



Northern Ireland Audit Office

Schools' Views of their Education and Library Board 2009



REPORT BY THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL
28 June 2010



Northern Ireland Audit Office

Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland

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Schools' Views of their Education and Library Board 2009

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Comptroller and Auditor General

Northern Ireland Audit Office
28 June 2010

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Abbreviations

EAL	English as an Additional Language
ESA	Education and Skills Authority
OFMDFM	Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister
LEA	Local Education Authority
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

Executive Summary



Executive Summary

1. The primary purpose of this survey was to capture the perceptions and judgements of schools on services provided locally by their Education and Library Boards (Boards) and their effectiveness in securing improvements in outcomes for children and young people. 1,238 schools across the five Boards were invited to take part in the survey which was completed by the school principal in consultation with other staff and school governors. It was accessed electronically through the Audit Commission's website¹ and was conducted over a six week period in the summer term 2009.
2. NIAO thanks all the schools who took time to respond to the survey. Unfortunately, the survey was not as strongly supported by schools as had been hoped, and, despite issuing numerous reminders, it attracted only a modest response rate of 23 per cent (288 schools). Appendix 1 provides a breakdown of participating schools across the Boards and by school sector. The overall response rate varied from 20 per cent to 27 per cent across the Boards which, when broken down further, showed a range of 18 per cent to 26 per cent for primary schools and 28 per cent to 45 per cent for post-primary schools. Despite our disappointment, the Audit Commission told us that statistically these response rates have sufficient utility to provide a robust overview of the perceptions of schools across Northern Ireland. Appendix 2 gives more detail on the background to the survey; the methodology is explained in Appendix 3; and a copy of the survey is at Appendix 4.
3. The average Northern Ireland response rate was relatively low compared to England and Wales. Although smaller, the Audit Commission's view is that an average 20 per cent response allows some validity in benchmarking. Clearly the response also varied greatly across different school sectors and this needs to be reflected when making any comparisons. School scores also need to be seen in context: for example, schools may have been unable to comment on particular questions for a number of reasons and we acknowledge that such context needs to be taken into account when drawing any conclusions.
4. The overall findings of this report show a generally encouraging picture with schools rating the services they receive from the Boards across a majority of services and functions as at least adequate. Schools responding to the survey rated their Board as adequate or better overall on 57 of 60 questions.
5. Primary schools are in general more positive than secondary schools about the support received from their Board across most of the survey questions. Special schools, on the other hand, are more likely than other school sectors to express dissatisfaction with Board services.
6. While the ratings given to the Boards by their schools were fairly consistent across the survey sections, schools in the North Eastern Board were markedly more satisfied with Board services compared with their counterparts in the Belfast and South Eastern Boards.

¹ NIAO contracted the Audit Commission to run the survey in Northern Ireland. The Commission has been running separate annual surveys of schools in England and Wales since 2002.

7. In addition to highlighting a number of key areas of Board support services which schools regard as strong, areas were also identified where they see opportunities for improvement. For instance, on the more positive side the Boards have succeeded in ensuring that the school admissions process is streamlined, fairly operated and in line with parental preferences. In addition, as schools play a critical role in keeping children safe from harm, there is an appreciation that the Boards support this role by providing schools with relevant tools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. Less positively, while we recognise the movement towards improving overall levels of attainment within schools, feedback from the survey demonstrates that it is important to ensure that the needs of gifted children are not ignored in this process and that appropriate services are in place to meet these needs.
8. The Audit Commission has commented that, in England, surveys have consistently identified low scores, such as support for children's mental health as particularly problematic. Paragraph 2.7 shows that this was also the case in the Northern Ireland schools responding to the survey. The Commission's view is that such results have been borne out by other evidence in this area and would, therefore, contend that the survey can accurately reflect, and provide further evidence for, these sorts of issues.
9. As a result of an independent Review of Public Administration² published in March 2006, a new Education and Skills Authority (ESA) was proposed to support the operational delivery of education across Northern Ireland. ESA will have responsibility for the functions performed currently by the five Boards. In view of this historic change, we consider that if the Authority continued to run an annual survey of schools similar to the one we carried out, it would be a powerful tool in supporting its work. Survey findings would help to inform ESA's future corporate strategies and allow it to build on its strengths and tackle relative weaknesses in order to improve the quality and cost effectiveness of the services provided to schools and to inform the targeting of resources in future years. A survey of schools would also provide benchmarks for ESA and a mechanism which, hopefully, it could use to monitor and inform change over time across core education system goals. Our ultimate hope for the project is that it becomes a valuable school self-evaluation tool run in partnership with ESA for the mutual benefit of both the Authority and schools enabling them to take account of school services and support.
10. When used in England the survey is treated by the Audit Commission as a "general perception" survey which helps to build up a picture of school support services in an area. As such, the individual comments provided by schools are often considered by the Commission to be at least as important as the quantitative scores. The survey was originally developed in conjunction with the English local authorities to provide such feedback. It is also used with a number of other sources of evidence to support school inspections and as such the scores are not considered adequate enough in their own right to reflect a complete picture of the support provided

2 The Review of Public Administration was the first major examination in over thirty years of how public services in Northern Ireland are organised and delivered. Formally launched in June 2002, the Executive decided to review Northern Ireland's system of public administration with a view to putting in place modern, accountable and effective arrangements for public service delivery.

Executive Summary

to a school but are triangulated with other evidence.

11. We acknowledge the Department's view that the survey could be tailored more carefully to the timing of school terms in Northern Ireland and to the specific context in which education is delivered here. Appendix 5 sets out more detail on some of the specific points raised by the Department which will be of assistance as the questionnaire evolves.
 12. The survey is low cost and has the potential to provide key information from schools on their perceptions of the quality and effectiveness of services. Obviously, a greater response rate produces better value for money from the overall exercise. We hope that ESA will adopt and adapt the survey as it sees fit and that it will encourage and press all schools to complete the on-line questionnaire in future years.
-

Part One:
Overall Findings



Part One: Overall Findings

Overview

1.1 Schools were asked to provide their views by indicating a response on a four point scale with 1 = poor, 2 = adequate, 3 = good, and 4 = excellent. The average response to the survey questions falls between adequate and good with an overall rating of 2.59 (Figure 1). Schools rate their Board as adequate or better overall in their response to 95 per cent of the survey questions (57 out of 60 questions). While only three questions had an overall average rating between poor and adequate, only four (less than one per cent) were rated between good and excellent.

Figure 1: Average of All Questions - by Board

BOARD	AVERAGE OF ALL QUESTIONS
Belfast	2.38
Western	2.71
North Eastern	2.80
South Eastern	2.41
Southern	2.60
All Boards	2.59

Source: Audit Commission

1.2 The questions rated most positively overall related to:

- training, advice, support and guidance on child protection;
- coordination of the admissions process; and
- financial information provided.

1.3 The lowest rated questions (lower than adequate) were in respect of support for gifted and talented children and young people, support for young carers to achieve positive outcomes, and the provision of appropriate family learning opportunities.

1.4 The questions in the survey are grouped by theme as set out in The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister's (OFMDFM) *Children and Young People's Strategy*³ of 2006. The themes are:

- Section 1 – Be healthy
- Section 2 – Enjoy and achieve
- Section 3 – Stay safe
- Section 4 – Achieve economic well-being
- Section 5 – Make a positive contribution
- Section 6 – Strategic management

An additional section (7) was included which contained questions for Boards of Governors.

1.5 The overall average response to the questions in each section has also been calculated (Figure 2). This shows that the Boards' support to schools in respect to "safeguarding the welfare of children and young people" (Section 3 of survey) was rated highest by schools. By contrast, Boards' capacity to "support children in decision-making, understanding

3 This 10 year strategy includes strategic goals in key areas affecting children and young people and takes into account the role of parents and families. It also examines the scope for achieving a more joined up approach within Government to children's issues.

their legal rights and choosing not to discriminate" (Section 5 of the survey) was rated lowest overall.

Figure 2: Average Board response to survey by section

SURVEY SECTION	BOARD AVERAGE
Be Healthy	2.58
Enjoy and Achieve	2.34
Stay Safe	2.87
Achieve Economic Well-being	2.40
Make a positive contribution	2.23
Strategic management	2.69
Questions for Governors	2.32

Source: Audit Commission

1.6 Schools were also given the opportunity to include comments on the individual sections, and were invited to give their opinion on the overall strengths and weaknesses of services. The areas receiving most praise across all Boards and all school sectors were the local knowledge of Board staff, and advice on pastoral issues. The main areas of common concern related to access to the Educational Psychology service and delays in the assessment process for pupils with special educational needs. Appendix 6 provides more detail on these and a range of other qualitative responses made by individual schools in response to the open questions included in the survey. While these are not representative of the opinion of all schools these comments are often

insightful and reflective of some of the stronger school opinions. Using them to secure improvements in service provision can help to engender a constructive culture in addressing problem areas.

By survey section

Section 1: Be healthy

- 1.7 The six questions in this section cover the Boards' responsibilities with regard to promoting a healthy lifestyle to children and young people. Figure 3 shows the average rating of those schools that responded for questions in the "being healthy" section.
- 1.8 All of the questions in this section achieved an average rating of adequate or better. The question rated most highly was *"the encouragement (provided by) the school meals service for children and young people to eat healthily"* (with an overall average score of 2.80), rated by 88 per cent of schools who responded to the question as adequate or better. This was followed closely by *"...providing schools with information and support to keep children and young people healthy"*, with an average score of 2.74, and with 92 per cent of schools rating it as adequate or better. The lowest-rated question was *"... helping to meet the mental health needs of children and young people"*, which achieved an average rating of 2.17, with just under a quarter (23 per cent) of schools who responded rating it as poor. Around 20 per cent of school responses to this question indicated that they felt unable to answer.

