School Improvement for Schools facing Challenging Circumstances:

A Review of Research and Practice

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In this report we outline what we have found out from the research literature, and the reports of practitioners, about 'what works' to improve schools that face challenging circumstances. We concentrate upon the 'universals' of what seems to work across the very varied settings that this group of schools inhabit, but are very aware that the literature suggests that although many of the principles governing improvement are universals, some are 'context specific' and must be tailored to the individual circumstances of each school (we outline the range of schools/circumstances in Section 3).

For this reason, we propose to undertake a programme of visits to schools in different contexts in the first few weeks of the Summer Term 2001, and will report fully on what our ideas about school improvement are, additional to those reported here.

1.2 We should help the reader to begin with by outlining the various phases or stages that the school improvement community of researchers and practitioners has passed through over the last fifteen years, as a context to the literature that we concentrate upon in this publication, which mostly comes from the 'third age' of school improvement that has only been in existence for the last five or six years.

1.3 Although the intellectual background to school improvement can be traced back to Kurt Lewin, it was in the first phase in the late 1970's and early 1980's that the field took shape as a distinct body of approaches and scholars/practitioners. This first phase was epitomised by the OECD's *International School Improvement Project* (ISIP) (Hopkins 1987) but unfortunately many of the initiatives associated with this first phase of school improvement were 'free floating', rather than representing a systematic, programmatic and coherent approach to school change. There was correspondingly, in this phase, an emphasis upon organisational change, school self evaluation and the 'ownership of change' by individual schools and teachers, but these initiatives were loosely connected to student learning outcomes, both conceptually and practically, were variable and fragmented in conception and application, and consequently in the eyes of most school improvers and practices struggled to impact upon classroom practice (Hopkins 2001; Reynolds 1999).

1.4 The second phase of the development of school improvement began in the early 1990's and resulted from the interaction between school improvement and the school effectiveness communities. Early voices calling for a merger of approaches and insights (Reynolds, Hopkins & Stoll 1993; Hopkins et al 1994; Gray et al 1996) were followed by a 'synergy' of perspectives in which both effectiveness and improvement researchers and practitioners made contributions to a merged perspective (see for example the contributions of Hopkins, Reynolds & Stoll in Gray, et al 1996). School effectiveness brought to this new, merged intellectual enterprise such contributions as the value added methodology for judging school effectiveness and for disaggregating schools into their component parts of departments and teachers. It also brought a large scale, known-to-be valid knowledge base about 'what works' at school level to potentiate student outcomes (Teddlie & Reynolds 2000).

1.5 Third age school improvement practice and philosophy attempts to draw the lessons from these apparently limited achievements of existing improvements and reforms. It is in evidence in a number of improvement programmes in the United Kingdom such as the Improving the Quality of Education for All (IQEA) Project, the High Reliability Schools (HRS) Project and many of the projects associated with the London Institute of Education National School Improvement Network (NSIN). In Canada, it has been in evidence in the various phases of work conducted in the Halton Board of Education. In the Netherlands in the Dutch National School Improvement Project (further details on these programmes are available in Reynolds et al 1996; Teddlie & Reynolds 2000; Hopkins, Ainscow & West 1994 and Hopkins 2001).

There are course variations between these various programmes that make any global assessment difficult. Nevertheless, if one were to look at these exemplars of third wave school improvement as a group, it is clear that:

■ There has been an enhanced focus upon the importance of pupil outcomes. Instead of the earlier emphasis upon changing the processes of schools, the focus is now upon seeing if these changes are powerful enough to affect pupil outcomes;

■ The learning level and the instructional behaviours of teachers have been increasingly targeted for explicit attention, as well as the school level;

- There has been the creation of an infrastructure to enable the knowledge base, both 'best practice' and research findings, to be utilised. This has involved an internal focus on collaborative patterns of staff development that enable teachers to enquire into practice, and has involved external strategies for dissemination and networking;

- There has been an increasing consciousness of the importance of 'capacity building'. This includes not only staff development, but also medium term strategic planning, change strategies that utilise 'pressure and support', as well as the intelligent use of external support agencies;

- There has been an adoption of a 'mixed' methodological orientation, in which bodies of quantitative data plus qualitative data are used to measure educational quality, and variation in that quality. This includes an audit of existing classroom and school processes and outcomes, and comparison with desired end states, in particular the education experiences of different pupil groups;

- There has been an increased emphasis upon the importance of ensuring reliability or 'fidelity' in programme implementation across all organisational members within schools, a marked contrast with the past when improvement programmes did not have to be organisationally 'tight';

- There has been an appreciation of the importance of cultural change in order to embed and sustain school improvement. There has been a focus on a careful balance between 'vision building' and the adapting of structures to support those aspirations;

- There has been also an increased concern to ensure that the improvement programmes relate to, and impact upon, practitioners and practices through using increasingly sophisticated training, coaching and development programmes.

2 FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE: EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS, IMPROVING SCHOOLS & LESS SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS

2.1 We've looked at a wide range of studies to get a handle on 'what works' and what schools facing challenging circumstances could do in their drive for improvement, including:

- studies of schools that improved rapidly over time;

- studies of 'effective schools';

- studies of schools that were less successful, and those who had serious long term difficulties;

- accounts of exemplary Headteachers who 'turned round' schools.

Some projects were aimed at whole school improvement, some at improving student performance. Some are based upon one school - others are district or nationally based. Appendix Two summarises project organisation, aims, principles and activities, and the strength of the evidence of success in raising student performance, and in turning around schools that needed it. The features of effective programmes are summarised in 2.7–2.8.

2.2 **School improvement** describes a set of processes, managed from within the school (Stoll and Fink 1996), targeted both at pupil achievement and the school's ability to manage change (Ainscow, Hopkins et al 1994) – a simultaneous focus on process and outcome. All authors stress the self-managing nature of the improving school (Southworth 2000: schools are self-managing and self-improving organisations "aided from time to time by external support"), apparently taking control of an externally-determined agenda – controlling, rather than the objects of, change. This paper adopts the tighter **definitions of effectiveness and improvement** used by Gray, Hopkins, Reynolds et al (1999; p5): if effectiveness describes above-expectation pupil academic performance, improvement is an sustained upward trend in effectiveness. An improving school is thus one which increases its effectiveness over time – the value-added it generates for pupils rises for successive cohorts.

2.3 Certain features of improvement programmes flow necessarily from this concept of **improvement**:

- *vision*: without a concept of where we are trying to get to, the verb "to improve" has no meaning;

- *monitoring*: we must know where we are now in relation to the vision;

- *planning*: how will we get from where we are towards where we want to be?

- *performance indicators*: to track progress over time in respect of the aspects we monitor.

Thus a focus on the quantitative review of trends in pupils' academic performance is inevitable.

2.4 **Schools which succeeded "against the odds"** in improving against a background of significant pupil and community disadvantage (Maden and Hillman 1996) shared the following characteristics:

- a leadership stance which embodies (in its leadership team) and builds a team approach

- a vision of success couched in academic terms and including a view of how to improve

- careful use of targets

- improvement of the physical environment

- common expectations about behaviour and success

- investment in good relations with parents and the community.

2.5 **Internal pre-conditions for successful improvement** [amalgamated from; Gray, Hopkins, Reynolds et al (1999); Ainscow, Hopkins, Southworth and West (1994)] include:

- transformational leadership in the leadership team, offering the possibility of change

- school-wide emphasis on teaching and learning

- commitment to staff development and training

- use of performance data to guide decisions, targets and tactics

- teamwork both within staff groups (collaborative planning, effective communication) and with stake-holders (involvement of teachers, pupils, parents in decision-making)

- time and resources for reflection and research.

