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STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE

Planning for sustainability: a strategy for the future development of the Dublin Docklands Education Programme

At the meeting of the School Principals' Forum on 15 May 2008, the consultants presented their interim evaluation report and discussed its findings with the principals and the Programme team from the Dublin Docklands Social Regeneration Unit. It was clear from the discussion that both the schools and the Programme team were committed to strengthening the Dublin Docklands Education Programme in the future, making it more fully responsive to the needs of the schools and more closely targeted at achieving improved educational outcomes for pupils.

The consultants proposed that a "logic model" be used to guide the development of the Dublin Docklands Education Programme over the next five to ten years. This model is used by many international philanthropic foundations to provide a clear framework of priorities and desired outcomes for educational programmes, which in turn determine the nature of inputs and actions required.

One of the key insights of the logic model is the importance of measuring final outcomes or results, because it is quite possible to waste time and money (inputs), "spin the wheels" on work activities, or produce outputs without achieving desired outcomes. It is these outcomes (impacts, long-term results) that are the only justification for doing the work in the first place. (Kellogg Foundation, 1998)



A new planning model for the Dublin Docklands Education Programme

The challenges

The school principals and the Programme team worked together in small groups to identify the main educational and social challenges facing school communities.

The educational challenges that they identified included:

- Levels of literacy and numeracy
- Need to raise educational ambition and expectations
- High turnover of staff; difficulty of retaining experienced teachers
- Lack of continuity in learning from one level to the next.

The social challenges that the group identified included:

- Poor attendance and punctuality
- Behavioural and emotional difficulties that affect educational performance
- Need to strengthen partnerships between schools, parents and communities.

While these challenges are significant, there was a sense of optimism among the group that the Dublin Docklands Education Programme had already begun to make an impact, and that by focusing on a number of key priorities for the future, it would be possible to produce even more significant change in the next phase.



THE PRIORITIES

The principals and the Programme team discussed the priority issues for the Dublin Docklands Education Programme and they decided on three main areas: involving parents, families and community in supporting their children's education; improving children's educational attainment and life chances; supporting schools and teachers so that their pupils can enjoy the best quality learning experiences.

Involving parents, families and community with the schools

- Encourage parents to see themselves as partners with the schools in educating their children
- Increase the commitment and expectations of everyone in the school communities
- Adopt a community approach towards improving literacy and numeracy
- Enable parents to appreciate and value the educational potential of their children
- Engage children and parents in enjoyable community-based educational activities
- Create leaders and role models in the community
- Increase the number of local young people attending local schools
- Work with families and support them to deal with children's emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Improving children's educational attainment and life chances

- Emphasise literacy, numeracy and attendance in the early years of school
- Raise the standards of literacy and numeracy to national average levels
- Promote greater self belief among pupils
- Reduce unemployment in the community



- Increase the number of pupils sitting Leaving Certificate and advancing to further and higher education.

Supporting schools and teachers

- Promote the welfare of teachers, making affordable accommodation available in the area to retain experienced people
- Improve the buildings and infrastructure in schools
- Provide opportunities for continuing professional development to reduce turnover of teaching staff
- Undertake research and development to underpin decision-making within the Dublin Docklands Education Programme.

THE OUTCOMES

The group agreed that the expected long term outcomes of the Dublin Docklands Education Programme, the results that will have been achieved in ten years' time, are in six main areas:

1. Improved levels of achievement among pupils
2. Active involvement of parents, families and community in supporting children's learning
3. High performing and happy teachers
4. Seamless high quality education provision
5. High quality learning environments
6. Evidence- and research-based decision-making.



1. Improved levels of achievement among pupils

- a) All pupils in Docklands schools will have achieved scores in reading and mathematics at least at the national average, at first and fourth class and at the end of primary school: no child will be left behind in literacy and numeracy at ages 7/11/14.
- b) At least 95% of Docklands pupils will successfully complete the Leaving Certificate (including Leaving Certificate Applied) or an equivalent level of qualification in the National Framework of Qualifications.
- c) The proportion of pupils achieving good grades in higher level Leaving Certificate subjects and progressing to further and higher education will be on a par with other areas in Dublin city.

2. Active involvement of parents, families and community in supporting children's learning

- a) Parents, families and communities will have high expectations of their children, supporting their educational development and contributing to successful results in a culture of lifelong learning
- b) There will be greater parent involvement in school, including participation in school management and attendance at meetings
- c) There will be improvements in pupils' attendance, punctuality and homework completion.