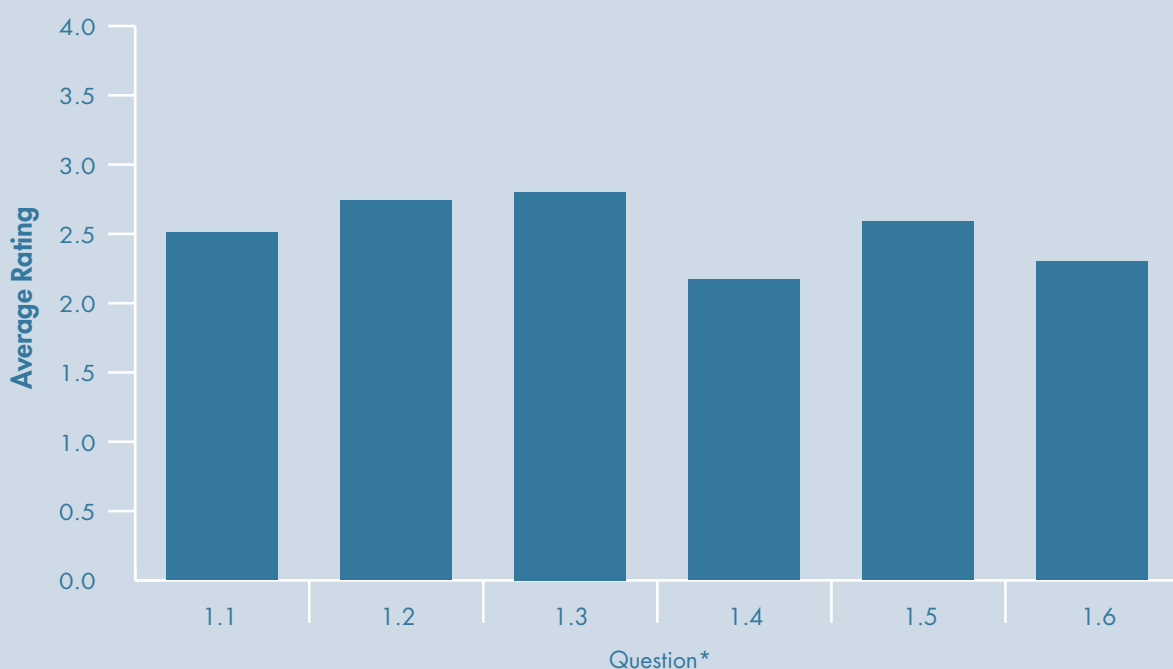
Part One: Overall Findings

Section 2: Enjoy and achieve

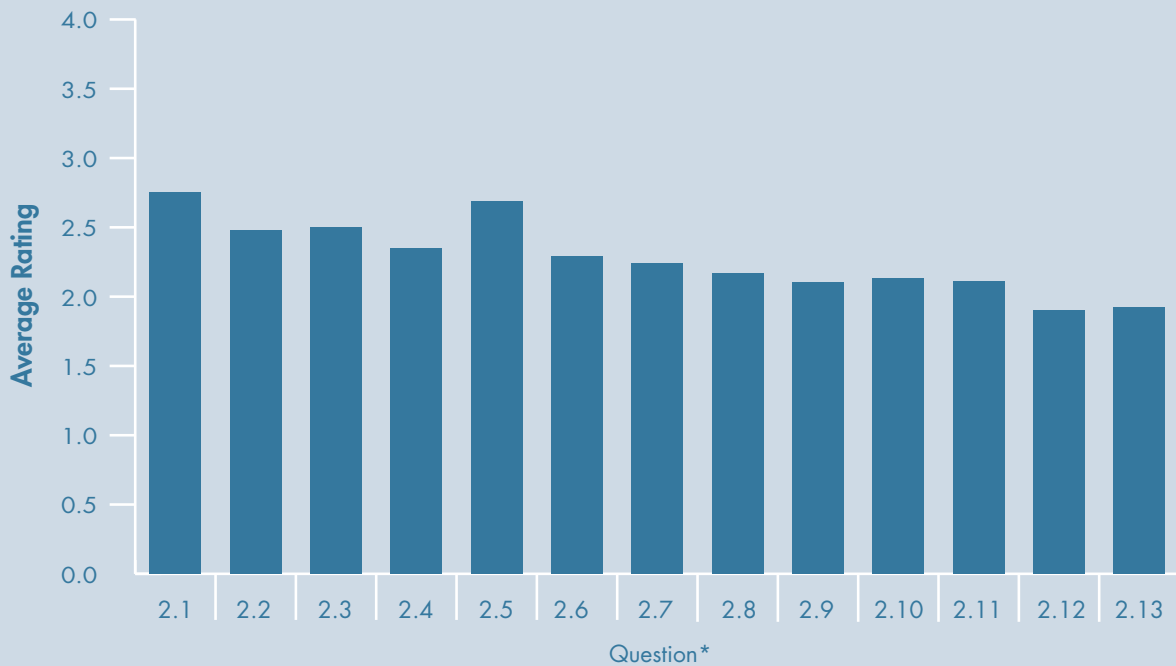
- 1.9 The questions in this section cover the majority of Boards' education functions – school improvement, support services, access and inclusion. Figure 4 shows the average rating for those schools that responded for questions under the "enjoy and achieve" section.
- 1.10 Eleven of the 13 questions in this section achieved ratings which were adequate or better. The question rated most highly was "...supporting the development of school development planning/self-evaluation in schools" (with an overall average score of 2.75), rated by 85 per cent of schools who responded to

the question as adequate or better. This was followed closely by "...advice, support and training ...for teachers with a specific responsibility for special needs", with an average score of 2.69, and with 87 per cent of schools rating it as adequate or better. Two questions rated Board performance as generally poor. The lowest-rated question was "...support for meeting the needs of gifted and talented children..." which achieved an average rating of 1.90, with just under a quarter (23 per cent) of schools who responded rating it as poor. This was followed closely by "...support for young carers to achieve positive outcomes", with an average score of 1.92, and with 15 per cent of schools rating it as poor. However, these

Figure 3: Be Healthy – All Boards



Source: Audit Commission * see Appendix 4

Figure 4: Enjoy and Achieve – All Boards

Source: Audit Commission * see Appendix 4

responses have to be viewed in the context that a third of schools who responded felt unable to comment on the former question while 60 per cent indicated an inability to comment with regard to the latter question.

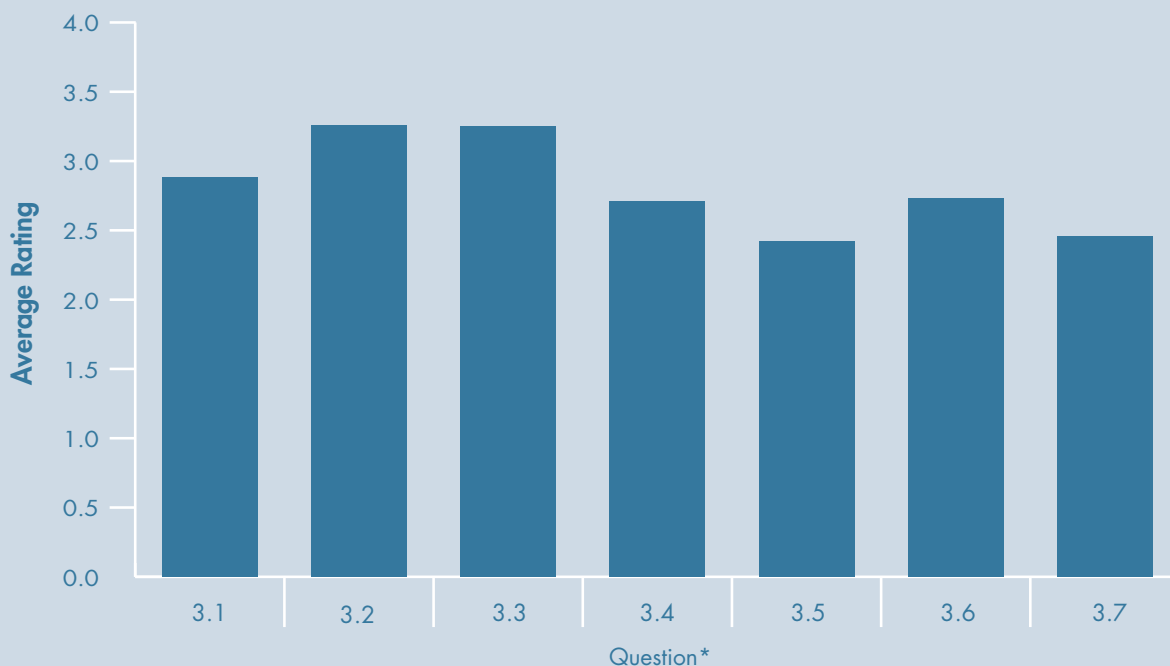
Section 3: Stay safe

- 1.11 The questions in this section cover the majority of Boards' functions in respect to safeguarding the welfare of children and young people. Figure 5 shows the average rating for those schools that responded for each question under the "stay safe" section.
- 1.12 As noted in paragraph 1.5, the questions in this section elicited the most positive

response from schools. Two questions of the seven in this section achieved a rating between good and excellent with "...training, advice and support on child protection" scoring 3.26, and "...guidance on when to make a child protection referral..." a close second, scoring a rating of 3.25. 81 per cent of schools rated the former as either good or excellent and 82 per cent the latter. The lowest-rated question was "...support for community relations and dealing with...racism". While 22 per cent of schools who responded to the survey were unable to comment on this issue, around 11 per cent rated it as poor (average rating of 2.42).

Part One: Overall Findings

Figure 5: Stay Safe – All Boards



Source: Audit Commission * see Appendix 4

Section 4: Achieve economic well-being

1.13 The questions in this section cover the effectiveness of Board services in engaging young people in further education, employment or training upon leaving school. Figure 6 shows the average rating for those schools that responded for questions under the "achieve economic well-being" section.

