

Chapter 2

The evaluation and assessment framework

New Zealand has developed its own distinctive model of evaluation and assessment that is characterised by a high level of trust in schools and school professionals. The education system aims to make the best use of student assessment data to inform decision making at all levels while limiting possible negative impacts of high-stakes assessment. The key purpose of evaluation and assessment is to improve teaching and learning, especially for students at risk of underperformance. While the national evaluation and assessment agenda is solidly based on research evidence and characterised by a high degree of coherence, a number of elements could be better integrated and aligned to form a coherent framework. Given the emphasis on school self-management, ensuring consistency in the implementation of national policies remains a challenge. It is essential to continue to build capacity in a connected way at different levels of the education system to ensure that information is used effectively for improvement.

This chapter looks at the overall framework for evaluation and assessment in New Zealand, *i.e.* its various components such as student assessment, teacher appraisal, school evaluation and system evaluation, the coherence of the whole as well as the articulation between the different components. Following this overview, the succeeding chapters (3-6) will analyse the issues relevant to each individual component in more depth.

This report differentiates between the terms “assessment”, “appraisal” and “evaluation”. The term “assessment” is used to refer to judgements on individual student performance and achievement of learning goals. It covers classroom-based assessments as well as large-scale, external tests and examinations. The term “appraisal” is used to refer to judgements on the performance of school-level professionals, *e.g.* teachers and principals. Finally, the term “evaluation” is used to refer to judgements on the effectiveness of schools, school systems and policies. The term “review” is also used in the context of school evaluation.

Context and features

Governance

New Zealand’s approach to evaluation and assessment combines central control over policy development and standard setting with a large measure of devolved responsibility for the implementation of evaluation and assessment. Schools benefit from considerable autonomy in the organisation of the various components of evaluation and assessment at the student, teacher and school level. At the same time, schools have multiple accountabilities – to their communities, the Ministry of Education, the Education Review Office (ERO), the New Zealand Teaching Council and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

Key components

In a nutshell, New Zealand’s approach to evaluation and assessment can be described as consisting of the following four main components:

- **Student assessment.** In the first ten years of schooling, all student assessment (the National Education Monitoring Project [NEMP] and international studies excluded) takes place internally at the school. There are no common national tests and schools are free to develop their own assessment policies and practices. Teachers are expected to make and report overall judgements on student performance based on a range of evidence. External reference points of expected performance are provided by national curriculum documents, literacy and numeracy progressions, and the recently introduced National Standards. A set of nationally validated assessment tools are at teachers’ disposal to guide assessment practice. In upper secondary education (Years 11-13), student assessment for qualifications is based on standards and assessment criteria provided by the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. Some standards are assessed externally by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority while others are internally assessed with external moderation systems in place to ensure dependability.
- **Teacher appraisal.** Teacher appraisal in New Zealand occurs in two specific instances: (1) To gain or renew registration to teach; and (2) As part of the employer’s performance management processes for salary progression and

professional learning and development. Teachers become provisionally registered upon graduation and undertake an induction and mentoring programme for two years before they can apply for full registration. Once fully registered, teachers must renew their registration every third year. In addition, teacher appraisal as part of the employer's performance management is a mandatory process internal to the school conducted at least once a year. The primary focus of this appraisal is supportive and developmental to assist teachers in their professional career development. School leaders play the key role in conducting teacher appraisal for both registration and performance management.

- **School evaluation.** There are two main forms of school evaluation: (1) Schools are required to conduct ongoing school self-review and report results annually to the school community and the Ministry of Education; and (2) External school reviews are conducted by the Education Review Office on average every three years. The frequency of external school reviews is proportional to the schools' development needs: a school that is performing well and has strong self-review processes in place is visited less frequently than a school facing difficulties. The internal and external school review processes are intended to complement each other and build school self-review capability. The combined results from self-review and external review are expected to feed into the schools' strategic planning and reporting cycles for further improvement. All information is published on ERO's website (www.ero.govt.nz).
- **System evaluation.** The responsibility for system evaluation is shared between the Ministry of Education and the Education Review Office (ERO). The Ministry of Education has developed an Education Indicators Framework to monitor trends in schooling over time. Information about education system performance is collected through a range of tools: (1) International and national student assessments provide high quality information on student learning outcomes at key stages of primary and secondary education; (2) Schools supply a range of demographic, administrative and contextual data via biannual school Roll Returns; and (3) ERO conducts about 12-20 thematic national reviews bringing together information on particular schooling issues and priorities. All information is published on the websites of the respective agencies.