2.6 **Characteristics of less successful schools** (especially from Reynolds in Stoll and Myers 1998, Stoll in ditto, Teddlie and Stringfield 1993) have been argued to be:

    2.6.1 At whole-school, including leadership, level:

- lack of the competences needed to improve

- unwillingness to accept evidence of failure

- blaming others - pupils, parents, LEA ...

- fear of change and of outsiders who embody it; belief that change is for other people

- controlled by change rather than in control of it

- dysfunctional relationships, with cliques

- goals are not plausible or relevant

- lack of academic focus; principals who take no interest in curriculum and attainment

- passive about recruitment and training

- school does not build longitudinal databases on pupils' progress - not outcomes-oriented

- valid improvement strategies are adopted but not carried through

- governing body may be passive, lack knowledge or have factions (may be political or ethnic).

    2.6.2 At classroom level:

- timetable not an accurate guide to academic time usage

- inconsistency, including some high-quality teaching

- low expectations

- emphasis on supervision and routines

- low levels of teacher:pupil interaction about work

- pupils perceive teachers as not caring, praising etc.

- high noise levels and lots of non-work-related movement

- lots of negative feedback from teachers

2.6.3 Problems may be mutually reinforcing: since the agencies of effective change are synergistic (Hopkins and Harris 1997), so is their absence. The scale and intractability of problems in the long-term, serious difficulty school cannot be ignored; these schools may have:

- lost public support

- been vilified in the press

- suffered multiple staff changes, including at SMT level

- "enjoyed" false dawns

- lost numbers and therefore have had to take other schools' excludees

- a very challenging pupil population, with extremely high SEN demands of all kinds

- huge budget problems

- a community of extreme poverty and deprivation

- a migrant population, many of whom have low literacy and/or EAL issues

- a significant number of "ghost" pupils who take up excessive amounts of time and who depress exam and attendance statistics

- a history of factionalisation and industrial unrest

- a crumbling physical environment.

(Drawn especially from reports of schools in very serious difficulties in Hackney and Hammersmith; see especially O'Connor et al 1999).

2.7 Turning round schools in serious difficulties

2.7.1 A persistent failure to improve argues that these schools cannot achieve the school improvement processes in 2.1–2.5, since these are self-managed. There is a competence line (Myers 1995; Ofsted definition of serious weaknesses) below which the school cannot use normal processes to avert decline or sustain improvement. The processes and intentions of conventional support programmes and the activities of school improvement projects provide appropriate help for schools that are functioning 'normally'.

2.7.2 By definition therefore schools in long-term, serious difficulty need major programmes of intervention. Hopkins and Harris (1997) describe this as a "Type 1" school – a failing school in which the intervenors are taking basic actions to establish minimum levels of effectiveness – involving high levels of external support and a clear and direct focus on a limited number of organisational and curricular issues. Most frequently, such programmes are provided or led by the LEA; LEAs have both de facto (such as in the judgements made in Ofsted inspections of LEAs) and de jure (in the regulations governing Education Development Plans successive Education Acts including 1998 – formal warnings etc.) responsibility for schools causing concern. In some cases, the failings of the LEA are major factors in the failings of the school, and other support agencies are involved. If the school cannot manage improvement alone with normal levels of support, the activities of an intervention body must lie in a combination of:

- changing the chemistry by changing the people

- training and supporting the new team – appropriate to the school context.

The intervention team withdraws in a planned way as the level of on-site competence rises.

2.7.3 The principles of effective intervention (especially Fullan 1992, Hopkins and Harris 1997, Stringfield in Stoll and Myers 1998) are:

- early and determined action

- resources are needed – lots of them – but will not work without strong management in place

- simultaneous action at whole-school (leadership), teacher and classroom levels

- balance of support and pressure

- internal and external processes, top-down and bottom-up, must be co-ordinated.

2.7.4 Accounts of turning schools round written by their headteachers stress the importance of:

- managing the tension between a focus on a few things and the need to change everything

- political wrangles at governor and LEA level

- making tangible environmental improvements

- using literacy as a Trojan horse of curriculum/teaching improvement.

2.7.5 The stages of recovery are described (Stark in Stoll and Myers, 1998) as:

- acknowledge failure, face up to problems, preparing an action plan which is aimed at regaining commitment as well as re-establishing basic competence [3 months]

- implement action plan: restore leadership, re-establish sound management, improve teaching and learning [18 months], within which period morale and self-esteem are re-established by early success with e.g. environment, behaviour

- "progress towards excellence".

2.7.6 One key finding in the work of many authors, but most clearly expressed by Stringfield (in Stoll and Myers 1998 and elsewhere), is that gain in scores varied more within projects due to level of implementation than between projects – in other words, given that most projects are sensibly predicated, **schools achieve greater gain by pursuing a project thoroughly than by choosing project (a) rather than (b)**. The originators of American improvement projects (see especially Slavin "Success for All") talk about "fidelity of implementation". A senior officer of an English LEA, reflecting on a school in persistent serious difficulty, says that everyone knew what was wrong and what needed to be done, but they didn't do it consistently.

2.8 The **common challenging issues** for managing improvement projects and programmes which span a number of schools are (summarised here from Stoll describing the Lewisham Project, in Barber and Dann eds. 1996; pps 113-115):

- what to do with non-volunteer schools which need to but do not want to take part (of the 50 projects listed in "Raising Education Standards in the Inner Cities" pp 193-4, 8% were identified by need and a further 16% comprised all the schools in a disadvantaged area, while 40% were self-selected);

- managing the tension between ownership and accountability: how much action is "done to" a school which cannot do it to itself, how and when to enable the school to resume local decision-making;

- the complexity of evaluation: attributability – how to assess what worked when everything is changing; poor baselining or success criteria in many projects;

- avoiding the project as bolt-on rather than bloodstream, event rather than process; projects which are linked to funding which dwindle or die when the funding runs out;

- concurrent agendas – e.g. development paralysis caused by Ofsted inspection in some schools;

- getting a school moving – how to start to move schools.

3 FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE AS A BASIS FOR SUPPORTING SCHOOLS FACING CHALLENGING CIRCUMSTANCES

3.1 The aim of the initiative to support Schools Facing Challenging Circumstances is to support the improvement of the lowest-performing secondary schools, as defined by a single measure – those in which 25% or under of pupils achieved five or more grades A* – C at GCSE in 1999 and/or 2000. PRUs, special and primary schools are not included. This also includes a number of schools which achieve above the 25% floor target, but where over 35% of their pupils are receiving free school meals (fsm).

The schools vary considerably (see Para 3.4); they are numerous and diverse, including low-achieving, under-achieving and failing schools – and some which are already highly effective schools. It is therefore expected that each school will design an improvement strategy to fit its specific circumstances.

3.2 In formulating this improvement strategy, schools are encouraged to learn from the research into effective school improvement programmes.

These have / are / do the following:

- a multi-level approach but with the stated improvement focus on the classroom and on academic achievement;
- securing strong leadership at headteacher level, before ...
- ... building an effective leadership team, before ...
- ... gaining staff commitment, before ...
- ... a large input of resources;
- securing the understanding of, and, preferably, the involvement of, the community, especially parents;
- adopting the characteristics of high-reliability organisations:
  - **i** clarity of mission: a small number of clear, agreed and inflexible goals, with ambitious targets for pupils' academic achievement at their heart
  - **ii** careful monitoring of key systems to avoid cascading error
  - **iii** data richness, with good benchmarking and openness about performance data
  - **iv** standard operating procedures (SOPs), including an agreed model of teaching and consistent implementation of agreed actions in teaching, managing learning behaviour, attendance etc.
  - **v** a focus on pupils at risk of failure
  - **vi** pro-active, extensive recruitment and targeted training, including the delivery of the agreed teaching methods
  - **vii** rigorous performance evaluation to ascertain the rapid, early and continuous impact of initiatives
  - **viii** maintenance of equipment in the highest working order;
- a "club" structure with support, networks – a learning network which may involve HEI/LEA/other schools/consultants; working with a multi-skilled support team which provides pressure as well as support; fidelity of implementation;
- strong rules and processes at the start of the programme (and recognising that fulfilling the rules is more important than the rules themselves!), with the school making greater input as confidence increases and the school begins to turn;
- seeking a sense of early achievement through a clean-up campaign and some improvements to fabric.