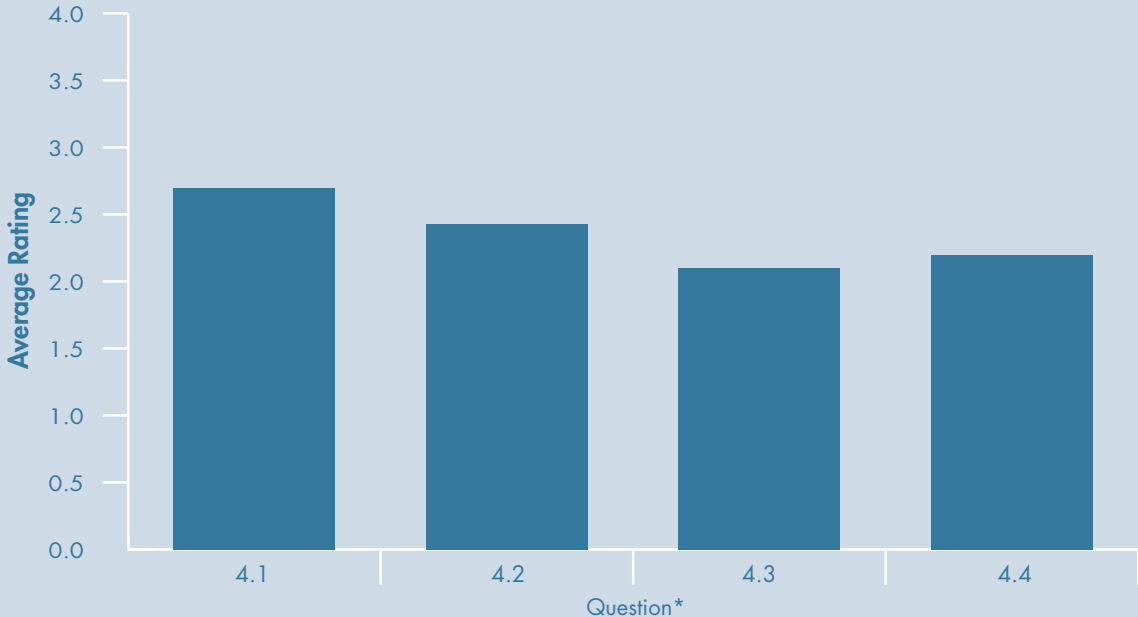
1.14 All of the four questions in this section achieved an average rating of between adequate and good. The question rated most highly was "support for progress in schools towards the greater inclusion of applied subjects in the 14-19 curriculum" (with an overall average score of 2.70),

rated by 26 per cent of schools who responded to the question as adequate or better. The lowest-rated question was "...provision of opportunities post-16 for children leaving care", which achieved an average rating of 2.10, with around 13 per cent of schools who responded rating it as adequate or better.

Section 5: Make a positive contribution

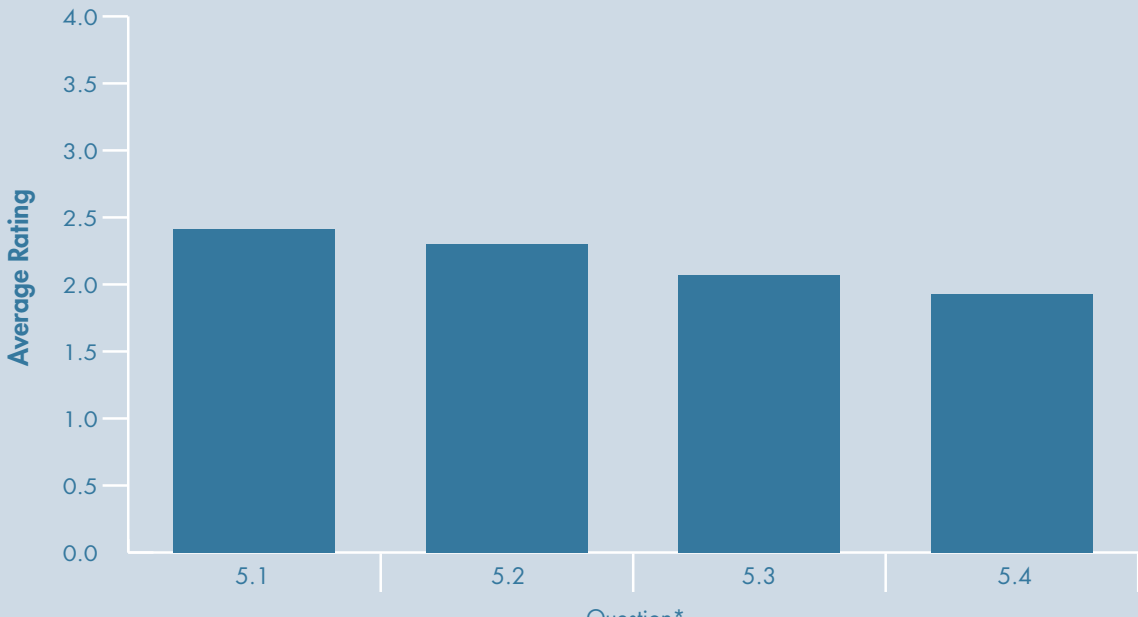
1.15 The questions in this section are linked to the effectiveness of Boards in helping children and young people to contribute positively to community and society and providing opportunities to make their voices heard. Figure 7 shows the average rating of those schools that responded for

Figure 6: Achieve economic well-being – All Boards



Source: Audit Commission * see Appendix 4

Figure 7: Make a positive contribution – all Boards



Source: Audit Commission * see Appendix 4

Part One: Overall Findings

questions under the "making a positive contribution" section.

- 1.16 Three of the four questions in this section achieved an average rating of between adequate and good. The question rated most highly was "...support for children and young people to contribute positively to their local community and to the environment" (with an overall average score of 2.41), rated by 74 per cent of schools who responded to the question as adequate or better. The lowest-rated question, "...providing appropriate family learning opportunities", was one of the three question rated overall as less than adequate (see paragraph 1.5), achieving a score of 1.93. However, 38 per cent of

schools responding indicated that they had no opinion on the question.

Section 6: Strategic management

- 1.17 The questions in this section relate to the Boards' leadership and strategic management of services for children and young people. Figure 8 shows the average rating for questions under the "strategic management" section for those schools who responded.
- 1.18 All of the 19 questions in this section achieved an average rating of adequate or better, with two achieving a rating of between good and excellent. The question rated most highly was "...coordination of

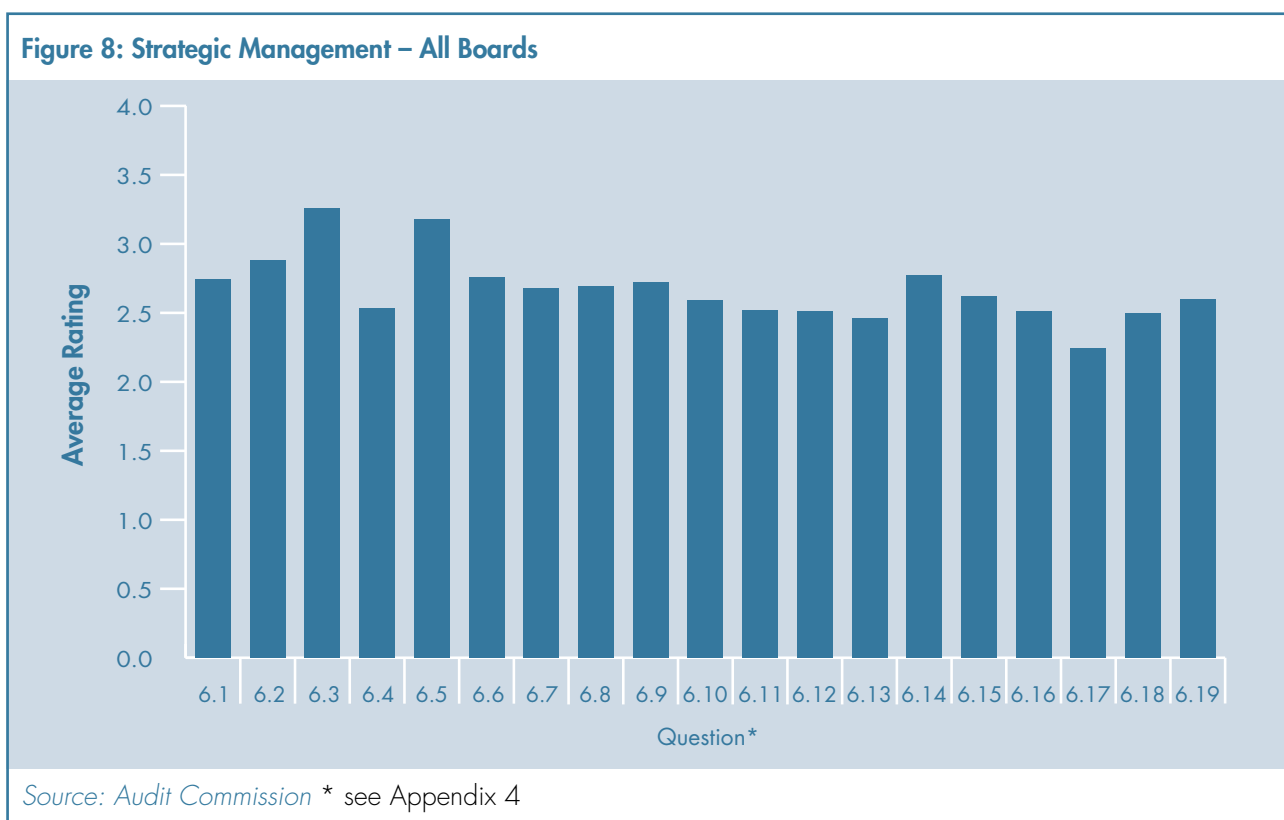
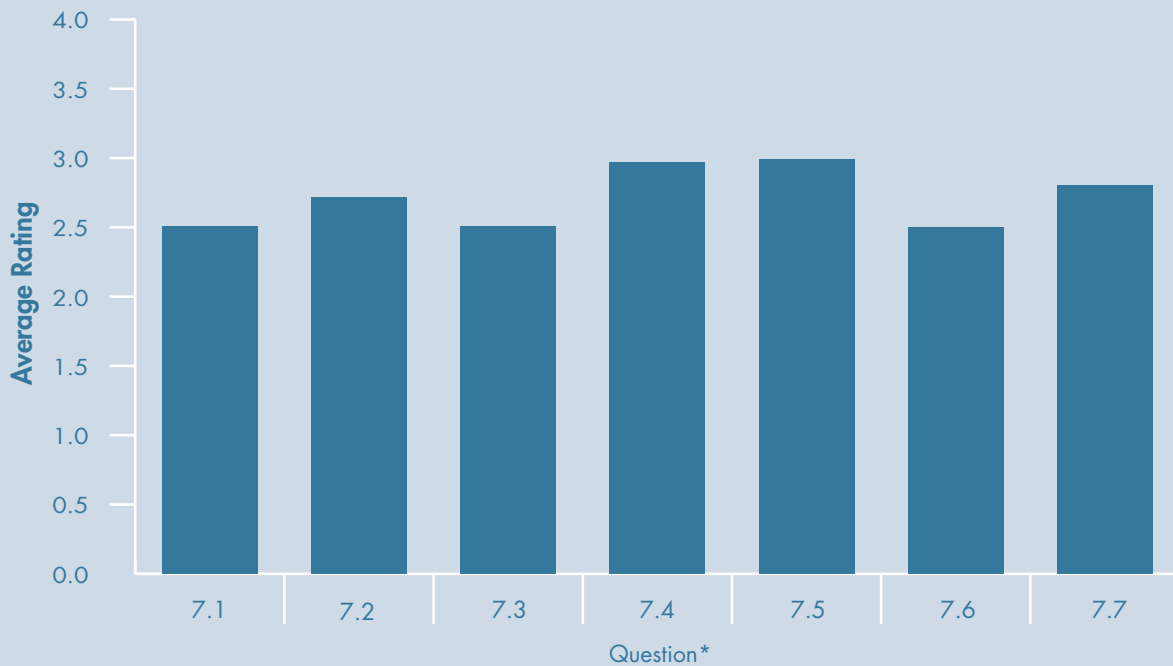


Figure 9: Questions for Boards of Governors – All Boards

Source: Audit Commission * see Appendix 4

the admissions process" (with an overall average score of 3.26), rated by 90 per cent of schools who responded to the question as adequate or better. The lowest-rated question, "...the extent to which schools influence policies/plans/procedures for services to children and young people" achieved an average rating of 2.24, with around 65 per cent of schools who responded rating it as adequate or better.

