector then evaluates each teacher”

“Basically the inspector will come in and talk to all parties concerning the process, the parents’ association, the principal, the teachers and the board of management. And also informally em...performance management is done differently in every school but in our school there was a period where you had to do a teacher self evaluation where the teachers were called in and em...you get called in by the principal and strengths and weaknesses are discussed and em...and we were asked questions about the achievements in the school and what we had given to the school, our strengths and weaknesses in the classroom and how we could build upon our strengths and how we could address our weaknesses and basically like, we , it’s a one to one discussion, it’s not threatening, they wont tell us we are bad at X,Y or Z it is not a disciplinary process”.

(Teacher B)

Principal D expressed their experience on receiving a Whole School Evaluation and mentioned the prior notice to the inspection from the Department of Education & Skills.

“Yeah the Whole School Evaluation is different, that would be where the Department inspectors come out now like for something in my school it was four years ago we had a Whole School Evaluation they spent the guts of a week with us now you know it was one of the earlier ones and there is a thing called the MLL which is this is what’s called a Whole School Evaluation, a WSE it was a more in depth one and they looked at every, four or five departments and then they even looked at what the cleaning staff were doing, what accounts where doing, everything. But teachers were evaluated there in the teachers room and gave them feedback...”

“Yeah you’re given three week’s notice for Whole School Evaluations and the MLL you get a three week notice as well and then they have these drop in ones now as well. We have had one of those”.

(Principal D)

It seems from those Educators interviewed that there are a number of structured internal and external performance management processes in place in Irish schools. Relying on how students perform in their exams could be detrimental to their results and also their future prospects to get into their desired third level courses if an underperforming member of staff had taught them. By and large Principal C and Teacher A are of the opinion that performance is measured by the results of a teachers’ students, however Principal D and Teacher B illustrated the more structured approach to managing performance in the educational sector mentioning the Whole School Evaluation and Self-Evaluation methods.

The researcher felt it was important to explore the factors that could ultimately influence a teacher’s performance in the classroom. A number of factors arose from this question including class sizes, the location of a school and whether it is in a disadvantaged area or not and then the stage of a career the teacher may be at.

“Oh...basically there are so many, this is the difficulty coming up with measuring the performance of a teacher, because there are so many varying factors such as having 30 individuals in front of you really is one of the most important factors, secondly there is the school in which you operate, em thirdly is

it disadvantaged, em and you know the personal motivation of the teacher and the stage they are at within their career”.

(Principal C)

Teacher A and Principal D expressed an element of admiration for those teachers performing in schools located in disadvantaged areas and how those staffrooms can be the best in the country.

“I mean they are the unsung heroes, like I mean where I work is heaven, your dealing with ambitious kids and ambitious parents and that’s it it’s a done deal. It’s a very easy place to work hard; if you are in a disadvantaged school well you have a whole different game altogether”.

(Teacher A)

“But the other side of that though is that disadvantaged schools tend to have a lot of changing teachers but you think that would be bad but in my experience is often they have a very young and enthusiastic workforce. I found them to be really motivated and the thing is if you are going into a very very difficult class of kids you do work very hard to make the classroom work and there is a great sense of teamwork among the staff as well I mean everyone is in it together to try and get the best out of these kids in order to survive perhaps really you kind of have to”.

(Principal D)

Principal D provided a more detailed answer on certain personal factors that may effect the performance of a teacher including domestic issues at home, money troubles, being asked to teach in area’s the individual is not trained in and the ability to discipline a class.

“Well just as I touched on there the main one I think is something at home, you know it is a pastoral thing you know somebody maybe with two or three small children at home or mortgage worries or you even know those sort of things and they just can’t cope...same as any job really I suppose like it can affect your

performance. Em...another one would be where you have been asked to teach, I mean some schools, I personally believe this is really wrong but teachers who have been asked to teach a subject they haven't been trained to teach and the pressure with trying to keep up with that can be awful. Em... and then discipline really that can be a big thing, if discipline slips and you're suddenly being swamped...anyone who has been to school knows what it is like to watch that teacher, the one that the kids are just making fun of and that is very difficult".

(Principal D)

Next the author examined any potential flaws in the current performance evaluation process. Principal D and Principal C discussed how teachers are not openly named or given any appropriate feedback after an inspection is done in the school. There appears to be a general consensus that the inspections done by Department of Education & Skills are not done frequently enough. This appeared to be a result of a lack of resources and funding from the State.

"There is a flaw in the sense that em...like the only consistent method of evaluation is when you first qualify, when you try to qualify for your Dip that is when you see the inspectors most often, now like I know myself I haven't seen an inspector since our school WSE in 2007 it's not done consistently enough and I know like, that there are schools who haven't had a WSE in years".

(Teacher B)

"Ehh yeah, well one of them you have mentioned yourself there already is the fact that it is so irregular em... the other one is that ehh... one huge flaw is that say for example they come and evaluate the history department right, and you have four fantastic history teachers and one very weak history teacher, the general report is written up about the whole department. So that it says things like there is improvement needed in one area, the questioning wasn't good in one area and so on but they will never say it was just one teacher so it is very hard on the brilliant teachers because they get this kind of negative report about them..."

(Principal D)

“There are plenty of flaws, I suppose the first one really, in relation to the external evaluation is by the inspector is that with agreements with the union, teachers are not allowed to be criticized openly or publicly em... this is reflected in the reports that may be published they can not be named, okay its understandable enough really, but when it comes to actually talking to the principal there is feedback at the end of all these evaluations and they don't name the teachers they just say oh... teaching in Hebrew is great but there are couple of drawbacks.....”

(Principal C)

Teacher A referred to the structure as a PR stunt performed by those in authority to keep everybody happy, and do it for the sake of it.

“The major flaw I would feel is...there is a lot of box ticking going, on for the sake of it. Its not going anywhere other than saying well we have done it, tick the box and wasting an awful lot of time”.

(Teacher A)

4.3 FINDINGS-OBJECTIVE TWO

The second objective will investigate who conducts the appraisal process and its relation to job performance, use of motivational tools, promotion, salary increase and job satisfaction. The aspect of promotion appears nearly non-existent as the only opportunity for promotion is for a principal or deputy principal position. It seems to be quite limited in terms of incentive schemes within the educational sector. The Department of Education & Skills pays teachers their salary; the pay scheme teachers receive is an incremental one, which is nearly guaranteed. The principals and teachers gave their views on the current pay system and motivational rewards.

Teacher A explained how the cutbacks implemented by the Minister for Education, Ruairi Quinn have been destroying the teaching profession and how the recent slashing of allowances and incentives have served as a deterrent to young people from entering the profession.

“Yep, salaries have been slashed, all the allowances have been taken away over the last couple of years and eh, so for...the big problem is you won’t get young people going into teaching because they can’t live on the salary, they just won’t”.

“You’re just on an incremental scale and it just goes up every year and it takes about 20-25 years to max the scale and that’s the end of it there is no bonus system. There’s no bonus system. It makes it easy then for lazy teachers to do nothing”.

(Teacher A)

Principal D and Teacher B discussed an intrinsic and extrinsic reward scheme that used to be present in schools and that the Department gradually phased iout. They both highlighted that there are no real promotion opportunities and that it was a shame for teachers who perform exceptionally well.

“Well promotion in teaching is very bad, yeah in the public system which is where most schools are, you used to get a special duties post or an A post and even they are beginning to be phased out now so you know it’s really very difficult. You stay on your salary and the promotion prospects are bad. In a school like mine em...when people do a particular duty they can be paid for it, but the irony is actually, I think teaching is one of the professions that payment doesn’t do a lot because in other words, say you take the debating team right and somebody gives you a few bob for doing it it will never pay you for the hours, you know yourself from being in school. Like if you have somebody who is taking teams out you could not pay them to be in university if you say at 12 o’clock at night if they have kids and everything so I think teachers either want to do that or they don’t and no amount of payment is really going to change that. It is an awful shame that there are no promotion prospects in teaching it is really really bad yeah”.

(Principal D)

“Well years ago they used to, they have promotions, but years ago they used to have if you didn’t want to be a principal, you could pick what I think they call a B Post, and basically your B post could be you are responsible for organising things like maths week and you would get paid more for that”.

(Teacher B)

Principal C discussed the limited promotional opportunities within the educational sector and how it can negatively impact on an individual being promoted. It was recognised that the promotion of a teacher to a principal is a transition from a teaching role to an administrative role, which may not necessarily suit good teachers, as it is essentially a different line of work.

“That doesn’t exist at the moment however really promotion in Irish schools relates to very much deputy principal or principal and they are filled by open competition and it does tend to, it does, sorry it does tend to be those teachers who perform very well who end up being principals but that would really move them into administration rather than continuing on being a teacher and that is a very serious flaw, there is really no promotion there for anybody”

(Principal C)

Principal C also spoke about how teacher’s pay was guaranteed and that this does not really drive a person to increase their performance to meet organisational objectives or goals.

“That’s right, it’s guaranteed so there’s no real motivation as such, motivation amongst teachers is your personal motivation to do well”

(Principal C)

4.4 FINDINGS-OBJECTIVE THREE

This objective will examine the specific, measurable, accurate, realistic and timed (SMART) action plans that can enable teachers to achieve specified goals and standards. In this section we will look at how those interviewed think the process could be improved and other implications that have affected the Irish educational syllabus including the removal of the Junior Cert, a state exam performed at the end of the junior cycle.

Principal D explored how the performance measurement tools have been improving and how they have transformed from focusing on statistical reports to being more focused on the individual and “learning outcomes” as it was put. It appears extremely important to concentrate on child centered learning rather than how a teacher is seen to be presenting a topic to the class. If the teacher does not understand the overall

capability of the class and know the best methods to interact with them to get the most out of their students then they are not performing well.

“There are definitely improving, yeah they are improving em...n em...ten years ago it was all about diagrams, statistics and matching things up. I think it’s more; it’s more realistic now people are actually looking at themselves and seeing what exactly did the child learn at the end of a lesson as opposed to what did I teach like you know? So the emphasis in the last two years in on learning outcomes now that is the buzzword that would be very important for you to have, learning outcomes and that’s a good idea because I could teach, I could sound brilliant up the top of the class but if the kids aren’t actually learning anything then like I’m not a good teacher really, the emphasis on that I think is really a good move”.