Responsibilities for evaluation and assessment

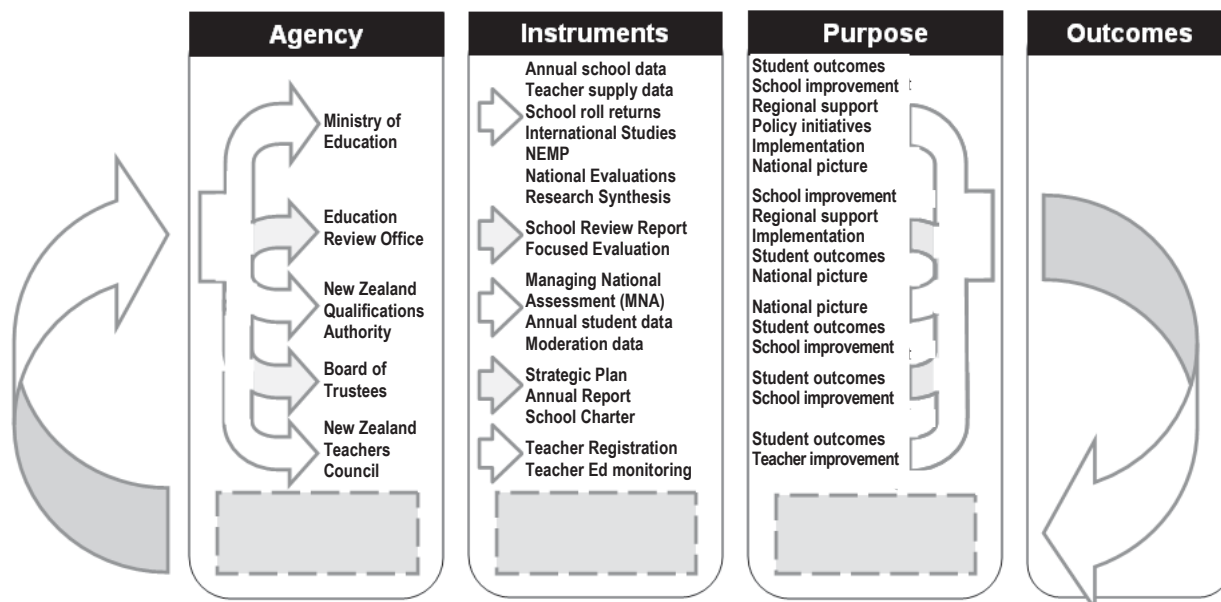
There are four government agencies with specified responsibilities in evaluation and assessment: the Ministry of Education, the Education Review Office, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority and the New Zealand Teachers Council. Each of these agencies has both accountability and improvement functions within the evaluation and assessment framework. In New Zealand's devolved education system, individual school Boards of Trustees also play a key role as they hold responsibility for governance, management and administration of schools. The responsibilities related to evaluation and assessment can be described as follows.

- **The Ministry of Education (MoE)** is responsible for oversight of the entire education system and plays a role in all components of the evaluation and assessment framework, including developing the national curriculum and assessment standards, setting minimum standards for teachers and monitoring the performance of schools and the education system. The MoE also designs, implements and monitors education policies.

- **The Education Review Office (ERO)** is involved in both school evaluation and system evaluation. It is in charge of evaluating and reporting on the quality of education in individual schools (including appropriate provision in private schools and home-schooling environments) and conducts national evaluations on specific aspects of schooling across the sector.
- **The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA)** plays a role in student assessment and in school evaluation. It manages the external assessments and moderates the internal assessments of secondary school students towards national qualifications. It also reviews the assessment practices of secondary schools to ensure the quality of school-based assessments for national qualifications.
- **The New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC)** has key responsibilities for teacher appraisal including establishing and maintaining standards for teacher registration, carrying out teacher registration processes, publishing a code of ethics for the teaching profession and exercising disciplinary functions relating to teacher misconduct.
- **Boards of Trustees** are responsible for ensuring that schools have annual planning and reporting structures in place and are involved in the conduct of ongoing school self-review. These responsibilities include preparing and updating a school charter, developing an annual plan and long-term plan and reporting annually against the school charter to the community and Ministry of Education. Boards of Trustees, together with school leaders, are expected to base their planning processes on evidence compiled from student assessment and other data gathering processes, available research on effective practice and professional judgement on how to prioritise from this information.

Figure 2.1 provides an overview of the key instruments used by these agencies in the exercise of their evaluation, assessment and reporting functions along with associated purposes.

Figure 2.1 Key agencies and instruments involved in evaluation and assessment



Source: Reproduced from New Zealand Ministry of Education (2011).