3.3 We have sought to develop a 2 stage approach:

Stage 1
Devise a programme which is built on the following core values:

- every school can improve
- improvement must ultimately be assessed in terms of improved pupil outcomes
- every individual in the school has a contribution to make to the improvement
- start from where the school is but help staff to set high goals
- help schools help themselves and guard against creating dependency
- model good practice
- help heads / staff raise their expectations of what is possible and to see beyond the school.

Stage 2

Encouraging schools to work with partners to:

■ take early, firm intervention to secure effective management and leadership;

■ help the school identify its core issues through:
— surveys of staff and student opinion
— gathering, analysing and presenting data on student achievement
— using these data to identify good practice

■ gain staff commitment through working with those staff unable or unwilling to change

■ introduce models of leadership and teaching quality:
— building a leadership team, with appropriate contribution from the Head
— introducing experienced new blood in the classroom

■ focus on dealing with issues in a phased manner in order to achieve a track record of success whilst recognising the importance of:
— addressing any Ofsted key issues
— improving the cleanliness of the environment
— developing pride and self-esteem
— emphasising attendance / punctuality / uniform

AND

■ focus on teaching and learning:
— establishing a set of core values and an agreed teaching model
— re-skilling teams of teachers in a limited repertoire of teaching styles
— firm and consistent policy on behaviour (around the site as well as in classrooms)
— supporting and building on models of excellent teaching.

3.4 There are a total of 620 schools included in the initiative (around 8% of all secondary schools):

■ 66 (10.6%) are on special measures at the end of the summer term 2000 (national average for secondary schools 2 – 3%)

■ the average fsm proportion of 36% is about twice the national average, with a range from 84% to 6%; Only 13.5% of the schools have the national average of approximately 20% fsm

■ performance at GCSE can be grouped into:
— a "core" group of 378 schools in which the threshold level was achieved in neither '99 nor '00 (12.7% or 48 of these are in special measures, the performance in 68 improved by 5% or more from 1999 to 2000, and declined by 5% or more in 75)
— 101 school which achieved the threshold level in '99, but not in '00 – declined. (5%, 5 schools were in special measures.)
— 141 schools which achieved the threshold level in '00, but not in '99 – improved. (5.7%, 8 schools were in special measures.)

■ a proportion of schools designated by Ofsted as under-achieving or having serious weaknesses, and a proportion of good, effective and / or improving schools;

■ a proportion of schools which are secondary modern in name, and another, larger group, the ability range of whose intake is seriously affected by neighbouring selective schools.

APPENDIX ONE: EXCELLENCE FOR ALL – THE HIGH RELIABILITY SCHOOL

There are now extensive bodies of knowledge about the essential good practice that can help schools. This is in marked contrast to the situation in British Education before the advent of the *knowledge bases* in school effectiveness, school improvement and departmental effectiveness, which have grown over the last fifteen years. There is now no need to wait for schools to 'invent wheels' in order to discover 'what works' in the way of school improvement as we have done historically.

We have validity in the sense of possessing knowledge about how children are to be educated successfully – our British problem is that we do not have reliability: a sense of all schools and teachers being able to do what the *leading edge* or *cutting edge* of our profession does.

The High Reliability School (HRS) programme aims to take our knowledge of how Highly Reliable Organisations (HROs) operate and combines it with our information on educational evaluation, school effectiveness and school improvement, in order to create a distinctly new type of school that aims to dramatically improve its processes and the achievements of its children.

The characteristics of HROs are as follows:
- They have a limited range of goals on which they focus.
- They develop their staff with extensive training programmes.
- They have refined *what works* and ensure all staff utilise these methods
- They have initiatives which identify flaws in their organisation and generate changes.
- They pay considerable attention to evaluating their performance and to benchmarking against their best people – and the best people outside the school.
- They are alert to lapses: they take their stand on detail since they are concerned that any minor error may cascade into major system failure.
- They are, crucially, data rich organisations, which are continually monitoring their functioning in order to improve the quality of their decision-making.

The HRS Project, developed in secondary schools, but also now piloting a programme for primary schools, aims to ensure that all schools involved receive the *valid* educational foundations of knowledge that are necessary to create high achievement. They also develop systems for performance evaluation and data management that enable them go beyond these foundations and introduce even more improved practices.

The programme encourages schools to set ambitious targets for school performance and learn from bodies of knowledge about good practice, derived from research and practice around the world and disseminated during training days and twilight sessions.

The programme is structured over four years:

Year 1
- School effectiveness
- Teacher effectiveness / peer observation

Year 2
- Departmental effectiveness
- Using data performance evaluation

Year 3
- Advanced teaching methods
- Parent / community programmes

Y ear 4
- Primary education programmes
- Schools of the future / ICT.

All the training sessions are designed to combine input of formal knowledge with: staff evaluation of the baseline performance of their teaching, of the school and of their department; small group sessions to consider change / improvement; and plenary sessions to review progress. Schools are encouraged to:

- adopt new practices that are effective, using training days and their knowledge about what works in other schools in the project. (This also comes about through regular 'what works' sessions as Headteachers routinely meet monthly in organisational meetings (see below), and in the annual regional and national residential sessions.)
- benchmark against their own best practice, using peer observation, performance indicators and professional knowledge
- become 'data rich' with the collection of a large volume of sophisticated assessment data on pupils, departments, teachers and the school. (The project has developed state of the art software to handle this, so that data can become management information which aids improvement. Data on individual pupils is used to generate interventions to maximise performance.)
- focus on external interventions, after the school's internal processes become more effective, to include parents and feeder primary schools, providing them with data, ideas, opportunities for involvement, etc.
- organise monthly group meetings (the project schools, their teachers, and the member of staff responsible for HRS, if not the Headteacher) around the geographical localities schools are in. (Each area has a project driver, usually one of the Headteachers working one day per week, to link the partner schools together.)

Additional support comes from David Reynolds, the consultants based at the University of Exeter and the international team associated with the project.

Excellence For All: The High Reliability School has been developed over five years of work with over 20 secondary schools in three LEAs. There is cast iron evidence that it works in terms of improving the attainment of pupils. Schools in the HRS programme have improved their academic performance by three times the rate of national improvement, with large numbers of schools literally 'taking off' in their performance. The programme is being written up in a series of books and training manuals, for publication later this year, and will be launched nationally from Autumn 2001.