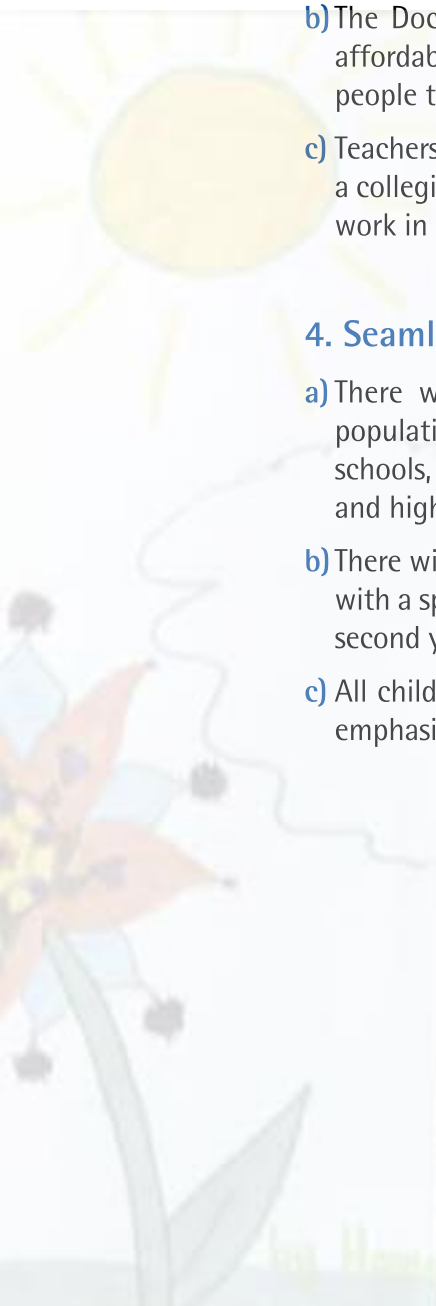


3. High performing happy teachers

- a) All teachers in Docklands schools will be supported to provide the best possible learning for the children, through continuing professional development; action learning and action research; networking; project work; involvement in creative projects
- b) The Docklands will be an attractive place for teachers to work, with an affordable accommodation rental or purchase scheme available to encourage people to take up positions and stay in the schools
- c) Teachers will be supported throughout their careers so that they are part of a collegial network that counters isolation and makes them feel privileged to work in the area.

4. Seamless high quality education provision

- a) There will be continuity of high-quality educational provision for the population of the Docklands, including pre-school, primary and second-level schools, out-of school provision, second-chance opportunities, and further and higher education
- b) There will be targeted supports for children at risk of not completing school, with a special focus on the middle years, from fifth class in primary school to second year of post primary
- c) All children will have access to good quality pre-school education, with an emphasis on language development in line with best international practice.





5. High quality learning environments

- a) The physical condition of all school buildings will be exemplary – buildings, furniture, equipment and learning resources will be a model of excellence
- b) There will be increased resources available to schools to undertake specific education programmes that meet the educational needs of their communities
- c) The wider Docklands neighbourhood will be recognised as a lifelong learning environment, and schools will be able to make use of the indoor and outdoor facilities that are available within the community.





6. Evidence- and research-based decision-making

- a) Appropriate structures will be in place for educational research and development as a basis for decision-making within the Dublin Docklands Education Programme
- b) Baseline data will be gathered from all schools on literacy and numeracy attainment, and these data will inform the development of family, community and school-based literacy and numeracy programmes
- c) Data collection and analysis will be part of all projects and activities: teachers and schools will undertake their own research to monitor the impact of the Dublin Docklands Education Programme on pupils' learning.

An outline of the strategy for the next phase of the Dublin Docklands Education Programme is shown on the next page. The Principals' Forum and the Programme team will work together to develop a more detailed action plan in the autumn of 2008, with the support of the consultants.





DUBLIN DOCKLANDS EDUCATION PROGRAMME 2008-2018: OUTLINE OF STRATEGY THE CHALLENGE

Many children in the Dublin Docklands are not achieving their full potential in education.