(Principal D)

Teacher A was still of the opinion that statistics and comparisons were in place and very important to the development of the current performance management process. It appears that it is also very hard to absorb all the information and a lot of it can get lost.

“They wouldn’t be too bad. The real magic is that it is very hard to quantify, the real magic is it’s very hard to tie down. So it’s number crunching, it’s pie charts, and its graphs, comparisons and statistics. It’s all in place at the moment, it’s massive now, but a lot of it can get lost”.

(Teacher A)

Principal C would recommend identifying the teachers at the inspection stage of a Whole School Evaluation who are underperforming, and perhaps bring them aside to give them appropriate feedback that will aim to ultimately improve their performance. It would not be seen as a disciplinary process it would be essentially focusing on improvement. Also Principal C talks about new approaches designed by the Department, which were implemented in order to allow parents to provide feedback to the school as to how they think the school and particular teachers, are performing.

“Yeah well I think the first one really in terms of identifying teachers, the whole idea is for improvement and really I think if everybody accepted that this is really what the aims of these evaluations are about then that’s where I would see

a benefit. But it is diluted because of confidentiality and there is a union idea that it can be used against a teacher and can be used by unscrupulous principals”

“The other thing that has been introduced as well with whole school evaluation is em...are questionnaires which are given out to secondary school students’ parents and the parents of 5th and 6th year students who are asked specific questions about the school again that is feed back in to the school em... again that enables them to come up an idea where...”

(Principal C)

Next the researcher thought it was necessary to see how an underperforming member of staff was dealt with in an Irish school. This section involves investigating the reason a teacher may not be meeting standards or expectations and providing the correct measures to deal with the situation appropriately. It includes job sharing, reducing working hours and in some circumstances removing the teacher from the classroom completely. Principal D also explained the disciplinary procedure for a member of staff who is not abiding by the rules of the organisation including receiving a verbal warning, written warnings and the ultimately losing your job.

“Em... internally... kind of going back really to try and find the route of the problem then trying maybe trying to reduce the teacher’s timetable, like listen Mary you’re on twenty two hours this week and you are really struggling. If you really felt that way you might say I will bring it down to eighteen hours next year and it will give you a bit more time for correcting and all of their preparation and all that kind of thing em...another thing you could do is a bit of team teaching you know where you share the class between two teachers and you know the more able one would help the one who is struggling so that can work as well”.

“If it is a teacher who just really is a bad teacher, very lazy and not covering the course and so on there is a discipline procedure and it is agreed with the ASTI, the union and the boards of management and so on there are various stages you know, they are given a verbal warning and then a written warning and then in extreme cases it can go before the board and in hyper extreme cases you can lose your job”.

(Principal D)

Principal C had a similar view on this question. The recommendation was that the underperforming teacher be removed from the classroom. There is no formalised procedure this situation and it was stated that there should be a mechanism put in place.

“If we all agree that the teacher is underperforming really I think the best thing for them to do is for them to be helped and removed from the class room because they are doing nobody any benefit and really they are doing themselves more harm than good by staying within a classroom. There should be a mechanism there really to help a teacher”.

(Principal C)

The next stage of this research brought into question the change of the Irish curriculum. One major decision that has been made by the Department of Education & Skills will be the removal of the Junior Certificate for 3rd year secondary school students in 2014. The researcher decided to investigate if this could potentially affect performance management in schools. The interview subjects were asked their opinions on this matter. Some felt that it was just a money saving activity devised by Ruairi Quinn while others felt that it was an interesting new approach as it had been trialed over in England. However, in the UK there have been murmurings that they may bring back in the more formal ‘A levels’ instead of the new continuous assessment syllabus.

“The Junior Cert... if you were replacing it with what was initially suggested with the new junior cycle program, it sounded exciting but I think as we get closer and closer to 2014 when it is due to be implemented and even the changes that are being suggested now that the huge experience that had been promised won’t materialise. Really many would argue that it is just a money saving exercise, helping to cut back on costs really that’s all”

“Exactly, they are talking about doing that in England where they had their continuous assessment model in place for years and now they are talking about going back to a more formalised examination structure...”

(Principal C)

Teacher A had a similar view on this issue but was more passionate about the new system suggested. It appears to reduce the morale of both principals and teachers alike. It is seen as a cost cutting method and will result in the junior cycle becoming meaningless for the students.

“It’s coming into place for first year students, next year, not this year. Next September they will be the first generation to not do the Junior Cert, and the only reason they aren’t doing is to save the money of the running costs of the exam. So first, second and third year will become pretty meaningless but it’s being packaged and presented as cutting edge curriculum development. The way the British system works, 20 years ago the British system just threw it out and they are going back to hardcore exams”

(Teacher A)

Teacher B discusses how it will be difficult to monitor this new system as the continuous assessment syllabus will be marked internally and will not prepare students adequately for the Leaving Certificate. As previously investigated it is results of the students that ultimately defines the performance of a teacher, this could heavily impact the performance management procedure in Irish Schools.

“It would be very difficult to monitor and I don’t think it’s fair for the students to have a system of continuous assessment all the way up through to the Leaving Cert and then just have them thrown in at the deep end sitting in a stressful situation. Because I mean any testing is stressful but if they are doing it in their own comfortable surroundings and their teachers are there and the teachers know their students strengths and weaknesses you know it’s not going to be that much of a stress on them”

(Teacher B)

4.6 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In this section the core findings will briefly be summarised, with conclusions and recommendations being dealt with in the following chapter.

In objective one, the researcher investigated the existing performance management process itself; the findings retrieved from those who were interviewed were alike in that it is primarily based around being an improvement approach rather than a disciplinary one. The key measurement tool currently used in schools is based around student's results. A number of factors affecting a teachers performance arose out of this research objective, they included the class size, the location of the school, the stage of the career that the teacher is at, their disciplinary control over the class and then being put in to a position that they are not qualified to be in. The findings of this research objective established that the main flaw in the current Whole School Evaluation process is that when a department or a number of departments in the school are being inspected, the inspection fails to name the underperforming teacher and does

not provide the teacher with the appropriate feedback necessary for improvement. Another major flaw that was made evident was that the actual inspection process was not conducted regularly enough, the reason for this is perhaps the lack of financial and human resources provided by the Department of Education & Skills.

Secondly, in objective two the author explored how teachers are motivated and if there were any incentives in place to encourage one to increase their overall productivity. In terms of motivation, the teachers that were interviewed responded and said it was primarily up to the individual to have an interest in their work, as there are extremely limited promotional opportunities in the educational sector. Teachers are paid by the Department of Education & Skills and are on an incremental pay scheme. This seems to encourage an element of laziness to a teacher's performance as their pay is almost guaranteed. The principals who were interviewed had a similar opinion in that a teacher either wants to be there or they do not. They think it is important to create a motivated culture through using the ethos of the school for continuous improvement. The findings from this research objective has highlighted that cutbacks are destroying the teaching profession and deterring young people from entering the profession. There used to be an A and a B post that would provide teachers with more responsibility for more pay and this is even being gradually phased out, however the general consensus was that a monetary reward system in schools would not be majorly effective in increasing motivation.

The third objective explores how performance management in Irish schools has been modernised from previously just analysing statistics and graphs to digging deeper and actually focusing on learning outcomes. One particular teacher was of the opinion that there could potentially be too much data and information collected by the schools and the Department and much of this could get lost and therefore be useless and ultimately a waste of time. Principal D outlined the disciplinary process that is followed if a teacher is continuously underperforming and not meeting the standards set by the school and the ASTI in that they would receive a verbal warning, written warnings and then in extreme cases they would lose their jobs. However this appears to be extremely rare.

The new syllabus, which sees the Junior Certificate examinations being removed at the end of the junior cycle, was then explored. This was compared to how it was

implemented in England and how they are reverting back to the older model of formalised exams. It is believed that this is a money saving activity devised by the Department of Education & Skills, it will increasingly make the performance of teachers more difficult to monitor as the new continuous assessment structure will mean that assignments will be marked internally by the individual teaching the class.

Chapter Five – Conclusions & Recommendations

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the author analysed the findings from the primary research carried out, the purpose of this section is to develop a conclusion for each research objective. These conclusions have been reached with the help of the analysis of each of the objectives mentioned in chapter three of this dissertation and also an analysis of the secondary data on this academic area. Recommendations for further research into this research question will be suggested subsequent to the conclusions.

5.2 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IN IRISH SCHOOLS

It is the role of the principal to internally manage the performance of the teachers operating in their school. Externally the Department of Education & Skills conducts Whole School Evaluations (WSE), a school is given three week's notice prior to the inspection and it typically lasts one week. This is however not done on a consistent basis as previously mentioned by those interviewed. Inspectors can also drop in to a school unannounced to monitor the performance of a school and its staff. Armstrong (2008, p18) emphasised the importance of the "role definition" of the individual by doing this; the competence requirements and key result areas are defined. He also highlighted how important it was to have a consistent management structure in place to monitor performance and provide relevant and constructive criticism with the overall aim of improving performance. This does not seem to be the case in Irish schools as all of those who were interviewed believed that once an inspection was completed it would mean their school being excluded from being inspected again for a while. This was put down to lack of human and financial resources provided by the Department.

From analysing the findings the researcher has identified that teachers are not to be named subsequent to an inspection, instead the author would recommend the underperforming teacher be taken aside and given feedback on areas that they can improve on. The director of the Performance Management Group, De Ceri Thomas (2013) spoke about approaches to performance management, the author feels that the continuous learning approach should be applied here as it is based around building a performance management structure efficient enough to capably enough monitor teachers' efforts effectively.

A number of factors were identified that influence a teacher's performance; these included the location of the school, the size of the classes, the disciplinary ability of the teacher, the stage of the career in which the teacher is at and the teacher being requested to teach a subject they are not qualified to teach. All of these factors are not necessarily in the control of the teacher, but it appears they must work in co-operation with the school and the Department to ensure that these issues are addressed and explain how it is impacting their performance.