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APPENDIX TWO: STUDIES REVIEWED

1 Project name 2 Location 3 Management 4 Time/duration 5 Schools involved	1 Aims 2 Principles/model 3 Actions taken	Evidence of positive effect on: 1 Pupils' achievement 2 Schools Facing Challenging Circumstances
1 Schools make a Difference (SMAD) 2 Hammersmith & Fulham UK 3 LEA 4 1993 – 95: 2 years 5 8 secondary, at least three in serious difficulty	**Aim:** to raise attainment, participation and morale of pupils **Model:** ■ effective schools features promoted by INSET ■ school-selected development priorities ■ driven by co-ordinator group plus principals ■ strong framework of evaluation ■ two year injection of cash, one year injection of capital ■ resources including INSET contingent on planning convergent with principles **Actions:** ■ management structure: appointment of co-ordinator to LEA/each school, steering group etc. ■ extended day, revision centres in holidays ■ visible improvements to environment ■ mentoring/monitoring service for SMTs ■ consultation with pupils ■ each school chooses a development priority	**Pupils' achievement** Pupils who attended revision centres achieved significantly higher GCSE results than those who did not. **SFCC** Project strengths embedded in strongly-managed schools; in weak schools the benefits fell away. LEA Chief Inspector believes that such projects are appropriate for schools which function 'normally'.
2 Halton Effective Schools Project 2 Halton District, Canada 3 District (= LEA) 4 1986 – 5 All district schools – 66 primary, 17 secondary	**Aim:** to enhance quality of schools and the school system by the application of effective schools features **Principles:** ■ school-centred: top down/bottom up – system provided direction, support, evaluation to schools' own plans ■ integrating effective schools features into existing systems/structures ■ not a quick fix – five years plus ■ not aimed at improving test scores, but at creating effective schools **Actions:** ■ model of school effectiveness taught to all staff ■ task force set up with reps from all schools, LEA ■ school growth (development) plans written, based on evaluation and vision: where are we, where do we want to be? ■ very small sums of money provided on a no-strings basis	**Pupils' achievement** No evidence – not the focus of the project **SFCC** Wide variety of school outcomes: schools which foundered often short-circuited the necessary bits of process – development of shared values, ensuring a climate for change, maintaining a collaborative culture. System-wide improvements in motivation in staff and in schools' capability as planners.

3 Accelerated Schools Project **2** USA-wide **3** Stanford Univ., Calif. **4** 1986– **5** 1000+, low SES, at risk pupils	**Aim:** to help at-risk and marginal pupils catch up **Principles:** ■ such pupils need to accelerate the rate at which they learn and would benefit from the same curriculum and teaching methods as the gifted and talented ■ unity of purpose – all staff, parents and students must sign up to a common set of aims ■ school-based decision making – share responsibility for decisions and for holding themselves accountable ■ building on strengths – those of students and of the organisation **Actions:** ■ contract signed by all participants, 90% of whom must sign up ■ representative project team established – all stakeholder groups ■ intensive and extensive training, much of it directly instructional ■ internal evaluation of strengths and weaknesses ■ school improvement consultant appointed – visits on a weekly basis to support the process – responsibility rests with school ■ lengthy process of vision building ■ 3 or 4 priorities established with work group assigned to each ■ whole school community comes together at least once a quarter to evaluate progress and set new priorities ■ assumption that transforming the culture takes 5–6 years.	**Pupils' achievement** Described as marginal; some studies show literacy and maths gains greater than control groups. Length of time for implementation can tangle the process with changes of staff etc. **SFCC** No evidence
4 Making Belfast Work: raising school standards **2** Belfast, N Ireland **3** ISEIC, Univ of London plus Dept of Ed N Ireland and local authority **4** 3-year project 1994–7 **5** 4 under-achieving secondary schools and their 10 feeder primaries	**Aim:** to provide additional support and resources to under-achieving schools to accelerate an improvement in the performance and employability of school leavers. Part of a larger city approach to disadvantage and low performance in all social contexts **Actions:** Target 7 areas for improvement: ■ quality of management, teaching and learning ■ standards of literacy and numeracy ■ qualifications and access to FE ■ links with local industry ■ parental involvement ■ class discipline ■ attendance and punctuality Unusual in that it is a project targeting under-performing schools	**Pupils' achievement** Patchy and not well established. Some evidence of literacy gain and of small-scale improvements in attendance. Other changes very variable among schools. Lack of baselining of achievement means that progress with basic aim cannot be assessed. Improvement in GCSE scores by end of project in line with city-wide improvement. **SFCC** Weak evidence. Where management weak, impact was low. Lengthy analysis of factors which promote/retard success.

5	**Improving the Quality of Education for All (IQEA)** **2** Initially geographical clusters of schools within the UK; latterly adopted by clusters in other countries **3** University of Nottingham **4** Began 1991; ongoing **5** 40+ schools in initial phase; now 80+	**Aim:** to strengthen the school's ability to provide quality education for all its pupils by building on existing good practice **Principles:** ■ school improvement is about enhancing students' learning ■ vision of the school shared by and contributed to by all members of the school community ■ external pressures are internal growth opportunities ■ encouragement of collaboration and empowerment ■ monitoring and evaluation are everybody's responsibility **Actions:** Contract drawn up among all participants: all staff must be consulted; co-ordinators appointed and resourced; a critical mass of teachers must be actively involved. Project leadership provides support, training for co-ordinators, staff development materials (manual). Project is about bottom-up capacity building and culture enhancement. Talks about empowerment, classroom conditions, working at all levels in the school.	**Pupils' achievement** No evidence of differential pupil score gain – not the aim of the project, no baselining of the cohort nor control group. Claims establishment of conditions for improvement. **SFCC** No specific mention of schools in difficulties but clear implications of differential success with different managerial capability; project is very clear on the need for intervention strategies differentiated by the stage of development of the school, including for an ineffective school for which the target is the achievement of basic effectiveness.
6	**Manitoba School Improvement Project** **2** Within the province of Manitoba, Canada **3** Charitable foundation is the funding body and receives bids from schools **4** Began 1991, ongoing **5** 31 secondary schools	**Aim:** to improve the learning experiences and outcomes of secondary school students, particularly those at risk, by building schools' capacities to become transforming schools that engage students actively in their own learning **Principles:** ■ School-based, with teacher-initiated ideas, drawing on teacher knowledge ■ Focus on needs of adolescent learners, especially those at risk ■ Schools must address basic issues of educational improvement ■ Long-term impact sought ■ Encouragement of collaboration in the school ■ Thorough evaluation **Actions:** TVEI-like: a fundholder invites bids against criteria, and then provides a combination of support (co-ordinator, networks, training) and pressure to deliver. School chooses project content to meet needs, within criteria.	"Majority of the schools" were successful in terms of demonstrable improvements in four aspects: ■ Achievement of the programme agreed ■ Increased student learning ■ Increased student engagement ■ Successful school improvement **Pupils' achievement** No reference to academic outcomes **SFCC** Since schools chose to bid, it is a reasonable presumption that schools in serious difficulties are not involved.