Strengths

Evaluation and assessment build on a high degree of trust and collaborative work

New Zealand has developed its own distinctive model of evaluation and assessment that is characterised by a remarkable level of trust in schools and school professionals. New Zealand's approach relies on national standard setting and test development combined with strong school autonomy in implementing evaluation and assessment. The education system aims to make the best use of student achievement data to inform decision making at all levels while limiting possible negative impacts of high-stakes assessment. There is a general consensus against national testing and a strong opposition to the use of student data for comparison among schools, such as league tables, especially in primary education.

Overall, the development of the national evaluation and assessment agenda has been characterised by strong collaborative work, as opposed to prescriptions being imposed from above. As a result of this participative approach, there appears to be considerable agreement and buy-in of schools into overall evaluation and assessment strategies. While there are differences in views, there seems to be an underlying consensus on the purposes of evaluation and an expectation among stakeholders to participate in shaping the national agenda. As expressed in its position paper on assessment, the Ministry's vision is that effective evaluation and assessment need to be reciprocal and can only be achieved through collaboration of professionals within and across the layers of the education system:

Effective assessment is not only concerned with high quality technical processes in the collection and interpretation of assessment information. It also requires a high level of responsiveness to unique learning and learner contexts. It includes collaborative exchanges of information between participants in a process of reciprocal learning or ako. A key feature of this paper is the insistence that this reciprocal learning process can and should be mirrored between participants both within and between all layers of the system. It has a role to play in classroom practice, professional dialogue, school review and the development of school-based policy and practices, system monitoring and evaluation and review and development of system-wide policy and practices.

(New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2010)

It should be noted that during the OECD visit, several stakeholder groups voiced concerns that some of the key principles of school policy development could be jeopardised by the introduction of National Standards in primary schools (these concerns will be addressed below).

Students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning

The New Zealand assessment framework, in parallel with the education system of governance, is characterised by an important devolution of assessment, starting with the students themselves. It emphasises the development of students' own capacity to regulate their learning through self- and peer-assessment. This approach can foster student self-regulatory skills in two important ways: self-assessment can increase student's autonomy and meta-cognitive awareness and peer-assessment can help develop a team spirit of collaborative work in the classroom. While a recent trend towards a strong focus

on literacy and numeracy can be observed, traditionally the assessment system has taken a broad approach, focussing not only on knowledge and skills but also on the holistic development of complex competencies, values and attitudes.

Teacher professionalism is encouraged and supported

The assessment system is further grounded in a strong belief in teacher professionalism. Teachers are seen as the main experts not only in teaching but also in assessing their students. This is in contrast to some other countries where student assessment is conceived as an activity separate from teaching and undertaken by school-external psychometric experts. While international developments are closely followed, there is general antipathy towards high-stakes accountability models, such as those implemented in the United Kingdom and the United States. Instead of implementing whole cohort testing, the national agencies have developed a range of sophisticated assessment tools to support teachers in their classroom assessment practice. National Standards aim to provide external reference points of expected student performance while leaving the responsibility for choosing assessment methods and forming overall judgements with teachers. The approach to national monitoring (NEMP) also involves teachers in the assessment activities.

A range of teacher professional development programmes, as well as mentoring and induction for new teachers, aim to ensure strong teacher competencies in assessment. Teacher professionalism is further supported by well-established approaches to teacher appraisal. Teachers have a good degree of ownership of the appraisal process. It is NZTC, the professional body of teachers, and not an external agency that has taken the lead role in defining standards for teacher registration. Individual teachers are actively involved in their appraisal processes (both for registration and for performance management) through self-assessment of their own practices. The registration process ensures that minimum requirements for teaching are met but also provides incentives for teachers to update their knowledge and skills continuously.

Schools' own self-review is at the heart of school evaluation

New Zealand's devolved evaluation and assessment system allows for a variety of solutions to be developed and adapted at the local level. It relies to a large extent on the capacity of the school and its governing body, the Board of Trustees, to use valid assessment practices to identify challenges and priorities, analyse and interpret data, and enact appropriate solutions. Over the last five years, the Education Review Office has pursued an agenda of making school self-review the centre piece of school evaluation. It has promoted evidence-informed inquiry, helping schools to engage in that process, and advising on how to use assessment results and other information for improvement and accountability purposes. Rather than prescribing methods to be used in school evaluation, the Education Review Office and the Ministry of Education make available a range of tools and professional development offers to guide schools in their practices. Schools are increasingly seen as responsible for providing their own accountability information whereas ERO focuses on helping schools working towards continuous improvement. New Zealand strives towards a collaborative model of school evaluation where internal and external reviews are complementary and build on each other. A high level of trust on both sides is essential to such a model.

