

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS



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Pupils compiled a comprehensive set of proposals to resolve the transfer issue. Pupils were extremely engaged about this matter and their views demonstrated a great deal of creative and logical thinking. Identifying a solution, pupils were broadly divided between those who were in favour of retaining tests and those who believed tests should be abolished. Again, efforts were made to quantify pupil preferences during the consultation, however, the large numbers of pupils consulted and pupils' indecision regarding some issues mean that the percentages provided are estimates. Views of teachers and parents are also documented.

Retain some kind of Tests

Between 10% and 70% of pupils in each school proposed that some kind of test should be employed to transfer pupils from primary to post-primary school. In the Kids' Life and Times survey, 40% of pupils thought that tests should be retained. Of these, 71% sat entrance tests. During the consultation, advocates of tests included both those who had sat tests and those who had chosen not to sit tests.

Pupils' reasons for retaining tests;

- Tests enable pupils to transfer to the school most appropriate for them.

Pupils suggested that tests were the most effective mechanism to identify pupils' abilities and to determine which school they should attend;

'It sorts out who's smart and who's not';

'Can make sure clever people aren't disadvantaged';

'If you take a test then the school will know you're really smart'; and

'Need to go to a school that suits your capabilities'.

- Tests ensure that schools are not oversubscribed. Pupils proposed that;
'Schools could be overcrowded and by the time principals and teachers decide, you might have to be homeschooled';
'Schools could let anyone in but the tests decide'; and
'If everyone wants the best school they could get overcrowded and teachers couldn't teach'.

- Tests are a fair system to determine entry to grammar schools. Pupils submitted various arguments in support of this proposal;
'If you're lazy you can get your brother to do work for you at home but he can't do a test for you'; and
'They help separate those who really want to get into grammar school and those who aren't as keen'.

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- **Tests help pupils improve or grow in confidence.** As one pupil surmised; *'You'll be more confident doing your work, if you can do the test – at least you should give it a go'.*
- **Tests are part of life.** Pupils argued that they would have to undertake tests throughout their careers; *'You do tests to get into a good university, to get a good job – they challenge your brain cells'.*

Pupils also had specific recommendations regarding the type of tests they felt should be employed.

- **Reintroduce the '11plus'.** Different proportions of pupils from almost one third of schools argued that it would be better to *'go back to the 11plus'; 'Older system was simpler – just do it the old way and give pupils a grade, not a score'; "'11plus" was better 'cos you didn't have to pay'; and 'Go back 'cos it's all up in the air – might be easier'.*
- **Retain the current entrance tests.** A very small number of pupils in approximately 25% of schools suggested that it would be best to keep the AQE and GL tests, although some qualified their choice; *'The tests are ok but do them in primary school'; 'Keep it the same – don't change it again. It's too stressful for kids'; 'I think the new way is better but if you did science you'd have a better chance of the*

school you want'; and 'I thought it was a good idea – it's different – everyone needs challenged'.

- **Include more subjects in tests.** A few pupils from over one third of schools proposed that the tests include more subject areas; *'There should be lots of subjects'; 'Should bring back science'; and 'Have tests in things you're good at'.*
- **Use InCAS tests.** A few pupils proposed that InCAS (Interactive Computerised Assessment System) tests could be employed instead of the current entrance tests. InCAS is a computer-based assessment tool which can be adapted to the individual needs of each pupil. Pupils were familiar with InCAS tests because they are used from P4 to P7 in primary schools to assess pupils' literacy and numeracy.

Views of teachers and parents

Teachers and parents referred to the uncertainty and lack of clarity regarding the 2009/10 process and tests and to the inherent inequality of the arrangements where, in some cases, the costs of entrance tests and engaging tutors prohibited lower income families from entering their children for the tests. Families, who had engaged tutors, sometimes found this placed a strain on their finances.

Some teachers expressed their support for selection via tests, but at a later stage in a pupil's school career. In support of this approach, one principal suggested that *'When children are older, they are more inclined to work'.* Some parents agreed that one test was

preferable to several being set by different grammar schools; *'Having one set of tests is better than two to five papers'*.

Although not necessarily agreeing with selection or the '11plus' procedure, some teachers and parents believed that this system was preferable, at least in the short-term;

'At least with the 11plus you had the criteria, specifications and they were all set out clearly so you knew what you were teaching';

'They should have left things as they were. Some children are better suited to grammar type education'.