Rummler & Brache (1990) illustrated six variables that affected one's job performance. The six variables take the influences of performance specification, consequences, knowledge and skill, task interference and individual capacity into account. The author feels that these all need to be taken into account when assessing one's performance. Thorpe & Beasley (2004) identified a number of issues with performance management; the first issue revolves around the practice of management being largely diverse. Management is required to work across technical, cultural and functional boundaries, information must be gathered from relevant areas that may influence performance such as economics, statistics and mathematics in order to provide a more organised and meaningful approach to the practice. The second issue is in relation to a research agenda in performance management and whether to investigate it from one perspective or one discipline or to consider a cross-disciplinary approach.

5.3 MOTIVATION AND INCENTIVE SCHEMES IN IRISH SCHOOLS

In terms of increasing a teacher's performance through a motivational approach, one teacher said the greatest motive was to see the student who was not expected to do well in their exams do better than they expected. There was a general consensus amongst those interviewed that teaching and getting the best out of students was enough to motivate the majority in the profession. When the researcher brought incentives and reward structures into the equation, the promotional opportunities within the educational sector appear nearly non-existent, as it is only limited to principal or deputy principal. The Department's implementing of wage reviews and issuing further cutbacks have created a sense of low morale throughout the industry. As Teacher A stated it is deterring young people from entering the profession as the cost of living are becoming increasingly high and it is not possible for them to support themselves on the reduced wages being proposed by the DES (Department of Education & Skills). In

terms of rewards as incentives these have all but been phased out over time as a money saving measure during the recent recession. Milne (2005) identified that reward and recognition programmes can positively influence performance, motivation and interest within an organization. The researcher examined the different types of rewards that are available; they include intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. As the Irish economy is currently in recession, monetary rewards seem to be out of the question, but by providing teachers with some sort of recognition and maybe the promotional opportunity to be a year head or even to be in charge of a particular department it will give them a superior job title, the aim of this would be to motivate the teacher. This can be seen in Appendix C where Principal D bravely chose to do this with an underperforming teacher and it was successful.

There are a number of methods that can be used to increase motivational levels throughout the school. Maslow (1943, 1954) believed that by satisfying individual's needs it would ultimately enhance their overall motivation. He established a hierarchy of needs, which aimed at increasing performance in the work place and providing them with a sense of job satisfaction. The hierarchy begins with the most basic needs and as each one is satisfied an employee will eventually reach a level of self-actualization. This could be applied to a school setting in order to maintain a happy and motivated workforce by meeting their needs. A more contemporary motivational approach suitable to this sector would be Adams Equity Theory (1963), which identified that employees recognise exactly what they get from a job situation as a result of what they have put into it. Employees then can compare their own inputs and outcomes ratio with that of others operating in a similar job situation. According to this theory if ratios are perceived to be evenly distributed then a state of equity exists. However, if ratios are not equal, inequity exists and it can effect whether a person feels over or under rewarded. This can result in a staff member becoming unmotivated.

5.4 DEVELOPING THE CURRENT PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS IN IRISH SCHOOLS

From the secondary research we can see how self evaluation is present in schools across the globe and that it is imperative that each teacher reflect back on their work in order to determine their own strengths and weaknesses. Perillo (2006) wrote a paper on practice enhancement and optimizing teaching performance in schools. The idea behind practice enhancement is to use it as a tool to develop strategies for examining, changes in communications and excellence in teaching practice planning. The paper illustrates the importance of managers accurately implementing appraisals and states that school leaders should consider it and teaching staff when formulating a process for managing the performance of teachers in schools.

The literature describes how Sarrico, Rosa & Manatos (2012) found that self-evaluation and performance management were not well developed in schools. Instead the majority of schools just monitor progression, completion rates and exam results. They did not appear to do this in a formal and systematic way and are confused as to what the overall results of assessment convey. After analysing the findings in chapter four this appears to be changing according to those interviewed. The focus now seems to be on what is actually taught in the classroom and not how the teacher is presenting the class.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The areas examined in this dissertation remain relatively unexplored. It is an extensive area and allows for much further study, and due to the content of this assignment and the lack of formal research in to the topic a number of limitations arose as mentioned in chapter three.

One recommendation for future research would be to engage in quantitative research on a larger sample of teachers and principals in order to gain a better insight to provide some conclusive answers to the research questions asked. The researcher would advise that the sample should be selected at random; the reason for this is that it would produce superior findings that would represent the entire population. This approach would provide a better understanding of how others view the efficiency of the performance management system in Irish schools, this is because it would be possible to access a wider sample of workers in this sector and analyse their perspectives on the research question.

As there were academic and time restraints within this investigation, a cross sectional approach was chosen, even though the author attempted to research previous performance management processes and trends, only provided a snapshot of the opinions of a few industry professionals. It is for this reason that the author would recommend adopting a longitudinal approach for future research where changes in the study and all other forms of development can be assessed over a given period of time.

The issue surrounding the modification of the current syllabus and how performance will be managed in Irish schools is another topical area, which the author feels worthy of future study. As the Junior Certificate examinations are removed in 2014, what sort of impact will this have on how teachers will be assessed given the fact that they will be correcting the new continuous assessment projects themselves. Although it is slightly outside the area of this dissertation, the researcher believes that it is certainly worthy of future study.

Bibliography

Agasisti, T., Bonomi, F., & Sibiano, P., (2012), “Do managerial characteristics of schools influence their performance”, International Journal of Educational Management [Internet], Available from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?issn=0951-354X&volume=26&issue=6&articleid=17053012&show=abstract> [Accessed on 15th January 2013]

Al-Hamdan, Al- Yacoub, (2005), “Evaluation of section heads’ performance at Kuwait secondary schools”, International Journal of Educational Management, [Internet], Available from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?issn=0951-354X&volume=19&issue=3&articleid=1463846&show=abstract> [Accessed on 18th January 2013]

Armstrong, M, (2006), “Performance Management-Key Strategies And Practical Guidelines”, 3rd Edition, London

Armstrong, M. & Baron, A. (2008) “Managing Performance-Managing Performance-Performance Management in Action”, CIPD, London

Armstrong, M, (2006), “Performance Management-Key Strategies And Practical Guidelines”, 3rd Edition, London

Baxamusa, N. (2012). “Equity Theory of Motivation”. Available from <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/equity-theory-of-motivation.html>, [Accessed 26 July 2013]

Blum A. (1990) “Academic Appraisal: Practice What We Preach?” International Journal of Education Management, 4 (2) [Internet] Available from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?issn=0951-354X&volume=4&issue=1&articleid=838439> [Accessed 11 January 2013]

Brown, A., (2005) “Implementing Performance Management in England’s Primary Schools”, International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management [Internet], Available from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?issn=1741-0401&volume=54&issue=5/6&articleid=1512972&show=html> [Accessed 13th January 2013]

Chen, L. (2012), “ Matching in Practice-Secondary Schools in Ireland”, Available from <http://www.matching-in-practice.eu/secondary-schools-in-ireland/>, [Accessed 28 July 2013]

Colby. J, & Witt. M, (2000), “Defining Quality Education -UNICEF”, Available from <http://www.unicef.org/education/files/QualityEducation.PDF> [Assessed on 17 July 2013].

Collis, J., & Hussey, R. (2009). Business Research: A practical guide for undergraduate & postgraduate students (3rd Edition ed.). Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan .

Coolahan. J. (2005), “Irish Education-History and Structure”, Available from <http://books.google.ie/books?id=E5drXAMpBDwC&pg=PA142&lpg=PA142&dq=the+structure+of+authority+in+irish+secondary+schools&source=bl&ots=63C6FXfxRF&sig=ssRFRU04hAFRgmbWbFEqn3h5eM8&hl=en&sa=X&ei=hwb9UcPnLMnE7Aaz>

[s4HgCg&ved=0CF8Q6AEwBw#v=onepage&q=the%20structure%20of%20authority%20in%20irish%20secondary%20schools&f=false](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?issn=0957-8234&volume=28&issue=1&articleid=838929&show=abstract) [Accessed 26 July]

Crow. Gary M (1990), “Perceived Career Incentives of Suburban Elementary School Principals”, Journal of Educational Administration, Vol 28 No.1, <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?issn=0957-8234&volume=28&issue=1&articleid=838929&show=abstract> [Accessed 23 July 2013]

Department of Education and Skills, (2012), “Implementation of schools self evaluation”, *Boards of Management, Principal teachers and teaching staff of post primary schools* [Internet], Available from http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0040_2012.pdf [Accessed 7th January 2013]

Domegan, C., & Fleming, D. (2003). Marketing research in Ireland (2nd Edition ed.). Dublin: Gill & Macmillan Ltd.

Donnelly, K. (2013). “The Independent – Teachers and Principals could face a Review Every Year”, Available from <http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/teachers-and-principals-could-face-a-review-every-year-29146926.html>, [Accessed 4 August 2013]

Gates, L. Minks, G. (2009), Performance Systems Analysis. Available from <http://www.slideshare.net/gminks/rummler-report> [Accessed 22 July 2013]

Greiling, D., (2006), "Performance measurement: a remedy for increasing the efficiency of public services", International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management [Internet] Available from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?issn=1741-0401&volume=55&issue=6&articleid=1563151&show=abstract> [Accessed 17th January 2013]

Guzzo, R. (2007). "Types of Rewards, Cognitions, And Work Motivation", Available from <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/257405?uid=3738232&uid=2129&uid=2&uid=70&uid=4&sid=21102555190983>, [Accessed 26 July 2013]

Halachmi, A., (2011), "Imagined Promises versus real challenges to public Performance Management" International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management [Internet], Available from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?issn=1741-0401&volume=60&issue=1&articleid=1896394&show=html> [Accessed on 17th January 2013]

Heathfield, Susan M. Performance Management, About.com Human Resources, Available from http://humanresources.about.com/od/glossary/g/performance_mgmt.htm [Accessed 9 January 2013]

Hindle, T. (2008). "The Economist Guide to Management Ideas and Gurus". Available from <http://www.economist.com/node/12370445>, [Accessed 24 July 2013]

Holdaway, E. (1990), "Some Crucial Issues in Educational Management", International Journal of Education Management, 4 (2) [Internet] Available from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?issn=0951-354X&volume=4&issue=2&articleid=838440&show=abstract> [Accessed 10 January 2013]

Houldworth, E., Machin, S. (2008), "Leadership Team Performance Management: the case of BERLON" Available from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/search.htm?st1=Performance+management&ct=all&ec=1&bf=1> [Accessed 3rd January 2013]

IBEC Agenda, (2009), "Ireland Lags behind on teacher evaluation and professional development", IBEC Agenda, [Internet] Available from http://208.254.39.65/ibec/e_article001625353.cfm?x=b11,0,w [Accessed 2nd January 2013]

Kover, A. J. (1982). Point of view: The legitimacy of qualitative research . Journal of Advertising Research , 22 (6), 49-50.