7	**Coalition of Essential Schools (CES)** **2** USA-wide, with 50 regional networks **3** Based in Oakland Calif.; managed through 50 Regional Centres **4** Introduced 1984 **5** 1000 schools, initially high schools, but now over half elementary	**Aims:** broadly those of school reform and improvement **Principles:** CES is not a specific model of school reform; schools are encouraged to use the ten "common principles" to shape their own reform efforts: ■ Focus on helping students to use their minds well ■ Simple school goals – each student to master a limited no. of skills and amount of knowledge ■ Goals to apply to all students ■ Teaching and learning to be personalised to the max. possible ■ Student as worker, teacher as coach ■ Diploma awarded upon demonstration of mastery of the skills and knowledge of the programme ■ Tone of the school "unanxious expectation, trust and decency" ■ Principal and teachers are generalists first, specialists second ■ Programme costs should not exceed traditional costs by >10% ■ Expected limits on teaching group sizes ■ Non-discriminatory, inclusive policies, practices and pedagogies **Actions:** Members must join the club by a letter of endorsement from their school board and district office; minimum 80% of staff to vote for participation. School controls its own programme; schools are encouraged to think small in terms of no. of goals, mixed ability grouping etc.	**Pupils' achievement** Extensive research on implementation, but very little on student achievement. Of the two rigorous studies, one showed gain, the other decline, in pupils scores. **SFCC** No evidence; since schools opt into the programme, it is unlikely that schools in serious problems would apply or be accepted. The programme does not match fit the UK situation or the needs of weak schools well
8	**Direct Instruction** 2 USA-wide 3 Began in Univ of Illinois and Oregon 4 Introduced late 1960s; effectively a 3-year programme 5 150 schools and several thousand classrooms; mainly focused on low-performing elementary schools in low SES areas	**Aim:** to increase student achievement through carefully-focused instruction; mastery of academic skills by even the least able **Model:** Focuses on curriculum content and method of instruction: groups to be small and homogeneous, so block timetabling of the focus subjects; curriculum materials must be purchased, at the heart of which *are highly-scripted, rapid-paced lesson plans*. Frequent assessment of a sophisticated nature, used to re-group pupils. **Actions:** Heavy training investment: one week of training for each teacher before commencement; at least 4 days/month of coaching, observation, and a weekly one-hour in-service session. Year 1 – training in instructional and assessment methods, a school-wide discipline programme and a focus on one or two key subjects. Widen range of subjects in year 2; concentrate on challenging students in year 3 and on training trainers; then self-sufficient.	**Pupils' achievement** Evidence of student gain is strong; methods are effective in overall achievement, as well as language, reading, maths, spelling, health ed and science. Gains for both high- and low-achieving students. Gains are sustained – graduation rates, college acceptance rates. Also improves student attitudes to self, school and work. **SFCC** Hints at school improvement through consistency, raised expectations and the sheer volume of training, assessment and monitoring.

9	**High Schools that Work**	**Aim:** to raise the academic achievement of high school students who intend taking up a career rather than higher education.	**Pupils' achievement** Evidence of student gain is *strong*; the programme improves student performance on nationally-recognised tests and promotes academic achievement, especially in science and maths. The gains are stable across a variety of schools – urban and rural, pilot and later phase – and can thus be replicated.	
2	USA-wide; 22 states	**Model:** Basically a modified curriculum programme to provide a more challenging high school experience for students who are not college-bound (?presumed less able and/or disaffected?) . Involves requiring these students to take a minimum number of academic courses (English, maths, science, computer science) as well as vocational courses. Seems to centre on raising the status of less able and/or disaffected students and raising expectations of them.		
3	Began with Southern Region Education Board			
4	1987; a 3-year programme for each participating school			
5	860 schools USA-wide by 1998 – aims for over 1100 by 2000		**SFCC** No evidence	
		Actions: Participating schools must establish an advisory council of students, parents, teachers, community members and business leaders. Many schools establish vocational advisory councils.		

10	**High-reliability schools**	**Aim:** to raise the academic achievement of all pupils	**Pupils' achievement** Evidence of student gain is *strong*; gain scores at GCSE are well above the national average gain. Gains are found equally across a wide variety of prior attainment and SES: in high-, medium- and low-attaining schools, in high and low SES areas. Lack of evidence as to whether gains are sustained.	
2	Geographical clusters in England and Wales, plus one cluster in the USA	**Principles:** schools seek to apply the learning from organisations in which failure would be universally recognised as catastrophic, since this is increasingly the case for schools: ■ Goal clarity – a small number of primary goals ■ Consistent best practice, based on Standard Operating Procedures ■ Systems for identifying flaws in SOPs and making changes ■ Extensive recruitment, training and re-training ■ Mutual monitoring of staff, without loss of autonomy and confidence ■ Data richness – performance analysis as the basis for improvement ■ Focus on detail to prevent cascading error; early intervention ■ Hierarchically structured but with collegial decision-making and interdependence ■ Equipment and environment maintained in the highest order		
3	Initially through University of Newcastle; latterly self-managing.			
4	1995		**SFCC** Evidence is mixed: there is some evidence that the application of the principles forms a strong vehicle for effective new management to turn round a failing school; in the absence of such management, the project does not constitute a magic wand.	
5	Around 25 secondary schools in 3 clusters, plus a growing number of the primary schools in the pyramids of two of those secondary clusters.			
		Actions: All participant schools received large amounts of high-quality INSET from major international figures; not only did this provide them with the international knowledge bases about, for example, teacher and school effectiveness, it reinforced a sense of worth and together-ness. Clusters and schools appoint their own co-ordinators, who work in mutually supportive teams to arrange and deliver training and support. Groups of heads and teachers in competition for pupils collaborate over improvement. All participant schools must have raising attainment at GCSE and attendance as two of their key goals. Plans to achieve the goals, both shared and individual, are the schools' own. Over time the central leadership from the universities dwindled and the clusters became even more strongly self-managing.		

11 Success for All (SFA)	**Aim:** a comprehensive approach to re-structuring schools, especially those serving pupils at risk, to ensure that every child learns to read. Secondary goals are to increase attendance, reduce the number of referrals to special education and the number of pupils held back.	**Pupils' achievement** Evidence of student gain is strong; many rigorous studies have shown that compared to control schools and those using other projects, SFA schools show significant improvement in reading scores. There are particular benefits for those at risk of school failure. The more of the programme implemented, the greater the gain.
(see also Roots and Wings These two projects share a methodology, the second being an application of the principles of the first to more areas of the curriculum	**Principles:**	
	■ after scrutinising the concept and the materials, a secret ballot of staff must be taken in which at least 80% vote for adoption of the programme	
2 USA-wide; adapted and in use in 5 other countries, including the UK	■ a highly-structured curriculum focused on language skills – 90 mins/day of reading instruction	The project is a bit of a "kitchen sink" of proven methods/principles, and must have been considered by those developing the UK NLP. It is potentially costly.
3 Based at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore	■ programme is taught to homogeneous groups, which may be multi-age, of about 20 pupils, revised frequently on the basis of assessment	
	■ 8-week modules with continuous, detailed and formative assessment	**SFCC** No evidence
4 1987; programme is supported for a minimum of 3 years in each school	■ strong adherence to inclusion – child stays in the class, not referred to special ed, held back etc. Big impact on SEN practice	
	■ one-to-one support programme for those, especially youngest, pupils having difficulty, outside of the time of the rest of the programme – in other words, no withdrawal	
5 1130 schools by 1998, growing by 400 – 600 schools per year. Began by focusing on urban schools and at-risk pupils. Although still mainly so, now encompasses all types of elementary school.	■ full-time facilitator in each school – most schools also hire additional teachers and/or ancillary staff (or re-designate them)	
	■ each school must have a family support team to encourage reading to children at home; team includes co-professionals such as EWO, social services, counsellor....	
	■ uses developer-provided materials	
	Actions:	
	■ facilitator trains, supervises, coaches, monitors and liaises with families	
	■ lessons have variety, are fast-paced and emphasise co-operative learning	
	■ significant training demand: trainers (centrally employed) plus local facilitators undertake pre-training (3 days, all staff); visits which support implementation, including specific support to the family support team	
	■ developer provides full technical support for 3 yrs minimum: helpline, website ...	