OUTCOMES – IMPACT Long term (10+ yrs)	OUTPUTS Activities
Long-term impact we expect • More young people in the Docklands completing second and third level education, with improved levels of achievement especially in literacy, numeracy and Leaving Certificate • Active involvement of parents, families and community in supporting children's learning • High performing and happy teachers, who are given excellent professional support to enjoy the challenges of their work • Seamless high quality education provision for lifelong learning • High quality learning environments • Evidence- and research-based decision-making.	What we do • Research to identify educational needs of children • Community development, awareness raising • Education and training programmes for parents and professionals • Literacy and numeracy intervention programmes • Assessment, diagnostic and therapeutic services • Curriculum enrichment and learning support • Arts, culture and leisure • Motivation and behaviour enhancement • School development: organisational and infrastructural • Community-based programmes



PRIORITY FOR THE DUBLIN DOCKLANDS EDUCATION PROGRAMME

The Docklands Authority will collaborate with schools, parents and the community to support children's learning, enabling them to participate successfully in education throughout their lives and to have more opportunities open to them.

OUTPUTS Participation

Who is reached

- All children and young people aged 4-18 living in the area
- Their parents and families
- School communities
- People working with children and young people in any capacity
- Community and voluntary organisations
- Business and commercial interests in the area
- Education providers at all levels
- Policy makers and national authorities

INPUTS

What we invest

Resources

- Staff expertise (educational and managerial)
- Community expertise
- Local facilities
- Funding (public/private)
- Infrastructure development

Collaborations

- Parents/Community
- Schools/preschools
- Department of Education & Science
- Higher education
- Health/social services
- Voluntary groups
- Business

Planning and Management

- Research and development
- Pilot projects
- Monitoring and evaluation



APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Evaluation design

Evaluation methods and timetable

Method: Documentary research

Participants: Consultants

Purpose: Analyse written material and data related to the Dublin Docklands Education Programme; review international research literature on good practice in educational inclusion programmes.

Time: July 2007-May 2008

Method: Interviews

Participants: Dublin Docklands Education Programme staff; Docklands management

Purpose: Gain overview of strategy and operation of the Dublin Docklands Education Programme; clarify main issues for evaluation

Time: August-September 2007

Method: Questionnaire survey

Participants: All schools (24)

Purpose: Gather quantitative/ qualitative data on effectiveness and impact of Dublin Docklands Education Programme

Time: September-October 2007

Method: Workshops

Participants: School Principals' Forum

Purpose: 1. Gather direct feedback on their views of the Dublin Docklands Education Programme, based on responses to the questionnaire survey

2. Give update on progress of evaluation

3. Present and discuss interim findings of evaluation and facilitate future strategic planning exercise using "logic model"

Time: 1. October-November 2007; 2. Dec 2007, March 2008; 3. May 2008



Method: Focus groups

Participants: Pupils; parents; teachers

Purpose: Gather direct feedback on their experience of the Dublin Docklands Education Programme

Time: January–April 2008

Method: Site visits

Participants: Consultants

Purpose: Complement data gathered by observation of Dublin Docklands Education Programme events

Time: January–May 2008

Method: Evaluation report

Participants: Consultants

Purpose: Analyse evaluation data and results; devise good practice guidelines from research literature; make recommendations for further development of the Dublin Docklands Education Programme; advise Docklands Authority on the presentation of the report to the Department of Education and Science

Time: June 2008

Method: Advice and support

Participants: Consultants

Purpose: Work with School Principals' Forum and Dublin Docklands Education Programme team to develop five-year action plan based on the planning model outlined in May 2008

Time: September 2008



Appendix 2: Dublin Docklands Education Programme Activities 1997-2007

Projects run in collaboration with the Docklands Schools Principals' Forum
and the National College of Ireland

1. ESRI Schools' Survey and Database
2. School Principals' Forum
3. Teachers' Conference
4. Psychological Assessments
5. Emotional intelligence
6. Comer Whole School Development Programme
7. Circle Time Programme
8. Teachers' Dyslexia Development Program
9. Literacy Programme
10. Therapeutic Crisis Intervention Management
11. Schools' Music Programme
12. Caught on Camera
13. Docklands Schools Drama Programme
14. Honk
15. Docklands Sound School Programme
16. Schools Incentive, Behaviour and Attitude Programme
17. Docklands Schools' Yearbook
18. Twinning with Eu Schools French Programme
19. Discovering University
20. One World Programme
21. Soccer Academy
22. Gaelic Football and Hurling Academy
23. Festival of Dance, Drama and Singing
24. Boxing Academy
25. Splash Week
26. Docklands Schools' Festival (Dragon Boat Racing)
27. Sail Training Pilot Project



28. Docklands Schools IT Hub
29. After-School Study Programme
30. In Schools Projects (Infrastructure and building development)
31. Third Level/Further Education Scholarship Programme
32. Early Start Education
33. African IT Programme
34. Family Learning Through Coaching
35. Life Centre Project
36. School Bands
37. Healthy Schools Programme
38. Study Visits for Principals
39. Circle Time Teacher Development