Abolish all tests

Analysing pupils' responses across the school sample, between 10% and 80% of pupils in each school proposed that all tests should be abolished. From the Kids' Life and Times survey, 26% of pupils opted to 'get rid of them'. Of these, 41% had not sat the tests while 57% had. 34% of pupils were unsure as to whether tests should be retained or abolished.

Reasons for abolishing tests were as follows;

- **Tests place too much pressure on pupils.** This was by far the most common reason given by respondents. Pupils commented; *'Doing the test, you could be really nervous';* *'Puts you under too much pressure – not right';* and *'Tests are cruel torture'.*

- **Pupils are too young to do tests that**

have such important consequences.

Pupils argued that 10 or 11 years old was too early to be undertaking tests which could determine their educational paths; *'Think we're too young to be put through tests and all that pressure';* and

'Nervous and it can decide your whole future'.

- **Tests can damage self-esteem.** Pupils highlighted the potentially negative impact of tests on pupils' self-esteem; *'If there were no tests, nobody would feel bad';* *'Tests can make you feel less confident if you don't get in';* and *'You could do the sample tests, get a tutor, do the test and get a 'D'. You'd feel really bad wasting your parents' money and you didn't get to grammar school. You feel bad about yourself – no point doing the test 'cos you failed'.*
- **Pupils may not 'perform well' under test conditions.** Pupils noted that tests did not necessarily allow everyone to effectively demonstrate their capabilities; *'People could do good at primary school then do the test and get nervous';* and *'You might study really hard and then get nervous on the day and forget'.*
- **Tests should examine other abilities and talents.** Pupils argued that to focus tests solely on academic ability was wrong; *'People might not be smart but they could have a good personality';* and *'Just test lots of different things'.*

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Views of parents and teachers

Some teachers were adamant that academic selection should be ended and they referred to the potentially detrimental short and long-term impacts of *'labelling a child a failure'*. Others acknowledged the merits of DE's position but argued that the current system was not ready for the immediate removal of tests since teachers were still having to manage parents' and pupils' aspirations. As one principal commented,

'On the ground, we're still at the stage of "Is the child going to sit GL or AQE?"'

Teachers highlighted the pressure experienced by children and the lengths to which parents were willing to go, in order to secure a grammar school place for them. Some parents were opposed to selection in principle, but felt obliged to enter their child for entrance tests because these presented an opportunity for their child to attend a *'better school'*. None of the parents involved in the consultation were entirely happy with the 2009/10 entrance tests. Many highlighted serious shortcomings, including the number of tests, administration arrangements, availability and cost of practice papers and the lack of information provided. Other parents were strongly opposed arguing, *'The element of competition at that age is terrible. Children's rights are being affected'*.

Alternative systems of transfer

Pupils considered a selection of alternative mechanisms and systems to transfer pupils from primary to post-primary schools.

Continuous Assessment. Pupils in almost every school highlighted the merits of continuous assessment, suggesting various ways it could be implemented, including assessing pupils' work during P7, from P6 to P7 or from P1 to P7 and through the use of record cards;

'Look at your work from P6 to P7 – people do better when they're not under pressure';

'Should go on reputation and how good you are at maths and things';

'It might be better because you might not be good at English but be excellent at art'; and *'Get the teacher to use a report card for past work'*.

Pupils in some schools argued against the use of continuous assessment, highlighting potential problems. A few suggested that teachers might favour some pupils over others; *'What if the teacher doesn't like you?'* Several pupils thought that it would be difficult for pupils to sustain their efforts throughout the assessment period; *'Some of your work mightn't be good during the year'*. A few also felt that continuous assessment could *'allow pupils to cheat'*.

Use of entrance criteria. The use of entrance criteria was advocated by some pupils; specifically having siblings already attending a school and the proximity of a pupil's home to the school. Other pupils expressed concerns about the use of entrance criteria, suggesting it was unfair that the free school meals (FSME) measure and

'raffles', (i.e. random selection) were used. Also they were unhappy that schools could employ quite different entrance criteria and that in applying these, a pupil's ability was largely ignored.

Age standardisation. A few pupils were concerned about the use of age standardisation in calculating pupils' test scores. They believed it was unfair and that it discriminated against older pupils, placing them at a disadvantage; *'It's not fair. It penalises those who are old for their age'*. In some cases, pupils felt this shifted the focus away from actual marks or grades.

Attend school of choice. A few pupils across one third of schools proposed that pupils transfer to their school of choice; *'Just put down your school ... they should take you'*. They also suggested that it was important that pupils could move to a school they *'felt comfortable in'*.