System evaluation monitors student outcomes while avoiding high-stakes testing

The emphasis on teacher professionalism and school autonomy does not imply an absence of national monitoring of education outcomes. Instead of testing a whole student cohort every year, New Zealand strongly relies on sample-based surveys, namely the National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) and international assessments that do not carry high stakes for individual students, teachers or schools.

Most national monitoring data are aggregated from the school level, that is, bottom up instead of being distributed top down. At the national level, the Education Review Office (ERO) has a quality assurance and accountability function, using student achievement data from schools' own self-reviews to return feedback to schools and provide assistance where it may be most needed. Through aggregation of specific data, ERO also produces reports on issues of national interest.

The improvement function of evaluation and assessment is strongly emphasised

Key policy documents in New Zealand (including the national curriculum and the Ministry of Education's position paper on assessment) state that the primary purpose of evaluation and assessment is to improve students' learning and teachers' teaching. This seems to be widely reflected in school practices. In primary schools, student assessment is mostly formative and provides detailed feedback rather than assigning numerical marks. The NEMP assessments do not carry high stakes for students. Assessment in secondary schools is more summative but there are opportunities for schools to reassess and resubmit internal assessments to maximise learner success and students also receive their marked NCEA external assessments back. A range of tools and professional development offers are available for teachers to help them gather a variety of evidence of student learning to allow nuanced overall judgements on performance (Chapter 3).

The other components of evaluation and assessment share the same focus on using assessment results to make improvements to teaching and learning. Recent changes in the Registered Teacher Criteria have shifted the emphasis of teacher appraisal towards student learning outcomes, including teachers' capacity to collect, analyse and use student assessment information to adapt teaching strategies, especially with regards to diverse learner needs (Chapter 4). New Zealand's approach to school evaluation has also evolved to focus attention on building the capacity of schools for effective self-review and strategic planning for improvement of teaching and learning. The external school reviews conducted by ERO include an analysis of schools' assessment policies and practices and provide recommendations for improvements. The main focus of ERO reviews is on whether the school focuses on the learning and achievement of all students, especially those students who are struggling (see Chapter 5).

Evaluation and assessment aim to respond to diverse learner needs

Given the large performance differences within schools in New Zealand, a key focus of education policy has been on ensuring effective teaching, assessment and evaluation that responds adequately to needs of all students within the comprehensive school. Particular attention is given to groups for which there is evidence of system under-performance such as Māori and Pasifika. One of the priorities for the Ministry of Education is to further work on developing appropriate tools and resources for the – still relatively new – Māori-medium sector.

The national curriculum and other key documents of the education system recognise the key role of assessment in identifying and responding to diverse student needs. Much work has been undertaken to develop assessment tools and approaches that are adapted to different learner groups. For example, the Ministry of Education is working with Māori assessment experts to develop approaches for monitoring student outcomes in the context of the curriculum and the standards used in Māori-medium settings. There is also a focus on developing guidance and resources for teachers to develop narrative assessment approaches and Individual Education Programmes for students with special educational needs. A number of language and literacy assessment tools are available to provide adequate assessment opportunities for English language learners (Chapter 3).

There has also been some focus on including attention to Māori learner needs in teacher standards and teacher appraisal procedures. The Registered Teacher Criteria emphasise the bicultural context of New Zealand (Chapter 4). While the standards for teacher registration are the same for English- and Māori-medium education, some *iwi* have developed cultural standards for teachers that relate to the Māori expectations of teachers. ERO has adapted school review practices to ensure that school reviews fulfil the commitment of the education sector to improving education outcomes for Māori and Pasifika students (Chapter 5).

System evaluation focuses attention on ensuring that information is collected not only on the whole group of students but also on specific groups, and in particular the Māori and Pasifika students (Chapter 6). This is intended to provide relevant information to identify strategies to respond to diverse learning needs. The Ministry of Education's bilingual education portal *Te Kete Ipurangi* (The Knowledge Basket) attempts to continuously improve the presentation of information, resources and curriculum materials, for example by offering a personalised community home page as well as Māori-medium content and navigation.

There is a strong commitment to evidence-based policy and practice

The principle of evidence-based policy making is well established in New Zealand. At the national level there is a strong commitment to bringing together national and international evidence on the factors and practices that can contribute to improving teaching and learning. Representatives of several stakeholder groups commended the willingness of the national level to engage academic expertise to build an evidence-based body of knowledge on effective practice.