Other projects with an educational dimension

40. Active Citizenship Programme
41. Parents in Education
42. Return to Education
43. Young Mothers' Self Development Programme
44. Young Persons' Self Development Programme
45. Talent Showcases
46. Sports Scholarships
47. Schools Job Placement Programme
48. Apprenticeship Programme
49. Community Training Workshop
50. Youth Workers' Forum
51. Young Achievers' Awards
52. Young People's Forum
53. Local Employment Initiative



Appendix 3: Analysis of survey results

In September 2007 the consultants sent a questionnaire to all twenty-four Docklands schools, asking principals for feedback about their experiences of the Dublin Docklands Education Programme and its impact on their schools. Seventeen completed questionnaires were returned, which represents a sample of just over seventy per cent of the schools.

Tables A-D below show the number of respondents who indicated their agreement or disagreement with the statements in the questionnaire. The accompanying charts show the data as a percentage of the total number of responses. The comments made by principals are summarised in pages 84-91.

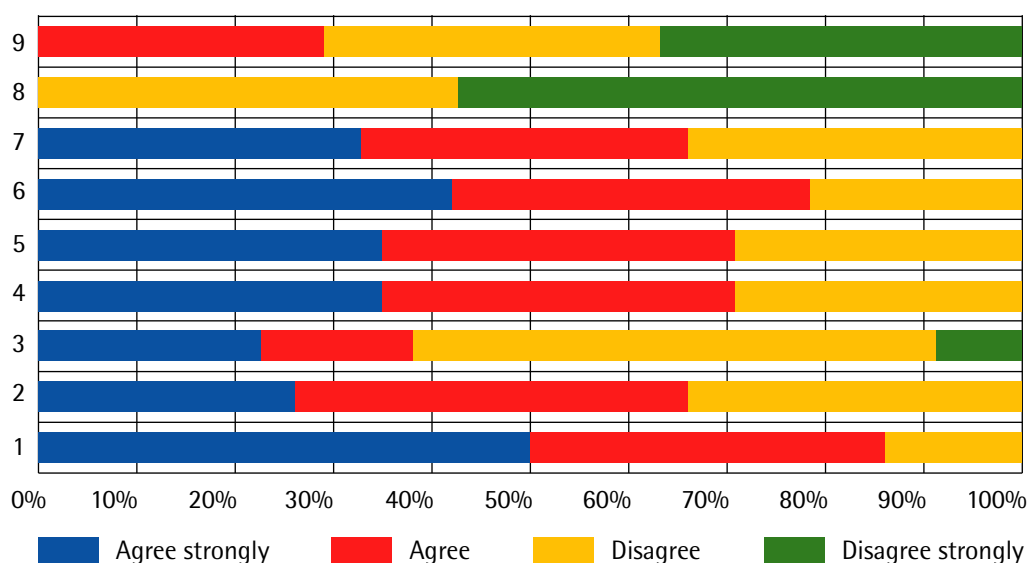
Table A
Impact of the Dublin Docklands Education Programme on pupils' engagement and learning

	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly
1. The Programme has improved our pupils' motivation to stay in school and achieve their full potential	7	5	2	0
2. The Programme has produced measurable gains in pupils' language and literacy skills	4	6	5	0
3. The Programme has produced measurable gains in pupils' number skills	3	2	7	1
4. Attendance has improved in our school as a result of the Programme	5	5	4	0



	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly
5. Self-discipline and behaviour have improved in our school as a result of the Programme	5	5	4	0
6. The Programme has raised pupils' educational and career aspirations	6	5	3	0
7. Pupils are achieving better educational outcomes as a result of the Programme	4	4	4	0
8. The Programme has made no difference to our pupils	0	0	6	8
9. The benefits of the Programme are confined to a small number of pupils in our school	0	4	5	5

(*Note: Total responses do not always add to 17 because some principals did not answer all questions)