Additional solutions

A number of other suggestions were made, including;

Being able to secure a place in a specialist subject school (e.g. music or sports), if a pupil had a particular ability or talent; *'Sporty people could go to a good sports school'*;

Making all schools the same; *'Have no more grammar schools – just normal secondary schools'*;

Attending the nearest school; *'Everyone should go to the nearest school'*. Preparatory school pupils argued that

they should be able to transfer to the grammar school to which the school was attached; *'even if they didn't do well in the test'*;

Attending an interview to gain admission to a school; and

Assessing pupils' personalities.

Pupils completing the Kids' Life and Times survey were asked, if they were a school principal, which children they would choose to admit to their school. They selected from a list of seven options;

1. Children who did well in a transfer test;
2. Children with brothers or sisters at the school;
3. Children whose P7 teacher said they worked hardest;
4. Children whose parents don't have much money;
5. Children who did well in other tests in P7;
6. Children who live nearest the school; and
7. Children whose P7 teacher said they did their best in P7.

The two most common responses were 'Children who did well in the transfer test' (39% selected this as their first choice) and 'Children with brothers or sisters at the school' (20% selected this as their first choice). Pupils' responses were then analysed in terms of whether or not they had taken the tests. 50% of those who took tests chose the option of selecting children who did well in a transfer test as the first criteria, compared with 21% of children who had not taken the tests. These

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children were more likely to choose children who had brothers or sisters at the school as their first choice (25%).

Additional solutions proposed by teachers and parents

Delayed selection. Many principals and teachers discussed the merits of delaying selection to 14 years and some referred specifically to the Dickson Plan (see page 4). A teacher from a school within the Dickson Plan highlighted the positive features of the system, arguing that pupils had the same opportunity to access different educational and career options, as those attending grammar schools. While highlighting the advantages of the system, teachers did also acknowledge that its acceptance and implementation could take some considerable time. Most parents were not in favour of delayed selection. Several commented that more evidence was required before it could be considered. A few parents thought it was a positive option, although they proposed different ages for selection; 14, 15 or 16 years.

Every school a viable option. Many teachers supported the DE policy on school improvement with its vision that every school should be a good school. Despite this, principals argued that not every secondary school was recognised by parents, or indeed teachers, as being a viable option, due to the condition or age of school buildings, quality and range of facilities and in some cases the reputation of pupils. As one

commented, *'the schools' estate should be fixed first because the whole thing has become so polarised'*.

Perceived *'discrepancies'* in funding between secondary and grammar schools, were also discussed at length and several principals called for this to be addressed urgently. Parents also applauded the vision of *'every school a good school'*, however, their comments about the poor quality of some secondary schools echoed those of teachers and they called for *'more effort being made to bring parity of respect...to academic and vocational education'*.

SUMMARY

As anticipated, an important feature of the consultation with pupils was the debate concerning the retention or abolition of tests and their justifications for each approach. Pupils proposed a broad range of other possible solutions, in many cases offering a constructive analysis of the merits and sometimes the potential problems of each.



MESSAGES TO GOVERNMENT



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MESSAGES TO GOVERNMENT

During the consultation, pupils were asked if they had any messages concerning the transfer process, which they wished NICCY to convey to Government. Pupils in almost every school were very animated about the issues and they made many reflective, astute, and at times vociferous comments. Their feedback was focused on a number of issues. These are listed below, in order of popularity.

(i) Children should be consulted

Pupils were adamant that they should be consulted about transfer procedures;

*'They just said "We know what's best for kids"...I don't think they asked a single kid';
'They didn't even ask the old kids who had done it';*

'They should have asked kids. I mean they were a kid a 100 years ago...';

'Give children a chance to speak their opinions instead of changing the test without even asking us';

'They're talking between themselves...but didn't really ask the children'.

A few pupils suggested that children be given the opportunity to vote for different options, adding that they should have been consulted before changes to the transfer process were introduced;

'Send out a voting thing to ask children what subjects should be in it';

'You should get to choose which test you want – 11 plus or these'.

Others simply said that everyone involved; parents, teachers and pupils, should be fully consulted;

'Should consult with children, parents and teachers – everyone involved';

'Should be up to the children to decide about choice and teachers to advise which school is best'.

(ii) Pressure experienced by children

Stress during the transfer process was highlighted throughout the consultation and the issue remained at the forefront of their minds when pupils were formulating their messages. Many believed that the Government was unaware of their anxiety;

'I would like the adults doing this to think. Do they know how much pressure they put on us? It was enough pressure before all this';

'They should think about how the people doing the test feel'.