Section 7: Questions for Boards of Governors

1.19 This section records the results of questions addressed to Boards of Governors. They covered a variety of issues and Figure 9 shows the average rating for questions of those schools who responded.

1.20 All of the seven questions in this section achieved an average rating of between adequate and good. Two questions almost achieved a good to excellent grading: "...the quality and usefulness of the financial management data received from the Board" (with an overall average score of 2.99), and "...the support provided to help plan and control the school budget" (with an overall average score of 2.97). The lowest-rated question, "...the quality and usefulness of the pupil performance data your school receives" achieved an average rating of 2.50, still with around 64 per cent of schools who responded rating it as adequate or better.

Part Two: Differences between school phases



Part Two: Differences between school phases

2.1 The differences between the average ratings by primary, secondary and special schools are examined in this section. Nursery schools were included in the survey, however, we have not included their responses in this part of our analysis due to the low numbers replying - only 14 out of 98 nurseries responded. Special schools have been included in the analysis because, while only 14 responded, this represents 32 per cent of that sector which was the sector with the highest response rate. The key feature of this section is that primary schools gave the most positive responses across the survey questions, with special schools giving the most negative answers (Figure 10).

Primary schools

2.2 Of the questions in the survey, primary schools gave their highest rating to the "... coordination of the admissions process" which had an average rating of 3.33, with the second highest rated question relating to "the financial information provided" which received 3.32. The two questions on the "training, advice and support on child protection" and "guidance on making a child protection referral" also scored highly. The question rated lowest by the primaries was "support for meeting the needs of gifted

and talented children" with an average rating of 1.97. [Figure 11]

Secondary schools

2.3 Secondary schools also gave their most positive ratings to the "admissions process" and "child protection" [Figure 12]. However, they were particularly negative about:

- Provision of appropriate family learning opportunities (1.67);
- Support for meeting the needs of gifted and talented children (1.80);
- Support for young carers to achieve positive outcomes(1.81); and
- Provision of activities to deflect children and young people from anti-social behaviour (1.88).

Special schools

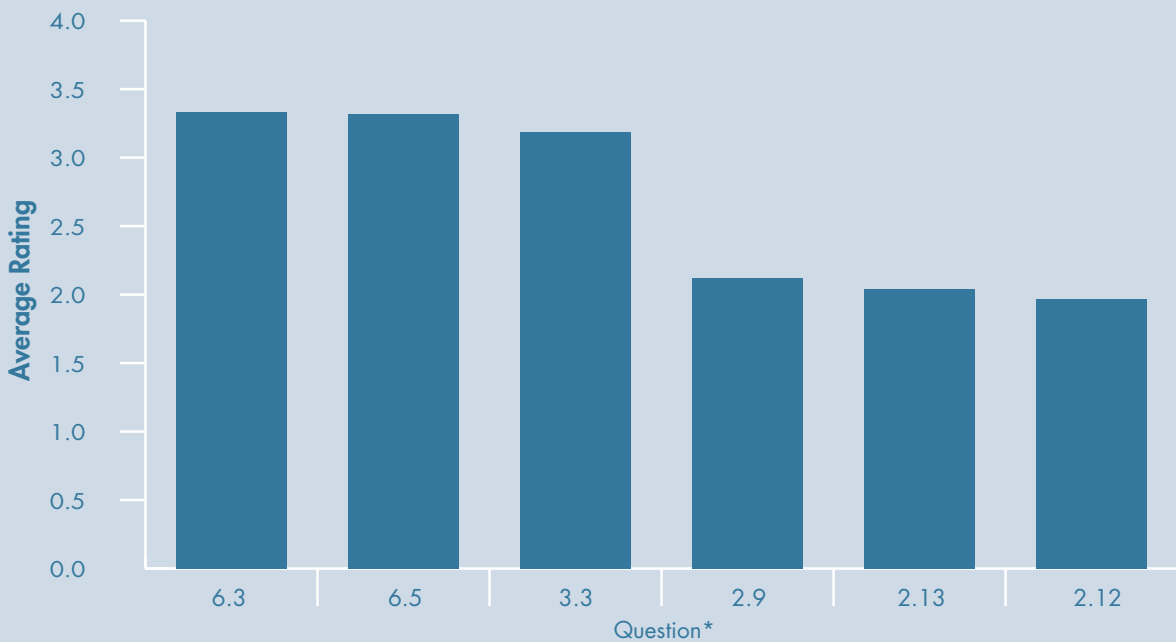
2.4 Special schools gave the most negative responses to the survey with 12 of the 60 questions receiving a rating between poor and average. The most negative rating was given to "quality and usefulness of pupil performance data" (1.20) followed by the help given to "meet the mental health needs of children and young people" (1.36). In

Figure 10:

	Primary	Secondary	Special
Most positive answers	37	11	13
Most negative answers	4	19	36

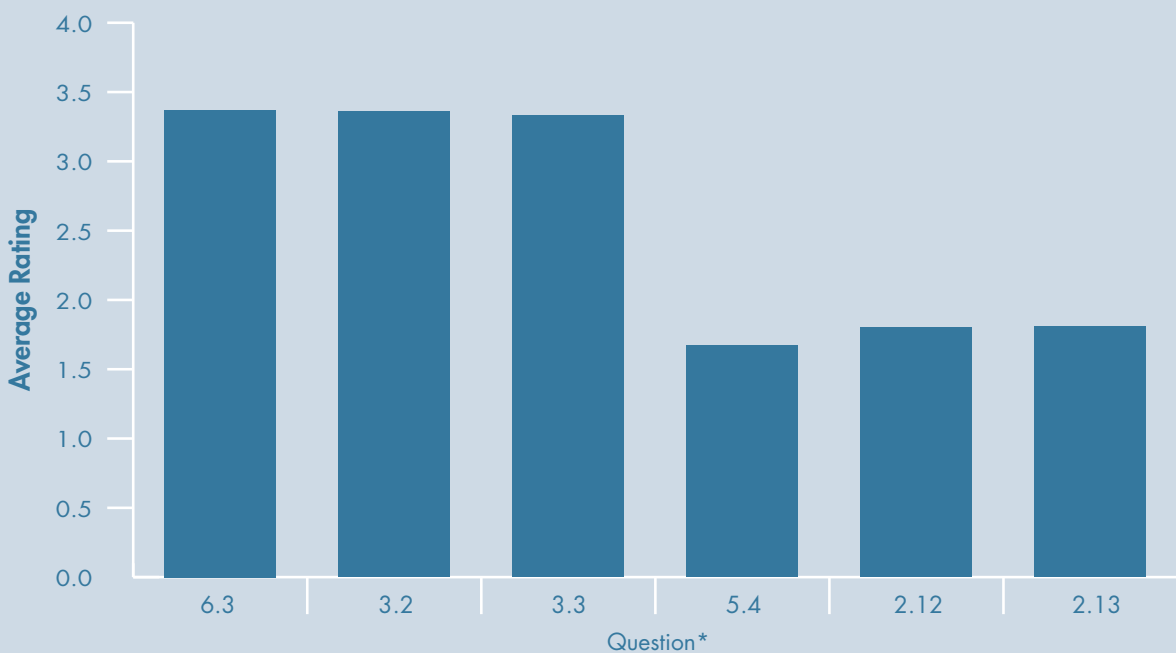
Source: Audit Commission

Figure 11: Questions given the highest and lowest ratings by primary schools



Source: Audit Commission * see Appendix 4

Figure 12: Questions given the highest and lowest ratings by post primary schools



Source: Audit Commission * see Appendix 4

Part Two: Differences between school phases

common with primary and post primary schools, the most positive ratings were given to the Stay Safe section, with four of the seven questions rated between good and excellent. The overall highest rated question was "guidance on when to make a child protection referral" (3.38)

Boards of governors

2.5 Consistent with the response ratings of principals and teachers, the Boards of Governors in primary schools responded more positively to a series of questions addressed directly to them than their secondary and special school counterparts. However, while primary and secondary schools both rated highest the questions related to the "...quality and usefulness

of financial management data.." and the "...support for planning and controlling the school budget", special schools rated "support on Human Resource issues" and "support for new governors" highest. While secondary school governors were most negative about "...support for assessing the performance of the principal and teaching staff", primary school governors were more negative about the "quality and usefulness of pupil performance data received from the Board". Special schools rated two questions in this section as between poor and adequate: "quality and usefulness of pupil performance data" (1.20) and "support ..to help you plan and control the school budget" (1.82). Figure 14 shows the differences in average ratings given in this section of the survey.