12 Roots and Wings	Aims: to improve attainment in elementary schools in reading and language, maths, science and social studies. Secondary goals are as those for SFA.	Pupils' achievement
(see also Success for All)		A much younger programme than SFA without the same range of longitudinal studies; early evidence is promising – performance in standardised tests in all of the focus subjects (reading, maths, science and social studies) improves, in most studies at significant levels. One study shows that schools which performed below comparator group average before adopting the programme scored significantly above it after doing so.
2 USA-wide; adapted and in use in 5 other countries, including the UK	Principles: similar to those of SFA, involving intensive direct instruction.	
	Actions:	
3 Based at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore	■ similar co-ordination and training regimes as for SFA ■ 90 mins/day for reading, 60 mins/day for maths, 90 for social studies ■ same family and community involvement ■ use of developer-provided materials	
4 1993; programme is supported for a minimum of 3 years in each school	■ maths programme involves a series of 3–5 week programmes of whole-class topics, interspersed with 2-week periods of individual skill-development and investigation	
5 200 of the 1100+ SFA schools; plans to add 400 – 600 schools/year. Like SFA, began by focusing on urban schools and at-risk pupils, but a wide range of schools now use it.	■ science and social science programme is a problem-solving programme which emphasises the inter-dependence of systems, and uses role-play and simulation, solving community problems, develops higher-order thinking and problem-solving.	**SFCC** No evidence.
13 Improving Schools in Swindon (ISIS)	Aim: to raise attainment in all schools in Swindon to raise LEA attainment to the national average	No outcome data: new project
	Principles:	Included because it has a focus on challenging schools and because it exemplifies a content-free, low on direction high process project.
2 Swindon, UK	■ school specific development ■ shared ownership school/university/LEA	
3 LEA plus Univ of Bath	Actions:	
4 1999; intention is to support each school for min. 3 years	■ all schools audit effectiveness with consultant support: exam and test data, analysis of school documentation and leadership styles, ethos q'aires to stakeholders	How does it differ from good school improvement planning?
5 15 schools, 4 sec, 11 primary. Aim to extend to all schools in the borough. Project fees of schools in difficulty paid by LEA; these schools in tranche 1	■ levers for improvement identified in each school ■ targets and action plans set ■ school-specific pathway	

14 Lewisham Improving Schools Project **2** Schools within the borough (LEA) of Lewisham **3** LEA plus Inst of Ed **4** began 1993 **5** About 40 of the borough's 90+ schools, in all phases	**Aims:** ■ to enhance pupils' progress, achievement and development ■ to develop schools' capacity for managing change and evaluating its impact ■ to develop the LEA's capacity to provide data to schools to help them plans and evaluate change ■ to integrate 1-3 with existing systems to form a coherent approach to prof devt **Principles:** ■ use of data ■ school management planning **Actions:** ■ joint INSET (five days in total) for school leaders from Institute staff on school improvement knowledge base, monitoring techniques to enable the development of coherent school improvement programmes ■ pilot group of 10 schools, each with a trained change-agent cadre ■ school selects own focus for development within the key areas above, commonly and under-achieving group or aspect of curriculum	Whatever its successes, the legacy at the LEA is negligible – no-one in the current team was able to comment on it, and most could not recall it. Lots of qualitative data on improvement from surveys, q'aires etc: ■ participants "believed their skills to have been improved" ■ reported improvements in morale, communi-cation, staff meetings, focus on teaching and learning No data on improvement in pupil outcomes; reported that the LEA did not have effective data for primary schools, although it did for secondary.
15 Tilbury Initiative **2** Small deprived area within a local authority **3** Essex LEA; linked with TEC and SRB **4** 1994 – 7 **5** All primary schools and the one sec school in the area	**Aim:** school improvement within a broader education and training culture for a deprived area with pervasive low educational expectations: focus on levels of achievement; pupils' levels of self-esteem; management development and the learning environment. Action followed very critical Ofsted reports on 3 of the schools and the town's inclusion in the HMI "Access and Achievement in Urban Education" research and report. **Principles:** ■ collaboration and common actions across the schools; ■ involvement of whole community – links with non-schools budget, involvement of governors as key community people **Actions:** ■ meetings with all the town's governors ■ £300k made available by LEA – some new money, some focusing of e.g. GEST (SF) funds ■ use of common tests to provide better data, confront issues and enable better targets ■ joint activity: cross-school mgt devt training, accredited through local HEI; all schools to seek IIP accreditation; joint INSET days ■ common literacy strategy and targets 5–16 ■ primary classroom on sec site – to promote continuity	No outcome data available; researchers convinced that the levels of determination are high and the quality of actions signify a real improvement in development capacity, both severally and collectively.

16 **Nottingham City Initiative**	**Aims:** to raise educational standards in the inner city, with classic socio-economic features and associated educational issues.	Clear evidence of significant levels of improvement in pupil outcomes across the nine schools.
2 Inner city Nottingham	Concerns derived from secondary school under-performance, but the focus was on primary, especially junior, education in a small number of schools.	Disseminated within the LEA
3 Nottinghamshire LEA (before LGR disaggregated the city from the county)	**Principles:** ■ Locally-planned action in each school within a framework of three programmes: recovering achievement, behaviour management, home/school partnership ■ Very strong emphasis on monitoring pupil outcomes	Researchers believe there is evidence of improved pedagogy, with greater levels of intellectual challenge, and improved teacher morale.
4 Began 1992; initially a 2-year project, extended under different funding source for a further 3 years	**Actions:** ■ focusing of c£1.2m of GEST/SF money ■ centrally-managed Reading Recovery programme ■ seconded head to act as project manager; steering c'tee of heads, LEA officers ■ deputy heads from each school relieved of all teaching to manage the project – high priority plus clout	
5 9 inner-city primary schools	■ under recovering achievement: target grouping – ability groups in core NC subjects and under-achieving groups, each for part of week/year ■ changed pedagogy within the target grouped sessions – more directive teaching ■ under behaviour management: charters, reward systems, management of play times ■ less evidence (less tangible?) of action under the home/school label	

17 Two Towns Project 2 Tunstall and Burslem, two towns within the Stoke-on-Trent conurbation 3 Staffs LEA and Keele Univ 4 1990–95 5 3 secondary schools	**Aims:** ■ to raise ambitions, expectations and achievement and the educational culture of the community (see Tilbury [15] for close comparison) ■ mix of precise targets and lofty ambitions: targets for gain in the 5-year period: 50% in post-16 participation; 1 point/pupil at GCSE (can this be right??); 5% in attendance. Loftier ambitions about demonstrating the possibility of success and improvement in a deprived urban context **Principles:** ■ to learn from characteristics of effective schools research ■ collaborative working of LEA, HEI, Careers service, TEC, local business community ■ particular efforts to involve and include parents ■ by involving primary and tertiary institutions, partnership and continuity are encouraged ■ thorough evaluation, including independent evaluation **Actions:** ■ cross-school INSET sharing the knowledge base of effective schooling ■ extension/compensation programmes outside curriculum time; revision clubs in holidays; extended library hours ■ taster courses at colleges and universities to encourage progression ■ individual action planning, personal tutoring ■ self-study flexible learning packages	*The three schools had outperformed all three targets by the mid-point of the programme* What worked: ■ targeting resources including time and energy on effective schools factors ■ loose collaboration between partners, matched by the management structure ■ clear, measurable targets ■ small amounts of extra funding, well targeted by the schools themselves ■ outside consultants of high credibility gave insight and status ■ critical mass of teachers involved ■ small but significant expenditure on symbolic change – displays of pupils' work in foyers ■ focused attempts to change pupil and staff expectations ■ professional devt opportunities linked to project goals ■ additional expenditure became an integral part of school's devt strategies	
18 Dutch National School Improvement Project 2 Netherlands 3 National government 4 1991–94 5 All schools	**Aims:** to prevent and reduce educational disadvantage, especially in reading **Principles:** ■ to use the results of school effectiveness research, including both management- and classroom-level factors **Actions** (at classroom level)**:** ■ improving teachers' skills in: — direct instruction — group management, improving the use of pupils' time — phonics methods of teaching reading — rigorous and methodical working	No evidence	