Being the first cohort to undertake entrance tests, pupils explained that they;

'Felt like guinea pigs...under pressure not knowing what was going to happen';

'it [was] harder for the first people doing the test and [will be] easier for the years after us'.

It was evident that specific stages of the transfer process had caused pupils particular concern and contributed to their anxiety. They

referred to the challenge of accessing accurate information, the 'long drawn out process' of preparation for entrance tests, the experience of sitting the tests, waiting on results, interpreting results and waiting to hear which school had accepted them.

(iii) Review the tests

When asked if they had any specific messages regarding entrance tests, the majority of pupils were adamant that if they had to be retained, a variety of amendments should be made;

- **'Just have one type of test'.** Some pupils argued that only one entrance test should be used. They felt it was particularly stressful for some pupils who were sitting both GL and AQE tests, that there were differences in the academic standard required by each test and that it was wrong that one test was used by some grammar schools while another test was used by others;
'There shouldn't be two separate tests';
'Don't like that tests are being referred to as the 'Protestant test' and the 'Catholic test''; and
'We think it's not fair there is GL and AQE – GL is easier...AQE is harder'.

- **'Put scores on with what it means'.** Some pupils called for a review of the scoring systems, commenting that these were very difficult to interpret and that they had created confusion for pupils and parents. A few also complained that the two tests had used different systems and by providing marks this had led to pupils comparing themselves with others;
'Not fair that results weren't clear – you

couldn't work out what you got';
'Just do grades and not marks – wouldn't be able to compare as much';
'Just do it the old way – give them a grade and not a score'; and
'AQE used the best of 3 scores and GL just had one score – not fair'.

- **'Don't do tests on a Saturday' and 'keep them in this school'.** Some pupils referred to the administration of the entrance tests, arguing that a weekday was a more appropriate day for the tests and that they should have been administered in their primary schools. Further suggestions were;
'Don't have tests all in the one day';
'Don't like a space between tests';
'Do it by yourself – you'd have more space to do the tests. You're under pressure with all those people around you'; and
'Take the tests on the internet'.
- **'Why not other subjects?' A few pupils** felt the scope of the entrance tests was too narrow and that other subjects and skills should be included. A few also suggested that pupils' talents and personality should be evaluated;
'Why is it only English and maths? Do physical stuff next time – sports or arts';
'Should put science back in';
'Why can't all talents be recognised equally?';
'You should be able to pick out what you're best at. I'd have done the tests if they were all about English – I'm not good at maths'; and
'Hate the way they base it on English and maths and don't look at someone's personality or interests'.

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Other revisions requested by pupils included reducing the waiting time for results, having more time to complete tests, more time to prepare for them and abolishing test fees. A few pupils felt that *'the 11plus' was working fine*, adding, *'just wish they'd never changed it'*.

(iv) Need for additional information

Many pupils believed that accurate information concerning the transfer arrangements and particularly for the entrance tests should have been made available to parents, pupils and primary schools sooner;

'They should have given a sheet to pupils to explain what they were doing';

'Didn't find out about things until the last minute';

'Our school was left stranded – we just had to listen to the TV'.

In some cases, pupils felt that their parents and teachers did not have sufficient information to help prepare them for the entrance tests;

'Need more advice for parents so they know what practice papers to buy';

'More children telling teacher what was happening – teacher should know before us';

'They're just experimenting on us and what we can do. Principal and teacher doesn't know...parents don't know'.

(v) Lack of understanding of Government decisions

Pupils from almost 50% of schools questioned

why the transfer arrangements had been changed and why the Government appeared happy for the current system to be in place. Some pupils were disappointed that the Minister for Education had been unable to remove all tests, as they had expected she would;

'Why did the Government throw out the 11 plus and not have anything to replace it with?';

'Caitriona Ruane is trying to help us for children's rights but it's not helping us... we're doing more tests';

'What they've done has just made it worse'.

They voiced their frustration about the changes and in some cases, their concerns that schools, rather than Government were making decisions;

'Why did the Government say we should use tests and then throw them away?';

'Stop chopping and changing, just so you know what you're doing';

'If you're going to do the test, do a test and if not, don't do a test...[I have] younger brothers...so they will know what to expect';

'Not fair that the schools are deciding – prefer that the Government supervised it'.