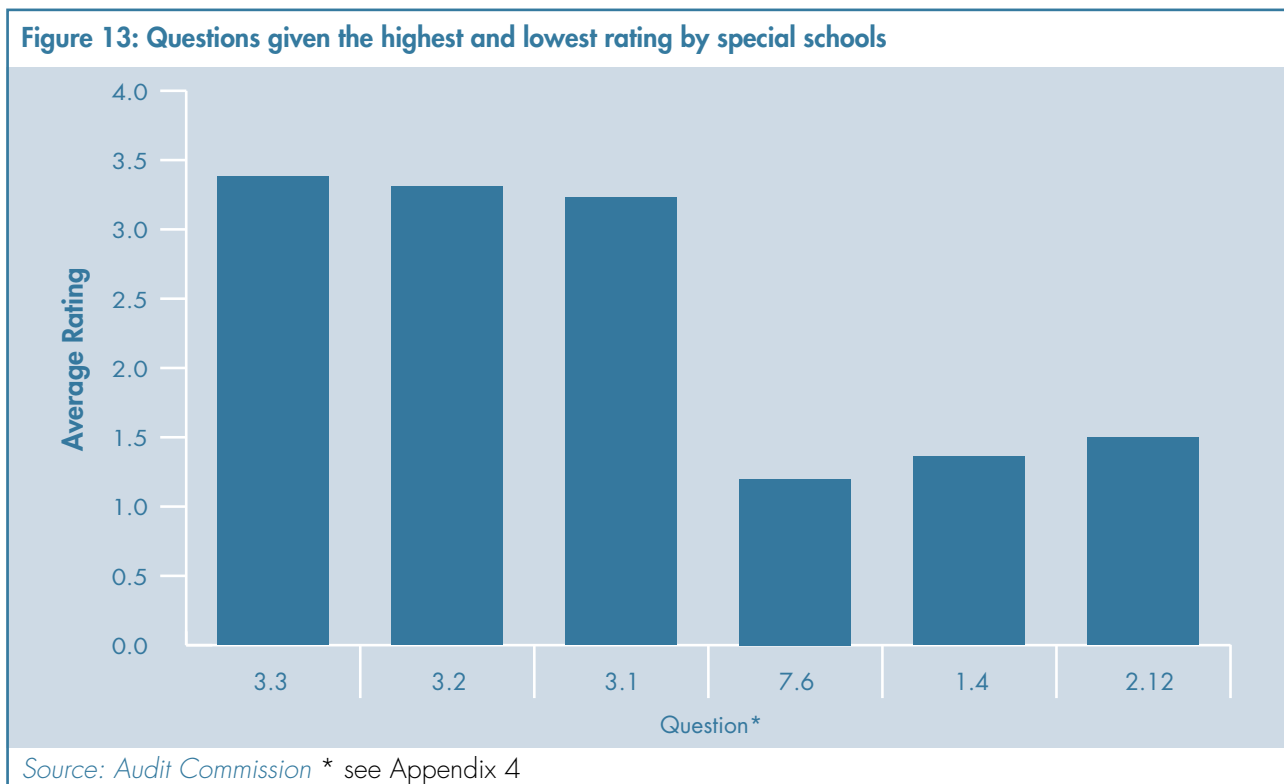


Figure 14: Average rating given to each question in Section 7 – by school sector

	Survey Question*						
	7.1	7.2	7.3	7.4	7.5	7.6	7.7
Primary	2.56	2.73	2.56	3.11	3.08	2.51	2.80
Post Primary	2.45	2.63	2.39	2.75	2.83	2.56	2.83
Special	2.38	2.85	2.33	1.82	2.36	1.20	2.85

Source : Audit Commission * see Appendix 4

By Survey Section

Be healthy

2.6 This was the one section of the survey where post primary schools were more positive than primaries in their overall rating of questions – 81 per cent of post primary schools rated their Board as adequate or better in this section compared to 66 per cent of primary schools. Special schools were also more positive than primary schools, but Figure 15 shows that this sector had a correspondingly high percentage of schools rating Boards' performance as poor. The reason for this apparent dichotomy is that those special schools responding to the survey tended to answer all the questions, whereas on many

occasions, both primary and post primary schools often scored questions as "unable to comment" or their responses were coded as providing "no answer". As a result, the percentage of questions recorded as poor represented a higher proportion of the total number of special school respondents.

2.7 There was a degree of consistency in how each sector rated the questions in this section. For instance, the questions relating to the "...encouragement for children to eat healthily" and "...support to keep children healthy" scored highest. Each sector rated "support in helping to promote sexual health and reduce teenage pregnancies" and "...help in meeting mental health needs" lowest in their responses.

Figure 15: Schools rating of "Be Healthy" section of survey

School Phase	% of schools responding	
	Adequate or better	Poor
Primary	66	10
Post Primary	81	14
Special	73	27

Source: Audit Commission

Part Two: Differences between school phases

Figure 16: Schools rating of "Enjoy and Achieve" section of survey

School Phase	% of schools responding	
	Adequate or better	Poor
Primary	64	16
Post Primary	61	18
Special	82	18

Source: Audit Commission

Enjoy and achieve

2.8 Figure 16 shows that there was a divergence of opinion between primary and post primary schools, on the one hand, and special schools on the other. Indeed, while schools in the former sectors rated the questions in this section among the lowest in their response to the survey overall – 64 per cent of primary schools and 61 per cent of secondary schools rating their Board as adequate or better - special schools gave this area of Board service provision their top rating. Similar levels of schools in all three sectors, (16 - 18 per cent), rated their Board's performance as less than adequate/poor. Despite the variance in strength of views, there was a significant degree of consistency between the three phases in terms of how they perceived Board performance across the range of questions employed in this section. All rated "... support for gifted and talented children" as the most negative of their responses in this section and while secondary schools rated "...support for special needs teachers" as their most positive response, closely followed by "...support for school development planning", this order was

reversed in the primary sector. Special schools also gave highest grading to "... support for school development planning" but, reflective of their sector, a close second was "interventions with young children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities"

Stay safe

2.9 There was no real difference in how the three phases rated overall Board performance in this survey area – around three quarters of all schools rated their Boards performance as adequate or better (Figure 17). The most positively rated questions in the three phases related to "child protection" services and the two questions concerned were scored as between good and excellent. Secondary schools did respond slightly more negatively to questions on "dealing with racism" and "helping families in danger of harming their children".

Achieve economic well-being

2.10 As the questions in this section all relate to post primary children, there was no response from primary schools (Figure 18). However, special schools did respond

Figure 17: Schools rating of "Stay Safe" section of survey

School Phase	% of schools responding	
	Adequate or better	Poor
Primary	78	3
Post Primary	78	10
Special	77	3

Source: Audit Commission

Figure 18: Schools rating of "Achieve Economic Well-being" section of survey

School Phase	% of schools responding	
	Adequate or better	Poor
Post Primary	58	17
Special	76	24

Source: Audit Commission

along with post primary schools and both sectors rated "...support for...greater inclusion of applied subjects in the 14-19 curriculum" as the top response. Similarly, both sectors agreed that "the provision of opportunities post-16 for children leaving care" was their least positive response. Again, the fact that all special schools responding expressed a view is shown in

the comparative response levels between the two sectors.

Make a positive contribution

- 2.11 There was a significant divergence of opinion between school sectors on this section of the survey (Figure 19). Whereas post primary schools rated this section the

Figure 19: Schools rating of "Making a positive contribution" section of survey

School Phase	% of schools responding	
	Adequate or better	Poor
Primary	63	12
Post Primary	54	26
Special	79	21

Source: Audit Commission

Part Two: Differences between school phases

Figure 20: Schools rating of "Strategic Management" section of survey

School Phase	% of schools responding	
	Adequate or better	Poor
Primary	74	9
Post Primary	69	9
Special	73	24

Source: Audit Commission

lowest overall, special schools gave it their second highest rating – 79 per cent positive compared to 54 per cent in post primary schools. Despite the span of responses there was a consistency to ratings across sectors. All three phases rated "...provision of appropriate family learning opportunities" as the least positive response: while the post primary average rating was poor to adequate (1.67) primary schools gave an overall adequate to good rating with an average score of 2.06.

Strategic management

2.12 The rating of questions in this section also displays a strong degree of consistency in how schools in all phases/sectors view the performance of boards, but again secondary schools tend to be more negative overall (Figure 20). However, on this section there is a split between special schools, on the one hand, and primary and post primary schools on how they view the different elements of strategic management. Primary and post primary schools both rate "...coordination of the admissions process" and "...provision of financial information" as their most positive responses, with post primary schools scoring an average of

3.37 and 3.06 (good to excellent) and primary schools scoring 3.33 and 3.32. Special schools rated these two elements fairly low, instead giving their top grade to "...support for developing extended schools..." and "...support for learning and professional development". While primary and post primary schools both rate "...schools influence on policies/plans/procedures..." as their lowest with a primary school average of 2.3 compared with secondary schools 2.15, special schools reserve a less than adequate 1.83 grading for "...Board's challenge to improve resource and financial management..."

Questions for Boards of Governors

2.13 As with principals, governors in primary schools tended to be slightly more positive in how they perceived the performance of their Board (Figure 21). The top two responses in both primary and secondary schools were "...support in planning and controlling the school budget" and "...quality and usefulness of financial management data", with the order swapped in the post primary sector. Governors in special schools, however,

Figure 21: School governors section of survey

School Phase	% of schools responding	
	Adequate or better	Poor
Primary	87	9
Post Primary	72	9
Special	76	24

Source: Audit Commission

rated their top answers as "...training, advice and support ...on Human Resourcesand for new governors". Governors in special and primary schools were in agreement about what they saw as the weakest area of Board support: "...the quality and usefulness of pupil performance

data", with special schools recording a particularly low 1.20. Post primary school governors, on the other hand, scored "... support on assessing the performance of the principal and teaching staff" as the weakest area (2.39).

Part Three:
Differences between Boards



Part Three: Differences between Boards

3.1 In general, the ratings given to Boards by their schools were fairly consistent across the seven categories of questions. Figure 22 shows that ratings for questions on "Staying Safe" (Section 3) and "Strategic Management" (Section 6) were scored highest, while those on "Enjoying and Achieving" (Section 2) and "Making a Positive Contribution" (Section 5) scored the lowest. Overall, schools in the North Eastern Board area were the most positive in their responses, followed fairly closely by schools in the Western and Southern Boards. Schools in Belfast and the South Eastern Boards, by contrast, tended to rate their Boards less highly.

By survey section

Be healthy

3.2 Schools in Belfast rated their Board below the overall Board average on five of the six questions in this section. By contrast, in the Western Board, schools scored four of the six questions as above the average. The North Eastern Board gave the question on "...providing information and support to keep children healthy" a rating between good and excellent (3.05). While schools in all Boards scored the question on "supporting mental health needs" lowest in the section overall, only those in Belfast rated Board performance as being between poor and adequate (1.89).