The most prominent example is the Ministry of Education's Iterative Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) programme, which brings together research on school factors that have a positive effect on student learning. The publications appear to be widely used by both policy makers and stakeholder groups to inform education policy and practice in New Zealand. New Zealand researchers and academics also contribute regularly to debates on educational evaluation and assessment policies, both individually and collectively via advisory groups, the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) and the recently created New Zealand Assessment Academy (NZAA) (Chapter 6).

To support sound assessment approaches, NZCER is developing research-based assessment tools and resources such as surveys and tests, and provides independent advice and information on education policy and practice. Procedures, standards and indicators for teacher appraisal and school review are also underpinned by research evidence. The New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC) contributes to building a sound

evidence base on high quality teaching. The Education Review Office (ERO) continues to review international and national evidence on effective practice to underpin its methodology and indicators framework. ERO's evaluation indicators are informed by educational research, in particular the Best Evidence Syntheses described above and ERO's own evaluations of effective schools. In its publication on *Evaluation Indicators for School Reviews*, ERO provides a list of research studies that have informed each set of indicators.

ERO's key focus is now on building capacity at the school for using evidence to inform school programmes and strategies. As part of its Building Capacity in Evaluation Project, ERO has run workshops for Boards of Trustees and school staff on assessment tools and processes. As part of its external review processes, ERO reviewers also focus on modelling approaches to data-collection, analysis and interpretation, as well as overall approaches to effective use of evidence for school self-review.

Challenges

Some components of the evaluation and assessment framework could be better aligned

While the key components of evaluation and assessment are well established in New Zealand, the articulation of the different elements needs ongoing attention. An important aspect of designing the evaluation and assessment framework is to monitor how different approaches to evaluation and assessment at student, teacher, school and system level interplay in order to generate complementarities, avoid duplication, and prevent inconsistency of objectives. The OECD review team noted a number of linkages or articulations between different elements of the evaluation and assessment framework that could be further strengthened. These include:

- *Articulation between the National Standards, the national curriculum and student assessment*

As a new piece that needs to be fitted into the primary education system, the National Standards need to be embedded into schools' work with the national curriculum and require mutual adjustments with existing tools and approaches to student assessment (Chapter 3).

- *Coherence between the two different sets of teaching standards*

The co-existence of two sets of teaching standards may give conflicting messages about what teachers are expected to know and be able to do at different stages of their careers (Chapter 4).

- *Linkages between teacher appraisal, professional development and school development*

Whether teacher professional development is linked to teacher appraisal varies across schools, largely depending on school leadership. There also is room to improve the links between strategies for teacher professional development and school development (Chapter 4).

- *Alignment between teaching standards, registration processes and career structures*
Registered Teacher Criteria, which are the reference for registration processes, do not specify skills and competencies at different stages of the career in association with roles and responsibilities of teachers in schools (Chapter 4).
- *Alignment between teacher appraisal and school evaluation*
There is room to ensure school evaluation is more closely aligned to teacher appraisal or has an impact on the focus of teacher appraisal (Chapter 4).
- *Articulation of school leaders' appraisal and school review*
External school reviews evaluate the quality of school governance, leadership and management but seem disconnected from the annual principal appraisals conducted by school Boards of Trustees (Chapter 5).
- *Articulation of school planning and reporting with school evaluation*
While schools are required to have both planning and reporting and self-review processes, the two processes are not always aligned. Also, school annual reports are not well integrated in the external review process (Chapter 5).
- *Linkages between annual school reports and education system monitoring*
While annual reports are sent to the Ministry of Education for accountability purposes, the potential to use them for system monitoring and evaluation is not exploited (Chapter 6).
- *Linkages between National Standards and education system evaluation*
While National Standards are partly intended for system monitoring, further work is necessary to ensure that assessment practices and reporting against the Standards are nationally consistent (Chapter 6).

Schools may be isolated in New Zealand's devolved education system

School autonomy and self-management create good conditions for school leader and teacher professionalism and, according to the New Zealand Principals' Federation, continue to be strongly valued by school leaders. This governance structure recognises that schools know their contexts best and allows professionals to adopt a diversity of practices, thereby creating conditions for innovation and system evolution.

At the same time, in such a devolved system, the workload and expectations of school leaders and Boards of Trustees are high. There is increasing concern about the complexity and breadth of the school leader's role, covering administration, strategic management and reporting, assessment and appraisal policies, financing, human resources and educational leadership, often in addition to teaching responsibilities (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2007).