(vi) Abolish tests and introduce all-ability schools

A few pupils reiterated their demands for an end to testing, calling for all ability schools to be set up;

'Don't do tests at all – not everyone is good at tests and they might not get to their school';

'I don't think this piece of paper should decide my future';

'Grammar schools and high schools should be merging together'.

(vii) Other messages

In each school, a few pupils identified a number of other issues they wanted NICCY to raise with Government. These included considering the ways in which other education systems transferred pupils from primary to post-primary school and taking account of bullying that occurred after the results were issued and during Year 8 at post-primary school. In addition, they referred to media coverage of the transfer issue, commenting that the media had created too much fuss, intensified the pressure they felt and overplayed the issues.

Messages from parents and teachers

Teachers' and parents' responses regarding the role of Government, were very firmly focused on the inability of politicians to resolve the 'situation' and the urgent need for them to come together to identify and agree a solution. They talked about a situation of *'total abject political failure'*, commenting that, *'politicians shirked their responsibility'* and that there was a *'need for leadership to change [the situation]'*. There was also frustration at the apparent lack of progress towards resolution and concerns about how the process would be managed for children transferring to

post-primary school in 2011. Both parents and teachers argued that the transfer process should not have been altered before more crucial changes concerning test regulations and the wider education system had been implemented;

'[There] was a need to keep [the process] regulated until a solution is found'

'Surely a change should have been made in the school system before changes were made in the transfer system'.

Teachers and parents also expressed concerns that the interests and wellbeing of children did not appear to be central to the decision-making process.

'The children suffered...the question is what's going to be the reality for the children?';

'It should all have been resolved...the powers that be should have sorted this out – it's a disgrace children are left like this'.

And a parent, commenting on political debates about the transfer issue, felt that children were seen as *'nothing more than ammunition in a bigger battle'*.

Additional issues highlighted by parents and teachers included the lack of *'helpful'* information issued by DE concerning transfer, concerns that the two entrance tests had further *'split the communities'* as pupils talked about *'Protestant and Catholic'* tests, and the impact of the media in causing *'confusion and unnecessary tension'*. Teachers also raised concerns about parents having to *'navigate the system'* without their

professional support or guidance and challenges in managing parental expectations, which according to some, appeared to be greater than in previous years. Commenting on this point, one teacher remarked, *'Parents feel tremendous pressure to do what they feel is right for their child'*.

SUMMARY

Children clearly welcomed the opportunity to communicate their thoughts, suggestions and experiences to Government and indeed their primary demand was that they be included in all consultations and discussions about the transfer process. Other strong messages emanating from the discussions included the need to change the current tests, a concern that Government was not aware of the pressure experienced by children during the process and their lack of understanding of Government decisions. Parents and teachers were adamant that Government should act urgently and decisively to resolve the current impasse regarding the transfer arrangements, and carefully consider the wellbeing of the children most directly affected.



CONCLUSION

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The consultation with pupils, and indeed, with parents and teachers, revealed the complexity of the issues associated with the transfer process during 2009/10. As the report demonstrates, there was considerable diversity in pupils' experiences, attributable to various factors, including whether or not pupils had participated in the entrance tests, their evaluation of their performance in the tests, their perceptions of grammar and secondary schools and their feelings about leaving primary school and moving to a post-primary school. The report also clearly illustrates that although some children were relatively unaffected by the process, many pupils experienced varying degrees of stress and pressure at particular points throughout the year.

The consultation proved to be an interesting and useful process in helping pupils to discuss and clarify their views in relation to different issues surrounding transfer. During our visits we were aware that pupils were reflecting on the issues, at times reviewing their opinions following discussions with peers and on other occasions, consolidating firmly held beliefs. This was particularly evident during their consideration of possible approaches to transferring pupils from primary to post-primary schools, and in the debate surrounding the retention or abolition of tests.

As stated at the outset, NICCY examined the issue of the transfer process during 2009/10 by exploring the experiences and views of P7 pupils, recording their accounts and using their words to present our findings. The views expressed throughout the report are those of the children and not those of NICCY.

The consultation addressed many of the key issues surrounding transfer, however, there were a number of relevant matters, which were not touched upon, either because they were not raised by pupils or because they were not immediately relevant during the period of the consultation. NICCY has been contacted by parents and children with concerns about specific issues relating to the transfer process. These include the use of age standardisation in the calculation of test scores and the application of specific admissions criteria in individual schools. Problems have also been identified in relation to special circumstances provisions. These difficulties appear to have arisen due to the guidelines detailed in the DE directive to primary schools.