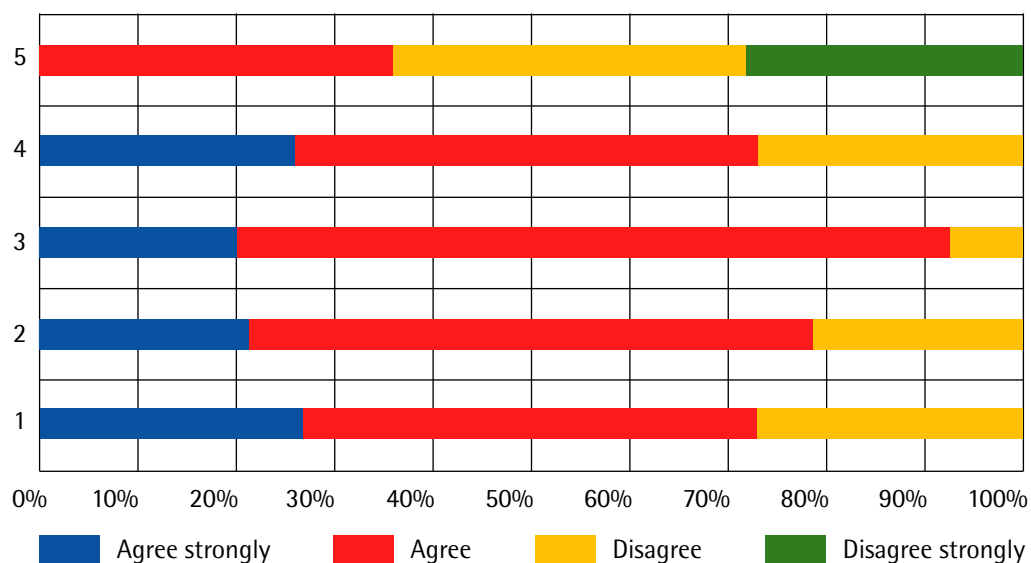




It is clear from the survey that principals believe the Dublin Docklands Education Programme has made a positive difference to their pupils, especially in raising their educational and career aspirations, and in improving their motivation to stay in school and achieve their full potential. Attendance, self-discipline and behaviour are also reported to have improved in schools as a result of the Programme. While many principals believe that the Programme has produced measurable gains in pupils' language and literacy skills, most do not think it has had an impact on their number skills.

Table B
Impact of the Dublin Docklands Education Programme on teachers

	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly
1. The Programme has improved our teachers' expectations of pupils	4	7	4	0
2. The Programme has improved our teachers' interaction with parents and families	3	8	3	0
3. Teachers in our school have increased their professional skills through the Programme	3	11	1	0
4. Classroom practices in our school have improved as a result of teachers' participation in the Programme	4	7	4	0
5. The benefits of the Programme are confined to a small number of teachers in our school	0	5	5	4



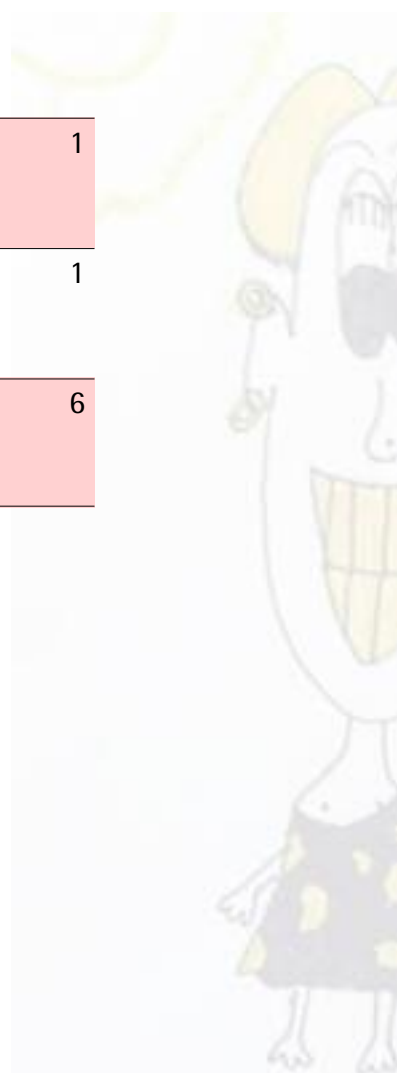
The majority of principals agree that the Dublin Docklands Education Programme has improved teachers' expectations of pupils. It is also widely agreed that teachers have increased their professional skills and that classroom practices in most schools have been improved as a result of participation in the Programme. In the majority of schools, it is believed that the Programme has improved teachers' interaction with parents and families. However, in some schools the benefits of the Dublin Docklands Education Programme are thought to be confined to a small number of teachers.