Loiseau, J. (2011). "Herzberg's Theory of Motivation". Available from http://www.academia.edu/901041/Herzbergs_Theory_of_Motivation, [Accessed 25 July 2013]

Malhotra , N. K. (2010). Marketing Research: An applied orientation (6th Edition ed.). New Jersey : Prentice Hall.

Malhotra, N. K., & Birks, D. F. (2007). *Marketing Research: An applied approach* (3rd Edition ed.). Harlow: Prentice Hall.

McLeod, S. (2007). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Available from <http://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>, [Accessed 22 July 2013]

Mulford et al, (2008), "Successful principalship of high-performance schools in high poverty communities", *Journal of Educational Administration*, [Internet] Available from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?issn=0957-8234&volume=46&issue=4&articleid=1732967&show=html> [Accessed on 15th January 2013]

Patricia Milne, (2007) "Motivation, incentives and organisational culture", *Journal of Knowledge Management*, Vol. 11 Iss: 6, pp.28 - 38

Perillo, S., (2006), "Practice enhancement: optimizing teaching performance in schools", *International Journal of Educational Management*, [Internet] Available from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?issn=0951-354X&volume=20&issue=5&articleid=1558961&show=abstract> [Accessed on 12th January 2013]

Prendergast, C., Topel, R.H. (1996), "Favouritism in organisations", *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 104 No.5, pp.958-78.

Quinn, R. (2008) "The Quality Assurance of Irish Schools and the Role of Evaluation, Current and the Future", Available from <http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Inspection-Reports-Publications/Evaluation-Reports-Guidelines/The-Quality-Assurance-of-Irish-Schools-and-the-Role-of-Evaluation-Current-and-Future-Trends.pdf1>, [Accessed 27 July 2012]

Rhodes et al, (2012). “Current state of public sector performance management in seven countries”, International Journal of Productivity and performance management, [Internet], Available from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?issn=1741-0401&volume=60&issue=1&articleid=1896394&show=abstract> [Accessed 13th January 2013]

Robbins, S. & Coulter, (2007). Management. Available from <http://www.slideshare.net/Mojolemu/chap-16-motivating-employees-management-by-robbins-coulter-9-e>, [Accessed 23 July 2013]

Rothwell, W. Hohne, K. King, S. (2006). Human Performance Improvement-Building Practitioner Performance, Published by BH, Oxford.

Sarrico, C., Rosa, M., & Manatos, M., (2012), “ School performance management practices and school achievement”, International Journal of Productivity and performance management [Internet] Available form <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/search.htm?st1=performance+management&ec=1&bf=1&ct=jnl&sr1=performance+management+in+schools&sr2=performance+management+in+schools&nolog=277775&page=1> [Accessed on 16th January 2013]

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2012). Research methods for business students (6th Edition ed.). Harlow: Pearson.

Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2013). Research methods for business (6th Edition ed.). Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

The Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), (2013), “School Review”[Internet], Available from http://ppds.ie/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=124&Itemid=229, [Accessed 12 August 2013]

Thomas, DC. (2013), The Performance Management Group, Roads to Higher Performance- 5 Approaches to Managing Performance, Available from <http://www.tpmg.com/website/website.nsf/f0c30e4a440b737280256f3b00509e2a/f677277301ea93af80256f5d00565bd0?OpenDocument> [Accessed 10 August]

Thorpe, R., Beasley, T. (2004), “The Characteristics of Performance Management Research”, International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management, [Internet] Available from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?issn=1741-0401&volume=53&issue=4&articleid=851448&show=html> [Accessed 4th January 2013]

Toremen, Karakus & Yasan, (2009), “Total Quality Management practices in Turkish primary schools”, Quality Assurance Education [Internet], Available from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/search.htm?st1=performance+management+in+schools&ec=1&bf=1&sr1=performance+management&ct=jnl&sr2=performance+management+in+schools&nolog=141139&page=12> [Accessed 20th January 2013]

Trochim, M.K (2006), “Deduction & Induction”, Research Methods, Knowledge Base [Internet] Available from <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/dedind.php> [Accessed 29 July 2013]

Appendices

Appendix A – Industry Experts Interviewed

Table 2: Principal & Teachers Interviewed

Interviewee	Work Status	Gender	Location	Years of Service
Teacher A	Full - Time	Male	Dublin-City	Over 20 Years
Teacher B	Full - Time	Female	Dublin-Suburb	Under 10 Years
Principal C	Full - Time	Male	Dublin-Suburb	Over 20 Years
Principal D	Full - Time	Female	Dublin-City	Over 20 years

Appendix B – Topic Guide

Performance Management in Schools -

- 1) How is a teacher's performance evaluated in the workplace?
- 2) Do you think there are any flaws in the current evaluation process? Would you have any suggestions on how it might be improved?
- 3) What is your role in the performance assessment process?
- 4) Do you think the performance measurement tools used in schools are effective on measuring the strengths and weaknesses of a school and its staff?
- 5) Do you think teachers operating in schools that are located in disadvantaged areas would find it more difficult to perform well?
- 6) In your opinion what aspects of the process do you find to work well or not so well?
- 7) Is there any incentive for a teacher to increase their productivity e.g. salary increase, recognition?
- 8) What measures are taken if the performance of a school or staff member is found to be underachieving?
- 9) What would be the main factors affecting the performance of a member of staff?
- 10) In your opinion what would be the best method of dealing with an underperforming member of staff internally?
- 11) Is there specific criteria in which a school must meet with regard to standards set by the Department of Education & Skills?

Appendix C – Transcribed Interviews

Interview 1: Teacher A

I: Okay so I am here with Conor, a teacher in Dublin City Centre. Hi Conor

A: How you doing Chris.

I: I just want to start of by asking how is a teacher's performance evaluated in the workplace?

A: Now...it would be basically; in this day and age it would be based on results

I: The results?

A: They wont say that publicly but the results are crunched, so if the results are good you're good but if they aren't you will hear all about it

I: Is there any you know like, I was doing a bit of research about self-evaluating the whole school, have you heard about this?

A: They're big in to that now at the moment, that's the new buzzword

I: Is that where the principal would go and assess each teacher...

A: It's the Department of Education and principal, that's the new craze is self-evaluation, everything, our place has been going ballistic for the last two years. Making sure everything gets evaluated.

I: And how often would a teacher get inspected?

A: Once you're through probation

I: It's done you? You don't get inspected anymore?

A: It's done

I: Its up to the principal then to monitor their performance then?

A: Yeah the Department of Education does these school inspections, so em...

I: They're spot checks are they?

A: They give you a bit of notice, they can do a subject inspection or else a whole school evaluation and again they go through the process with a fine comb, I mean you can get all those reports off of the Internet.

I: Do you think that there are any flaws in the current evaluation process? And would you have any suggestions on how it might be improved?

A: The major flaw I would feel is...there is a lot of box ticking going, on for the sake of it. Its not going anywhere other than saying well we have done it, tick the box and wasting an awful lot of time.

I: Do you ever think teachers get by just because of their reputation in the school, like they have been there awhile they have kind of, its just taken for granted?

A: No because the next generation doesn't know you

I: I know from my own experience, some of the teachers I have had over the years, they, like I won't mention names or anything but they had been in the school awhile people would have come in to inspect a teacher and she kept choosing the students in the class who were brighter or excelling in certain subjects to make themselves look good, do you think that could be a flaw?

A: It's one of the big problems, I mean you can't, can't actually tie it down. Particularly, every school had bad teachers and they can't be touched. That's the major problem because you, even if I am a brutal teacher and you go off to do grinds when your leaving cert results come out...

I: You get the recognition?

A: I get the recognition for it, so there's no point in the boss coming in and saying Conor you're not teaching properly, and I say what do you mean Chris is after getting an A in English and he replies but Chris has done English down in the Institute.

I: There's no real proof to back it up then?

A: No, it's very hard to tie it down

I: So do you think the performance measurement tools used in schools are effective you know with regard to measuring the strengths and weaknesses of a school and its staff?

A: They wouldn't be too bad. The real magic is that it is very hard to quantify, the real magic is it's very hard to tie down. So it's number crunching, it's pie charts, and its graphs, comparisons and statistics. It's all in place at the moment, it's massive now, but a lot of it can get lost

I: Do you think teachers operating in schools that are located in disadvantaged areas find it more difficult to perform well?

A: Absolutely, I mean they are the unsung heroes, like I mean where I work is heaven, you're dealing with ambitious kids and ambitious parents and that's it it's a done deal. It's a very easy place to work hard; if you are in a disadvantaged school well you have a whole different game altogether.

I: Different clientele sort of thing?

A: Absolutely, you're up against it

I: Is there any incentive for a teacher to increase their productivity for example a salary increase, a promotion or recognition?

A: The Department is demolishing the profession at the moment, demolishing it.

I: With cut backs and stuff?

A: Yep, salaries have been slashed all the allowances have been taken away over the last couple of years and eh, so for...the big problem is you won't get young people going into teaching because they can't live off the salary, they just won't. So it's becoming increasingly...

I: Before the economy went into recession were there any?

A: No, you're just on an incremental scale and it just goes up every year and it takes about 20-25 years to max the scale and that's the end of it there is no bonus system. There's no bonus system. It makes it easy then for lazy teachers to do nothing.

I: That's still in place is it?

A: Yeah, that's a done deal; if I'm working I will get it.

I: Do you think a monetary incentive would increase teacher's performance?

A: It's a very tight world, so it's...there is no mobility in teaching, so if they bring in like performance related bonuses like you have in business the staffroom could become a very nasty place. I don't think it would necessarily be good. It comes straight back down to your exam results.

I: Do you not think that it would really motivate the teacher to put an extra effort in and do the over time?

A: It motivates the teacher to want to get rid of the students who would not be excelling in certain subjects and it would be a battle for the students who excel. Otherwise you wouldn't be producing the right results.