CALLS TO ACTION



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Emerging out of the consultation, there are clear calls from children regarding how Government and other stakeholder bodies should address the transfer process in Northern Ireland.

(i) Consult with pupils when reviewing the transfer process

Pupils emphasised that they are at the centre of the transfer debate. Therefore, they were adamant that children should be consulted and that their views should be seriously considered with regard to any future changes or decisions pertaining to the transfer process. Throughout the consultation, NICCY was extremely impressed by the quality of debates and by the articulate and thoughtful comments made by children.

(ii) Politicians must reach agreement on the transfer situation

Pupils expressed frustration and disappointment that politicians had been unable to reach an agreement on the transfer arrangements. They demanded that politicians in the Northern Ireland Executive address the issue as a matter of urgency and that they set aside political agendas in order to agree a workable solution that will be in the best interests of ALL children.

(iii) Recognise and take steps to reduce pressure and stress experienced by pupils

Pupils called for politicians and all stakeholders in the transfer process to recognise and address the stress and pressures which many of them experienced due to the new transfer arrangements. Parents and teachers also drew attention to the adverse impact these had on pupils, as well as the disruption to family life and the financial implications for some parents. Perceived widespread confusion and an ongoing lack of information about the arrangements (e.g. provision of practice papers, arrangements for the administration of tests, interpretation of scores), were also perceived as contributing to pupils' and parents' anxiety.

Following our analysis of the consultation responses, NICCY is making the following call in addition to the calls identified by children.

(iv) Children's wellbeing and best interests must be at the centre of all educational decision-making

NICCY is concerned that children's wellbeing and best interests have not been key considerations in the debates and decisions concerning the transfer process, or in the implementation of the new arrangements. Closely linked to concerns about children's

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wellbeing is the need to recognise the difficult position in which many primary teachers and principals found themselves during the 2009/10 academic year. They were pulled between their desire to support and prepare pupils for entrance tests and a desire to follow the DE directive strongly recommending that primary schools did not undertake such preparation. NICCY therefore urges the Northern Ireland Executive to ensure that every child's wellbeing and interests are placed at the centre of their debates and decisions regarding the transfer process and broader issues concerning educational provision.



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REFERENCES

(Web addresses accessed August 2010)

- 1 This figure includes preparatory departments in grammar schools. http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg.htm
- 2 Education and Library Boards are responsible for the administration of education at a local level and are broadly equivalent to Local Education Authorities in other parts of the UK.
- 3 http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg.htm
- 4 http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg.htm
- 5 http://www.deni.gov.uk/revised_circular_2009-07_english__pdf_2.09mb.pdf
- 6 <http://www.aqe.org.uk/Schools%20supporting%20AQE.html>
- 7 <http://www.aqe.org.uk>
- 8 <http://www.nipptc.org/>
- 9 The purpose of age standardised scores is to convert a pupil's actual score in the test, i.e. 'raw score' to a standardised score. Standardised scores take into account a pupil's age in years and months and give an indication of how they are performing relative to other pupils of the same age.
- 10 DE (2009) DE Leaflet Number 2. Choosing a Post-primary School: A Guide for Parents, (Bangor: DE).
- 11 AQE (2009) Guidelines for Parents on Special Circumstances, Special Provisions or Special Cases.
- 12 DE (2009) DE Leaflet Number 2. Choosing a Post-primary School: A Guide for Parents, (Bangor: DE).
- 13 http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news/news-de/news-de-june-2010/news_-_de-210610-education-minister-briefs.htm
- 14 A children's version of the report has also been published.
- 15 Initially 23 parents enrolled in the Parent Reference Group, however, one parent withdrew during the process. It is important to note that each parent may not have attended every meeting.
- 16 Pupils were consulted at different stages in the academic year therefore the length of their experience of P7 varied.
- 17 5,192 pupils across 321 primary schools completed the Kids Life and Times survey. 62% indicated they sat entrance tests.
- 18 Currie, C. et al (2008) 'Researching health Inequalities in Adolescents: The Development of Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC) Family Affluence Scale'. *Social Science and Medicine* 66(6) 1429-1436.
- 19 Of the 5,192 pupils who completed the survey, 33% indicated that they did not sit entrance tests.
- 20 Further information about InCAS may be found at: <http://www.cemcentre.org/incas/assessment>
- 21 This policy document may be accessed at: http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/85-schools/03-schools_impvt_prog_pg/03-every-school-a-good-school-a-policy-for-school-improvement.htm

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