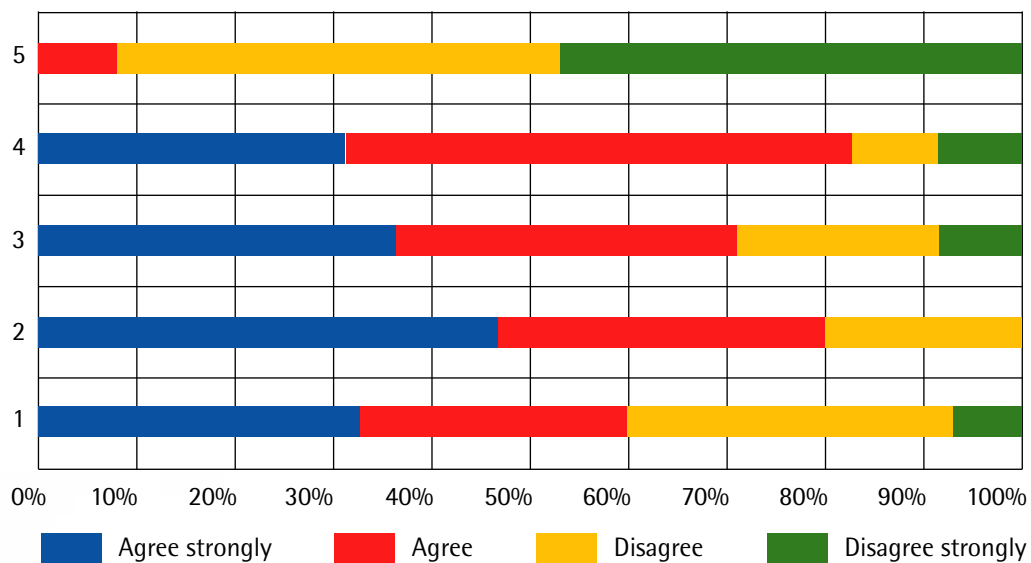




Table C
Impact of the Dublin Docklands Education Programme on school leadership, policy and planning

	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly
1. The Programme has changed the way we plan teaching and learning in our school	5	4	5	1
2. The Programme has helped to develop leadership skills that are relevant to the principal and other teachers	7	5	3	0
3. We have applied the skills learned from the Programme in our school development planning	5	5	3	1
4. The Programme has helped our school community to achieve important educational goals	4	7	1	1
5. The Programme has made little or no difference to the way we do things in our school	0	1	6	6





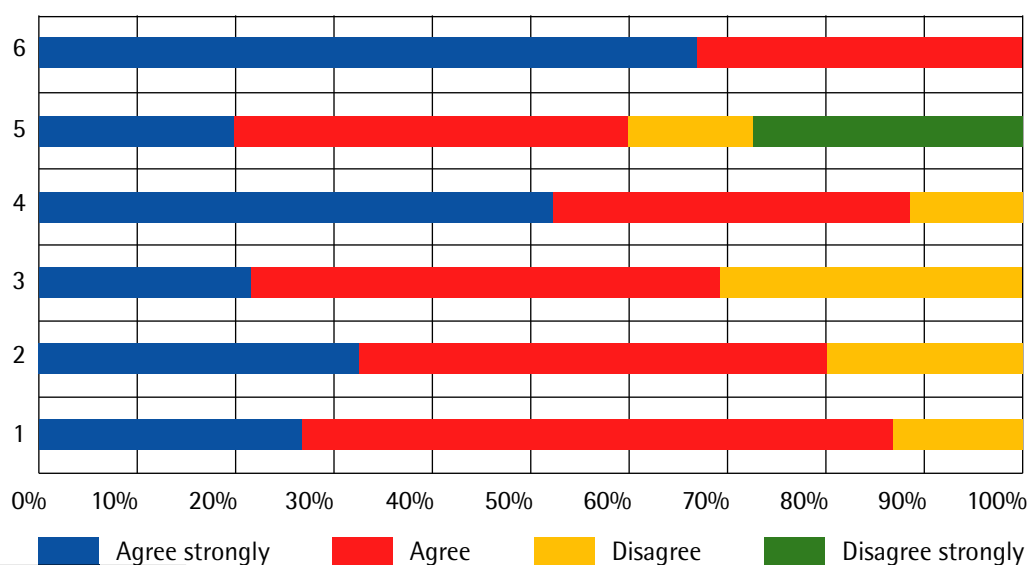
There is strong agreement that the Dublin Docklands Education Programme has helped school communities to achieve important educational goals. Almost all principals agree that the Programme has made a difference to the way they do things in their schools, with a significant number agreeing that it has changed the way they plan teaching and learning. It has also helped to develop leadership skills that are relevant to the principal and other teachers, who have applied the skills learned from the Programme in school development planning.