I: What measures are taken if the performance of a school or staff member is found to be underachieving?

A: Well the Department will issue all sorts of reports and... the board of management will make all sorts of requests and recommendations...

I: That's over a long period of time?

A: Yeah it's a really really slow process and again it comes back to individual teacher, there's a lot of huff and puff but when it comes down to it they can't actually do an awful lot about it. And the irony of it is, you can often have a really dodgy teacher and the department will come in to expect them and say they are great.

I: Just because they did well on the inspection is it?

A: Ye, they would have their meetings and chats and then make their promises.

I: You never heard of a teacher losing their job for something like that?

A: No they are untouchable, it's wrong, the downside of that is that it is also one of the reasons why a teacher's salary is...there not great, the max of the scale is 65 grand and that's not huge money.

I: Do you think that there is any sort of satisfaction when you see a student getting results and they have done well?

A: The big buzz is the guy who does better than he expected or better than he is done before and that doesn't matter what level he's at, that's the big buzz. You know you can get the biggest kick out of a guy who just scraped through as you would with someone who got an A1

I: Em...what would be the main factors affecting the performance of a member of staff in a school?

A: Ehhh... Just... one of the main factors in a school working well is just genuinely caring for the kids. If you're interested in the kids you'll have a great time and if that interest isn't there it is negative.

I: how would you approach a student who just doesn't want to put the work in?

A: It would depend on their age, you know a 13 year old and an 18 year old, I mean an 18 year old is a young man. You just put that decision out on front of him and if he doesn't want to work it's his choice. You just make sure he is understanding what he is choosing and then it's fine.

I: And if he was 13 you would try to encourage him?

A: If he is 13 I would try to encourage him, nudge him and hassle him and chase him make life awkward and difficult for him. But that goes for 14, 15, 16, 17 year olds but when they hit 18 it's up to them.

I: Do you think parent teacher meetings are a good way of checking parents checking up on how their child is performing and bring about issues about your teaching methods?

A: A complete waste of time

I: Do you think so?

A: Yep it is a public relations exercise, most parents just come in to be polite and say we are very happy he is getting on well, nice to meet you. Generally it's the parents you want to see most are the ones that don't show up

I: Would you get a lot of parents not showing up?

A: No not in our case, if I had a class of 30 and there was one I really needed to see they might show. Emm... the whole exercise is really public relations on everybody's part. I mean if I have serious business to do I'm not waiting for a parent teacher meeting.

I: In your opinion what would be the best method of dealing with an underperforming member of staff internally?

A: Well...eh...the way its done at the moment is they'll have the meetings, the chats, the reviews they'll put in all sorts of supports, courses and go down that road

I: Would those courses be mandatory, would you have to go to them?

A: No

I: It's up to the teacher then to take the initiative is it?

A: Yep, so it's all about cajoling and encouragement and the other side of it is harassment and hassle and standing outside of doors saying you're late again, so it swings both ways. Both ways you know, so it's the teachers just being lazy and that generally means they are 10 minutes late for class and it results in principles standing outside doors

I: How long would you get away with that for?

A: Not very long

I: Would your job be in jeopardy then?

A: No that's the problem its never going to be in jeopardy and that was coming back to the salary thing its because your job is so secure the salary is capped as it were. Em...

I: To me there's no real incentive then to want to put the effort in, I mean you I could get by doing the bare minimum?

A: You could yeah, absolutely

I: So it's all down to the individual really

A: It'd be a horrible way to go to work. Every school has people like that, 2 or 3 people who live life like that but there not living very happy lives, they are not very happy people and enjoying their life in any shape or form so...

I: Are there any specific criteria which a school must meet with regards to standards set out by the Department of Education?

A: Ah yeah, you'd have to have you qualification and so they have that professional teaching council, theoretically that's your license to practice and maybe down the road in years and years to come it will become easier for the Department to threaten your license as it were but that's generations away I'd imagine.

I: Do you reckon they are trying to put that in place at the moment.

A: It's structured that's what the teacher's council is all about. So, for instance I have to be a member of the teaching council, it really is like my license to teach. Em... I have to be signed off on them and there is a lot of paperwork in that em... that's all your qualifications and everything they are all logged and registered em... so you would have to go through that whole process if you wanted to start teaching. Without that then the Department won't pay you. See, it is the Department of Education that pays teachers, the schools don't pay teachers. I am employed by the Department of Education.

I: Do you think Ruairí Quinn is trying to improve any aspects of the teaching process?

A: No, I think it is a complete sham, it's all marketing and public relations, he is getting rid of the Junior Cert and that is just a money saving exercise and it is being presented as...

I: When is that coming into place?

A: It's coming into place for first years, next year, not this year, next September they will be the first generation to not do the Junior Cert, and the only reason they aren't doing is to save the money of the running costs of the exam. So first, second and third year will become pretty meaningless but its being packaged and presented as cutting edge curriculum development. The way the British system works, 20 years ago the British system just threw it out and they are going back to hardcore exams, but Mr. Quinn is presenting...

I: He is trying to save money

A: It's pure economics but he is slick, he is very slick. The maths is the same, pure pure scam its just to appease IBEC, that's my feel on it. He has been saying it is a huge success but really they have just increased the number of students getting a D3 in honors maths. The actual grades above that haven't improved at all, they have dipped again. That's a scam to appease via the media the business world, the business communities, they are not getting better maths students just getting more D3's the extra 25 points has inflated the entire system, which is very unfair. Like an awful lot of people are getting caught on the points thing and not everybody can do honors maths. Like I mean at 14 years of age it's decided, you don't do honors maths, so you're now at a huge disadvantage. Why? Just to please Rory Quinn so he can appease IBEC

I: Were there many people failing honours maths seeing as they took the risk to do the higher paper?

A: Well, again, I would suspect the Department is delighted to hand out D3's em... I suspect...

I: With regards to the Junior Cert do you think it will just be a similar set up in the schools like you know Christmas exams and Summer exams?

A: They are bringing in this promotional type of thing where each school has their own diploma, Junior Cert Diploma. It's ultimately project work and then you will get their mammy's and daddy's doing it to make sure their child gets a diploma.

I: So you don't think it's a good idea?

A: I think it's daft

I: I know from when I did the Junior Cert it really helped me feel comfortable and well prepared going on to do the Leaving Cert.

A: Yeah it's a learning curve. The continuous assessment is pretty but ehh...it's far too subjective. I will give an A and you would give the same piece of work a B. That's my view on it and that's you view on it, we could both be looking for different things and then you would have the parents really pushing. This is where Mr. Quinn is being

clever and basically saying design it you and then just work it out yourselves, that will be the new Junior Cert.

I: Doesn't really seem like it's going to work

A: That's not his issue; his issue is to save money. So be it if in 10-12 years tie they go back to the Junior Cert they can cause they would now have the money the damage would have already been done.

I: I think that's everything Conor, thank you for time I really appreciate it.

A: No Problem Chris.

Interview 2: Teacher B

I: Okay so I am here with Alyson she is a teacher in Balbriggan, how are you doing Alyson?

B: Hi Chris, I'm good thank you

I: Em... I would like to know how a teacher's performance is evaluated in the workplace?

B: Well first of all it starts off when you first qualify, you go out, you find a job in a school and then you have to have at least 100 days in a school to be able to achieve your em...or to be fully recognised as a teacher. Then after that em... the next step would be the process of whole school evaluation that happens periodically throughout a school's lifetime. Like a school may not have a WSE for years and then all of a sudden the Department might allocate eh... an appointment for the school to be evaluated. Basically when that happens the school is looked upon as a whole and a department inspector then evaluates each teacher.

I: And there is notice given for that inspection?

B: I think up to 3 weeks notice is given but I would not be 100% on that. Basically the inspector will come in and talk to all parties concerning the process, the parents association, the principles, the teachers and the board of management. And also informally em...performance management is done differently in every school but in our school there was a period where you had to do a teacher self evaluation where the teachers were called in and em...you get called in by the principal and strengths and weaknesses are discussed and em...and we were asked questions about the achievements in the school and what we had given to the school, our strengths and weaknesses in the classroom and how we could build upon our strengths and how we could address our weaknesses and basically like, we, it's a one to one discussion, it's not threatening, they won't tell us we are bad at X,Y or Z it is not a disciplinary process.

I: It's an improvement process.

B: Yeah, just to look at where you are em... at whatever stage of your practice and what you can do to improve yourself, basically it gives you a chance to stand back and

have a look at your own practice and kind of motivate yourself to make yourself better, it kind of builds up your confidence in a way as it shows you where your strengths are as well as pointing out your weaknesses, You know? So...

I: Do you think there are any flaws in the current evaluation process?

B: There is a flaw in the sense that em...like the only consistent method of evaluation is when you first qualify, when you try to qualify for your Dip that is when you see the inspectors most often, now like I know myself I haven't seen an inspector since our school WSE in 2007 it's not done consistently enough and I know like, that there are schools who haven't had a WSE in years.

I: And why do you think that is? Why is it so spaced out?

B: Em... it's probably a lack of resources and em..

I: Finances?

B: Yeah a lack of resources and finance and inspectors already have a massive workload with going out to see students for their probation every year so I can kind of understand with the reduced number of inspectors with higher amounts of graduates coming out of schools that it can be hard to find the time to do a WSE. There are schools that genuinely need a WSE and they need to find out if they are falling down in certain areas and what needs to be addressed.

I: Is there anyway of allocating these WSE to underperforming schools?

B: You see they won't know until they do a WSE, so...

I: Are there no statistics or reports that they could use to identify these schools

B: No not really no unless it's very rare that somebody would complain about what's going on in the school and even then...

I: Could you not judge the school's performance on the likes of the Leaving Cert whereby a school could have produced terrible results, I think that way that school could be the main priority

B: Well that's kind of starting to happen now because up until recently the test results I know are being submitted to the department, I know that this will be a factor when

choosing which schools to have a WSE. Another flaw is emm... that oh god I had it there, it might come back to me

I: Yeah no problem, what is your role in the performance management process?

B: Oh... Like that is kind of a tough question, I would be more kind of, basically when like when in college when we were doing teaching practice and looking at lessons we were encouraged to reflect back on our work. Like when doing a particular lesson we were always told to look back on it and see what worked well and what could be improved, like anything that went wrong...