19 **Cardiff School Improvement Project**	**Aim:** to change school organisation and encourage professional development for staff as routes to raising achievement	**Outcomes:** ■ programme schools out-performed control schools on attendance and academic achievement ■ improvement endured – 80% of effect still in evidence 7 years after project
2 Cardiff	**Principles:** ■ to use teachers as change agents	
3 LEA, Univ of Wales, Cardiff	**Actions:** ■ chosen teachers one day/week at university – given knowledge and skills about teacher effectiveness and research ■ provided each other with a support network	**Why successful?** ■ ownership ■ interaction between practical local knowledge and effectiveness literature
4 2 year programme	**Teachers drove:** ■ curriculum change ■ academic emphasis	■ strong involvement of senior staff ■ incentives (higher degree for participants)
5 38 schools	■ monitoring of progress ■ liaison with parents and other agencies ■ targeted staff development ■ pupil participation and autonomy	■ focus on real-life problems ■ change which was "joined up"

Programmes 20–23 are brief accounts of some direct instruction programmes which aim to raise student achievement, often in low SES areas and/or for under-achieving pupils, summarised from Joyce, Calhoun and Hopkins "The New Structure of School Improvement", OU Press, Buckingham 1999. General conclusions: the greater the enquiry into teaching and learning, the greater the gain; collateral gains in social dimensions of schooling – reduced disciplinary action, SEN referral; gains often very rapid and persistent

20 **Schenley Program**	**Aim:** to demonstrate how achievement can be raised in low SES areas	Large and sustained rises in scores across the curriculum at Schenley – not surprising in the light of collecting the best teachers and making both them and the students feel special.
2 Pittsburgh, USA	**Principles:** intensive, instruction-oriented staff development	
3 District-managed	**Activities:** ■ excellent teachers concentrated in a low SES school, achieving well below national averages	The question is: what happened in the schools whose teachers were rotated in?
4 All district schools	■ as a spin-off, school became a staff devt. centre ■ other district teachers rotated in for spells of several weeks, observing these teachers and studying pedagogy	Joyce (ed) Changing School Culture through Staff Devt. Alexandria, VA; Assoc for Supervision and Curric devt. 1990 Chapt by Wallace et al.

21 **Richmond County Models of Teaching Program** **2** Georgia, USA **4** 16 schools **5** Includes very low-achieving schools.	**Aim:** increase learning capacity of the students **Principles:** instruction-oriented staff development **Activities:** teachers from participating schools learned to use models of teaching which taught pupils to ■ work collaboratively ■ learn concepts ■ work inductively ■ memorise info	Large gain scores, especially in the weakest schools (whose pupils averaged 60% of the national average annual gain); also achieved higher promotion rates at year end; decreased exclusions. Joyce and Calhoun (ed) Learning Experiences in School Renewal Eugene, OR; ERIC Clearing House for Ed Management . 1996 Chapt by Showers et al
22 **Just Read** **2** Began at American School in Panama **5** Spread to US districts; scale unknown	**Aim:** to raise reading and writing ability, mainly through encouraging reading at home **Principles:** ■ action research based ■ collaboration with home ■ based on data on reading habits	Competence in reading increased significantly across the age and ability range; major collateral gains in vocab, comprehension and writing.
23 **Reading Recovery** **2** Began in NZ; now through-out English-speaking world **3** Trademarked programme **5** Focus is first grade pupils	**Aim:** early remediation of pupils whose reading falls to the bottom of their class in their first year and who are likely to fall seriously behind if not given special attention. **Principles:** ■ a year of high-quality professional development for each lead teacher ■ never watered down ■ comprehensive classroom support for all teachers – guidance, classroom materials, data analysis service ■ no fidelity implementation – loss if licence to practise!	Competence in reading increased, gaps closed, need for remediation reduced.

24 Pasadena High School

2 Southern Calif: a school whose success with an affluent intake dwindled to mass failure as the intake became more challenging. Intake attainment well below grade expectation; attendance very low; proportion going onto higher ed very small; very high proportion failing to complete

3 Began 1989

Aim: school restructuring to make the school serve the needs of the students – a results-driven school ensuring that students are successful in the defined areas.

Actions:
■ major re-organisation of the curriculum around a vision of the sort of young person the school should be producing
■ focus on learning and teaching – a thinking curriculum, a coaching style of teaching
■ strong focus on learning mathematics
■ re-organisation of the school into houses, in which a student comes into contact with relatively few teachers at a time

Evidence of success:
■ proportion of low grade/failing pupils dramatically reduced
■ improved reading and maths scores
■ attendance improved
■ completion rates dramatically improved

Keys to success:
■ focus on results – student centred
■ involve teachers, but look beyond the institution for expertise as well – consultants, other schools
■ support for school leaders
■ use data to confront failure but without blame
■ a strong, visionary principal helps enormously
■ restructure in stages, but ensure each stage focuses on improving outcomes for the students
■ revise the structure early in the process.

25 The Barclay-Calvert Project

2 Baltimore US

3 From 1990, one year group added per year, beginning with kindergarten

Aim: to raise expectation and attainment in an inner-city disadvantaged public school (Barclay) by implementing the curricular and pedagogic programme of a successful affluent private primary school (Calvert)

Principles:
■ an academically traditional, high expectation curriculum, heavy on homework and with an intensive writing programme – demanding and intellectually stimulating
■ content coverage non-negotiable
■ full-time co-ordinator
■ error-free work by pupils
■ teachers can count on systems working every time

Activities:
■ each year, the facilitator trains the relevant Barclay staff group in the Calvert programme for that year
■ students read and write a lot and produce a lot of work, daily
■ teachers check students' work rigorously
■ all students' folders are monitored by the project co-ordinator or one of the two principals
■ students' folders are sent home every month

Evidence of success:
■ very large improvements to pupil scores across the ability range, spanning language and mathematics, and sustained over time
■ significant changes to teaching technique
■ pupils' on-task rates improved

26 Aynesworth Elementary

2 Fresno, Calif: a very high-achieving school in a very impoverished community

Keys to success:
■ precision teaching: initial diagnosis, frequent re-testing, targeted use of staff to support pupils falling back and to advance those making rapid progress
■ high expectations from the top: "super-kids" programme led by headteacher – belief that our kids can achieve
■ common-sense innovation – finding ways

27 Roosevelt Elementary	**Keys to success:**
2 Louisiana: a stable positive outlier school (scoring well above expectation) in a remote, very poor community	■ Reliable curriculum coverage ■ Staff not trendy but had no major weaknesses ■ Principal with clear standards which he calmly and reliably implements ■ "Compensatory education staff" rapidly and flexibly deployed – early assessment and intervention

"Projects" 28–32 are not development projects but key research findings from a number of important studies of effectiveness and improvement which will provide contexts for judging and improving the effectiveness of schools

28 School Matters Research	A set of 4 key factors which affected pupils' progress and development in the *junior years*:	Summarised in Sammon P, "School Effectiveness" Swets and Zeitlinger, Lisse, 1999
2 Findings from research into effective teaching	■ structured sessions: progress is positively related to teacher structuring of the day, to pupil responsibility for managing pieces of work and to a limited focus within sessions ■ intellectually challenging teaching: higher-order questions and statements contribute to effectiveness – invitations by the teacher to pupils to use their creative imagination and powers of problem solving ■ work-centred environment: classes in which the teacher spent more time talking with pupils about the work and feeding back to them about it, made more progress ■ maximum communication between teacher and pupils: teachers who spent less time communicating directly and more in marking, silent monitoring etc were less effective; also, the more the teacher communicated with the class rather than with groups or individuals benefited progress (and behaviour, attendance, attitude to school)	Unlikely to surprise anyone – ratifies common sense