Table D
Management and organisation of the Dublin Docklands Education Programme

	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly
1. The Programme is well managed and organised	4	9	1	1
2. There is good communication between the Docklands Programme team and the schools	5	7	3	0
3. The Programme responds to the needs of the schools	3	6	3	1
4. The network activities provided by the Programme are of benefit to me and my school	9	6	2	0
5. The yearbook and other publications produced by the Programme are of high quality and are useful	3	6	2	4
6. If we have the opportunity, we will continue to be involved in the Docklands Programme	10	5	0	0



Almost all principals who responded to the survey consider the Dublin Docklands Education Programme to be well-managed and organised, and all schools say that they will continue to be involved if they have the opportunity to do so. Most principals consider the network activities provided by the Programme to be of benefit to themselves and to their schools. Opinion is somewhat divided, however, about the usefulness of the yearbook and other publications produced by the Programme.



Principals' comments and observations about the Dublin Docklands Education Programme from the survey responses

Which Programme activities do you think were the most successful? Why?

Almost all projects were mentioned at least once, with some featuring in many people's "top three"

Psychological Assessments

- Facilitated obtaining additional resources
- Filled a huge void; the National system is not working

Principals' Forum

- Enables building of strong network between Principals
- Helps our understanding of other schools

Drama programme

- Helps pupils' expression and confidence
- Develops self-esteem and promotes cooperation
- High quality, very positive results
- "Brilliant: I should have it at number one"

Emotional intelligence

- "I am better at my job as a result"
- Whole staff training
- Leadership skills programme was very comprehensive

Circle Time

- Improves pupils' attitudes and happiness: "the children love it"
- "Training and support are top-class"



Literacy

- Teachers responded to help around their needs
- The development of the school library had an impact on all in the school community
- In-service for teachers

Attitude, behaviour, incentive project for pupils

Helps some students focus

Schools' music programme

Highly skilled professional facilitator; thoroughly enjoyed by all pupils irrespective of academic ability

Schools' Yearbook and "Caught on Camera"

- Involve all children in a special school
- All children participate

Other Dublin Docklands Education Programme activities that were mentioned at least once were

- Therapeutic Crisis Intervention: "vital in a special school"
- Twinning with Eu
- P.E./Healthy Eating; well delivered and researched
- Sound School: Developed real additional skills in teacher and students
- Teachers' Dyslexia Programme: gave teachers practical skills
- Introductory presentation on "Jolly Phonics" at NCI
- Links with a local business
- Safe Pass
- "Anything that assists continuing professional development of teachers"



What are the most important results that you can see coming from the Dublin Docklands Education Programme?

Greater opportunities for all learners in the Docklands

- Consciousness by staff and students that there are substantial educational supports for students from the area. They complement and support other educational projects and approaches in each school. The outcomes are not down to a particular project.
- Some children have benefited greatly. Up-skilling for teachers/principals. Parents have also had encouragement.
- Broadening the children's horizons and expectations; exposing them to travel, health, fitness, drama opportunities to extend their interests and self-esteem. Getting fathers involved with daughters in parenting course.

Raising expectations - "Raising all the boats"

- Greater expectations/higher self-esteem; raising of standards
- Opportunities to develop talents, explore possibilities for the future
- Self-esteem is enhanced as children and parents see they are valued by outside agencies
- "The Dublin Docklands Education Programme offers children opportunities they would not otherwise experience, and hopefully may lead to career choices in the future."

Quality of the Dublin Docklands Education Programme

"Thinking outside the box: very creative, always the best training, always well delivered"

Networking opportunities

- Among schools, staff, principals
- Better interaction among pupils in the Docklands localities.



Specific positive outcomes

- "Fantastic results in some of the projects: the problem is that not all projects are available to all schools"
- Increased self-esteem in children
- An interest in France and the knowledge of the language
- Improved attendance
- "Very positive effects, for example drama in school: this would normally be hit and miss. Integration of children in different projects for example Honk and music in schools."

Which Programme activities do you think were the least successful? Why?

One school principal remarked that "All the projects where our school was involved were very good because we only took part in projects that we found would be of use to us."

However, a small number of projects were mentioned by many respondents as being less successful, in their experience.

Schools' Yearbook and Caught on Camera publications

- "Yearbook is now a chore: it should not be an annual event"
- "The yearbook is the one aspect of the Docklands projects that I question. I don't think there is any need for it on an annual basis and the cost must be enormous."
- "Very repetitive"
- "Terrible waste of money and time"
- "Lacks purpose, a lot of work and little impact on children."
- "Read once and left aside"
- "Our children were too young"

Honk

- "An imposed programme which left a lot of bad feeling; a lot of class time lost"
- "Too many children involved, badly organised on the day."