I: That's not mandatory is it, you can do that in you're on time?

B: It's not mandatory but I think every, every capable teacher does it, its not a formalised process and as well as that the self-evaluation that I spoke with you about earlier like that's not done in every school like every school has different practices which kind of leads back to em...to the second question there that there isn't a consistent way for a principal to evaluate their teachers, like everybody does it different and I mean principals have enough of a workload without having to like you know....

I: Allocate more time to assess each teacher?

B: Yeah and the thing is that there is no set em... there is no set framework or a structure for assessing teachers, you know? And I mean the principal might know themselves about a teacher that is underperforming and the thing is it is very hard to gauge if a teacher, sometimes its obvious if a teacher is underperforming and you would be able to tell but like you know if em...a parent is coming in complaining about a particular parent. It's very hard for the principal to gauge whether it is a valid argument or if it's, because they can't see what they are doing a lot of the time. It hasn't happened in our school but I know in some cases when a teacher is under performing the principal may sit in on the class, you know at certain times unannounced or arranged times you know em...

I: Do you think teachers operating in schools located in disadvantaged areas find it more difficult to perform well?

B: Yes and no, I mean teachers are there ultimately to teach and the thing is like, there are certain factors that can effect a teacher's job regardless what way they try to work things like whether it be you know a good em... parent teacher relationship you know, students turning up absent you know like particularly In disadvantaged areas there are a lot of social factors that can affect a child's performance whether it is like domestic issues if they are not being taken care of properly, if they don't have breakfast, there's a whole load of issues that stop a child from performing and like in that sense it is very hard for a teacher to do their job when they are dealing with domestic issues the thing is like there is a line you cant cross between home and school, and if something is happening at home the teacher can do very little about, for an example if a child is consistently absent from school the only thing a teacher can do I fill out a form and send it out to the Department if a child is not performing well in school due to absenteeism there is very little a teacher can do. I would agree that it is very difficult to teach in disadvantaged areas but depending on the problems that are em...there you know that like there are a lot of issues the teacher can't address and have no control over and it is not very fair to judged a teachers performance over factors that can't be controlled.

I: You spoke about motivating teachers earlier is there any kind of em... incentive program specifically designed for the teacher to increase their productivity like a increased salary, a promotion or some sort of recognition?

B: Well years ago they used to, they have promotions, but years ago they used to have if you didn't want to be a principle, you could pick what I think they call a B Post, and basically your B post could be you are responsible for organising things like maths week and you would get paid more for that.

I: A bit more responsibility for a bit more pay was it?

B: Exactly but now those b posts exist but teachers don't get paid for them anymore, like they em... I can't remember but a few years ago they brought out a moratorium on the b posts and they were still available but the monetary incentive no longer exists, basically now they just offer you recognition, so em...

I: Would that motivate you? What would motivate you more money or some sort of recognition?

B: It would be the recognition I would say seeing as the money incentive was removed

I: But if the money were still available would you be more motivated to try to increase your performance levels?

B: It would be more appealing yes

I: But could it cause conflict in the staffroom em...

B: No it wouldn't really, if anyone went for the B Post they go for it because they want to go for it, you know, and like the only way I can see for that to cause any discontentment in the school is if somebody got the job and people felt that they didn't deserve it, you that kind of way, but you know if you have to apply for the B Post and you didn't take that opportunity you know you can't really blame somebody else for that...

I: What happens if you know if they started giving out incentives on classes that were doing better in exams?

B: I think overall it would be a grossly unfair process, like mean if everybody thought a class that was at em... like at a good academic level across the board then yes you could, but I think em... particularly in this day and age where there is a huge multi cultural society in Ireland and the fact that not everybody is at the same academic level and its not fair to like for example I had a class there two years ago where there was a high level of dyslexia and like in a lot of the tests that they do they don't make allowances for their learning difficulty so they are going to perform poorly and its not fair from that respect you know so they didn't perform well enough and that you know they wouldn't get their incentive .

I: Yeah it does seem unfair, I think there would be other ways to maybe bring em... incentive schemes into the performance management of teachers, it could potentially motivate them

B: But I don't think it should be dependent, it think it should be you know maybe a class that was performing poorly one year and improved the next, I think then yes it would be good to have an incentive there or like you can compare one class with another with progressive results it would be fair. You can't really compare one class

against another because of the various different academic abilities of the students in the class.

I: Do you reckon if you could monitor it say from the results they received in their Junior Cert and the results that they received in their Leaving Cert, and do a comparison on them. If there had been an improvement in their results you could potentially be entitled to a monetary reward?

B: But then again that would only work for certain subjects because some students em... change classes from Junior Cert Level to Leaving Cert level and you know what they did in their Junior Cert if they do change subject is totally different to what they might be doing in their Leaving Cert and they might be weak in that particular subject you know? But em... so like that's em...like that's a little bit of a ehh...an issue there that can be kind of a speed bump in the road

I: Are there any sort of criteria with regards to standards set out by the Department of Education & Skills?

B: There are. It would basically be set out for the school and then the school leader would communicate these standards directly to the rest of the school as in the staff and then it's up to the teachers to carry it out according to the Departments guidelines there but unfortunately the inspectors, even though they do follow the guideline they have a certain attitude and a certain opinion as to the way they want to see things run within the guidelines. But like you can get somebody who can come into the classroom and sees how you do something and they might not like it but then another inspector could come in and say yeah, yeah that's great and love it. Like when they come in they want to see that the curriculum objectives in the lesson are being achieved. The thing is the might not like how it is done but like there are some inspectors, I mean a lot of the inspector who were teachers and were promoted, like in to a position in the Department.

I: For you what would be the main factors affecting the performance of a member of staff? Obviously depending on the class I suppose

B: It could be, god that's a tough one, there, you see there's so many layers to the job that it is hard to pin point one particular factor and I mean think about it just like it has

just popped into my head now it could just be the teachers attitude to their job I suppose em...it could be...

I: Suppose a teacher was lazy and you know and not up to much just going in and out, day to day not exerting too much effort, how would that be dealt with? Like arriving late to class?

B: Well they would be spoken about, basically there will be policies em... each school draws up a policy as to how those staff members would be dealt with basically and it is up to the principal and you know upper management to follow that policy with the teacher involved em...

I: What happens if em...they do bring the teacher in?

B: You see it is a very difficult process because em...like basically first of all if a report was made against ehh a staff member basically they are going to be observed and going to be watched. They might be cautioned and the like. They will follow the policy of to deal with that particular person according to the guidelines and then what they'll do say right up a probationary period for this that and the other with them. But then like you know it would take a considerable amount of time to follow all that through you know? And it is very difficult to be...

I: So there's no real disciplinary action involved it's more of a personnel development scheme?

B: Pretty much yes,

I: Have you ever seen or heard of a teacher who has been lazy in the workplace losing their job for refusing to increase their work rate?

B: I have never heard of anybody like judging from my own school experience in school and being thought myself you kind of, you would see it from that aspect and you see I wouldn't see that much because I would be in my own classes you know? And as far as I am concerned my priority is the students in you know? You might hear rumours and but like the thing is it doesn't pay you to listen to rumours because you know there are a lot of very spiteful people out there and you don't know who is saying what. Em... what I have seen in relation to a teachers performance is basically a decline in performance due to stress and em... like this teacher is currently attending

counseling but she can't go to her principal about the problem because the principal is the problem. She feels she has no body to turn to, she went to go to the teaching council, she went to the department about it and basically nothing has been done. So em...you know there are a lot of issues there but basically in both situations there's no procedure for dealing with the situation.

I: Do you think performance is managed well though? Does the current system work?

B: Em... yes at a school level but not at a departmental level and I mean every school has their own policies and procedures for dealing with their performance management and dealing with situations as they arise. But the Department needs to take a more proactive em... role in addressing the whole school evaluation.

I: Do you think they would only for the financial state of the country?

B: They're basically trying to get the schools to do the job for them because what they have brought in now is school self evaluation and basically what happens there is the school staff as a whole sit down and discuss their strengths and weaknesses in any particular are like you know if students aren't performing well in English they'll say why and what can they do to address the issue and basically the school fills out the paperwork, like we don't send it off to the Department or anything but when an inspector comes in and they call an incidental and basically they will look for their school self-evaluation form. But the thing is it could be years before they get through the paperwork and the thing is it has to be all done. I can't see the point in doing something like this using all that manpower, I can see the point from a school, but the Department is asking us to do this and they aren't even going to look at it. You know that kind of way? So...

I: They were talking about getting rid of the Junior Cert, that will make it harder to monitor the performance of the school and it's teachers don't you think? In relation to statistics

B: You see I don't think they will completely get rid of the Junior Cert, I think they are going to replace it with continuous assessment. Is that system not going to be monitored and corrected internally inside the school, nothing would go to the Department. I don't know what stance the Department is going to take on that

I: It's ultimately to save money isn't it?

B: Exactly yes

I: Do you not think those students might suffer?

B: You see the thing is, the Leaving Cert is a state examination and they are all shoved in a hall to do a state exam and basically I think the Junior Cert kind of prepares them for that, whether they do well or not at least they know what is going to happen in the Leaving Cert. Em... a continuous assessment is kind of like a more, you know when you do a school test in school you're in your own familiar surroundings, you're comfortable. Basically what the state exams do is take you out of your comfort zone em... but the whole continuous assessment I don't know how the Department are going to address that unless they look at the particular results from a particular year group for each subject.

I: That would be quite difficult to monitor wouldn't it?

B: It would be very difficult to monitor and I don't think it's fair for the students to have a system of continuous assessment all the way up through to the Leaving Cert and then just have them thrown in at the deep end sitting in a stressful situation. Because I mean any testing is stressful but if they are doing it in their own comfortable surroundings and their teachers are there and the teachers know their students' strengths and weaknesses you know it's not going to be that much of a stress on them.

I: That's great Alyson, thank you for your time

B: No problem, you're very welcome.

Interview 3: Principal C

I: I am here with Pat, he is a principal in North County Dublin, okay so let's get started, how is a performance evaluated in the workplace?