Boards of Trustees play a key role in supporting principals in their planning, reporting and self-review tasks, but their preparedness and capacity to fulfil this role is highly variable across schools. Board members exercise their functions as unpaid, part-time volunteers (Pont *et al.*, 2008). Especially for small schools, it can be challenging to

recruit enough qualified Board members and have the right mix of skills represented on the Board. In rural schools, Board members often take on a range of hands-on practical tasks in the school and they tend to be selected on this basis rather than in relation to educational management and leadership tasks. Frequent changes of Board members may also lead to disruptions in the development of a school's vision, strategic planning and evaluation approaches.

Each school has its own processes and systems to comply with regulations related to evaluation and assessment and to develop effective practice. This may result in schools spending a lot of time on reinventing practices. Many stakeholders interviewed by the OECD review team spoke highly of government initiatives to support school clusters and networks, for example through School Improvement projects and the initiative Extending High Standards Across Schools¹, discontinued in 2009. There appeared to be a demand for more systematic and durable frameworks to help schools develop and spread effective practice. In the context of self-management, individual schools can be relatively isolated and may have limited opportunities for learning from effective practice from across the region or the country.

Schools have access to school improvement expertise via the School Support Services, a national network of advisory services that are regionally based, know the schools in their region and offer a range of professional support. School Support Services are attached to the initial teacher education institutions and contracted by the Ministry to provide professional learning and support services to schools. While the Regional Offices of the Ministry of Education could potentially also play a stronger role in school improvement, they are currently not structured and staffed in a way which would help them work directly with schools to support improvement efforts. Their main role is to be a public service agency whose first responsibility is to the Minister. The Regional Offices are not conceived directly as service providers to support individual schools, nor do they have a direct accountability relationship with schools. However, at the time of the OECD review, the development of a Student Achievement Function, located in the Regional Offices of the Ministry of Education, was in train. The purpose of this function is to increase Ministry support for schools in accelerating student progress and achievement.

Difficulties in creating coherence of practices across the system

At the national level, New Zealand has clear objectives for improving student learning opportunities, and defines ways in which evaluation and assessment can be helpful in achieving these. At the same time, given the emphasis on school self-management, the implementation of this agenda relies very much on schools' goodwill and buy-in. In this devolved educational environment, it can be challenging to bring about systemic change in approaches to assessment and evaluation, and ultimately to teaching and learning.

There is evidence that while schools are obliged to have assessment, appraisal and evaluation approaches in place, there is large variation in the extent to which these processes are effective and aligned (see Chapters 3, 4, 5). As explained above, a strong evidence base and a range of sophisticated tools for student assessment, teacher appraisal and school evaluation are in place nationally. However, the implementation of this framework depends on whether these tools permeate the routine work of day-to-day assessment and evaluation practice in schools. There is little evidence as to whether practices that have been shown to be effective are spread and shared across the system.

Evaluation and assessment frameworks have little value if they do not lead to the improvement of classroom practice and student learning. Therefore securing effective links to classroom practice is one of the most critical factors in designing the evaluation and assessment framework. The variation in practices across New Zealand raises questions as to the degree of consistency that is desirable set against what may be seen as legitimate diversity in the context of school self-management. As described above, the New Zealand education system is conceived as a high trust model relying strongly on teacher judgement. There is, however an inevitable tension between variety of practice and consistency across the system. Autonomy at school level helps to create a sense of ownership and self-direction, but is not easy to reconcile with the drive for consistency of standards.

It is hoped that the provision of clear goals and reference points via the national curriculum, learning progressions, and most recently the National Standards, will bring about the needed consistency of school approaches to ensure equity of educational opportunities across the country. Resistance to National Standards stems in large part from a fear that autonomy, initiative and diversity will be sacrificed to common measures and top-down imposition. The implementation of National Standards will be difficult if concerns of schools, teacher organisations and advisory bodies are not attended to and refinements made to the framework and process of roll out. The challenge is to ensure that links to classroom practice not only run one way – top down – but that experience and effective practice from inside New Zealand’s classrooms can also adequately inform the national agenda.

Policy recommendations

The different components of evaluation and assessment are well developed in New Zealand and build on a high level of trust and co-operation between the different levels of the education system. In order to further enhance the governance and coherence of the overall evaluation and assessment framework, the OECD review team proposes the following approaches for New Zealand to consider:

- Further strengthen consistency between different components of evaluation and assessment;
- Consider establishing regional support structures to increase connectedness of schools;
- Continue to build school capacity in evaluation and assessment;
- Encourage systematic local approaches to evaluation and assessment.

Further strengthen consistency between different components of evaluation and assessment

While the national agenda is characterised by a high degree of coherence in the objectives and approaches to different aspects of evaluation and assessment, there is no policy document or written strategy on the overall framework for evaluation and assessment. There is much room to be more explicit about how evaluation and assessment at student, teacher, school and system level are intended to link together and be complementary.