Teachers' Conference

- "Meeting for a day is superficial and meaningless."

IT Hub

- It aimed to network schools for a purpose which schools felt had little validity
- Some principals mentioned that the coordination of this activity was poor.

Circle Time

- Seen as very successful in primary schools, but only in 1st Year of post-primary

Emotional intelligence

- "Modules for staff ended up being divisive, raising unresolved issues among staff."

Comer project:

- It was felt that much more planning was required to implement this successfully.

Do you see any problems in the Dublin Docklands Education Programme?

One principal responded "No, we have found the Dublin Docklands Education Programme activities in which we participated to be excellent", while others made very positive suggestions about how the issues they identified could be addressed.

Consulting with schools and responding to their needs

A number of principals mentioned the need for more consultation with schools:

- "I would like more genuine consultation, more open, clear objectives and a transparent system for the allocation of projects and resources to individual schools. In addition projects for the coming year must be flagged before the end of the previous school year, to facilitate appropriate planning and in-school coordination."



- "When projects are initiated by the Docklands they should be more amenable to modification following suggestions from schools."

Planning and organisation issues

- "We would like to see greater advance notice of projects. We could then plan and incorporate the Dublin Docklands Education Programme into school more effectively."
- "Finding time for the projects within the school day (is a problem)."
- "I am not sure that there is a clear overall plan."
- "Too scattered, poor communication, no great thought put into projects; no open form of selection criteria."
- "Aspects of the drama presentation could have been better (changes of venue etc)."

Target groups

- "They do not serve the local population. Why should advantaged pupils in schools outside the area benefit because Docklands children attend them?"
- "(There should be) greater availability of projects to all schools."

Is there anything you would like to change or improve for the future?

Principals made wide-ranging and thoughtful suggestions for the future, indicating their strong belief in the potential of the Dublin Docklands Education Programme to bring about real change for the better.

Focus of Dublin Docklands Education Programmes

"Instead of a huge menu of Programme activities, I would suggest that we should target one area, for example literacy, and make a concerted effort to improve it during the final years of the Dublin Docklands Education Programme."

Linking Dublin Docklands Education Programmes to the educational needs identified

- Provide more opportunities for schools to suggest projects for funding through the Docklands: "it seems always to be driven from the top down."



- More input from the schools: teachers, parents and pupils
- "Appoint an education officer"
- Provide a regular opportunity to hear outcomes – positive and negative – from project evaluations to assist planning.

Extending the scope of projects

- Make all projects available to all children
- Further school-based work around emotional intelligence
- Extension of drama classes: access to the drama programme for every pupil, including those in second level schools
- Caught on Camera/photography: explore ways of using the cameras during the year, for example a project aimed at improving language development including pupils/ teachers/ parents
- Greater input into physical and arts education
- Expand drama/healthy eating projects
- "Revisit upgrading of school buildings and possible relocation".

Communication with schools and pupils

"If the Docklands Authority is communicating directly with students in the area on a general topic i.e. scholarships, a copy of the correspondence should go to schools for information purposes."





Any other comments you would like to make about the Dublin Docklands Education Programme?

The comments in this section were generally positive, with principals mentioning again some of the benefits for their schools. There were also some comments about how they would like to see things develop further in the future.

Positive effects on whole school communities

- "For those of us working in the Docklands since the 1970s, the Dublin Docklands Education Programme gave us a great injection of enthusiasm and optimism. The in-service training, the emotional intelligence programme, psychological assessments all enhanced the quality of the education programmes in our school. The whole school community has benefited from the Dublin Docklands Education Programme."
- "The effect of all the projects has been to give staff and students a very positive feeling about the Docklands area."
- "Very worthwhile initiatives: the benefits will flow in the coming years."
- "We are delighted to be involved. We have gained professionally as teachers and the children have enjoyed all projects offered to them to date. Thank you!"
- "We are very pleased with the Docklands education projects. Congratulations to all involved."
- "Delighted to be involved in the projects. Well done and thanks"
- "We have received a literacy/numeracy software program from Docklands which is very helpful for individual work with challenged learners."

For the future

- Involve principals and schools in formulating an education plan for the next five years.
- Agree transparent criteria for selection of schools to participate in projects.
- "Aim to make a real difference by targeting a few specific areas and not trying to be too inclusive (numbers wise)".





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