C: Ehh... teachers' performance, I suppose the school basically has an evaluation first of all and I think that would probably be in the past revolved around examination results really em... secondly feedback that you would get back from parents and also students would give you an indication em... basically speaking of how well teachers are doing but you would now have a much more formal structure as well in terms of school evaluation and the different forms of school evaluation.

I: That's self-school evaluation is it?

C: No this is external, that's where you have got the inspector coming in and they have different forms. You have got the large-scale whole school evaluation and you have got whole school evaluation MLL that is management, leadership and learning and then there are individual subject evaluations and subject departments and then there are those em...which are refereed to jokingly by teachers as 'drive bys'. Basically the inspector comes in unannounced...

I: Spot checks really?

C: Yes exactly

I: Okay em...do you think that there are any flaws in the current evaluation process?

C: There are plenty of flaws, I suppose the first one really, in relation to the external evaluation is by the inspector is that with agreements with the union, teachers are not allowed to be criticised openly or publicly em... this is reflected in the reports that may be published they can not be named, okay its understandable enough really, but when it comes to actually talking to the principle there is feedback at the end of all these evaluations and they don't name the teachers they just say oh... teaching in Hebrew is great but there's only a couple of drawbacks in that they cannot..

I: Specify what teacher it is?

C: Yeah it's confidential

I: Would you recommend any suggestions on how it could be improved?

C: Yeah well I think the first one really in terms of identifying teachers, the whole idea is for improvement and really I think if everybody accepted that this is really what the aims of these evaluations are about then that's where I would see a benefit. But it is for confidentiality and there is a union idea that it can be used against a teacher and can be used by unscrupulous principals.

I: They are protected then are they?

C: Yeah well I think that's really changed over the years, really the idea is that an inspection is for improvement and not to be getting at someone really.

I: Em... so what would your role be in the performance evaluation process?

C: Well I suppose the internal one in the sense that the one that you have the hard facts are the results and then there are other exams or tests that have been administered over the years of a student so if somebody gets to do their Leaving Cert and when they came into the school they did a standardised assessment test coming in to show that they have a certain ability and if their Leaving Cert did not match that then you would have to question the teaching, so the principal can use that information to... all the information in schools when we do testing, principals could use it but they are...

I: Would those results be monitored every year?

C: Ehh... they would indeed and they would get the leaving cert results every year and the department would process em...software as well was given to schools to help analyze results so that they can be compared to the national average.

I: Okay...em...so do you think the performance measurement tools used in schools are effective in determining the strengths and weaknesses of a school and its teachers?

C: They are indeed really they have done, what we have at the moment they have actually used as I said all of that information in a school em...the other thing that has been introduced as well with whole school evaluation is em...are questionnaires which are given out to secondary school students parents and the parents of 5th and 6th year students who are asked specific questions about the school again that is fed back in to the school em... again that enables them to come up an idea where...

I: Would it take long to process all of that information?

C: No, again the department has software that it is done in a way that people basically can actually just put the results in and it formulates statistics and comparisons. But schools themselves can just forexample there before the summer we were getting a package in place where basically speaking we could send out questionnaires online, where parents could fill them in online and the software would analyse them for you.

I: Okay yes...do think teachers operating in schools located in disadvantaged areas would find it more difficult to perform well?

C: It depends what you mean by performing well I think that if you go back to the fact that you have base line information such as the standardised tests coming in and then you can use that to say whether or not a teacher is doing well with that class but in disadvantaged areas you have got challenges that other schools have but they can be factored in em... you know there is a concept that there is an idea of value added and if you tried to use that in schools as something to try to suggest at the start that is a very difficult thing to do basically speaking really but however people have done research and have compared and contrasted disadvantaged and non disadvantaged schools and have come up with ways of working around it.

I: Em... is there any incentive for a teacher to increase their productivity? Ehh... for example a salary increase or a promotion?

C: That doesn't exist at the moment. However really promotion in Irish schools relates to very much deputy principal or principal and they are filled by open competition and it does tend to, it does, sorry it does tend to be those teachers who perform very well who end up being principals but that would really move them into administration rather than continuing on being a teacher and that is a very serious flaw. There is really no promotion there for anybody.

I: With regard to the money side of things, it is an incremental scheme isn't it?

C: That's right, its guaranteed so there's no real motivation as such, motivation amongst teachers is your personal motivation to do well.

I: Oh okay, what measures would be taken if a member of staff was found to be underperforming?

C: Well if a member of staff is underachieving its up to the principal really, for them to talk to them about it and em...you know there are areas open, there are areas of suggestion open to a principal to the teacher about up-skilling or going to their teachers' association, and making recommendations...

I: It isn't mandatory though is it?

C: Not really there is a very long way down a road where you could actually say to a teacher you're fired over such and such, that doesn't exist and em...there are, there has been something introduced in terms of teacher performance but em...it is a very lengthy process.

I: Do you not think that would encourage a teacher to be de-motivated and lazy?

C: Exactly... it does, there is no coercion as such there is no fear em really that anything would happen...

I: So it is up to themselves to motivate their own performance?

C: It is yeah, but you know if a school is working in a particular way and a principal can figure out a particular way to motivate their staff - that essentially speaking that that is the ethos of the school to do well then you would stand out very much isolated and in that way you are brought along...

I: Do you think there would be any other way of motivating teachers?

C: There aren't any procedures no

I: Do you think it could be effective if some were to be implemented?

C: Em... I am not to sure about it really em... I think they tried it in England, whether it works or not, lets say you get a bunch of maths teachers in and paying them more to get the best results...

I: What would be the main factors that would affect the performance of a school and its staff?

C: oh...basically there are so many, this is the difficulty coming up with measuring the performance of a teacher, because there is so many varying factors such as having 30 individuals in front of you really is one of the most important factors, secondly there is the school in which you operate, em thirdly is it disadvantaged, em and you know the personal motivation of the teacher and the stage they are at within their career. It is recognised that you are on an upward scale in terms of improvement the first ten years and then for the second ten years you reach a plateau then in the third ten years...

I: It goes up again?

C: No... it actually goes back down haha you know so em...

I: Do you think if the classes were smaller teachers would be able to perform better?

C: They say that doesn't have an effect really em... that's not... prepared teachers, motivated teachers, interested teachers will do well.

I: Okay...em... in your opinion what would be the best way to deal with an underperforming member of staff?

C: Really again it is, an underperforming teacher in one school could be a satisfactory teacher in another school, but if we all agree that the teacher is underperforming really I think the best thing for them to do is for them to be helped and removed from the class room because they are doing nobody any benefit and really they are doing themselves more harm than good by staying within a classroom. There should be a mechanism there really to help a teacher.

I: And in terms of Ruairi Quinn making cutbacks in the education department do you think that is going to effect overall how teachers will be performing, cutbacks like getting rid of the Junior Cert do you think that will ultimately make performance difficult to monitor?

C: The cutbacks that have occurred really are huge and really down the road we will find out the effects they will have em... you know they will have detrimental effects, very harmful effects on the educational opportunities for students really

I: do you think that will work the whole getting rid of the Junior Cert?

C: The Junior Cert... if you were replacing it with what was initially suggested with the new junior cycle program, it sounded exciting but I think as we get closer and closer to 2014 when it is due to be implemented and even the changes that are being suggested now that the huge experience that had been promised won't materialise. Really many would argue that it is just a money saving exercise ...helping to cut back on costs really, that's all.

I: I had been told that it was all continuous assessment and that it would be marked internally, to save on time and money.

C: Ehh... yeah initially depending on the subject that you are talking about but em... but there will be a huge element of continuous assessment but there will still be some exams, external exams or school based exams but the point that you make about removing the state examination that's in place at the moment will greatly reduce costs really and everything will be done by the teacher...

I: And if it doesn't work over a couple of years they can just return to the old system after saving all of that money couldn't they?

C: Exactly, they are talking about doing that in England where they had their continuous assessment model in place for years and now they are talking about going back to a more formalised examination structure...

I: You know in relation to standards set by the Department of Education are there are particular criteria teachers must meet? Would they put the onus on you to monitor?

C: Well you see the thing is that the department sets out a syllabus and the teachers must meet that syllabus and the exam really determines what happens at the end of the day and the standards then basically speaking set by the exam is one way. On the other hand if you're interested in education the exams are one part of it and as a principal you should be monitoring and establishing what the standards are and make sure they are being maintained. There is also a board of management in the school that as a responsibility in that area as well ...

I: Okay so you would communicate that to them?

C: Exactly that is it

I: Okay Pat I think that is everything thanks a million

C: That's it? Great, you're welcome

Interview 4: Principal D

I: I'm here with Triona a principal in a secondary school in Dublin, okay ehh...the first thing I would like to know is how performance is evaluated in your workplace?

D: Teachers performance...evaluated in the workplace em...well some of it is done by themselves okay so they would regularly have meetings ehh...department meetings where people would look and see how did you do something. How did I do something so they would compare it against somebody else's work and look at their own work em...Dip students, people who are doing their training are monitored by the principal right so they would have four or five visits you know during the year and likewise people who are in their first year of teaching do that as well so the principal would come in and out...

I: Like sit in on the classes?

D: Sit in on the classes yeah and give them feedback and that kind of thing if there was anything that they needed em...occasionally you would have to give some suggestions usually not you know? Usually it is pretty good what you see - so and then I suppose the other one would be then if parents complain or anything there would be an evaluation around that like you know somebody would be spoken to and you would try get some ideas why the parent has complained you know that type of thing?

I: So it would be focused on improvement?

D: Exactly yeah

I: With regard to that Whole School Evaluation that the Department do...

D: Yeah the Whole School Evaluation is different, that would be where the Department inspectors come out now like for something in my school it was four years ago we had a Whole School Evaluation. Now there's a thing called the MLL which is this is what's called a Whole School Evaluation, a WSE it was a more in depth one and they looked at every, four or five departments and then they even looked at what the

cleaning staff were doing, what accounts were doing, everything. But teachers were evaluated there in the teacher's classroom and gave them feedback...

I: Did you receive any notice on that?

D: Yeah you're given three weeks notice for Whole School Evaluations and the MLL you get a three week notice as well and then they have these drop in ones now as well. We have had one of those and ehh...

I: Is it done regularly enough do you think?