Figure 22: Overall average rating per section – by Board

	Section						
	1 <i>"Be Healthy"</i>	2 <i>"Enjoy and Achieve"</i>	3 <i>"Stay Safe"</i>	4 <i>"Economic Well-Being"</i>	5 <i>"Make a Positive Contribution"</i>	6 <i>"Strategic Management"</i>	7 <i>"Governors Views"</i>
Belfast	2.47	2.15	2.65	2.14	1.98	2.38	2.13
Western	2.61	2.41	2.98	2.72	2.37	2.83	2.41
North Eastern	2.68	2.54	3.00	2.71	2.36	2.92	2.56
South Eastern	2.46	2.19	2.74	1.90	2.10	2.49	2.10
Southern	2.61	2.32	2.87	2.41	2.20	2.69	2.31
All Boards	2.58	2.34	2.87	2.40	2.23	2.69	2.32

Source: Audit Commission

Enjoy and achieve

- 3.3 Within the North Eastern Board, schools scored ten of the 13 questions in this section above the overall Board average. By contrast schools in the South Eastern and Belfast Boards rated all but two of the questions below the Board average. Belfast schools rated six of the 13 questions below adequate while those in the South Eastern Board rated four of the questions in this way.

Stay safe

- 3.4 In this section, schools in the Western Board were closest to those in the North Eastern Board in how positive they were about the performance of their Board. Indeed, the Western Board provided the most positive response of all Boards in terms of *"...the support provided on child protection for members of staff and governors"* (3.42). While this was the section rated highest by Belfast schools with two of the seven questions receiving a rating of good, they were particularly negative about support for *"...dealing with the issue of racism"* (1.86).

Achieve economic well-being

- 3.5 Schools in the South Eastern Board were out of step with those in other Boards, scoring all questions in this section particularly negatively: two questions were rated as less than adequate and the other two questions only just achieved an adequate rating (2.0). By contrast, schools in the North Eastern Board rated two of the questions as good to excellent. While

the responses from schools in the Western Board were also of a generally positive nature, uncharacteristically, they gave the lowest rating of all Boards to the question *"...provision of opportunities post-16 for children leaving care"* (1.78).

Make a positive contribution

- 3.6 North Eastern and Western Board schools responded positively to all questions in this section. South Eastern Board schools, however, scored two of the four questions below adequate and those in the Southern and Belfast Boards each rated one question less than adequate. These questions related to *"anti-social behaviour"* and *"opportunities for family learning"*.

Strategic management

- 3.7 This section contains the largest number of questions in the survey – 19. Apart from one question rated as below adequate by schools in the Belfast Board, all the questions were rated adequate or above by schools in all Boards. North Eastern Board schools rated seven as good or above.

Questions for Boards of Governors

- 3.8 Analysis of questions for Governors shows that there is a high degree of correlation between these and the responses of their school principals. In line with this, therefore, Governors in the North Eastern Board scored questions most positively, followed by the Western and Southern Boards. Governors in South Eastern Board schools were the most negative about the support services they received.

Part Three: Differences between Boards

Comparison with English Local Authorities

- 3.9 The Audit Commission carried out the survey of Northern Ireland schools in conjunction with the survey it has been running in England since 2001. Therefore, it is possible to use the survey results from England to get a general sense of where the two school systems stand in comparative terms. While we recognise that the roles of the Boards and Local Education Authorities (LEAs) cannot be strictly compared, we consider that measuring the relative ratings for similar services can be useful and instructive starting point. Appendix 7 provides an analysis of responses across the various sections of the questionnaire. This reveals that across the six categories where comparisons can be made, schools, locally only tend to be much more positive than their English counterparts in terms of their rating of the "strategic management" provided by their Boards. In general, English schools tend to demonstrate a much more positive outlook in terms of the other support services they receive from their LEAs.
-

Appendices:



Appendix One: (paragraph 2)

BELFAST			
School Phase	Total schools	Responses received	Response rate %
Nursery schools	32	2	6
Primary schools	94	20	21
Post primary schools	36	10	28
Special schools	12	3	25
Belfast Total	174	35	20
Northern Ireland Total	1,238	288	23

WESTERN			
School Phase	Total schools	Responses received	Response rate %
Nursery schools	12	3	25
Primary schools	185	39	21
Post primary schools	44	13	30
Special schools	8	4	50
Western Total	249	59	24
Northern Ireland Total	1,238	288	23

NORTH EASTERN			
School Phase	Total schools	Responses received	Response rate %
Nursery schools	15	0	0
Primary schools	211	44	21
Post primary schools	52	15	29
Special schools	9	3	33
North Eastern Total	287	62	22
Northern Ireland Total	1,238	288	23

SOUTH EASTERN			
School Phase	Total schools	Responses received	Response rate %
Nursery schools	19	5	26
Primary schools	158	41	26
Post primary schools	38	13	34
Special schools	10	1	10
South Eastern Total	225	60	27
Northern Ireland Total	1,238	288	23

SOUTHERN			
School Phase	Total schools	Responses received	Response rate %
Nursery schools	20	4	20
Primary schools	225	41	18
Post primary schools	53	24	45
Special schools	5	3	60
Southern Total	303	72	24
Northern Ireland Total	1,238	288	23

Appendix Two: (paragraph 2)

Background to the Survey

The school survey used in England and Wales is a collaborative tool developed by the Audit Commission in partnership with the Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED), Estyn, the Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales, the Wales Audit Office, Local Education Authorities (LEAs), Head teacher and Governor associations. The primary purpose of the school survey is to act as a source of evidence about schools' perceptions of the support they receive from their local authority and the services provided locally for children and young people.

The Northern Ireland Schools' Survey 2009 was carried out by the Audit Commission on behalf of the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

Appendix Three: (paragraph 2)

Methodology – Survey and Analysis

The summer 2009 survey was carried out electronically through a secure website⁴ and was “live” from 3 June to 15 July 2009. Information on how to log on to access the survey was passed from the Audit Commission to all schools via the Department of Education through emails and by letters from the Northern Ireland Audit Office. Schools could print off the survey in order to consult all staff and governors.

Schools were asked to provide their views by indicating a response on a four point scale: 1 = poor, 2 = adequate, 3 = good, 4 = excellent. The higher the score, the higher the satisfaction rating. Schools were also given the option of indicating that they were unable to comment. The survey also included sections for schools' comments.

Schools' responses are confidential and individual schools are not identified in this report. Analysis included in this report is broken down by Board and school sector only.

Comparison with responses given by schools in England

The Audit Commission carried out the survey of Northern Ireland schools in conjunction with the survey it has been running in England since 2001. Forty five out of the sixty questions included in the survey had an English equivalent; therefore it is possible to use the results from England to get a general sense of where the two school systems stand in comparative terms.

Appendix Four:



The School Survey

This survey asks for your views on the support from your Education and Library Board for your school and for children and young people

Thank you for participating in this regional survey.

Your views will make a valuable contribution to the assessment of your local area and to the development of services in your area for children and young people.

The survey will be open from **3rd June 2009 until 15th July 2009**.

The survey is also available online at www.audit-commission.gov.uk/schoolsurvey

The Northern Ireland Audit Office should be your first point of contact for any general enquiries – please contact Cathy Robinson (Tel: 028 90251055) cathy.robinson@niauditoffice.gov.uk. You can contact the Audit Commission by emailing schoolsurvey-help@audit-commission.gov.uk

Please go to <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/thiswebsite/accessibility.asp> for general information about website accessibility.

School Details (please complete):			
School Name		School Number	_____ / _____

How your response will be used

The results of the School Survey will be available in autumn and they will help to inform the new Education and Skills Authority. A report by the Northern Ireland Audit Office will be published later in the year – all schools will be sent a copy.

The questions used in the survey cover seven areas: five drawn from outcomes identified in the *Our Children and Young People Strategy 2006*, a programme of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) for a framework to support the “joining up” of children’s services – being healthy; enjoying and achieving; staying safe; achieving economic well-being and making a positive contribution, plus strategic management.

Your response to the core School Survey questions (Sections 1-6) will be assumed to be the response from the whole school. We encourage you to consult with other members of staff and governors when responding. In addition, your attention is drawn to Section 7 which includes a number of questions specifically addressed to school governors. We would ask that you coordinate responses to these in your return.

Your response will be kept confidential and no external reports or analysis will name schools. You should respond to the questionnaire acting on behalf of the school and not in your capacity as an individual within that school. Please note that all intellectual property, including copyright, in the school survey and all information obtained through the survey will be the property of the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

Please return your survey by 15 July 2009 to:

School Survey
Local Government
The Audit Commission
FREEPOST LON17791
LONDON
SW1P 4BR

Appendix Four:

Section 1: Be Healthy

This section covers the effectiveness of Board services in promoting a healthy lifestyle to children and young people. It is linked to the "Healthy" section of the Our Children and Young People Strategy 2006.

Please bear in mind when reading these questions that where we mention **local services** we are not asking you to rate your own provision.

Please note the survey scale:

1: Poor **2:** Adequate **3:** Good **4:** Excellent **X:** Unable to Comment

Please rate		1	2	3	4	X
(1.1)	Board services' support for children and young people to cease substance abuse (including smoking and alcohol)					
(1.2)	Board services in providing schools with information and support to keep children and young people healthy					
(1.3)	The school meals service encouragement for children and young people to eat healthily					
(1.4)	Board services in helping to meet the mental health needs of children and young people					
(1.5)	Board services in helping to meet the needs of children and young people with disabilities and long term health conditions					
(1.6)	Board services' support in helping to promote sexual health and reducing teenage pregnancies					

Do you wish to comment on any of the above?

(A maximum of 255 characters can be entered into the box. You must restrict your comments to the council/local services as a body. You must not include any comments from which any individual can be identified).

Section 2: Enjoy and Achieve

This section covers the majority of your Board's education functions – school improvement, support services, access and inclusion. It is linked to the Enjoying, learning and Achieving section of the Our Children and Young People Strategy 2006.

Please bear in mind when reading these questions that where we mention **local services** we are not asking you to rate your own provision.