To optimise complementarity of evaluation practices at different levels of the system, the New Zealand authorities could consider developing an overall mapping or framework for the entire evaluation and assessment system. The idea would not be to introduce a new strategy or approach to evaluation and assessment, but to take stock of existing research syntheses, position papers, standards and indicators to integrate them in a coherent and concise framework. The overarching goal would be to propose a higher level of integration and coherence of the different components of evaluation and assessment.

The Ministry of Education is currently conducting an exercise which maps existing student assessment tools. The purpose is to align some of the assessment tools to the National Standards and provide an Assessment Resource Map to help school professionals select the appropriate assessment tool to fit their purpose. In a similar vein, the Ministry of Education could envisage starting a process of mapping approaches to evaluation and assessment at student, teacher, school and system level. The outcome could be a concise document mapping for each of the components of evaluation and assessment (1) The purpose and goals of the process; (2) Evidence-based principles of effective practice; (3) Available tools and reference standards for implementation; and (4) Reporting requirements and/or intended use of results.

Much of this work has already been conducted and research-based key principles and guidance for practice are embedded in a range of documents such as the national curriculum, the Ministry's position paper on assessment, NZTC's teacher standards and ERO's indicators for school review. The added value of an overall strategic framework would be to bring the different components together and begin a process of reflection as to how they are interrelated. The process of developing such a framework or "map" of evaluation and assessment levels would provide an opportunity to analyse the various linkages between different components and identify missing links and articulations in need of strengthening.

The process of developing such a framework would also provide a timely opportunity to clarify where the recently introduced National Standards fit into the existing evaluation and assessment system, including information on available support tools and professional development offers and clarifications regarding the intended use of results at different levels of the system. To ensure that there is broad agreement and common ownership of such an evaluation and assessment map, it is essential that the process of developing it builds on New Zealand's traditional strengths in involving stakeholder groups, research expertise and advisory groups as part of a collaborative process.

Consider establishing regional support structures to increase connectedness of schools

Bringing together national strategies and school practices is particularly challenging in New Zealand as there is no intermediate level of administration such as local authorities or school districts. The above analysis points to a demand for a more locally or regionally based support structure for school development.

One option would be to consider different ways of reinforcing the school support role of Regional Offices of the Ministry of Education. The Regional Offices seem well placed to play a stronger role in establishing direct contact with schools and facilitating advice and support offers which respond to schools' identified needs. Being closer to the local level than the national Ministry, the Regional Offices could help ensure that principals

and Boards of Trustees have access to high quality advice and are able to use their planning and reporting structures for continuous improvement.

An important aspect of such a regional structure would be to establish collective knowledge-building and sharing so as to facilitate innovation and system learning. The regional support service could play a clearinghouse function of looking at national research as well as leading-edge practice across the region and feed this back into the local system in a way that is adapted to specific local needs. For example, the regional support structure could gather effective tools that have been developed at the school level, analyse their quality and robustness and publish them as inspiration and support for other schools. It could support schools in effective evaluation and assessment practice, identification of priorities and strategic planning. This could be done in collaboration with non-for-profit educational advisory services, universities and centres of expertise.

Continue to build school capacity in evaluation and assessment

Continuing to build capacity for evaluation and assessment remains a priority. The effectiveness of the overall evaluation and assessment framework depends to a large extent on whether those who evaluate and those who use evaluation results at the different levels of the system have the appropriate competencies. This is of particular importance when new requirements and approaches related to assessment and evaluation are introduced. The National Standards reform has proceeded at a quick pace and coincides with the introduction of the revised national curriculum. Since the implementation of Standards there has not been enough time to build the capacity necessary to ensure the embedding of these within the overall evaluation and assessment framework. Teacher competencies related to student assessment and reporting in general, and working with the national curriculum and the National Standards in particular, need to be given ongoing attention (Chapter 3).

Another area of importance is to ensure schools have appropriate expertise related to effective teacher appraisal and school evaluation. Given the key role of school leadership in New Zealand's devolved education context, it is difficult to envisage either effective teacher appraisal or productive school self-review without strong leadership capacity. Hence, the recruitment, development and support for school leaders is of key importance in creating and sustaining effective evaluation and assessment cultures within schools. Research internationally has shown that school leadership focused on goal-setting, assessment, appraisal and evaluation is positively correlated with teacher and student performance (Pont *et al.*, 2008). The term school leadership is understood here in a broad sense, including the various distributed leadership functions such as deputy and middle leaders, who all play an important role in the New Zealand context.