D: No, I mean the general feeling on the ground is that if you had one in one year then you would be very unlikely to get another and in fact you might not get one for two years, that would be the kind of feeling now there is no proof of that but you sort of sit back and say yeah that's great, that is over now yeah...

I: Do you find that stressful?

D: Em... no actually there is much more stress for the ones that you are given the notice for because you feel you should be planning and have everything perfect, the drop in ones well it's take it or leave it. Now you know the day they were in with us was a day where we had about four hundred kids visiting from other schools and everything was chaos really but like that's school life you just have to take it type of thing really.

I: Do you think that there are any flaws in the current evaluation process?

D: Ehh yeah, well one of them you have mentioned yourself there already in the fact that it is so irregular em... the other one is that ehh... one huge flaw is that say for example they come and evaluate the history department right, and you have four fantastic history teachers and one very weak history teacher, the general report is written up about the whole department. So that it says things like there is improvement needed in one area, the questioning wasn't good in one area and so on but they will never say it was just one teacher so it is very hard on the brilliant teachers because they get this kind of negative report about them...

I: They don't name the people do they?

D: They don't name the people no, I don't know if I would like them being named but likewise the person who isn't performing kind of doesn't really get any feedback either because they are saying "oh it was great, it was fantastic" you know...

I: What is your role in the performance assessment process?

D: Well...em... the big one would be, well the most obvious one would be going in and out of classrooms for all the first year teachers and Hdips you wouldn't do it after first year its kind of agreed by unions and things you wouldn't really go in after that. But the biggest role for a principal is leading a culture where people will evaluate themselves. Where you see it as important and there are people who are always saying could I do it better? If you don't lead that, if you're not doing it yourself, you have to, I have to evaluate my own work and be seen to do that kind of thing and then hopefully other people will do it as well.

I: Em... do you think then that the performance measurement tools used in schools are effective in measuring the strengths and weaknesses of a school and its staff?

D: They are definitely improving, yeah they are improving em...n em...ten years ago it was all about diagrams, statistics and matching things up. I think it's more; it's more realistic now people are actually looking at themselves and seeing what exactly did the child learn at the end of a lesson as opposed to what did I teach. So the emphasis in the last two years is on learning outcomes. Now that is the buzzword that would be very important for you to have, learning outcomes and that's a good idea because I could teach, I could sound brilliant up the top of the class but if the kids aren't actually learning anything then like I'm not a good teacher really, the emphasis on that I think is really a good move.

I: Do you think like the state of the economy is affecting how schools are performing and how it will be assessed in the future?

D: Ehh...yeah I mean I think cutbacks do, you see them biting now you know, now I'm lucky enough to work in a fee paying school so we can supplement it really but in schools that are not fee paying em... you know inevitably you will always have three or four kids in a physics class but now that class is gone and that has a knock on effect for other people, people who are...the moral is a bit lower em...without a doubt then the classroom sizes going up particularly in primary schools is just a disaster like really

numbers were supposed to be going down and suddenly we are going up again. I mean there is no doubt you can not teach a whole load of kids in one classroom you know, you need to have smaller numbers to be effective.

I: Do you think schools located in a disadvantaged area would find it more difficult to perform well?

D: Yeah...em...well I'll tell you there are two things about that, first of all the cutbacks are vicious in disadvantaged schools, they really are. The only thing is that if they do have a disadvantage status called DEIS, they would be known as a DEIS school then the cuts would not be as bad but they still are very bad though. But the other side of that is that disadvantaged schools tend to have a lot of changing teachers but you think that would be bad but in my experience is often they have a very young and enthusiastic workforce. I found them to be really motivated and the thing is if you are going into a very very difficult class of kids you do work very hard to make the classroom work and there is a great sense of teamwork among the staff as well. I mean everyone is in it together to try and get the best out of these kids in order to survive perhaps really you kind of have to. So it kind of works both ways, like some DEIS Schools in disadvantaged areas have the best staffrooms in the country because of thatthey tend to be a very motivated staff

I: Do you find if a teacher in a school has been there for a long period of time they can become less motivated?

D: Ehh... I honestly don't think that applies, I literally think it depends on the person, yeah I really firmly believe that. I could look at a new teacher coming in who has just got a job and know that in ten years they will be disinterested where as I could see somebody who is in their fifties and they're turning the world upside down you know, in excitement and enthusiasm - so I just think that it depends completely on the personality of the teacher and how much they want to be a teacher as well you know?

I: How would you go about improving the motivation of a staff member who may be underachieving or who has become unmotivated?

D: It is tough now, it is really tough em...I would say sometimes at a particular stage in a career the funny thing about it is this is my experience of it as a principal is if you look at somebody in their mid forties and they are getting a bit disillusioned, life is

moving on and so on, you begin to sort of say look don't give that person any responsibility now they are not that interested they are inclined to be absent but then in actual fact if you bite the bullet and give them loads of responsibility and make them something like a year head, suddenly now that has happened in my situation where I have given a particular person a year head job and they are unbelievably motivated and now the kids are beginning to look at them in a different light, they have suddenly more interest in coming to school and so on. So it can work that way to really give somebody the feeling that you have confidence in him or her that they are going to do a great job that is probably the best motivator really you know?

I: Do you think in terms of incentives is there no salary increase or promotional opportunities?

D: Well promotion in teaching is very bad, yeah in the public system which is where most schools are, you used to get a special duties post or an A post and even they are beginning to be phased out now so you know its really very difficult. You stay on your salary and the promotion prospects are bad. In a school like mine em...when people do a particular duty they can be paid for it, but the irony is actually, I think teaching is one of the professions that payment doesn't do a lot because in other words, say you take the debating team, and somebody gives you a few bob for doing it, it will never pay you for the hours, you know yourself from being in school. Like if you have somebody who is taking teams out you could not pay them to be in a university at say a 12 o'clock at night with a team so I think teachers either want to do that or they don't and no amount of payment is really going to do that. It is an awful shame that there is no promotion prospect in teaching it is really, really bad yeah.

I: What measures are taken if a...the performance of a school or staff member is found to be underachieving?

D: Now eh... a school underachieving is a very difficult one because that lies completely with the department of education you know and it is very hard to prove that the whole school is underachieving. Because they are so diverse like areas of the school, you could have like the sports department could be doing brilliantly where the music isn't or the Irish could be great and the English isn't so that is very very difficult. Now in extreme situations, in a very extreme situation the department would intervene, if it were a really terrible school the department would intervene and sort of

look at seeing what they could do about it. But I mean the number of times you hear of that is virtually never you know? In terms of an underperforming teacher, there are new ways, well, first there...the things that people do... there are lots of measures that have to be done first like you look at somebody we will say who arrives in fifteen minutes late every day and then by the time they get to their classrooms they are very late, the first thing a principal does in a situation like that is to look and see why you know? So it may be they are underperforming because they are caring for an elderly person at home or you know or you don't know it could be something like that. And after you have looked in to all those things and see that pastoral side, sometimes that might iron things out and you can help around that or a student teacher may be in to help them. If it is a teacher who just really is a bad teacher, very lazy and not covering the course and so on there is a discipline procedure and it is agreed with the ASTI, the union and the boards of management and so on there are various stages you know, they are given a verbal warning and then a written warning and then in extreme cases it can go before the board and in hyper extreme cases you can lose your job. But in all honesty it doesn't happen...

I: It's a lengthy enough process then is it?

D: It is very lengthy and like to lose your job you really would have had to be doing something, you would have had to have been abusive or something really now you know...

I: What would be the main factors affecting the performance of a teacher?

D: Well just as I touched on there, the main one I think is something at home, you know it is a pastoral thing somebody maybe with two or three small children at home or mortgage worries or you even know those sort of things and they just cant cope...same as any job really I suppose like it can effect your performance. Em...another one would be where you have been asked to teach, I mean some schools, I personally believe this is really wrong but teachers who have been asked to teach a subject they haven't been trained to teach and the pressure with trying to keep up with that can be awful. Em... and then discipline really that can be a big thing, if discipline slips and your suddenly being swamped...anyone who has been to school knows what it is like to watch that teacher, the one that the kids are just making fun of and that is very difficult.

I: In your opinion what would be the best method of dealing with an underperforming member of staff internally?

D: Em... internally... kind of going back really to try and find the route of the problem then trying maybe trying to reduce the teacher's timetable, like listen Mary your on twenty two hours this week and you are really struggling, if you really felt that way you might say I will bring it down to eighteen hours next year and it will give you a bit more time for correcting and all of their preparation and all that kind of thing em...another thing you could do is a bit of team teaching you know where you share the class between two teachers and you know the more able one would help the one who is struggling so that can work as well

I: Is there any sort of specific criteria set by the Department of Education with regards to performance standards for teachers.

D: Yeah I mean there are and that is where the subject inspection comes in you know. I mean at its most basic a teacher will have to cover the syllabus that is set down. Like if you are teaching Junior Cert you have to teach the course and that is where the inspector comes in to check but as we mentioned they don't come often enough but that is the role of the principal as well to make sure the syllabus is being taught like you know really and in terms of classroom management and everything yeah there are basic, you know basic requirements that teachers have to indicate what the learning targets are and you have to explain it properly. But again how they are monitored and what happens if a person doesn't do all of these thingsthere are no real disciplinary procedures to prevent this but to answer your question there are minimum requirements that a teacher must meet.

I: Say if an inspector came in and the teacher increased their performance just for that day, after being reported for not being a good teacher, how would you go about detecting that?

D: Yeah Yeah it is very difficult and to be honest with you Chris that is exactly what happens because the bottom line is most kids are decent at the back of it. So a parent complains, and lets say Chris he is an awful teacher, he can't teach maths at all. On the day that the inspector comes in and the kids are nice and they behave themselves and the teacher picks the brighter kids...It is a flawed process, definitely flawed

because once you have got kids in the dynamic on that day you know they probably will rise to the occasion ...

I: Because they will be looking to impress in front of the inspector also?

D: Exactly yes, this is it. It is difficult enough now. Now if a teacher was off the wall bad it would emerge but just the teacher who is lazy, doesn't correct the copies, keeps them for weeks on end well I mean how do you prove that, but sure the person knows the inspectors coming so you can always prepare for that, they can just go through them and so on...

I: Okay I think that is everything Triona, thank you for your time I really appreciate it.

D: No problem at all Chris.