Please note the survey scale:

1: Poor **2:** Adequate **3:** Good **4:** Excellent **X:** Unable to Comment

Please rate		1	2	3	4	X
(2.1)	Your Board's support to develop school development planning/self-evaluation in your school					
(2.2)	Your Board's challenge to your school to perform better					
(2.3)	The provision for early years in meeting local needs					
(2.4)	Your Board's support for all teachers in mainstream schools in dealing with the wide range of special needs					
(2.5)	The advice, support and training from your Board for teachers with a specific responsibility for special needs (SENDOs)					
(2.6)	Interventions with young children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities					
(2.7)	How statutory assessments are made for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities					
(2.8)	The advice, support and training from your Board for teaching looked-after children					
(2.9)	The information you receive from your Board about looked-after children in your school					
(2.10)	Your Board's support for meeting the needs of children and young people with English as an additional language (newcomer children)					
(2.11)	Your Board's support for meeting the needs of children and young people from minority ethnic groups					
(2.12)	Your Board's support for meeting the needs of gifted and talented children and young people					
(2.13)	Board support for young carers to achieve positive outcomes					

Do you wish to comment on any of the above?

(A maximum of 255 characters can be entered into the box. You must restrict your comments to the council/local services as a body. You must not include any comments from which any individual can be identified).

Appendix Four:

Section 3: Stay Safe

This section covers the majority of functions in respect to safeguarding the welfare of children and young people. It is linked to the "Living in safety and with stability" section of the Our Children and Young People Strategy 2006.

Please bear in mind when reading these questions that where we mention **local services** we are not asking you to rate your own provision.

Please note the survey scale:

1: Poor **2:** Adequate **3:** Good **4:** Excellent **X:** Unable to Comment

Please rate		1	2	3	4	X
(3.1)	Board's contribution to safeguarding of children and young people and to protecting them from harm and neglect					
(3.2)	The training, advice and support on child protection provided by your Board for designated members of staff and governors					
(3.3)	The guidance on when to make a child protection referral to the relevant service					
(3.4)	Your Board's support for combating bullying					
(3.5)	Your Board's support for encouraging good community relations and dealing with issues around racism					
(3.6)	Your Board in ensuring that children and young people do not go missing from the system					
(3.7)	The contribution of your Board's services in helping families in danger of harming or neglecting their own children					

Do you wish to comment on any of the above?

(A maximum of 255 characters can be entered into the box. You must restrict your comments to the council/local services as a body. You must not include any comments from which any individual can be identified).

Section 4: Achieve Economic well-being

This section covers the effectiveness of Board services in engaging children and young people in further education, employment or training upon leaving school. It is linked to the "Experiencing economic and environmental wellbeing" section of the Our Children and Young People Strategy 2006.

Please bear in mind when reading these questions that where we mention **local services** we are not asking you to rate your own provision.

Please note the survey scale:

1: Poor **2:** Adequate **3:** Good **4:** Excellent **X:** Unable to Comment

Please rate		1	2	3	4	X
(4.1)	Your Board's support for progress in schools towards the greater inclusion of applied subjects in the 14-19 curriculum					
(4.2)	The information, advice and guidance provided by your Board on options post-16					
(4.3)	The provision of opportunities post-16 for children leaving care					
(4.4)	The provision of post-16 opportunities for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities					

Do you wish to comment on any of the above?

(A maximum of 255 characters can be entered into the box. You must restrict your comments to the council/local services as a body. You must not include any comments from which any individual can be identified).

Appendix Four:

Section 5: Make a positive contribution

This section covers the effectiveness of Board services in helping children and young people in decision-making, to understand their legal rights and responsibilities and to choose not to discriminate. It is linked to the "Contributing positively to community and society and living in a society which respects their rights" sections of the Our Children and Young People Strategy 2006.

Please bear in mind when reading these questions that where we mention local services we are not asking you to rate your own provision.

Please note the survey scale:

1: Poor **2:** Adequate **3:** Good **4:** Excellent **X:** Unable to Comment

Please rate		1	2	3	4	X
(5.1)	Your Board's support for children and young people to contribute positively to their local community and to the environment					
(5.2)	The opportunities provided for children and young people to make their voices heard					
(5.3)	Your Board's provision of activities to deflect children and young people from anti-social behaviour					
(5.4)	Your Board's provision of appropriate family learning opportunities					

Do you wish to comment on any of the above?

(A maximum of 255 characters can be entered into the box. You must restrict your comments to the council/local services as a body. You must not include any comments from which any individual can be identified).

Section 6: Strategic Management

This section covers the leadership and strategic management of services for children and young people provided by the Education and Library Boards.

Please bear in mind when reading these questions that where we mention local services we are not asking you to rate your own provision.

Please note the survey scale:

1: Poor **2:** Adequate **3:** Good **4:** Excellent **X:** Unable to Comment

Please rate		1	2	3	4	X
(6.1)	The leadership of senior officers in your Board					
(6.2)	Your Board's communication with your school					
(6.3)	Your Board's co-ordination of the admissions process					
(6.4)	Your Board's support for the upkeep and maintenance of your grounds and buildings					
(6.5)	The financial information provided to you by your Board					
(6.6)	Your Board's support in enabling you to be an effective purchaser of services, whether from the Board or from external providers					
(6.7)	Your Board's challenge to improve resource and financial management in your school					
(6.8)	Your Board's support for developing extended schools and other out of school activities for children and young people					
(6.9)	Your Board's support in developing the effectiveness of your governing body					
(6.10)	Your Board's behaviour support programmes					
(6.11)	Your Board's support for promoting pupil attendance					
(6.12)	Your board's management of the procedures for re-admission of excluded pupils					
(6.13)	Your Board's provision for pupils out of mainstream schools, including pupils who have been excluded					
(6.14)	Your Board's support for learning and professional development					
(6.15)	The training, advice and support given to develop leadership and management skills in your school					
(6.16)	Your Board's educational psychology support					
(6.17)	The extent to which schools influence policies/plans/procedures for services to children and young people					
(6.18)	Your Board's contribution to the delivery of the five outcomes from the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister's Our Children and Young People Strategy 2006					
(6.19)	Board services in helping you to promote the wellbeing of children and young people					

Appendix Four:

Do you wish to comment on any of the above?

(A maximum of 255 characters can be entered into the box. You must restrict your comments to the council/local services as a body. You must not include any comments from which any individual can be identified).

Questions proposed by Boards of Governors

You may wish to explain your answers further in the comments box below. When you are finished, please click 'Continue' to go to the next section, or click 'Back to Menu' to return to the survey menu.

1: Poor **2:** Adequate **3:** Good **4:** Excellent **X:** Unable to Comment

Please rate		1	2	3	4	X
These questions have been proposed by NIAO/Department to elicit information about the support and advice provided by Boards to school Governors: Please rate the effectiveness of:						
(7.1)	Your Board's guidance and support in enabling you to fulfil your role as an integral part of the school involved in all aspects of school life, in particular formulation of policies and setting school priorities					
(7.2)	The training, advice and support provided by your Board on Human Resource issues					
(7.3)	The training, advice and support provided by your Board on assessing the performance of the principal and teaching staff					
(7.4)	The support provided by your Board to help you plan and control the school budget					
(7.5)	The quality and usefulness of the financial management data your school receives from your Board					
(7.6)	The quality and usefulness of the pupil performance data your school receives from your Board					
(7.7)	The training, advice and support your Board provides for new governors					

Do you wish to comment on any of the above?

(A maximum of 255 characters can be entered into the box. You must restrict your comments to the council (or board) and local services as a body. You must not include any comments from which any individual can be identified).

Further comments

(A maximum of 255 characters can be entered into the box. You must restrict your comments to the council (or board) and local services as a body. You must not include any comments from which any individual can be identified).

Please comment on the overall strengths and weaknesses of services:

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Please comment on the areas where services are improving or deteriorating and your council's (or boards) and/or local services overall capacity to improve:

Improving:

Appendix Four:

Deteriorating:

Capacity to improve:

(You must restrict your comments to the Board as a body. You must not include any comments from which a living individual can be identified)

Survey sign-off

For completion by the Principal

Which staff were consulted in the completion of this survey?	
<i>(Please tick as many boxes as apply)</i>	
Principal?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other senior management teammembers?	<input type="checkbox"/>
SEN Co-ordinator?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other teachers?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Governors?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Administrative staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	If others, _____
	Please specify _____

Authorisation	
Principal's signature	Date



Appendix Five: (paragraph 11)

Comments from Department of Education on structure of Questionnaire

As the draft report acknowledges, the low response rate is disappointing and indeed untypical of other surveys of schools here. This does raise issues about the reliability of some aspects of the survey findings, particularly if it is to be used as a benchmark for future surveys: the relatively small number of respondents may not be representative of all schools.

The survey report also does not indicate if there are variations in satisfaction depending on different school sizes and management types. Those would have been interesting dimensions to assess. The voluntary grammar schools, for example, avail of only a limited number of Board services. Given the number of returns, the potential for non-response bias is high and, as the report indicates, small numbers mean that one school's view may have a disproportionate impact. It may therefore be useful to include commentary in the report on how representative the respondents are of the school population as a whole.

Timing seems to have been an important factor in the response rate; while the 3 June to 15th July may be suitable for England and Wales, it is at the end of school year in Northern Ireland and this will inevitably be a factor affecting levels of response.

Another factor which may have impacted on the response rate is that the questionnaire could have benefited from more tailoring for the Northern Ireland context. The commentary does not reflect that some questions related to services that are not delivered by the Boards, and others related to services which are delivered regionally. The commentary could distinguish between:

- (i) services which are part of the Boards' remit and those which are not ie the schools' access to services through the Education and Library Boards and those which would typically be delivered by Health and Social Services other stakeholders; and
- (ii) those services which are delivered regionally through a lead Board such as the Inclusion and Diversity Service, and not by 5 Boards individually.

I also note that there are also a number of Board service areas which were not included in this survey (eg home to school transport, music services, and support for travellers).

A number of questions were asked of primary and special schools which are only relevant to post primary schools (eg questions 1.6, 2.8, 2.13, 4.1, 4.2). This accounts for a large proportion of the 'unable to comment' that have been returned. But it also raises a query over the responses received from primaries where the school would have no direct experience of the service. The option to record 'unable to comment' in the question is nevertheless useful as it can highlight areas where awareness/experience is an issue, but it is not clear from the report whether responses are due to a lack of awareness, or a lack of actual experience of the service. The perception of schools about Board services inevitably depends on a number of factors, including the need to access the services, the experience of accessing the services', and the understanding of the service.

A number of the Boards already conduct annual school surveys as a mechanism to facilitate continuous improvement. I understand that there was some correspondence with Boards ahead of the survey, eg North Eastern Board offered

Appendix Five: (paragraph 11)

advice based on their experience of surveying schools here. Service providers clearly benefit from receiving feedback through surveys of customers, and it will be important that we continue to collect information from schools through such surveys for the purpose of benchmarking performance and monitoring improvement.