30 Key Features of Effective Schools	**1** Professional leadership ■ firm and purposeful ■ participative approach ■ leading professional **2** Shared vision and goals ■ unity of purpose ■ consistency of practice ■ collegiality and collaboration **3** Learning environment ■ an orderly atmosphere ■ an attractive working environment **4** Concentration on teaching and learning ■ maximisation of learning time ■ academic emphasis ■ focus on achievement **5** Purposeful teaching ■ efficient organisation ■ clarity of purpose ■ structured sessions ■ adaptive practice	**6** High expectations ■ high expectations all round ■ communicating expectations ■ providing intellectual challenge **7** Positive reinforcement ■ clear and fair discipline ■ feedback **8** Monitoring progress ■ monitoring pupil progress ■ evaluating school performance **9** Pupil rights and responsibilities ■ raising pupil self-esteem ■ positions of responsibility ■ control of work **10** Home-school partnership ■ parental involvement in their children's learning **11** A learning organisation ■ school-based staff development
2 Amalgamated findings from a large range of school effectiveness studies		

31 Key features of Improving Schools	Definition of school improvement: an improving school is one which increases its effectiveness over time – the value-added it generates for pupils rises for successive cohorts	Taken from Gray, Hopkins, Reynolds et al 'Improving Schools' (OU, 1999; Chapt 10)
2 Most significant correlates with rapid, sustained school improvement (secondary schools)	**Key correlates:** ■ tactics for maximising examination grades ■ policies for teaching and learning ■ intervention in the processes of teaching and learning ■ responsibilities given to pupils	

The following school improvement programmes were studied, but excluded for the reasons given. Their details were read to contribute to the "principles" database.

	Specified curriculum content, not compatible with NC, NLP, NNP	Little or no evidence of effect on student achievement	Focus mainly on the personal and social development of students, families, communities
America's Choice	X	X	
ATLAS communities	X	X	
Basic Schools Network	X		
Community for Learning			X
Co-NECT	X	X	
Core Knowledge	X		
Different ways of Knowing			X
Expeditionary learning			X
Foxfire			X
League of Professional Schools		X	
Modern Red Schoolhouse	X	X	
Paideia		X	
Purpose-centred Education	X	X	
School Development Programme			X
Talent Development			X
Urban Learning Centres	X		

High-Scope, although successful, was excluded because of its total focus on early learning. Some other programmes, such as **Onward to Excellence**, are very similar to UK-based programmes and have weak evidence of effect on pupil outcomes.

The School-based Review approach to improvement, exemplified by the GRIDS scheme in the UK and its adaptations in Australia; the Reformed Primary School scheme in Belgium; and the Danish Self-formulating Study Circles, was also studied and its principles taken into the report. Since the approach is quintessentially school-driven, it is not appropriate as a case study here.

APPENDIX THREE: BIBLIOGRAPHY

The report's findings are drawn from the range of sources listed below. The methodology, and some of the content, of the School Improvement and Re-structuring Projects section is based on the evaluation of American school improvement and re-structuring programmes in the American Institute for Research (1999) study.

Ainscow (ed) Especially Reynolds	1991	*Effective Schools for All* "Changing Ineffective Schools"	David Fulton
Ainscow, Hopkins, Southworth,West	1994	*Creating the Conditions for School Improvement*	David Fulton
American Institute for Research (Project Director: R.Herman)	1999	*An Educator's Guide to Schoolwide Reform*	Educational Research Service Arlington, Va
Barber	1995	*The Dark Side of the Moon: Imagining an End to Failure in Urban Education*	Text of the TES/Greenwich lecture; Univ of Keele, Staffs
Barber and Dann (eds)	1996	*Raising Educational Standards in the Inner Cities*	Cassell
Clarke and Christie	1997	*Improving School Intervention Approaches* Paper to 10th World Congress on School Effectiveness and School Improvement	Memphis, USA
Collins and Porras	1996	*Built to last*	Century
Dalin	1998	*School Development: Theories and Strategies*	Cassell
Datnow and Stringfield	2000	*Working Together for Reliable School Reform*	Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk; Vol 5
DfEE	1994	*Raising Standards of Achievement in Education*	The Planning Exchange, Manchester
Joy and Street	1997	*The Road to Success: Case Studies of Four Schools which No Longer Require Special Measures*	DfEE/Inst of Education
Earley, Fidler and Ouston (ed)	1996	*Improvement Through Inspection*	David Fulton
Fullan	1991	*The New Meaning of Educational Change*	Cassell
Fullan	1992	*Successful School Improvement*	Open Univ (OU) Press
Fullan	1987	*Managing Curriculum Change in "Curriculum at the Crossroads"*	Leeds, SCDC Conference Papers
Gray	2000	*Causing Concern but Improving*	DfEE Publications, Research Paper 188

Gray and Wilcox (eds)	1995	*Good School, Bad School* Especially Gray and Wilcox "The Challenge of Turning Round Ineffective Schools" (Ch 5)	OU Press
Gray, Reynolds, Fitz-Gibbon & Jesson	1996	*Merging Traditions: The Future of Research on School Effectiveness and School Improvement*	Cassell
Gray, Hopkins, Reynolds, Wilcox, Farrell, Jesson	1999	*Improving Schools: Performance and Potential*	OU Press
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for Schools facing. Challenging Circumstances: A Review of Research and Practice. Professor David Reynolds. School of Education. University of Exeter. Heavitree Road. EXETER EX1 2LU. Â lenging circumstances could do in their drive for improvement, including: î€, studies of schools that improved rapidly over time; î€, studies of â€˜effective schoolsâ€™; î€, studies of schools that were less successful, and those who had serious long term difficulties; î€, accounts of exemplary Headteachers who â€˜turned roundâ€™ schools. Some projects were aimed at whole school improvement, some at improving student performance. Some are. School Improvement for Schools Facing Challenging Circumstances: A Review of Research and Practice. School Leadership & Management, 22, 243-256. https://doi.org/10.1080/1363243022000020381. has been cited by the following article: TITLE: Mathematical Modeling from Metacognitive Perspective Theory: A Review on STEM Integration Practices. Â Collaborative Inquiry Driving Leadership Growth and School Improvement. M. Chaseling, R. Smith, W. Boyd, A. Foster, W. E. Boyd, C. Markopoulos, B. Shipway, C. Lembke. DOI: 10.4236/ce.2016.72023 5 346 Downloads 6 205 Views Citations. Scholastic offers some tips for school districts that want to fit the bill for technology, including everything from asking individuals in the district for â€œbig giftsâ€ to going to Uncle Sam for the funding. The website also suggests negotiating prices on technology when possible and allowing student to bring their own from home. Â There are many problems in public schools today, but identifying those issues is half the battle. With a laundry list of challenges to face, now is the time for educators, parents and lawmakers to come together and begin to find solutions â€“ for the benefit of all students in public schools today. Questions? Contact us on Twitter. @publicschoolreview. These strategies for school improvement provide a starting place for school leaders wanting to engage the school community in the learning process. Â It will also deal with challenges that the school is facing and needs that you have. Why: Writing the newspaper column will allow the public the opportunity to see what is going on within the school on a weekly basis. It will allow them the opportunity to see both the successes and obstacles that the school is facing. Have a Monthly Open House/Game Night. How: Every third Thursday night of each month from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m., hold an open house/game night. Reviews the literature on what works in school improvement in the UK. Outlines the practices that appear to be necessary--in terms of organization, culture, leadership, and ethos--to improve the levels of effectiveness. Appended is an outline of a number of particularly effective school-improvement projects. (Contains 22 references.) (WFA).