In the past few years, New Zealand has introduced a suite of sophisticated tools and training opportunities to support school leadership staff in their tasks, including a model of effective educational leadership, a range of professional development opportunities and a leadership practice survey tool for principals to gather feedback from teachers and develop their own leadership (Chapter 5). While these efforts are commendable and should be continued, enhancing the effectiveness of school work with data and self-review remains a challenge in many schools (ERO, 2007). This points to the need to firmly embed a focus on effective evaluation and assessment in the competency description, training, appraisal and support tools for school leaders.

Encourage systematic local approaches to evaluation and assessment

Capacity for evaluation and assessment needs to be built in a connected way at different levels of the education system. School leaders can play an important role in connecting the classroom, school and system level in the pursuit of improving student learning (Hopkins, 2008). One way of connecting schools across the system would be to use a regional support structure (see above) as platform for school leaders to share knowledge and work towards a systematic approach to evaluation and assessment. In Finland, for example, an OECD case study team visited a city that had implemented a pilot programme where some principals were also working as district principals, with one-third of their time devoted to the district. Beyond leading their own school, these principals co-ordinated district level functions such as planning, development and evaluation (Hargreaves *et al.*, 2008). Such a system requires a rethinking and redistribution of leadership structures within schools as well so that it is possible for principals to dedicate some of their time to area-wide tasks.

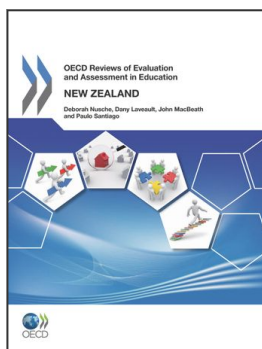
There is also great potential for schools to collaborate more closely in collecting and analysing evaluative information (see Chapter 5). This could involve setting up more elaborated structures of groups of schools (Hattie, 2009), where professional learning communities of leaders and teachers from neighbouring schools could build a collective understanding of how to gather and interpret data on student learning. It would also be helpful to rely as much as possible on practitioners in the role of peer evaluators or participating in ERO review teams. The active involvement of competent practitioners in reviews of schools can make the process more efficient while at the same time fostering peer learning and knowledge sharing (Nusche *et al.*, 2011).

Notes

1. Extending High Standards Across Schools (EHSAS) was a government initiative designed to raise student achievement by making funding available for schools to develop and extend their proven practice in collaboration with other schools. The emphasis was on developing professional networks and improving the evidence base on effective practice. The initiative was discontinued in 2009 as a result of Government reprioritisation (Ministry of Education website).

References

- ERO (Education Review Office) (2007), *The Collection and Use of Assessment Information in Schools*, Education Review Office, Wellington.
- Hargreaves, A., G. Hálasz and B. Pont (2008), “The Finnish Approach to System Leadership”, in B. Pont, D. Nusche and H. Moorman (eds.), *Improving School Leadership, Volume 2: Case Studies on System Leadership*, OECD, Paris.
- Hattie, J. (2009), “Tomorrow’s Schools – Yesterday’s News: The Quest for a New Metaphor”, in J. Langley (ed.), *Tomorrow’s Schools 20 Years On...*, Cognition Institute, Wellington.
- Hopkins, D. (2008), “Realising the Potential of System Leadership”, in B. Pont, D. Nusche and D. Hopkins (eds.), *Improving School Leadership, Volume 2: Case Studies on System Leadership*, OECD, Paris.
- New Zealand Ministry of Education (2007), *Improving School Leadership: Country Background Report New Zealand*, www.oecd.org/dataoecd/37/43/38740175.pdf.
- New Zealand Ministry of Education (2010), *Ministry of Education Position Paper: Assessment [Schooling Sector]*, Wellington.
- New Zealand Ministry of Education (2011), *OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes: Country Background Report for New Zealand*, www.oecd.org/dataoecd/6/16/47797042.pdf.
- Nusche, D., G. Hálasz, J. Looney, P. Santiago and C. Shewbridge (2011), *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Sweden 2011*, OECD, Paris.
- Pont, B., D. Nusche and H. Moorman (2008), *Improving School Leadership, Volume 1: Policy and Practice*, OECD, Paris.



From:
OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: New Zealand 2011

Access the complete publication at:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264116917-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

Nusche, Deborah, *et al.* (2012), "The evaluation and assessment framework", in *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: New Zealand 2011*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264116917-6-en>

This document, as well as any data and map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area. Extracts from publications may be subject to additional disclaimers, which are set out in the complete version of the publication, available at the link provided.

The use of this work, whether digital or print, is governed by the Terms and Conditions to be found at <http://www.oecd.org/termsandconditions>.