Appendix Six: (paragraph 1.6)

School comments of Special Education provision

- Provision for Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils without statements at nursery school poor;
- Referrals for children with learning difficulties too slow – waiting list for education psychology support horrendous, huge time delays between various tests, diagnosis and support. This makes code of practice seem irrelevant;
- Resources not in place to support early intervention in respect of special needs;
- Need for more Educational psychologists and support teachers to deal with special needs pupils when identified especially in the area of mathematics/numeracy;
- Training is provided for SENCO-ordinators but many schools do not have a dedicated SENCO working with individual children;
- Special needs support but not provision ie classroom assistants;
- Not good at helping SEN pupils with disabilities and long term health difficulties;
- Lack of strategic direction for Special Education and absence of consultation with schools;
- Communication between special schools and special education department in the Board is deteriorating; and
- Post 16 provision for children with SEN is very poorly developed.
- Little advice on developing ICT within the school;
- No support for English as an Additional Language (EAL);
- No support/follow-up to “gifted and talented” document issued;
- Professional development practically non-existent for teachers and principals/management; and
- Need for integrated thinking between health and education – joint policy making.

Points arising from **PRIMARY** schools:

- More time for literacy co-ordinators to develop the subject in school;
- Further support for beginning principals with perhaps a mentor or cluster of beginning principals to offer support and guidance;
- Weak area is guidance on transfer to and from post primary schools and what information each post primary school requires about new pupils;
- Communication systems within transport department weak, especially during poor weather and for rural schools;
- Looked after children – agencies working in isolation – not enough information given to schools;
- Regional Training Unit courses run during summer holidays are great – could Boards run similar locally as twilight courses in term time?;
- Concerns about the ability of some governors to assess the performance of teaching staff;
- Need to continue in-school reading support for targeted children;
- School meals need to be healthier;
- Layout of financial management data is very difficult to follow;
- Meals service for children is terrible – very often school meals are inedible;

Other Comments submitted by school phase

Points arising from comments by **NURSERY** schools:

- Dedicated support for the early years sector required;
- Support needed for School development planning and action plans;
- More training for finances required – especially for first time principals;

Appendix Six: (paragraph 1.6)

- Early years intervention and funding for nurturing groups have the capacity to improve;
- CASS teams good at coming to school to help with curricular development;
- Integrated school – they do not give us any help with human resource and financial issues, very little help in child protection we go to social services direct. Individual staff in the Board do not like our system and governor training is irrelevant to us;
- School meals section non compliance with nutritional standards;
- Need more support for School development planning;
- No support for newcomer EAL children;
- School is buying in counselling services through Extended School funds. Counselling should be available in inner city schools and not dependent on funding;
- Funding for basic resources and health and safety matters has deteriorated;
- In school support is required to assist schools to meet the needs of children with English as an additional language. A handbook/notes and DVD is inadequate;
- Professional and curriculum development – training is best done using practicing principals and teachers e.g. on a secondment basis not Board personnel who are too far removed from current and real school life; and
- Further delegation of resources to schools so that they can “buy in” services that are most relevant to themselves will make better use of these resources.

Points arising from comments by **POST PRIMARY** schools:

- Recommended suppliers not always best or most efficient;
- More support needed for young people with mental health problems, addictions and emotional issues;
- Child protection support is of a high standard;
- Little good support for newcomer children;
- Staff development is superficial;
- Educational other than at school support off-site is slow;
- Need support implementing the revised curriculum;
- Purchasing – freedom to look for best value for money is non-existent;
- Can take up to six months from a staff vacancy is identified until post is filled;
- Schools require an overall map of services available, links between them and relevant personnel. Accessing appropriate services can sometimes be difficult; and
- Quality of school meals still a concern – little effort to make healthy food attractive.

Points arising from **SPECIAL** schools:

- More joined up thinking between schools and regional colleges needed to ensure school leavers with learning difficulties can access relevant courses;
- Limited budget for staff development and training;
- Deteriorating – staffing levels for pupils with complex needs;
- More support for financial management;
- Need the capacity to hire their own therapists eg speech, occupational, physio, music etc.;
- School counselling is a free service available to post primary schools since Sept 2007, but is not available to special schools;
- Accessibility to family learning opportunities needs to be more widely known;
- Lack of provision on mental health matters; and
- Have had to buy in expensive counselling services for young children.

Appendix Seven: (paragraph 3.9)

Summary analysis-all participating boards in Northern Ireland All schools – comparison with England

Survey Question			
Summary report for schools maintained by the board		All participating boards average	England average
1. Be healthy			
1.1.	Board services' support for children and young people to cease substance abuse (including smoking and alcohol)	2.51	2.68
1.2.	Board services in providing schools with information and support to keep children and young people healthy	2.74	2.94
1.3.	The school meals service encouragement for children and young people to eat healthily	2.80	2.81
1.4.	Board services in helping to meet the mental health needs of children and young people	2.17	2.05
1.5.	Board services in helping to meet the needs of children and young people with disabilities and long term health conditions	2.59	2.60
1.6.	Board services' support in helping to promote sexual health and reducing teenage pregnancies	2.30	2.57
2. Enjoy and achieve			
2.1.	Your Board's support to develop school development planning/self-evaluation in your school	2.75	2.84
2.2.	Your Board's challenge to your school to perform better	2.48	3.03
2.3.	The provision for early years in meeting local needs	2.53	2.56
2.4.	Your Board's support for all teachers in mainstream schools in dealing with the wide range of special needs	2.35	No equivalent question
2.5.	The advice, support and training from your Board for teachers with a specific responsibility for special needs (SENDOs)	2.69	No equivalent question
2.6.	Interventions with young children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	2.29	2.55
2.7.	How statutory assessments are made for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	2.24	2.35
2.8.	The advice, support and training from your Board for teaching looked-after children	2.17	No equivalent question
2.9.	The information you receive from your Board about looked-after children in your school	2.10	2.48

Appendix Seven: (paragraph 3.9)

2.10.	Your Board's support for meeting the needs of children and young people with English as an additional language (newcomer children)	2.13	2.43
2.11.	Your Board's support for meeting the needs of children and young people from minority ethnic groups	2.11	2.49
2.12.	Your Board's support for meeting the needs of gifted and talented children and young people	1.90	2.53
2.13.	Board support for young carers to achieve positive outcomes	1.92	2.53
3. Stay safe			
3.1.	Your Board's contribution to safeguarding of children and young people and to protecting them from harm and neglect	2.88	2.63
3.2.	The training, advice and support on child protection provided by your Board for designated members of staff and governors	3.26	3.01
3.3.	The guidance on when to make a child protection referral to the relevant service	3.25	2.73
3.4.	Your Board's support for combating bullying	2.71	2.69
3.5.	Your Board's support for encouraging good community relations and dealing with issues around racism	2.42	2.73
3.6.	Your Board in ensuring that children and young people do not go missing from the system	2.73	2.62
3.7.	The contribution of your Board's services in helping families in danger of harming or neglecting their own children	2.46	2.23
4. Achieve economic well-being			
4.1.	Your Board's support for progress in schools towards the greater inclusion of applied subjects in the 14-19 curriculum	2.70	No equivalent question
4.2.	The information, advice and guidance provided by your Board on options post-16	2.43	2.60
4.3.	The provision of opportunities post-16 for children leaving care	2.10	2.44
4.4.	The provision of post-16 opportunities for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	2.20	2.36
5. Make a positive contribution			
5.1.	Your Board's support for children and young people to contribute positively to their local community and to the environment	2.41	2.54
5.2.	The opportunities provided for children and young people to make their voices heard	2.30	2.57
5.3.	Your Board's provision of activities to deflect children and young people from anti-social behaviour	2.07	2.24
5.4.	Your Board's provision of appropriate family learning opportunities	1.93	2.52

6. Strategic management			
6.1.	The leadership of senior officers in your Board	2.74	2.57
6.2.	Your Board's communication with your school	2.88	2.43
6.3.	Your Board's co-ordination of the admissions process	3.26	2.50
6.4.	Your Board's support for the upkeep and maintenance of your grounds and buildings	2.53	No equivalent question
6.5.	The financial information provided to you by your Board	3.18	2.76
6.6.	Your Board's support in enabling you to be an effective purchaser of services, whether from the Board or from external providers	2.76	2.42
6.7.	Your Board's challenge to improve resource and financial management in your school	2.68	2.64
6.8.	Your Board's support for developing extended schools and other out of school activities for children and young people	2.69	2.66
6.9.	Your Board's support in developing the effectiveness of your governing body	2.72	2.70
6.10.	Your Board's behaviour support programmes	2.59	2.42
6.11.	Your Board's support for promoting pupil attendance	2.52	2.60
6.12.	Your board's management of the procedures for re-admission of excluded pupils	2.51	2.41
6.13.	Your Board's provision for pupils out of mainstream schools, including pupils who have been excluded	2.46	2.25
6.14.	Your Board's support for learning and professional development	2.77	No equivalent question
6.15.	The training, advice and support given to develop leadership and management skills in your school	2.62	No equivalent question
6.16.	Your Board's educational psychology support	2.51	2.41
6.17.	The extent to which schools influence policies/plans/procedures for services to children and young people	2.24	2.27
6.18.	Your Board's contribution to the delivery of the five outcomes from the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister's Our Children and Young People Strategy 2006	2.50	No equivalent question
6.19.	Board services in helping you to promote the wellbeing of children and young people	2.60	2.53
7. Questions for Boards of Governors			
7.1.	Your Board's guidance and support in enabling you to fulfil your role as an integral part of the school involved in all aspects of school life, in particular formulation of policies and setting school priorities	2.51	No equivalent question

Appendix Seven: (paragraph 3.9)

7.2.	The training, advice and support provided by your Board on Human Resource issues	2.72	No equivalent question
7.3.	The training, advice and support provided by your Board on assessing the performance of the principal and teaching staff	2.51	No equivalent question
7.4.	The support provided by your Board to help you plan and control the school budget	2.97	No equivalent question
7.5.	The quality and usefulness of the financial management data your school receives from your Board	2.99	No equivalent question
7.6.	The quality and usefulness of the pupil performance data your school receives from your Board	2.50	No equivalent question
7.7.	The training, advice and support your Board provides for new governors	2.80	No equivalent question

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